
CENTER FOR TECHNOLOGY AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PILOT PROJECT FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

Summer 2024

CENTER DESCRIPTION

The Center for Technology and Behavioral Health (CTBH) is a P30 “Center for Excellence” funded by the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA). CTBH is an interdisciplinary research group focused on the development, evaluation and dissemination of digital therapeutic tools targeting substance use and co-occurring behavioral-health issues. The Center is housed within the Geisel School of Medicine at Dartmouth College (and includes collaboration with affiliates within Dartmouth College and at several other institutions across the U.S. and internationally).

PILOT PROJECT FUNDING

CTBH offers funding up to \$20,000 per project to support novel 1-year pilot studies that offer considerable promise to have a large impact on the field, as part of the Center’s activities to support the development and evaluation of cutting-edge applications of technology to the treatment of substance-use disorders and related conditions.

Center-supported pilot projects will facilitate the rapid execution of research to advance the Center’s Aims to complement knowledge gleaned from longer-term, NIH-funded projects conducted by Center Faculty Affiliates. In general, ***pilot projects are expected to be completed within a one-year timeline.*** The Center Director’s office will oversee the implementation of pilot projects and the expenditure of pilot-project funds.

CTBH encourages collaborations among investigators across diverse research disciplines with expertise that may be applied to substance use research, including behavioral health, computer science, engineering, data science, user-centered design, and implementation science. During the current CTBH funding period, the priority research areas are:

- implementation science research to promote scaling access to digital therapeutics;
- linking digital assessment and digital phenotyping to personalized digital therapeutics, including just-in-time adaptive interventions, and other adaptive intervention regimes;
- digital therapeutics for co-occurring disorders, focused specifically on substance use in conjunction with mental health and other health conditions (including physical health conditions);
- research on ethics in digital health research, including topics of privacy, data sharing, and informed consent;
- diversity research, focused on interventions targeted or tailored for particular minority populations, recruitment or retention of minority populations in substance use and digital research, and testing generalizability of results across diverse populations.

Proposed projects are not limited to these focus areas but are encouraged to include one or more aims relevant to digital approaches to assessment, measurement, and/or intervention delivery for substance use disorders (SUDs) and related conditions. ***If the project does not specifically address SUDs, the Principal Investigator***

should explicitly describe in the application how the outcome/results of the project can be applied to the field of SUDs.

Researchers whose proposed research focuses on health behaviors other than substance use are encouraged to include an aim related to substance use (e.g., assessment of substance use) and to consider applying their novel, promising intervention approaches to substance using populations. To support researchers with less expertise related to substance use research, the CTBH offers mentoring resources to pilot projects. Specifically, applicants can be paired with a CTBH-affiliated substance use expert mentor, with the mentor time to be paid by CTBH in addition to the pilot funds. Please reach out to the Pilot Core director, Dr. Catherine Stanger (Catherine.Stanger@Dartmouth.edu) with any questions about mentorship and to request a mentor to assist with development of the pilot application. Mentorship funds available to each funded pilot project include up to 24 hours (2 hours per month on average) of consultant time funded for each one-year project.

ELIGIBILITY

The Principal Investigator of the pilot project must be a CTBH Faculty Affiliate or Dartmouth CTBH Senior or Principal Research Scientist.

Trainees or fellows (for example, a post-doctoral scholar or junior faculty in a mentored position such as funded by a K award or other career development award) mentored by a CTBH Faculty Affiliate, at Dartmouth or other affiliated institution may also serve as PI.

We encourage all Faculty Affiliates to make their trainees aware of this opportunity. Doctoral level CTBH Research Scientists are also eligible to apply as PI provided they are in a research training role with sufficient protected time to complete the project and receive regular independent research mentoring. Applications from trainees and fellows are encouraged early in their training to facilitate successful completion of the project prior to completion of the training period. Involvement of graduate students and medical students is encouraged, but trainees at this level are not eligible to serve as Principal Investigators. If you have specific questions regarding applicant eligibility, please contact Sonia Oren (Sonia.D.Oren@Dartmouth.edu).

Priority consideration will be given to new investigators and to applicants who have not previously received a pilot project award from CTBH.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Applicants for pilot project awards **are required to submit a non-binding letter of intent prior to the proposal submission date to allow the Center Director's office to assemble the appropriate review committee in advance of a given review cycle.** The letter should include a proposal title, brief description of the planned project, and a list of planned key personnel and their roles. This letter should address the applicability of the proposed research to SUDs and identify the targeted research areas noted above the project addresses (if any). After the letter is reviewed, applicants will receive a response from CTBH indicating whether they are invited to submit a proposal for funding. If you have questions or need assistance in the application process, CTBH mentors can be available.

LETTERS OF INTENT AND APPLICATIONS ARE TO BE SUBMITTED BY EMAIL TO
Sonia.D.Oren@Dartmouth.edu

TIMELINE OF TARGET DATES FOR FOURTH PILOT PROJECT REVIEW CYCLE

Letter of Intent Submission:	August 1, 2024
Proposal Submission:	September 6, 2024
Proposal Review:	September-October 2024
Funds Awarded:	October-November 2024

PROPOSAL FORMAT

1. Research Plan – not to exceed 4 pages

- Specific Aims – 1 page total
 - Significance
 - Innovation
 - Approach
- } 3 pages total

2. Timeline (1 page or less) – Provide a brief description of the timeline for your proposed project. Pilot projects are expected to be completed in one year or less.

3. Budget (no page limit) – The target range for each award is up to \$10,000 - \$20,000. Please request **only** the budget that is needed to conduct the project. Proposals with lower budgets may have an increased chance of being funded.

These pilot grants are intended to support project-specific costs and do not support time/effort of investigators. **Indirect (F&A) costs cannot be budgeted. If a sub award needs to be established, the CTBH grant management team will work with the outside organization to try and establish one.** Consultants external to the Principal Investigator's institution may be included in pilot proposals in cases where specific expertise from such Consultants is needed for a pilot project to be viable. In such cases, a detailed rationale should be submitted with the budget justification. This rationale should include a description of the extent of Consultant involvement, itemized in terms of tasks and deliverables, rather than days or hours. As noted above, Consultants with expertise in substance use research can be provided to investigator teams at no cost upon request. For budgetary questions please reach out to Sonia Oren (Sonia.D.Oren@Dartmouth.edu).

Submit a breakdown of costs in spreadsheet format, using the template attached to this announcement.

4. Budget Justification (no page limit) – Provide brief text for justification of each line item in accompanying budget. Please note, it is expected that the majority of pilot funds will be used for the conduct of the pilot study. Publication costs are typically not approvable costs. If costs for conference presentation are requested, the applicant must demonstrate that the project results will be ready for presentation within the 1-year award period. If included, conference travel costs must be clearly justified including the person traveling, the dates, and the name of the conference.

5. Human Subjects (no page limit) – Please follow the NIH guidelines to describe procedures for ensuring the protection of human subjects, if applicable. (Refer to Part II of the PHS 398 Instructions, found here: <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/how-to-apply-application-guide/forms-e/general/g.500-phs-human-subjects-and-clinical-trials-information.htm>). Please include a description of inclusion of women, children, and minorities as well as a proposed inclusion enrollment report.

6. Dissemination Plan (1 page or less) – All proposals should include a plan for disseminating study results, including the publication plan. Additionally, pilot grant recipients will be required to present their project at a P30 Center meeting.

7. Project Relevance to Career Plans (1 page or less) – Briefly describe how this project will fit into your long-term career plans. The intent of the pilot program is that an investigative team can use results from pilot projects to seek subsequent extramural funding. These plans should be addressed in this section.

8. Impact (1 page or less) – Briefly describe how this project moves beyond incremental findings and the likelihood for the project to exert a sustained, powerful influence on the research field(s) involved.

9. Biosketch – Please submit a biosketch in NIH or NSF format for each investigator and mentor. (Refer to the following page for NIH instructions and format: <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/forms/biosketch.htm>). Biosketches from collaborators are optional but encouraged.

10. Letter of Support – For eligible trainees, fellows, or Dartmouth Research Scientists *only*, please include a letter from your mentor that details the support they will provide during the project period. In this letter, please address the career stage of the applicant, protected time for the applicant to complete the project with justification, and plans to ensure the success of the project should the applicant's position end prior to the completion of the project, particularly if the pilot project will take place during the applicant's final year of training. Letters of Support from collaborators are optional but encouraged.

PROPOSAL REVIEW PROCESS

The Center Director's office will select review committee members with expertise relevant to pilot project proposal submissions. Review committees will be composed of members of the Center's expert Advisory Boards and Center leadership.

Review criteria and the associated scoring system for reviews will be similar to those employed by NIH reviews.

Pilot project applications will be evaluated for the following criteria:

- Significance (Review of this criterion will include a consideration of the relevance of the proposed project to research on substance misuse).
- Investigator (Review of this criterion will include a consideration the investigator's biographical sketch and description of their career plan).
- Innovation
- Approach
- Environment (For trainees, review of this criterion will include a consideration of the mentor's letter of support).
- Impact

Applicants will receive an overall score for the proposal, along with a score associated with each of the six criteria using a 1-9 scale, where 1 = Exceptional and 9 = Poor.

Applicants will also receive written qualitative feedback from reviewers on the strengths and weaknesses of the proposal on each of these dimensions as well as the human subjects and budget sections of the proposal.

POST-AWARD ACTIVITY

Ongoing support and guidance will be available from the Center Director's office. Principal Investigators of pilot projects will submit quarterly reports to the Center Director's office and meet with the Director of the Core (along the same timeline) to review progress. Results of pilot projects are expected to be disseminated via presentations and publications. A final report will be due to the Center Director's office upon completion of the pilot project. For tracking and reporting purposes, CTBH may also request updated information on presentations, publications, and funding that have resulted from pilot data after the final report is submitted.

The Center Director's office will advise all recipients of pilot project funds on optimal next steps in seeking extramural funding to support a line of research that appears promising based on pilot study results.

Questions about the pilot project application process can be submitted to:

Sonia D. Oren, MEd
Research Program Manager
Center for Technology and Behavioral Health
Voice: 603-646-7090
Email: Sonia.D.Oren@dartmouth.edu

and

Catherine Stanger, PhD
Director, Pilot Core
Center for Technology and Behavioral Health
Voice: 603-646-7023
Email: Catherine.Stanger@dartmouth.edu