

Call for Pilot Project Applications

Chemical Biology of Infectious Disease

NIH Center of Biomedical Research Excellence, <https://cbid.cobre.ku.edu/>

Applications due:	May 4, 2026 11:59 p.m.
Anticipated Decision Date:	June 8, 2026
Anticipated Start Date:	July 1, 2026 pending NOA

The KU NIH CoBRE in Chemical Biology of Infectious Disease is requesting applications for pilot projects that will provide investigators with support for research activities, mentoring, and access to Core Lab Services. **Three pilot projects at up to \$70,000 in annual total direct costs starting July 1, 2026** are anticipated for support pending the funding of a Phase III application. Pilot projects are for twelve months starting July 1, 2026 or as approved by NIH, potentially renewable for a second period pending scientific progress and available funds.

Applications must describe a pilot research project that fits well with the scientific theme of Chemical Biology of Infectious Disease and incorporates substantial use of one or more associated core labs at KU. The competition is open to all full-time faculty at any State of Kansas Regents University with priority given to those who qualify as NIH Early Stage Investigators (ESIs) or New Investigators (NIs).

([https://grants.nih.gov/grants/glossary.htm#EarlyStageInvestigator\(ESI\)](https://grants.nih.gov/grants/glossary.htm#EarlyStageInvestigator(ESI)))

(<https://grants.nih.gov/grants/glossary.htm#NewInvestigator>) A Pilot Project recipient cannot hold any IDeA award concurrently with a CoBRE Pilot Project. IDeA awards include INBRE, IDeA-CTR, and other CoBRE programs.

The CoBRE pilot grant program is intended to build on the CBID's scientific strengths and enable junior and senior investigators to generate preliminary data for submission of competitive grant applications, develop new technologies, and/or achieve other goals as defined by the PI that will better position the institution to conduct biomedical research.

This CoBRE pilot request for proposals further encourages the development of team science projects that bring together two or more investigators from IDeA states with different perspectives and expertise to address complex basic, behavioral, clinical and/or translational research questions with complementary approaches. These research questions should not duplicate those currently being pursued by other awards and should clearly benefit from the collective efforts of the collaboration.

Criteria for evaluation of CoBRE applications. The basic criteria for NIH grant review may be found at <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/peer/peer.htm>. Additional CoBRE-specific review criteria include:

- Strength of the science, and the quality and clarity of its presentation;
- Likelihood of the project becoming competitive for independent R01 funding;
- Likelihood of getting a publishable result within the one-year time frame;
- Relevance to the CoBRE theme of Chemical Biology of Infectious Disease;
- Clear, detailed plan for utilization of one or more CBID CoBRE Core Labs (or, when justified, another relevant Core Lab at KU);
- Background, experience and career status of the applicant;
- Track record of past research, research grant applications and research funding;
- Team science approach.

Questions about eligibility, program details, or the appropriate inclusion within this CoBRE scientific theme are encouraged to contact Scott Hefty (pshefty@ku.edu).

Chemical Biology of Infectious Disease Core Facilities and Director Information

IDAD Core Facility (Infectious Disease Assay Development)

Director: Anuradha Roy (anuroy@ku.edu);
<http://idad.cobre.ku.edu/>

The overall goal of the IDAD Core is to provide expertise, facilities, services, and training in the area of HTS assay design, development, validation, small and large-scale screening for organism (cell) based or biochemical infectious disease targets. Core staff will facilitate design, development and validation of assays suitable for automated high-throughput chemical screening. They will also facilitate small- or large-scale screening of compounds (at KU or external sources). The expected outcomes of this core and associated efforts are well developed and validated assays suitable for automated large-scale screening that can be performed internally or externally. Hits generated through successful assay development and limited- or large-scale screening efforts will be directed into CCB and SCB to identify lead compounds for use as molecular probes and pre-therapeutics for infectious diseases.

CCBMM Core Facility (Computational Chemical Biology and Molecular Modeling)

Director: David Johnson (dkjohnson@ku.edu); <http://ccb.cobre.ku.edu/> Computational Chemical Biology and Molecular Modeling (CCBMM) Core will provide comprehensive computational support, with capabilities focused on five distinct classes of computational tasks: structure-based approaches, protein modeling (including molecular dynamics), computation toxicology, chemo-informatics, and 3D ligand comparisons. These capabilities will support activities such as virtual screening, lead optimization, target identification, and protein design.

SCB Core Facility (Synthetic Chemical Biology)

Director: Chamani Perera (chamani@ku.edu); <http://scb.cobre.ku.edu/>

The purpose of the SCB is to provide synthetic chemistry support, including the validation of hit compounds obtained through high-throughput screening, quality control and analysis of compounds, synthesis of compounds unavailable commercially but needed by researchers, structure–activity relationship studies based on HTS campaigns, and optimization of fragment binders.

FC Core Facility (Flow Cytometry)

Director: Peter McDonald (petemcd@ku.edu); <http://scb.cobre.ku.edu/>

The Flow Cytometry Core (FC) provides access to flow cytometry and cell sorting instrumentation and expertise to researchers. Services and training are provided for flow cytometry: cell sorting and multi-parametric analysis of individual cells in solution, calculated from their fluorescent or light scattering characteristics. The core provides assistance in sample processing, data analysis, instrument training, software support, method and grant assistance, manuscript support, and consulting.

Other associated Core Facilities (<https://corelabs.ku.edu/>)

- Protein Structure Labs (Director: Scott Lovell) <http://psxl.ku.edu>
- Biomolecular NMR Lab (Director: Justin Douglas) <http://nmrlab.ku.edu>
- Genome Sequencing Core (Director: Jennifer Hackett) <http://gsc.ku.edu>
- Nanofabrication Facility (Director: Ryan Grigsby) <http://nanofab.ku.edu>
- Microscopy and Analytical Imaging Laboratory (Director: Noraida Martinez-Rivera) <https://mai.ku.edu>
- Mass Spectrometry and Analytical Proteomics Lab (Director: Anita Saraf) <http://mass-spec.ku.edu>

General Terms and Conditions of CoBRE-CBID Pilot Project Awards.

1. Projects must make significant use of at least one Core Lab. Prospective applicants are highly encouraged to consult with the appropriate Core Lab Director(s) before applying. A letter of support from core director reflecting the feasibility of proposed core utility is strongly recommended for the application.
2. Summer salary is limited to a maximum of one person-month during a 12 month period. Funds may be used for consumable supplies, services or small laboratory hardware, but not for equipment (i.e., items costing > \$10,000). Personnel costs are allowable but preference will be given to applications that name specific individuals who are assured to be present on-site, eligible to work and ready to begin no later than July 1, 2026. Personnel costs may not be used to support first-year graduate students. Travel costs are limited to essential research-related travel and must be pre-approved by PI (Scott Hefty). Tuition costs are allowable as per standard institutional policies.
3. Investigators who receive CoBRE pilot project support are REQUIRED to participate as fully as possible in the regular monthly research meetings of the Center, as well as in the seminars, workshops and other special activities organized or sponsored by the Center.
4. A standard NIH-type progress report (ca. 2 pages in length) is required from each CoBRE Pilot Project Leader by May 1, 2027 and 2028 for inclusion in the CoBRE annual report to NIH.
5. Junior faculty recipients are expected to have a CoBRE-approved senior faculty Mentor.
6. **All** pilot project grant recipients are expected to submit an NIH or similar proposal within the first year of the pilot project funding period.
7. Term and budget adjustments. The CoBRE Director reserves the right to make term and budget adjustments in accordance with the intent of the CBID CoBRE program and NIH policies concerning scientific overlap of projects. For example, if a CoBRE investigator receives his/her own R01 grant the CoBRE grant may be reduced to adjust for overlap, up to and including 100% reduction if the scientific overlap is extensive.
8. Unanticipated new requirements. By accepting CoBRE funds, awardees agree to comply with any and all requirements not already mentioned that may be imposed on CBID CoBRE by NIH or other institutional authorities.

Application Process

You are encouraged to obtain assistance from the appropriate Grant Services agency at your university (**required if a KU participant**). Suggested contacts are listed below:

- KSU [Office of Research and Sponsored Projects](#) 785-532-6195 research@k-state.edu
- KU [Office of Research](#) 785-864-3441 kucpremgmt@ku.edu
- KUMC [Sponsored Programs Administration](#) 913-588-1251 spa@kumc.edu WSU [Office of Research](#) 316-978-3285 proposals@wichita.edu

Prepare and Submit a Complete Application.

Applications should be prepared in general accord with the NIH PHS 398 application guidelines.

1. Include the Face Page signed by your institution's authorized official,
2. Project Summary and Relevance section (form page 2), Project/Performance Site(s), Senior/Key Personnel,
3. Detailed Budget page (use a continuation page to provide a budget explanation/justification), and Checklist. Budget dates are 7/1/26 – 6/30/27 for \$70,000 TDC and a potential second year budget should be prepared for the full \$70,000 TDC over 7/1/27-6/30/28.

Note: Due to NIH guidelines on COBRE grant funding, no carry-forward will be allowed between budget periods, and there is no project funding extension possible.

4. Biosketch format page, most current NIH version (applicant and Mentor if applicable),
5. Other Support (applicant only, not mentor). Instead of using PHS Other Support pages, please follow these CoBRE-specific requirements:
 - Other Support. Provide a listing of all current research support from all sources. For each source listed, please provide the following information: Name of funding source, title of project, project start/end dates, and amount of direct costs available (or available to you if a multi-PI grant), and percent effort. If you are a junior faculty member, please include the following details of your startup package in this list: amount initially provided, current unspent balance, and expiration date or other restrictions if any.
 - Provide a listing of all grant **applications** submitted during the past **two** years (January 2023 to present). For each application submitted, please provide the following information: Date of submission, name of granting agency, title of project, project start/end dates requested, and amount of direct costs requested.
6. Research Strategy, developed for a potential two-year project period.
7. Rigor and Reproducibility description.
8. Number all pages consecutively starting with the face page as page 1. Please type the applicant's name in the upper right hand corner of every page.
9. Omit the Table of Contents page and the Resources page(s).
10. Letters of support from Directors of Core Labs that you will use are highly encouraged, but not required. Appendices are not allowed.

In addition, please observe the following CoBRE-specific requirements:

1. Please use 11-point Arial font with one half-inch (1/2") margins on all four sides. (Write concisely and limit the amount of general background to the essentials that reviewers will need to know in order to understand and appreciate the proposed research.) Keep references to a minimum.
2. The Specific Aims section (maximum of two specific aims for a pilot project) must fit entirely on one page.
3. The Research Plan may not exceed **six (6) pages** in length including the Specific Aims page and all figures and tables, but excluding the reference list. References must be complete citations in the NIH style. Limit the reference list to a single page at most.
4. Please be sure to include a [Data Management & Sharing Plan](#) and [authentication of key biological and/or chemical resources](#). If the key biological section does not apply, please include a statement to that effect.
5. All figures and lettering **MUST** be large enough to be clearly legible (redraw if necessary).
6. For Junior Investigators, please include a letter of support from your CoBRE Mentor.
7. **Copies of all relevant compliance approvals (radioisotopes, recombinant DNA, vertebrate animals, human subjects, etc.) must be provided at the time of application.** *NOTE: if compliance approvals are still pending at the time of application, please provide documentation that approvals have been requested but not yet approved.*

Submission Requirements

1. Submit applications as a single PDF document labeled as "PI LAST NAME" and "INSTITUTION" (e.g. NAME KU).
2. Submit applications to Shelley Sandberg (kucbid@ku.edu) which must be received no later than 11:59 p.m. on May 4, 2026.

CoBRE Pilot Project applications will be reviewed administratively according to the NIH criteria and the CoBRE-specific criteria mentioned above.