Center of Biomedical Research Excellence (COBRE)

September 22, 2025

The CNAP COBRE Center at Kansas State University solicits applications for primary research projects and pilot projects; start date June 1, 2026. Funding is open to all faculty with appointments at higher education institutions in the State of Kansas, although Early Stage and New Investigators will be prioritized.

Proposed projects should seek to enhance neuroscience research in the State of Kansas and fit within CNAP's theme of cognitive and neural plasticity. We fund basic, translational, and clinical research in humans and animals from various disciplines (e.g., animal behavior, biology, pharmacology, veterinary medicine, cognitive science, human factors, kinesiology, human nutrition, computer science, and engineering). Further details found at www.k-state.edu/cnap.

The CNAP COBRE program aims to promote extramural grant funding success. Awardees' research careers are supported and developed in the following ways: 1. Awardees are mentored by experts in relevant research areas who assist with research projects and general career development. 2. CNAP offers awardees grant writing support to assist with subsequent proposal submissions. 3. CNAP provides access to core facilities and relevant training to support cutting-edge animal and human neuroscience techniques and advanced computational modeling applications. 4. Our scientific exchange network provides additional core facility access, support for collaborations, and access to scientific training and professional development workshops.

Applicants are encouraged to submit a **letter of intent** by **5 PM (CST) on October 24, 2025**. This is highly recommended to ensure your proposal can be reviewed in a timely manner.

Final proposals are due by **5 PM (CST) November 21, 2025**. The applicant's research office should submit applications on behalf of the applicant.

CNAP funding mechanism 1: Pilot Projects.
Pilot projects (1 year in duration; 6-page limit for research strategy) are available for up to $60,000 in total direct costs, plus F&A at the approved institutional rate. The selection process will favor Early Stage Investigator (ESI) and New Investigator (NI).

CNAP funding mechanism 2: Primary Research Projects.
Primary research projects (1 year in duration; 6-page limit for research strategy) are available for up to $125,000 in direct costs for 1 year of support, plus institutional F&A at the approved institutional rate. Research Project Leaders (RPLs) must hold a tenure-track faculty appointment. The selection process will favor Early Stage Investigator (ESI) and New Investigator (NI).

Submissions should be submitted via email to the CNAP Center email address (cnap@ksu.edu). Please direct any inquiries to the CNAP Interim Director, Dr. Heather Bailey (hbailey@ksu.edu). CNAP's External Advisory Committee (EAC) and CNAP's NIH funding agency, the National Institute of General Medical Sciences (NIGMS), approval is required for all grants.

Sincerely,

Heather Bailey

Heather Bailey, PhD
Interim Director, Cognitive and Neurobiological Approaches to Plasticity Center

Contents

Submission instructions (required forms, page length, required information).
Application packages will consist of the following documents, compiled in a single PDF in the order below. Note that budgetary instructions are tailored according to the funding mechanism (page 3). All other instructions listed below apply to both mechanisms.
Link to all PHS 398 documents/PHS 398 (main page).

Doc Name	Doc Type/ format	Link to doc form or directions	Notes
PHS 398 Face page	PHS form page 1	https://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/phs398/fp1.pdf	• The performance period should be 6/1/26-5/31/27.
PHS 398 Project Summary/ Abstract	PHS form page 2	https://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/phs398/fp2.pdf.	• Provide a general project summary and relevance statement. • Make sure to list the mentors as "Other Significant Contributors" on the second page.
Specific Aims	PDF or the PHS Continuation Page	https://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/phs398/phs398.pdf	• No PHS 398 form page required. • **1-page limit.** • Discuss your overarching project goals.

Research Strategy	PDF or the PHS Continuation Page	https://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/phs398/phs398.pdf	• No PHS 398 form page required.
			• **6-page limit.**
			• Research strategy document should include the following:
			  ○ Significance, Innovation, Approach
			  ▪ Reminder to address rigor and reproducibility. Guidance found here: https://grants.nih.gov/reproducibility/index.htm; https://grants.nih.gov/policy/reproducibility/guidance.htm
			  ○ Project Timeline.
			  ○ Achievement of Pilot Grant Milestones – See page 5 for more details. Pilot grant applicants should include specific plans for submitting conference abstracts, publications, and grants.

Bibliography	PDF or the PHS Continuation Page	https://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/phs398/phs398.pdf	• Include a reference list for all cited sources in the application. • No PHS 398 form page required. • **No page limit.**
Other Support for the applicant	NIH Other Support (OS) form page	https://grants.nih.gov/grants/forms/othersupport.htm	• Use the NIH other support form page to report any **completed**, current, or pending support. **Note that NIH does not normally request completed support**. Therefore, applicants will need to manually add completed support to their OS. • Make sure to note any overlap with the pilot project and plans for dealing with overlap on the last page. • Reminder that applicant may need to work with their Central Office to compile this document. • Reminder to "certify," i.e., sign the last page of this form.
Biosketches	NIH Biosketch form page	https://grants.nih.gov/grants/forms/biosketch.htm	• Biosketches are required for the applicant and mentor(s).

PHS 398 Detailed budget	**Pilot Projects** PHS form page 4	**Pilot Projects** https://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/phs398/fp4.pdf	**Pilot Projects** • Use the NIH PHS detailed budget form page 4. • Pilot grants are for one year only. • Grantees should not exceed $60K in direct costs, plus F&A at the approved institutional rate. • The budgets may cover equipment, salaries (plus benefits), supplies, animal care costs, human participant payments, other research costs, and travel costs. • There is no minimum required effort for pilot project leaders.
	Primary Projects PHS form page 4	**Primary Projects** https://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/phs398/fp4.pdf	**Primary Projects** • Use the NIH PHS detailed budget form for Year 1 (PHS Form Page 4). • Grantees should not exceed $125,000 in direct costs, plus F&A costs at the approved institutional rate. • Budgets should be developed for 1 year of support. • **Project leaders must commit a minimum of 6 months of effort to the project annually,** which should be included in the direct cost budget (matching funds for effort may be included). • The budgets may cover equipment, salaries (plus relevant benefits), supplies, animal care costs, human participant payments, other research costs, and travel costs.
Budget Justification	Use the last portion of page 5 &/or the continuation page	https://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/phs398/fp5.pdf https://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/phs398/continuation.pdf	• Please provide a justification for each item in the spreadsheet.
PHS Forms G Human Subjects and Clinical Trials Information	PHS Forms G Human Subjects and Clinical Trials Information	https://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/phs398/phs398.pdf Alternatively, you may find it easier to build this form out in eRA commons and print to PDF.	• **No page limits** • Include attachments in the compiled PDF form.
Study Record(s)			• If applicable. • **No page limits.** • Include attachment in the compiled PDF form.
Applicable education certificates		https://www.k-state.edu/comply/committees/	• **No page limits.** • Include attachment in the compiled PDF form.

IRB approval letter		https://www.k-state.edu/comply/committees/	• If applicable. • **No page limits.** • Include attachment in the compiled PDF form. • The title of the IRB/IACUC application in the approval letter must match the title of the grant. This will make it easy for NIGMS to evaluate the IRB approval as relevant to the application.
Vertebrate animals and IACUC approval letter		https://www.k-state.edu/comply/committees/; https://olaw.nih.gov/guidance/vertebrate-animal-section.htm	• If applicable. • **No page limits.** • Include attachment in the compiled PDF form. • It is recommended that the title of the IRB/IACUC application in the approval letter match the title of the grant. This will make it easy for NIGMS to evaluate the IRB approval as relevant to the application.

Formatting requirements.

- Applicants should use **at least** 11-point Arial, Georgia, Helvetica, or Palatino Linotype.
- **At least** 1/2-inch margins.
- No more than six lines per vertical inch line spacing for all documents.

Timeline.

Oct 24, 2025 (5 PM Central)	**Letter of Intent:** Submit a letter of intent with the project title, abstract (500 words max), proposed project grant mentor(s) names, email addresses, and a brief description of qualifications. The letter should also include the names of 3-5 recommended reviewers, their institutions, email addresses, and a brief description of their relevant research interests.
Nov 21, 2025 (5 PM Central)	**Full Proposal:** Submit all proposal materials as a single compiled PDF file to cnap@ksu.edu. Arrange contents in the order listed on pages 3-4 of this RFA. Applicants **MUST** work with their Office of Sponsored Programs — Pre-award services grant specialist. Note your grant specialist will email the final proposal to CNAP's email on your behalf. Work with him/her closely during the entire process. Email mkwills@ksu.edu to learn more about this requirement and/or identify your grant specialist. Several researchers may be working with one or two grant specialists on this call. To get the best service, start early. If the attachment is too large, applicants may share their proposals via email using a cloud link such as OneDrive.
Dec 19, 2025	Scientific review completed; grants sent to External Advisory Council (EAC) for review.
Jan 9, 2026	Grant decisions sent to NIGMS for approval.
June 1, 2026	Grant awards begin.

Note that the review timeline is aspirational, as reviewers may take longer to complete their assignments, and the time frame for NIGMS approval may take longer than planned. We will do our best to adhere closely to the timeline.

Some grantees may be asked to revise and re-submit their grants, including budgets. In these cases, we will construct a new timeline in consultation with the applicant.

Also, upon review, applicants may be recommended for the funding mechanism for which they did not directly apply. For example, applicants applying for a pilot project may be invited to receive a primary project award or vice versa.

Note: Applicants should submit all materials through their host institution's pre-award services/research office. The applicant organization's signing official must sign the face page. Materials should be submitted as a single package via email to cnap@ksu.edu.

Helpful links.

New NIH simplified review framework	https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-24-010.html; https://grants.nih.gov/policy-and-compliance/policy-topics/peer-review/simplifying-review/framework
General guidance on writing NIH applications	https://grants.nih.gov/grants/how-to-apply-application-guide/format-and-write/write-your-application.htm
PHS 398 Forms G forms and instructions (scroll or use search bar)	https://grants.nih.gov/grants-process/write-application/forms-directory/public-health-service-grant-application
COBRE program announcement	https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/par-19-312.html
Rigor and reproducibility	https://grants.nih.gov/reproducibility/index.htm; https://grants.nih.gov/policy/reproducibility/guidance.htm
NIH biosketch form	https://grants.nih.gov/grants/forms/biosketch.htm
Tips for developing your budget	https://grants.nih.gov/grants/how-to-apply-application-guide/format-and-write/develop-your-budget.htm#cost
Human Subjects Research overview	https://grants.nih.gov/policy/humansubjects.htm
Preparing FORMS G human subjects and clinical trials documents	https://grants.nih.gov/policy-and-compliance/policy-topics/clinical-trials/new-human-subject-clinical-trial-info-form
Preparing the vertebrate animals section	https://olaw.nih.gov/guidance/vertebrate-animal-section.htm

CNAP PILOT PROJECT funding mechanism description.

Overall description.

The pilot grant program will provide funds to support projects with a maximum budget of $60K in total direct costs plus institutional F&A costs at your approved institutional rate.

Specific aims.

The pilot grant program will expand our range of projects to:
(1) capitalize on new core facility capabilities;
(2) establish new collaborations;
(3) develop stronger interdisciplinary and cross-institutional connections;
(4) provide additional expertise for CNAP's cross-cutting themes; and
(5) utilize resources available through the Science Exchange Network (SEN).

Pilot grants are expected to result in extramural grant submissions and have good prospects for publications, conference presentations, and other relevant research products.

Investigator eligibility.

The intent of this program is to support and develop promising Early Stage and New Investigators in their pursuit of extramural funding. The program will favor supporting promising individuals who do not have, or have not previously had, an external peer-reviewed Research Project Grant (RPG), Program Project Grant (PPG), or equivalent awards from either Federal or non-Federal sources as the Program Director/Principal Investigator (PD/PI) or project PD/PI of a PPG. Each pilot project lead should indicate his/her current, pending, and previous history of peer-reviewed research support. Applicants must hold a tenure-, research-, or clinical-track faculty appointment at an eligible institution of higher education within the State of Kansas at the time that the award is made. Individuals may have had previous CNAP funding, but CNAP will favor funding individuals new to the program.

Postdoctoral fellows or other positions that do not carry independent faculty status at the applicant institution will be disqualified, as that is a key eligibility requirement. Individuals must be conducting or planning to conduct research in an area related to the CNAP Center theme of cognitive and neural plasticity. Eligible individuals must have good potential to obtain extramural funding, as evidenced by their track record of research publication appropriate to their experience.

Mentor qualifications.

All pilot grants are mentored. Mentors must be approved by the CNAP PI/PD (Dr. Bailey) before funding is initiated. Mentors will receive compensation for their time through central COBRE funds. Applicants should include their mentors in their applications but should not include the mentor fees in their budgets. Each pilot grant should be supported by at least one mentor with expertise in the relevant field, a strong research track record, extensive mentoring experience, and experience in reviewing and/or managing grants. The mentor(s) should provide specific scientific expertise to support the project development and development of extramural grant applications.

Implementation plan.

The performance period for this round is 6/1/26-5/31/27. There is no minimum effort the **Pilot project leaders (PPLs) must dedicate to the project each year, and funds may be included for summer salary, course release, and/or releases from other duties.** (This contrasts with the RPL role, which requires 6 months of effort). Institutions may provide matching funds as effort release for PPLs (this should be outlined in the letter of support). Proposals should be relevant to the overarching CNAP theme and have an appropriate scope for the size and duration of the award. Applications will be reviewed following NIH review guidelines for regular R-grants with the additional selection criterion for fit to the CNAP Center mission. CNAP's External Advisory Committee (EAC) will conduct a secondary review of the applications and the reviewer comments and make the final recommendation for funding consideration (approve, revise, resubmit, or disapprove). The EAC will assess progress during the January and June evaluation meetings.

General elements of successful Pilot Project proposal.

Successful pilot grants should show clear potential to:
(1) advance the CNAP program mission of conducting cutting-edge research on cognitive and/or neural plasticity;
(2) capitalize on CNAP core facilities;
(3) meet NIH requirements for significance, innovation, and approach;
(4) build on the Center's scientific strengths, and encourage the exploration of new ideas, concepts, and approaches, and
(5) obtain extramural funding.
Pilot projects must be approved by NIGMS prior to their initiation.

Milestones.

All pilot grants will be assessed based on the following milestones:
(1) Deliver at least one presentation at a national and/or international conferences that cites CNAP support during the pilot grant support period.
(2) Submit of at least one manuscript to a high impact journal that cites CNAP support within 6 months of pilot grant completion.
(3) Submit an extramural grant as lead PI based on CNAP supported research within one year for pilot grant completion
Applicants should submit plans for achieving these milestones as a part of the Research Strategy. Pilot grant leaders will be asked to report on the milestones and outcomes of their pilot grants in subsequent years following funding to capture outcomes that occur following the grant period. The EAC will evaluate the program milestones in January and June to examine success rates in manuscript submissions, publications, grant proposal submissions, and successful procurement of extramural grants.

Metrics of success.

The goal of the pilot project program is to promote the PPL's ability to secure extramural funding. The metrics of success will measure progress toward and achievement of the milestones, including:

(1) regular reporting on the achievement of COBRE project aims;
(2) regular reporting on the collection of preliminary data;
(3) the number and quality (e.g., impact factor) of peer-reviewed publications based on the primary project;
(4) the number of proposal submissions as lead PI;
The metrics of success are collected through the evaluation processes described in the Assessment of Progress section.

Anticipated outcomes.

The pilot projects will grow CNAP membership, enhance synergy along the cross-cutting themes, and develop interdisciplinary connections with other departments and universities. The program will result in new collaborative projects, increased use of core facilities, increased participation in the SEN, and the formation of new lines of research. The increased use of facilities through the pilot grants will promote the success and impact of the research cores, resulting in significant infrastructure growth. The pilot grants will also support innovative new lines of research and provide the foundation for these projects to transform into viable applications for extramural funding. In addition, the pilot grant holders will be considered potential candidates for future primary projects, contingent on performance in the pilot grant program and on developing viable primary project proposals. The program will increase the overall intellectual impact and reputation of CNAP through increased research productivity, conference presentations and publications, grant submissions, and extramural funding.

Assessment of progress.

Progress of PPLs toward graduation will be assessed at three points during each grant year:
1) January Semi-Annual Evaluation Meeting.
2) Annual RPPR submission to NIGMS.
3) CNAP's annual Site Visit (a closed EAC meeting will take place during site visit, in part to assess progress of PPLs and research project leaders (PPLs)).

PPLs will provide progress reporting through CNAP's evaluation system, Piestar, prior to the three above reporting periods. The reporting includes descriptions of accomplishments, plans, and changes as a part of the "semi-annual progress" module. Unrelated to project progress, PPLs are also required to contribute to the assessment of center function by responding to questionnaires (also administered via Piestar). Semi-annual reports are due in advance of the first and third evaluation time points. Deadlines will be communicated by CNAP's Administrative Core. PPLs may also be required to provide additional progress reporting in the event of poor performance or the failure to submit an investigator-initiated RPG as lead PI.

Any conference submissions/presentations or manuscript submissions/publications that used COBRE project funds or CNAP research cores should be reported using the "Publications and Presentations" module in the evaluation system. Any grant applications or funded grants that stem directly from the COBRE project and/or rely on CNAP research cores should also be reported using the "Proposals" module in Piestar.

Pilot project leader (PPL) rights and responsibilities.

Pilot grant leaders will have full access to all COBRE-supported research cores and COBRE-supported programs. They will use the mentoring system to facilitate career development, and CNAP central funds will cover consulting fees for the pilot grant mentor(s). Pilot grant leaders are expected to participate in CNAP's weekly speaker series, Neurosync, whenever possible. They should also attend and participate in CNAP business and evaluation meetings when required.

Successful PPLs will provide progress reports through the Piestar evaluation system when requested. **PPLs will continue to provide reporting on conference presentations, publications, grant submissions/awards, scientific highlights (e.g., media coverage) of their work, and other project outcomes following the completion of their project.**

Successful PPLs should cite CNAP support in all products (e.g., presentations, publications, media coverage) that used COBRE project funds and/or research cores, e.g., "This project was supported by a grant from the National Institute of

General Medical Science P20GM113109 of the National Institutes of Health. The content is solely the responsibility of the authors and does not necessarily represent the official views of the National Institutes of Health."

The director reserves the right to remove pilot project funding and/or pilot project mentors if recommended by the EAC and approved by the NIGMS in the event of poor performance or failure to comply with funding agency requirements. COBRE funds will be used to support pilot project grantees in developing independent, extramurally supported grant funding of direct relevance to the project approved for funding by the NIGMS. COBRE funds should not be used to support other projects. Any unspent funds at the end of the grant year will revert to the CNAP Center. If the PPL receives other funding for research that overlaps with the pilot grant prior to the end of the performance period, the remaining pilot grant funds will revert to the CNAP Center. PPLs may not simultaneously hold any other IDeA program funding, such as other COBRE or INBRE pilot grants or project funding, during the pilot grant performance period.

Program removal.

During each semi-annual evaluation, if an individual PPL fails to meet relevant program benchmarks, then the EAC will conduct a review (see EAC Review Procedures) to determine whether the PPL should be removed from the program. PPLs will be removed if they fail to submit an investigator-initiated RPG application as lead PI by the end of two years of COBRE support. Program removal may also occur if a review by the EAC indicates a failure by the investigator to make significant progress toward achieving the program milestones. Documented extenuating circumstances, such as unexpected problems in project execution (i.e., the need to change the project aims), may result in an adjustment of the timeline for meeting benchmarks. In these cases, the RPL may be placed on probation until the goals of the probationary period are met (See "Probationary Procedures"). If a project fails to achieve benchmarks and is deemed unlikely to alter course, the RPL will be removed from the program. EAC approval is required for program removal decisions, and the PD must communicate the EAC recommendation to the NIGMS for programmatic and administrative review and approval.

Probationary procedures.

PPLs may be placed on probation in the event of poor performance. If the PPL is selected for probation, they should develop a set of clear goals and timelines for returning to good standing. During the probationary period, the PPL should provide frequent (e.g., weekly or bi-weekly) reports on their progress to their mentors, PD, and/or AD. If the goal(s) of the probationary period are met, then the PPL may be returned to normal monitoring status. If the goal(s) are not met, then the PPL will be removed from the program (See "Program Removal").

CNAP PRIMARY RESEARCH PROJECT funding mechanism description.

Overall description.

The project grant program will provide funds to support projects with an anticipated budget of up to $125,000 in direct costs plus institutional F&A costs at the current approved rate for one project year (6/1/26-5/31/27).

Specific aims.

The project grant program will expand our range of research that CNAP supports to:
(1) capitalize on new core facility capabilities;
(2) establish new collaborations;
(3) develop stronger interdisciplinary and cross-institutional connections;
(4) provide additional expertise for the cross-cutting themes; and
(5) utilize resources available through the SEN. Primary project grants are expected to result in extramural grant submissions and have good prospects for publications, conference presentations, and other relevant research products.

Investigator eligibility.

RPLs must qualify as NIH Early Stage Investigators (ESIs) or New Investigators (NIs). They must also hold independent multi-year faculty appointments (or equivalent at research institutes) and be leading their own research programs. More than half the RPLs must hold primary appointments at the applicant institution. An RPL with a primary appointment at another IDeA institution may be proposed, provided that the institution, through subcontracts, holds four or fewer

COBRE Research Projects and/or Cores from active Phase 1 and Phase 2 COBREs awarded to other institutions; note that subcontracts for Research Cores from Phase 3 COBREs are not included in this calculation. An investigator cannot receive more than five years of support as a COBRE RPL, including any RPL support from another COBRE award. A COBRE RPL cannot receive simultaneous research support as a COBRE Pilot Project Leader (PPL). Furthermore, a COBRE RPL or PPL cannot receive simultaneous research support as a project lead from any other IDeA parent award (e.g., COBRE, INBRE, IDeA-CTR) but may be eligible to serve as a project lead of a supplement to an IDeA award.

Investigators on leave (e.g., sabbatical) may be eligible to participate but should consult Dr. Bailey (hbailey@ksu.edu) before applying. Postdoctoral fellows or other positions that do not carry independent faculty status at the applicant institution will disqualify that individual and his/her project from further consideration and will not be reviewed. Individuals must be conducting or planning to conduct research in an area related to the CNAP center theme of cognitive and neural plasticity. Eligible individuals must demonstrate a strong track record of research publication appropriate to their experience.

Mentor qualifications.

All project grants are mentored, and mentors must be approved by the PI/PD (Dr. Bailey) before funding initiation. Mentors will receive compensation for their time through central COBRE funds. Each project should be supported by an external mentor with expertise in a relevant field, a strong research track record, and experience in reviewing and/or managing grants. The external mentor should provide scientific-specific knowledge to support the project development and development of extramural grant applications. An internal mentor with general expertise in a relevant field and a strong research track record also supports each project. The internal mentors provide general guidance and support for local institutional issues, such as setting up a laboratory, mentoring students, and liaising with appropriate offices to support the COBRE grant activities. Funds are included in the Administrative Core budget to compensate mentors for their time.

Implementation plan.

The performance period is 6/1/26-5/31/27. Proposals should be relevant to the overarching CNAP theme and have a scope similar to an R21 grant. Applications will be reviewed following NIH review guidelines for regular R grants with the additional selection criterion for fit to the CNAP center mission.

The Advisory Committee (AC) will conduct a secondary review of the applications and reviewer comments and make the final recommendation for funding consideration (approve, revise, resubmit, or disapprove). The EAC will assess progress annually during the January and June evaluation meetings.

RPLs **must commit a minimum of 6 person-months annually**, and funds may be included for summer salary, course releases, and releases from other duties. Institutions may provide matching funds in the form of effort release for PLs (this should be outlined in the letter of support).

General elements of a successful Primary Research Project proposal.

The Primary Research Projects in Phase 2 should solidify the Center's strength in its scientific areas. Successful projects should show clear potential to:

(1) advance the CNAP program mission of conducting cutting-edge research on cognitive and/or neural plasticity;
(2) capitalize on CNAP core facilities;
(3) meet NIH requirements for significance and innovation; and
(4) obtain extramural funding.

Primary project grants must be approved by NIGMS prior to their initiation.

Milestones.

The EAC will assess progress during the January and June evaluation meetings. Each funded project will have its own specific milestones based on the project timeline. In addition, all project grants will be assessed based on the following program milestones:

(1) development of a functional laboratory, including installation of new equipment, recruitment of students and staff;
(2) progress toward completion of experiments to address specific aims of the primary project;
(3) submission of abstracts and delivery of presentations at national and international meetings based on the primary project (typically, 1-2 per year of support);
(4) submission and publication of high-impact articles in quality peer-reviewed journals based on the primary project (typically, one publication per year of support);
(5) collection of preliminary data suitable for a Research Project Grant (RPG) application;
(6) submission of an RPG application within two years of support;
(7) development of national reputation in the research area; and
(8) funding of an RPG.

Project grant applicants should submit plans for achieving these milestones as a part of the Research Strategy. Project grant leaders will be asked to report on the milestones and outcomes of their project grants throughout the project and subsequent years following funding to capture outcomes following the grant period. The EAC will evaluate the program milestones in January and June annually to examine success rates in manuscript submissions, publications, grant proposal submissions, and successful procurement of extramural grants. RPLs should achieve milestones 1-6 within two years of support and make significant progress toward achieving milestones 7-8. Performance in the program will be gauged based on the achievement of program milestones.

Metrics of success.

The goal of the primary project program is to promote the RPL's ability to secure extramural funding in the form of an RPG. The metrics of success will measure progress toward and achievement of the milestones, including:

(1) regular reporting on the achievement of COBRE project aims;
(2) regular reporting on the collection of preliminary data for an RPG submission;
(3) service on study sections, journal reviewing and/or editorial board service, professional society governance boards, and other indicators of esteem in discipline;
(4) the number of national/international conference presentations based on the primary project;
(5) the number and quality (e.g., impact factor) of peer-reviewed publications based on the primary project;
(6) the number of submissions of RPGs;
(7) percentile ranks of RPGs;

The metrics of success are collected through the evaluation processes described in the Assessment of Progress section.

Research Project Grants (RPGs) submission requirements.

RPLs must submit an investigator-initiated RPG application on which they are the lead PI by the end of two years of COBRE support to be eligible to receive continued funding through the COBRE award. RPG grants include most NIH R-grants (e.g., R03, R15, R21, R01) and comparable grants at any extramural funding agency. Grant submissions that stem directly from the COBRE award are strongly encouraged, but the grant submission may be in an area of research that does not overlap with the COBRE award. Note that the deadline for grant submission is relative to the project's start date and must be within two years of that start date. If RPL fails to meet the grant submission deadline, then they will be removed from the program.

Anticipated outcomes.

Primary projects will grow CNAP membership, enhance synergy along the cross-cutting themes, and develop interdisciplinary connections with other departments and universities. The program will result in new collaborative projects, increased use of core facilities, increased participation in the SEN, and the formation of new lines of research. The increased use of facilities through the grants will promote the success and impact of the research cores, resulting in significant infrastructure growth. The primary project will also support innovative new lines of research and provide the

foundation for these projects to transform into viable applications for extramural funding. The project will increase the overall intellectual impact and reputation of CNAP through increased research productivity, conference presentations and publications, grant submissions, and extramural funding.

Assessment of progress.

Progress of RPLs toward graduation will be assessed at three points during each grant year:

4) January Semi-Annual Evaluation Meeting.
5) Annual RPPR submission to NIGMS.
6) CNAP's annual Site Visit (a closed EAC meeting will take place during site visit, in part to assess progress of PPLs and research project leaders (RPLs)).

RPLs will provide progress reporting through CNAP's evaluation system, Piestar, prior to the three above reporting periods. The reporting includes descriptions of accomplishments, plans, and changes as a part of the "semi-annual progress" module. Additional reporting on graduation plans and progress will occur through the "graduation progress" module, which will articulate planned criteria for graduation. The PD, AD, project mentors, and EAC member(s) will review the plan in the graduation progress module and provide feedback on the proposed criteria for graduation on a case-by-case basis. Unrelated to project progress, RPLs are also required to contribute to the assessment of center function by responding to questionnaires (administered via Piestar). Semi-annual and graduation progress reports are due in advance of the first and third evaluation time points. Deadlines will be communicated by CNAP's Administrative Core. PLs may also be required to provide additional progress reporting in the event of poor performance or the failure to submit an investigator-initiated RPG as lead PI within two years of support (see "Probationary Procedures").

In addition to the descriptive reporting on progress for metrics 1-3, RPLs should supply detailed information for assessing metrics 4-7. Any conference submissions/presentations or manuscript submissions/publications that used COBRE project funds or CNAP research cores should be reported using the "Publications and Presentations" module in the evaluation system. In addition, **CNAP grant support should be acknowledged within the presentation or publication: "A grant from the National Institute of General Medical Science GM113109 of the National Institutes of Health supported this project. The content is solely the responsibility of the authors and does not necessarily represent the official views of the National Institutes of Health."** Any grant applications or funded grants that stem directly from the COBRE project and/or rely on CNAP research cores should also be reported using the "Proposals" module in Piestar.

Program removal.

During each semi-annual evaluation, if an individual RPL fails to meet relevant program benchmarks, then the EAC will conduct a review (see EAC Review Procedures) to determine whether the RPL should be removed from the program. RPLs will be removed if they fail to submit an investigator-initiated RPG application as lead PI by the end of two years of COBRE support. Program removal may also occur if a review by the EAC indicates a failure by the investigator to make significant progress toward achieving the program milestones. Documented extenuating circumstances, such as unexpected problems in project execution (i.e., the need to change the project aims), may result in an adjustment of the timeline for meeting benchmarks. In these cases, the RPL may be placed on probation until the goals of the probationary period are met (See "Probationary Procedures"). If a project fails to achieve benchmarks and is deemed unlikely to alter course, the RPL will be removed from the program. EAC approval is required for program removal decisions, and the CD must communicate the EAC recommendation to the NIGMS for programmatic and administrative review and approval.

Probationary procedures.

RPLs may be placed on probation in the event of poor performance. If the RPL is selected for probation, they should develop a set of clear goals and timelines for returning to good standing. During the probationary period, the RPL should provide frequent (e.g., weekly or bi-weekly) reports on their progress to their mentors, PD, and/or AD. If the goal(s) of the probationary period are met, then the RPL may be returned to normal monitoring status. If the goal(s) are not met, then the RPL will be removed from the program (See "Program Removal").

Graduation.

PLs should develop a graduation plan that includes goals for program completion using the graduation progress module in the evaluation system (See "Assessment of Progress"). Graduation plans should consider the timeline for completing program benchmarks and for achieving independent funding status.

There are two main pathways to graduation. One route is through the completion of the CNAP COBRE program objectives. Through this route, PLs should be considered for a status change if acquiring sufficient skills and knowledge indicates independence. Progress toward completion of program Milestones 1-7 will be used to gauge independent status in these instances. The second route is to achieve independent funding status wherein PLs receive an investigator-driven RPG of any type on which they are the lead PI (i.e., achievement of Milestone 8).

Completion of Program Objectives. Depending on the funding availability, RPLs may receive up to 3 years of support from the COBRE program. During the final year of support, all PLs will be put forward for consideration to graduate from the program based on progress towards completion of program Milestones 1-7 (See "EAC Review Procedures"). Graduation will occur at the end of the grant year in which the evaluation is performed (i.e., May 31).

RPLs will complete the program at the end of their project period. However, if there is insufficient progress toward meeting program milestones, an RPL project can end without graduation. Extensions beyond the scheduled project end date will not be allowed.

Achievement of Independent Funding Status. Graduation to independent funding status may occur at any time during or after the project period.

The award of any type (e.g., new or renewal) of RPG (e.g., R03, R15, R21, R01, or other investigator-initiated grant of any type) to a RPL should be viewed as a milestone and a criterion for changing the PL's status to independent investigator. Receiving any award during the project funding period will automatically initiate a graduation evaluation by the EAC (See "EAC Review Procedures").

COBRE support cannot be provided when an RPL's new/renewal award is significantly similar to that described in the COBRE program. In these cases, individuals will graduate from the program after receiving a Notice of Award. Receipt of an R01 or equivalent award will result in graduation. Still, individuals receiving smaller awards (e.g., R03, R21) may be eligible to continue in the program if the specific aims of the funded RPG are significantly different from the COBRE project. The EAC will evaluate such cases (See "EAC Review Procedures" paragraph below) to determine if graduation or continuation is appropriate. If RPLs are selected for graduation, then they may be given funding during a brief transitional period to complete ongoing experimentation. If the RPL continues in the COBRE program while co-managing a separate RPG, continued support for personnel (e.g., postdoctoral associates, graduate students, technicians, etc.) associated with the COBRE project but also listed on the other award can be provided. However, the percentage of efforts these individuals make must be appropriately adjusted. Any proposed change in COBRE project aims and/or RPL effort requires prior approval by the CD and NIGMS.

COBRE investigators may not receive simultaneous research project support from an INBRE or other COBRE award.

Privileges for COBRE graduates.

The goal of the COBRE program is to promote the development of an independent and sustainable center. PLs who have acquired independent status through the completion of program objectives or by obtaining RPG funding will have the same access to core facilities under the same conditions as active COBRE investigators. Former COBRE members are encouraged to participate in collaborative research efforts by collaborating with or advising on primary projects or pilot grants. If appropriate, an investigator who has graduated from the program may direct a COBRE core facility and/or serve as a mentor. CNAP graduates will be encouraged to continue their participation in CNAP events such as NeuroSync, colloquia, and training events (e.g., grant writing and statistical workshops). Post-graduation mentoring will also be available on an informal (unpaid) basis through the involvement of the mentors as needed. Individuals removed from

the program due to poor performance will not be considered graduates. Still, they will be encouraged to participate in select CNAP programs and seek continued informal mentoring.

External Advisory Council (EAC) review procedures.

In addition to assessing progress during the semi-annual EAC meetings, the EAC will provide recommendations on graduation and program removal. If an event occurs that requires a review above and beyond the semiannual meetings, the center director (CD) will initiate an EAC review. First, the CD will write to the RPL with an outline of considerations that will be addressed during the EAC review. The RPL will be invited to supply any relevant written evidence that may inform their case, such as updated progress reports or other metrics of success, evidence of extenuating circumstances, or other pertinent evidence that may inform the EAC judgment. In the case of graduation assessments, the EAC will consider the graduation plans outlined in the most recent "graduation progress" report. This will be submitted to the CD and forwarded to the EAC for use in the review process. The CD will contact the EAC over email to initiate the review. PLs will be provided with a copy of the PD's email to the EAC outlining their case and any attached supporting documents. The EAC review may take place over email or through a meeting (e.g., videoconference). The project mentors, relevant IAC members, and AD will be included in the initial email and consulted as needed during the review process. The NIGMS program officer may also be consulted on an as-needed basis. EAC recommendations will be summarized in a letter from the EAC chair to the CD that will be forwarded to the candidate and the NIGMS. Program removal decisions must undergo NIGMS programmatic and administrative review before any CD action. All other decisions will be considered final once the NIGMS program officer has been informed.