UCONN | UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT

INSTITUTE FOR COLLABORATION ON HEALTH,
INTERVENTION, AND POLICY (InCHIP)

Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA):
FY19 InCHIP-BIRC Seed Grant for UConn Faculty

A. KEY DATES

- Friday, February 15, 2019   FOA posted
- Friday, April 26, 2019   **Letters of Intent (required) due by 11:59 PM EST**
- Friday, May 3, 2019   Applicants notified of LOI approval decision
- Friday, May 17, 2019   *InCHIP Affiliate Application due by 11:59 PM EST*
- Friday, May 31, 2019   **Full Proposals due by 11:59 PM EST**
- June 2019   Applicants notified of award decision
- July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2021   Award period

B. PURPOSE

UConn's Institute for Collaboration on Health, Intervention, and Policy (InCHIP) and the UConn Brain Imaging Research Center (BIRC) are co-sponsoring a seed grant funding opportunity for faculty at UConn Storrs, UConn Health, and the regional campuses. This grant is designed to fund an innovative pilot project that will directly support an external grant application in health behavior or health policy with a substantial neuroimaging component. Health is broadly defined and includes physical and mental health and outcomes with critical implications for health. The funded pilot project must involve neuroimaging-related research that includes MRI, TMS, tDCS/tACS, and/or EEG usage at BIRC.

This funding is intended to enable investigators to demonstrate feasibility, develop scientific and technical expertise, establish collaborations, and, secondarily, publish in peer-reviewed journals.

One of the goals of this funding mechanism is to encourage incorporation of BIRC's neuroimaging services into the pilot project. Therefore, at least one of the Principle Investigators on the seed grant application must be new to BIRC and not have previously utilized BIRC's neuroimaging services.

Investigators with experience in neuroimaging methods, as well as those with little or no experience may apply for this grant, but those with limited experience must include a collaborative plan for how they will acquire such experience.

An external grant application should be submitted **through InCHIP** within one year of completing the pilot project.

C. FUNDING AVAILABILITY AND REQUIREMENTS

One seed grant of $30,000 is available through this seed grant competition. Funding in the amount of $15,000 (half of the seed grant) will be provided in the form of a limited number of allocated hours on MRI, EEG, and/or TMS equipment at BIRC. The remaining $15,000 may be used to fund other research costs associated with the pilot project.

All grant funds must be expended within two years of the award date. A one-year extension may be requested prior to the expiration date. Requests should be submitted no less than 3 months prior to award expiration.

Unexpended funds will revert to InCHIP and BIRC.

Seed grant funds <u>may only be used</u> for the direct costs of carrying out approved projects, as indicated below:

1. $15,000 is designated **<u>exclusively</u>** for BIRC equipment usage (i.e., MRI, TMS, tDCS/tACS, and/or EEG usage). This portion of the funding may NOT be used to cover any other research costs. It may be used for any combination of modalities at BIRC at the current rates (**https://birc.uconn.edu/rates-and-policies/**).

2. $15,000 may be used for non-BIRC research costs such as:
   ➢ Personnel who are essential for conducting the research project, such as graduate research assistants and student labor. Individuals who are not on the regular state payroll (i.e., consultants and other off-campus assistance) may be hired to perform special research-related tasks as needed.
   ➢ Resources that require fee-for-services within UConn.
   ➢ Participant incentives for recruitment or study participation.
   ➢ Travel that is necessary to conduct the research, NOT travel to present the results of the research, or travel to explore future funding opportunities.
   ➢ Equipment necessary for conducting the research ("equipment" is defined as an article of tangible, nonexpendable, personal property that costs $5,000 or more).
   ➢ Project supplies, including drugs and services.
   ➢ Other specifically authorized expenses as may be essential for carrying out the project.

3. **Seed grant funds <u>may not be used</u> for the following:**
   ➢ The salary of any Principal Investigator, Co-Investigator, or UConn faculty member.
   ➢ Living expenses.
   ➢ Laptops or desktop computers, unless used exclusively for the project and not for any other activities.
   ➢ Service/maintenance contracts on equipment.
   ➢ Laboratory renovations or other infrastructure renovations.
   ➢ Institutional and/or individual memberships in professional organizations.
   ➢ Travel to professional meetings to present the results of the research, or any conference attendance.
   ➢ Indirect costs, including clerical and administrative personnel salaries.
   ➢ Costs associated with the publication of results of the research, such as purchase of reprints.
   ➢ Investigator training costs, including tuition.

D. PROJECT AND INVESTIGATOR ELIGIBILITY

1. Proposals must be clearly linked to a planned external grant application for neuroimaging-related research in the area of health behavior or health policy.

2. Both single-PI and dual-PI proposals are permitted, but dual-PI proposals are recommended in order to promote interdisciplinary research. Preference will be given to applications where the two PIs have distinct and complementary areas of expertise and where one of the PIs has neuroimaging experience (e.g., one with expertise in intervention development and the other in neuroimaging methods).
   ➢ For single PI applications, the PI must be new to BIRC and **<u>not</u>** have previously utilized their services. However, s/he must have experience in neuroimaging or have someone on his/her team who does.
   ➢ For dual-PI projects, at least one of the PIs must be new to BIRC and <u>not</u> have previously utilized their services. If neither PI has utilized BIRC's services, at least one of them must have prior neuroimaging experience or have someone on their team who does.

3. The Principle Investigators must have an advanced degree (e.g., PhD, MD, PharmD), have an eligible faculty appointment at UConn Storrs, UConn Health, or one of the regional campuses, and be eligible to submit external grants through InCHIP. Eligible faculty appointments are tenured or tenure-track faculty, in-residence research faculty, clinical faculty, other research faculty, and research scientists/scholars.

4. UConn faculty who work at Connecticut Children's Medical Center (CCMC) are not eligible to be a Principal Investigator (PI) on this seed grant unless they can submit their external grant applications through UConn. If they are required to submit their external grant applications through CCMC, they can serve as a Co-Investigator on this grant but not as a PI.

5. Positions that are ineligible to serve as PIs are post-doctoral fellows, lecturers, research assistants, research associates, visiting titles, and adjunct faculty.

6. Graduate students are not eligible for this opportunity.

7. Research teams may include students, postdocs, and other faculty members, as well as researchers from other institutions, but only eligible UConn faculty can serve as PIs.

8. Research teams must have sufficient expertise in study design, implementation, data acquisition, and data analysis, or must detail specific plans to develop this expertise.

9. At least one of the PIs is required to be an approved InCHIP Faculty Affiliate *by the time the final proposal is submitted*. If the applicant is not currently an Affiliate, s/he must submit an application to become one by **11:59pm EST on May 17, 2019**. The InCHIP Affiliation application form and instructions are available **here**. Please allow at least two weeks for approval.

10. The proposed research must focus on *health behavior or health policy* and be consistent with the missions of **InCHIP** and **BIRC**. A wide range of research is permitted; the pilot project does not have to involve intervention development, implementation, or evaluation. The pilot project must include, though, an aim that involves neuroimaging and utilizes BIRC equipment.

11. The proposed seed grant project should address a novel research question, not a research question that is already being explored as part of an existing, externally-funded project.

12. The proposed pilot project must NOT overlap an existing BIRC seed grant.

13. If one of the Principle Investigators already has an InCHIP seed grant (with the exception of an *Interdisciplinary Team Building Grant*), s/he must close out the award from that InCHIP seed grant prior to the start of the award period for the FY19 InCHIP-BIRC Seed Grant.

14. If funded, changes to the project's objectives and budget will require prior approval from relevant InCHIP/BIRC staff.

15. The PIs must commit in good faith to using the seed grant funds to obtain pilot data to support an external grant proposal that will be submitted **through InCHIP** within a year of completing the pilot project.

16. Each individual may only submit one LOI/proposal for this competition as the Principal Investigator (PI).

17. The pilot project must have IRB approval before the award is released.

18. Any research products must acknowledge InCHIP and BIRC support. InCHIP and BIRC staff must be included as authors when they provide substantive theoretical, design, or analysis support.

E. APPLICATION PROCESS AND REQUIREMENTS

Note: InCHIP staff will answer questions about the seed grant application (including the budget), but will not assist applicants with development of the actual budget or budget justification, or with writing the seed grant LOI or proposal. Investigators may get input into their proposals via the Grant Proposal

Incubator.

Stage 1: Proposal Development (Optional)

InCHIP recorded a webinar on how to effectively structure a seed grant to support a future external grant submission. Applicants are encouraged to watch the **webinar** (see the Writing Successful Seed Grants tab) before developing their seed grant proposal. It is essential that the work supported by an InCHIP-BIRC seed grant is linked to a planned, larger project.

In addition to the webinar, a *Grant Proposal Incubator* **is being offered at 12:00 pm on Wednesday, March 6** that provides applicants the opportunity to meet with a panel of skilled InCHIP and BIRC researchers to receive feedback on their research idea and proposal. More information about the Incubator can be found **here.**

Applicants are also encouraged (but not required) to utilize other resources offered by InCHIP's Cores when developing their research ideas and proposals. Seed grant-related services available through the InCHIP Cores include:

- *Training and Development Core***:** Individual consultations are available by appointment with InCHIP Training and Development Core staff.

- *Community-Engaged Health Research Core***:** This Core can help UConn researchers make linkages to community researchers and community-based organizations. For assistance with identifying possible community partners, email **boundaryspanners@chip.uconn.edu**. For information about this Core, click **here**.

- *Intervention Core***:** This Core can help researchers identify and develop collaborations with experts who can assist with theory-based intervention development, implementation, and rigorous outcome evaluation and dissemination. To request assistance finding a collaborator with intervention expertise, visit the Intervention Core webpage **here**.

InCHIP Cores offer more extensive services for those applying for external funding including pre- and post-award services, as well as assistance in the design, development, implementation, and dissemination of research. A complete description of the Core services can be found on their respective webpages (see links above). Please look for announcements from InCHIP about Core trainings, workshops, and events in the coming months.

Stage 2: Letter of Intent

1. All applicants must submit an online Letter of Intent (LOI) form, available on our **seed grant webpage**, by the above specified due date/time. The LOI must describe the concept for the future external grant application and how the InCHIP-BIRC seed grant will support work that will ultimately make the external grant application more competitive. The LOI must also list specific agencies (e.g., NIH, NSF, Foundations) that fund the type of work proposed, and if available, links to relevant funding announcements. If assistance is needed in identifying funding agencies and mechanisms, please contact InCHIP Boundary Spanning at **boundaryspanners@chip.uconn.edu**.

2. A budget is not required at the time of LOI submission. LOIs do not require routing through grants offices at UConn Storrs or UConn Health.

3. LOIs will be reviewed by relevant InCHIP and BIRC staff to determine the eligibility of the proposed research and applicants.

4. Applicants must receive written approval of their LOI prior to submitting a full proposal.

Stage 3: Full Proposal

1. Full proposals must be submitted online **here** by the above specified due date/time. The application must include the following:
   a. Project Title (**Maximum of 200 characters including spaces and punctuation**).

b. PIs' Contact Information.

c. Biographical sketch of PIs, in NIH or NSF format.

d. Any Co-Investigators, Community Partners, or Consultants.

e. Roles and functions of project personnel, and the individual responsibilities of the PIs (**Maximum of 1 page**).

f. Abstract/Project Summary (**3000 characters including spaces**) – This section should describe the concept for the future external grant application and explicitly state how the proposed seed grant will help the research team develop a more competitive external grant.

g. Specific Aims (**Maximum of 1 page**) – This section <u>must</u> include an aim that involves neuroimaging and utilizes BIRC equipment. In addition to information about the proposed pilot project, this section should include information about the planned future external grant application. Include an explanation of how the proposed pilot project will lead to a new externally-funded research project.

h. Research Strategy (**Maximum of 4 pages**) - Provide a brief description of significance, innovation, and approach. The significance and innovation descriptions should focus on the larger research questions that will be addressed by the future external grant application. The approach portion of the Research Strategy should focus on the pilot project that is being funded by the seed grant. Be sure to include anticipated products to result from the pilot project, including grants to be submitted with funding opportunities. In addition, a brief timeline for the project, from data collection to grant submission, must be included.

i. References (**No page limit; not included in the 4-page maximum for the Research Strategy**).

j. Multi-PI Plan (**Maximum of ½ page**) - Describe the roles and responsibilities of the two PIs on the pilot project, as well as the governance and organizational structure of the leadership team, communication plans, processes for making decisions on scientific direction, and procedures for resolving conflicts.

k. Budget with Justification for Each Item (**Maximum of 1 page**) – For BIRC equipment usage, specify and justify the number and duration (in multiples of 30 minutes) of MRI, EEG, and/or TMS sessions requested for seed grant funding. For studies proposing EEG as the sole modality, a justification for the use of high-density EEG at BIRC (as opposed to another lower density EEG system on campus) is required. In addition to delineating the BIRC project needs, specify the other costs required to complete the proposed pilot project.

l. Other Sources of Support for the proposed project (e.g., additional funding, in-kind services, equipment).

m. Brief discussion of how the proposed pilot project is related to any current projects being conducted by the PIs.

n. *Optional:* Other Letters of Support.

2. Proposals are **not** required to be routed through InCHIP or Sponsored Program Services (SPS).

3. Seed grant proposals must be predominantly the work of the Principal Investigators (PI) and *for the benefit of the PIs' research programs.* Proposals written primarily by graduate students or others in a PI's name will not be considered.

4. Proposed projects must fall outside the scope of research projects that are currently funded or have funding that is pending (e.g., are under review).

5. Full proposals will undergo a rigorous review process by reviewers from InCHIP and BIRC. One or more external reviewers may be consulted as well. Individuals who are Senior/Key Personnel or Other Significant Contributors on a seed grant proposal will be excluded from participation in the review process. Reviewers and InCHIP/BIRC staff may request additional information from applicants to better evaluate the scientific merit of the application, to clarify any aspect of the proposal, or to assess how the application fits within the strategies priorities of InCHIP and BIRC.

6. Investigators will be notified via email whether or not their proposal has been awarded funding.

F. REVIEW CRITERIA

Priority for funding will be based on the following review criteria, in no particular order:

- Scientific merit of the planned external grant application and the extent to which is it novel or innovative (e.g., testing a new intervention, methodology, theory, or understudied research area).

- Scientific premise and rigor of the pilot work to be supported by the seed grant funding.

- Relevance of the study to InCHIP and BIRC's research missions and strategic priorities.

- Feasibility of plans to submit an external grant proposal to external funders no later than one year following completion of the pilot project.

- Potential for external funding.

- Composition of the research team and the extent of its interdisciplinarity.

G. AWARDEE REQUIREMENTS

- If awarded, the PIs are not required to route their proposal through Sponsored Programs Services (SPS).

- Projects must have IRB approval before awards are released. The awarded PIs are responsible for obtaining all required approvals for their research from the relevant IRB(s).
    a. Please visit the **UConn IRB website** for more information about the IRB approval process for research conducted at the UConn Storrs Campus, the four regional campuses, and the School of Law. For more information about the IRB approval process for research conducted at UConn Health, please visit the **UConn Health IRB website**.

- Awardees will be required to submit a summary report of their progress annually for at least 5 years following award of the funding. This report must describe status of the pilot project, progress towards acquiring external funding, and any research products.

- Any research products (e.g., publications, external grant applications) must acknowledge InCHIP and BIRC support. BIRC staff or IBRAIN fellows must be included as authors when they provide substantive theoretical, design, or analysis support.

- Changes to the project's objectives, PIs, and budget will require prior approval from relevant InCHIP and BIRC staff.

- Detailed awardee instructions/requirements will be distributed to seed grant winners when they are notified of the award decisions. All awardee requirements described above are subject to change in accordance with updated institutional procedures (e.g., routing requirements).

H. CONTACT

For questions not addressed in this FOA or on **the InCHIP seed grant webpage**, please contact **seedgrants@chip.uconn.edu**.