



THE HARVARD CLINICAL
AND TRANSLATIONAL
SCIENCE CENTER

Pilot Grant Opportunity

Preliminary Request for Applications (RFA) Addressing Mental Health in the Second Decade of Life Through Translational Lifecourse Research

Due: January 6, 2015 at 5:00pm EST

I. Key Dates

Preliminary RFA Announcement:	September 9, 2014
Child Health Symposium:	October 6, 2014
Full RFA Release:	October 8, 2014
Applications Due:	January 6, 2015
Funding Decisions Announced:	March 31, 2015
Anticipated Funding Start Date:	May 1, 2015

II. Award Amount

Applicants may request awards ranging from \$25,000 to \$75,000 (direct costs only) for a one-year period. The budget should be commensurate with the scope of work. Budgets spanning the entire funding range are encouraged. A total of \$450,000 will be available for awards. The number of awards will depend on the quality of the applications and the potential for impact.

III. Overview and Goals

The Harvard Catalyst Child Health Committee fosters collaboration across Harvard and its affiliated institutions, and supports innovative and collaborative child health-related clinical and translational research. With this announcement, Harvard Catalyst is inviting applications for pilot grants to foster and enable collaborative research on mental health and the developing brain in the second decade of life across the T1–T4 translational spectrum.

This funding opportunity is intended to engage a broad range of policy, public health, clinical, and other investigators from across the Harvard community. Funding will be provided for collaborative, cutting-edge work that improves our understanding of this vulnerable and critically important developmental period. Harvard Catalyst will fund applications for pilot data and feasibility studies for innovative child mental health research projects, or for the development of tools, measures, and resources that will be used in future studies to decrease the burden of child mental illness in late childhood and adolescence, and across the lifecourse.

Grants will begin approximately in May 2015, and the funded work should be completed within one year. Grantees will be required to attend two grantee meetings as a condition of award—an initial launch meeting in the spring of 2015, shortly after the start date, and a final presentation meeting in the spring of 2016, where grantees will share findings and discuss implications of their work. It is expected that the funded projects will lead to additional funding from other sources, including both federal and non-federal funders, that will extend the results of the pilot project and broaden the goals, scope, and scale of the investigator's research program.

In section IV below, specific research priority areas are listed, which represent topics covered as part of the annual Child Health Symposium on October 6, 2014. Sponsored by Harvard Catalyst's Child Health Committee, the symposium *Mental Health and the Developing Brain in the Second Decade of Life: Research Challenges and Opportunities* will bring together leading scientists from across the nation for a dialog with Harvard's child health research community on four topics: (1) Mood Dysregulation, (2) Youth Suicide, (3) Violence, and (4) Concussion and the Developing Brain.

For this RFA, the first two focus areas have been consolidated into one research priority area: mood dysregulation and its consequences. Applications in response to this RFA should relate to this research priority area or to the violence research priority area. Applications related to concussion are not responsive to this RFA and will not be reviewed. Furthermore, this RFA is not designed to provide core funding for existing basic science or clinical/behavioral/policy interventions, and such studies will be considered non-responsive to this RFA.

IV. Research Priority Areas

The second decade of life is a time of tremendous physiological and psychological changes and is also the time when psychopathology, particularly related to mood disorders, emerges for many. Interpersonal violence also rises during adolescence. Below are the two research priority areas for this RFA:

1. Mood Dysregulation and Its Consequences

Anxiety and depression are two of the most common psychopathologies among adolescents and can lead to lifelong morbidity. Like many psychological illnesses, depression and anxiety are multifactorial, with genetic, biological, behavioral, social, and environmental determinants. Applications related to all forms of mood dysregulation will be considered responsive to this RFA. This includes close examinations of neurocircuitry and phenomenology, as well as possible mechanisms and treatment targets.

Mood dysregulation has serious and significant consequences, with suicide being the most serious sequelae. Suicide is the third-leading cause of death among Americans between 10 and 24 years of age, accounting for more deaths in this age group than all natural causes combined. The public health significance of the problem is most apparent when the high rates of non-lethal suicidal behavior are taken into account. Applications addressing psychosocial correlates of suicide, biomarkers of suicide, and suicide interventions will be responsive to this RFA. Research addressing other sequelae of mood dysregulation is also responsive to this RFA.

2. Violence

Interpersonal violence is epidemic in this country. Homicide is the second-leading cause of death among 15–24 year olds, claiming more than 8,500 lives each year. For young African American men and women, it is the leading cause of death. Among 10–14 year olds and 1–9 year olds, homicide is the third- and fourth-leading cause of death, respectively. The sale or use of illegal drugs is closely linked to interpersonal violence in teens and young adults. Furthermore, intimate partner violence affects one out of every four women in their lifetimes, underlies one-third of female homicides, and is witnessed by many children. Witnessing such violence is the strongest risk factor for intergenerational transmission of violence.

This RFA seeks applications addressing interpersonal violence as it affects children, including both victims and perpetrators. This includes but is not limited to the neuroanatomy and neurophysiology of anger in children and adolescents, secondary prevention of violence through treatment and support of children who witness domestic partner violence, community risk and protective factors related to gang violence, preventing school violence and bullying, and gun control policies and practices.

V. Eligibility

This is a limited submission competition. To be eligible for an award, the principal investigator or a co-investigator must attend Harvard Catalyst's Child Health Symposium, *Mental Health and the Developing Brain in the Second Decade of Life: Research Challenges and Opportunities*, on October 6, 2014.

In addition to the principal investigator, at least one co-investigator is required, and there is no limit to the number of co-investigators that may be listed. Single-investigator projects are not responsive to this RFA. While researchers may submit only one application as principal investigator, they may be listed as a co-investigator on multiple applications.

Principal Investigator Eligibility

Any faculty member who holds a Harvard University appointment as assistant professor, associate professor, or professor, irrespective of type of degree or institutional affiliation, is eligible to be the principal investigator. Investigators who hold appointments such as lecturer, instructor, or research scientist/associate are eligible to apply as principal investigator if approved by and with the support of their department chair/division chief. Investigators at these ranks must provide a letter from their department/division chief, as appropriate, verifying their appointment title and status at Harvard and departmental/divisional support of the application.

Co-Investigator Eligibility

Trainees (e.g., students, clinical trainees, post-doctoral fellows, clinical fellows) cannot serve as the principal investigator on an application but may serve as co-investigators if they make a substantial contribution to the project. A substantial contributor helps conceive of the experimental idea, contributes to the intellectual development of the project, and/or designs the study or a part thereof (scientific or technical details), and will be involved with the study throughout the funding year. Co-investigators can be from any institution; however, if you are working with a co-investigator from an outside institution, please provide justification of how the external expertise adds to the project.

For questions regarding eligibility, see contact information below.

Contact Information

All inquiries related to the application process, eligibility, and/or scientific research areas should be directed to Amy Webber, Pilot Grants Administrator, Harvard Catalyst (617-432-7810); grants@catalyst.harvard.edu.

Inquiries relating to financial or grants management areas should be directed to Lucy Kolessin, Director of Finance and Research Administration, Harvard Catalyst (617-432-7804); lucy_kolessin@hms.harvard.edu.