

The PennCHOP Microbiome Pilot and Feasibility Grant Program

Purpose and Research Focus:

The mission of the PennCHOP Microbiome Program is to facilitate research across campus focused on understanding the microbiome and altering its composition and activity to improve health. Pilot/Feasibility Grants are designed to bring together microbiome investigators and to stimulate other researchers to enter the field and investigate the influence of the microbiome in their subject areas. The Pilot/Feasibility Projects can focus on the microbiota at any body site of the human or animal hosts. Projects can focus on composition and/or function of bacterial, fungal, archaeal, viral communities as well as their physiological and pathological effects on their hosts.

There will be three pilot funding mechanisms that will support up to 6 pilot grants:

- 1) Up to four general microbiome pilots
Criteria: Any area of microbiome research is eligible

- 2) One matching pilot with the University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine
Criteria: Proposal is relevant to understanding host-microbe interactions in either clinical or experimental settings, but which includes a faculty member for the School of Veterinary medicine ideally combined with faculty from another school at Penn. Research will typically involve animal models of human disease or topics relevant to veterinary medicine.

- 3) One matching pilot with the University of Pennsylvania Center for AIDS Research
Criteria: Proposal will focus on the intersection of HIV research and microbiome research. Possible topics could include biomarkers of transmission or disease progression, modulators of vaccine responses, or agents and/or biomarkers relevant to opportunistic infection associated with advanced immunodeficiency.

Eligibility:

All faculty members (including Instructors and Research Associates) of the University of Pennsylvania scientific community who meet the eligibility requirements below are invited to submit proposals. Applicants must be a U.S. Citizen or have a permanent resident visa and hold one of the following credentials: MD, PhD, MD/PhD, DVM/VMD.

Pilot grants are targeted to:

- 1) New Investigators who have never held extramural support (R01 and/or P01). Or

- 2) Established investigators in other areas of biomedical research who wish to apply their expertise to a problem involving microbes. Or

- 3) Established investigators in the microbiome field who wish to study an area that represents a significant departure from currently funded work.

Pilot project awardees are eligible for two years of funding; renewals are evaluated competitively.

Proposal Preparation:

Submit a PDF via email to April Weakley (pcmp@pennmedicine.upenn.edu). Complete proposals are due by 5PM on March 16, 2018. Awards will be announced in June 2018.

Format

- Cover page: includes title, author information, an abstract of up to 250 words, and a list of approved or pending IACUC/IRB protocols pertaining to the proposed pilot.
- NIH biographical sketch
- NIH other support
- Budget and justification: one year, \$40,000, one page only. Salary support of \$10,000 or less allowed but not for the PI. The HIV pilot award will be for \$60,000.
- Sections for the main proposal include background, preliminary results, estimated PENNCHOP Microbiome core usage, and research plan. All pilots are required to utilize at least one of the Program's Cores (see website for more information about specific services offered). A future directions paragraph must be provided at the end of the proposal articulating how this pilot award will provide necessary data to obtain extramural funding.
- Page limit for the main proposal: 4 pages total, including references.
- Senior Investigators should indicate how this project represents a new direction in their research.
- Appendix: Please use the supplementary section for preliminary data only. Do not include reprints.

Award Terms:

- Awardees are required to inform the PennCHOP Microbiome Program in the event that the Pilot/Feasibility Project receives external funding during the project period.
- A final progress report is due one month after the close of the project period. The report will contain a one-page synopsis of scientific progress and a list of resulting collaborations, microbiome program core utilization, publications, and grants.
- Along with the final progress report, investigators are required to submit a 2-5 minute non-confidential video explaining their microbiome work at a non-specialist level for public disclosure. These videos will be posted on the program YouTube channel and be used for other promotional purposes.
- Awardees will be asked to provide brief interim reports concerning research activities, resulting publications, and fundraising that may be highlighted at the annual PennCHOP Microbiome Program symposium.
- The project title and PI name will be published on the program website as an announcement (no financial or project details will be included)

For additional information, please contact:

The PennCHOP Microbiome Program

Phone: 215-573-4970

Fax: 215-573-2024

Email: pcmp@pennmedicine.upenn.edu

<https://www.med.upenn.edu/penn-chop-microbiome/>