

# UAB MEDICINE

## Comprehensive Neuroscience Center

### Request for Applications 2026-2028 Pilot Award Program

**LOI Deadline: April 24, 2026**

**Proposal Deadline (invitation only): June 26, 2026**

#### Overview

The mission of the [Comprehensive Neuroscience Center \(CNC\)](#) is to accelerate discovery by promoting excellence in fundamental, translational, and clinical neuroscience research, as well as education and clinical care, through integration of the UAB-wide neuroscience community. Toward that goal, the CNC is pleased to announce that it will fund two Multi-PI Pilot Awards for up to \$40,000 for a 24-month period. Through these Pilot Awards, the CNC will provide short-term funding for large-scale, Multi-Principal Investigator led projects designed to promote collaborative extramural proposals for fundamental, translational, or clinical research in the neurosciences.

#### Objective

The principal goal of the CNC Pilot Award Program is to provide short-term funding for new collaborations that are scientifically meritorious and innovative through a competitive program with open solicitation and peer review. The program will focus on inter-disciplinary collaboration among current UAB scientists that will be developed into extramural funding applications.

#### Eligibility

Principal Investigators should hold a current faculty position at UAB, at any rank (Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, and Professor), and must meet inclusion criteria for future extramural collaborative grant applications. Each project proposal must have a minimum of two sponsoring faculty as principal investigators. Priority will be given to applications that demonstrate close relevance to the CNC mission and the likelihood (including eligibility) of future large-scale, R-level, U-level, or P-level (or similar) MPI grant funding from NIH, DOD, or NSF within 1-2 years. Please note: standard R01 type applications will not be considered responsive to this RFA. A strong preference is given to applicants that have not been funded previously through this program and for projects that do not overlap with existing UAB UWIRCs.

The CNC Pilot Award Program is not designed to provide ongoing support for a long-term project or to provide supplemental support to ongoing funded research projects. Please note that pilot projects that are selected for potential funding will be required to complete necessary protocols as required by NIH to initiate the release of funds. All projects are required to meet UAB and federal requirements for human subjects protections and animal welfare.

#### Budget

CNC Pilot Awards may be used for direct project costs for preliminary data, scientific writers, establishing or building out cores as part of the program project, and salary supplementation for key staff/trainees. PI salary/effort should not be included in the proposed budget.

# Application Process

Proposal submission will involve **two rounds**: an initial Letter of Intent (LOI) followed by an invitation to submit a full proposal.

- 1) Letter of Intent (1-page limit) – Initial applications should consist of a one-page Letter of Intent (LOI), using Arial 11-pt font, single spacing, and 0.5” margins. The letter should include: names of the PIs, project title, focus area, abstract of the proposed research, timeline of milestones, and detailed plans for a future grant submission. Applicants should plan to submit an extramural application at the end of the first or second year for the CNC Pilot Award. LOI applications should be submitted as a single PDF document. In addition to the LOI, this document should include a reference list (up to 1 page), a preliminary budget, and NIH-style biosketches from all project PIs. LOIs will be reviewed by CNC leadership and additional reviewers with program project grant experience.
- 2) Full applications (3-page limit) – Following review of LOIs, selected applicants will be asked to submit a full application. This application will include a research strategy section outlining the specific aims, experimental approach, and milestones/timeline (up to 3 pages total), reference list (up to 1 page), a detailed budget, and updated NIH-style biosketches from all project PIs. Full applications will be reviewed and scored on the 1-9 point NIH scale by three reviewers serving on a separate review committee comprised of UAB faculty. Scoring will focus on three areas: 1) quality of the research (scientific merit, innovation, and impact); 2) relevance to the mission of the CNC and the Pilot Award Program; and 3) qualifications of the research team to lead the research effort toward securing extramural funding. We aim to fund two proposals per year.

Earliest submission date: March 23, 2026

LOI due date: April 24, 2026

Full application invitations sent by: May 22, 2026

Full application due date (invitation only): June 26, 2026

Award Start Date: August 03, 2026

Award Level: Up to \$40,000 (\$20,000/year) for a 2-year support period (upon satisfactory progress of meeting Year 1 milestones).

[Submit LOI](#)

Questions? Email [CNC@uab.edu](mailto:CNC@uab.edu)