

Centers for Research in Emerging Infectious Diseases (CREID) Network



Pilot Research Program Call for Applications 2021 *Release: January 29, 2021*

SUBMISSION AND REVIEW DATES

Call for Applications Release	January 29, 2021
Deadline for Questions	February 12, 2021
Response to Questions Available	February 19, 2021
Deadline for Letter of Intent	February 25, 2021
Deadline for Full Application	March 12, 2021
Notification of Award	May 7, 2021

Call for Applications 2021 Synopsis

The CREID Network Pilot Research Program supports, trains, and mentors the next generation of emerging infectious disease researchers. This program will help develop capacity for emerging infectious disease research around the world.

Scientific research project topics could include but are not limited to studies on pathogen transmission, emergence, or maintenance in an ecosystem, pathogenesis, characterization of viral antigens, phylogenetics, viral diversity, sociological or behavioral influences on emerging or re-emerging viral diseases, development of reagents and diagnostic assays to improve detection of emerging pathogens, as well as studies aimed at detailing human immune responses to new or emerging infectious agents. Preliminary data are not required.

<https://creid-network.org/pilot-program>

Email: info@creid-network.org

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1. Pilot Research Program Overview

1.1 Background

The Centers for Research in Emerging Infectious Diseases Network (CREID Network) is comprised of 10 Research Centers and a Coordinating Center operating in regions around the globe where emerging and re-emerging infectious disease outbreaks are likely to occur. Multidisciplinary teams of investigators will conduct pathogen/host surveillance, study pathogen transmission, pathogenesis, and immunologic responses in the host, and will develop reagents and diagnostic assays for improved detection of important emerging pathogens and their vectors. For more information about the CREID Network, please visit the website (<https://creid-network.org/>). For more information on the pathogens and diseases being studied as part of the CREID Network, please visit the pathogens page on the website (<https://creid-network.org/pathogens>).

CREID Research Centers

- American and Asian Centers for Arboviral Research and Enhanced Surveillance (A2CARES)
- Center for Research in Emerging Infectious Disease-Epidemiology, surveillance, pathogenesis (CREID-ESP)
- Center for Research in Emerging Infectious Diseases-East and Central Africa (CREID-ECA)
- Coordinating Research on Emerging Arboviral Threats Encompassing the Neotropics (CREATE-NEO)
- Emerging Infectious Diseases: South East Asia Research Collaboration Hub (EID-SEARCH)
- EpiCenter for Emerging Infectious Disease Intelligence (EEIDI)
- Pasteur International Center for Research on Emerging Infectious Diseases (PICREID)
- United World Antivirus Research Network (UWARN)
- West African Center for Emerging Infectious Diseases (WAC-EID)
- West African Research Network for Infectious Diseases (WARN-ID)

CREID Coordinating Center

The CREID Coordinating Center (CREID CC) is a partnership between RTI International and Duke University's Human Vaccine Institute. Serving as the operational hub for the CREID Network, the CREID CC team offers expertise in supporting administration and management of data and scientific programs. The CREID CC administers the Pilot Research Program.

1.2 Objectives and Research Priorities

The CREID Network Pilot Research Program supports, trains, and mentors the next generation of emerging infectious disease researchers. This program will help develop capacity for emerging infectious disease research around the world through the performance of scientific research projects.

Scientific research project topics could include but are not limited to studies on pathogen transmission, emergence, or maintenance in an ecosystem, pathogenesis, characterization of viral antigens, phylogenetics, viral diversity, sociological or behavioral influences on emerging or re-emerging viral diseases, development of reagents and diagnostic assays to improve detection of emerging pathogens, as well as studies aimed at detailing human immune responses to new or emerging infectious agents. Preliminary data are not required.

Additional examples of types of research this program would consider include:

- Retrospective epidemiological study using already captured clinical data (secondary human subjects' research) or other experimental data.
- Behavioral/social science studies on unique aspects of a particular clinical cohort, but not a clinical trial, and that is nested within a parent study.
- Characterizing pathogens or pathogen diversity from previously collected animal or vector specimens.
- Lab-based study answering a finite and well-defined hypothesis.

Human Subjects Research:

- This program is not designed to support submission of new human subjects research, given the length of time required to receive IRB approval for new studies. Nor does this program support clinical trials. However, human subjects research is allowed within a limited scope, including research applications nested within a parent study with an IRB approval in place and requiring only a modification for the additional sub-study. In addition, clinical research applications nested within a parent clinical trial are allowed if the research application itself is not a clinical trial and no funds will go towards a clinical trial. As part of the Letter of Intent, applicants must notify the CREID CC of their plan to conduct a human subjects research study and describe the parent study and the plan for receiving an IRB modification within 2 months of the award.

Animal Studies

- This program is not designed to support submission of new animal research studies, given the length of time required to receive IACUC approval for new studies. However, animal studies are allowed within a limited scope, including research applications nested within a parent study with an IACUC approval in place and requiring only a modification for the additional sub-study. As part of the Letter of Intent, applicants must notify the CREID CC of their plan to conduct an animal study and describe the parent study and the plan for receiving an IACUC modification within 2 months of the award.

Select agent studies:

- Applicants may propose studies that involve pathogens that are considered select agents based on the Federal Select Agent Program definitions (<https://www.selectagents.gov/sat/list.htm>), if they can demonstrate the facility, organization, or institution where the select agent work is to be conducted has received prior approval from the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) for the specific select agent to be utilized. Applicants must notify the CREID CC of their intent for utilizing select agents in their Letter of Intent (instructions below).

This program will not fund:

- Human subjects research study requiring a new IRB approval (rather than a modification of an existing IRB approval).
- Clinical trials: Please see this website for more information on the definition of clinical trials. <https://grants.nih.gov/policy/clinical-trials/definition.htm>.
- Animal study requiring a new IACUC approval (rather than modification of an existing IACUC approval).

- Other areas outside of funding priorities include specific HIV/AIDS-only, and other topics not within scope of the CREID Network (e.g. brain disorders, addiction, etc.).
- Research that falls within the categories of *United States Government Policy for Institutional Oversight of Life Sciences Dual Use Research of Concern* (DURC) (<https://www.phe.gov/s3/dualuse/Pages/InstitutionalOversight.aspx>) or within the *United States Department of Health and Human Services Framework for Guiding Funding Decisions about Proposed Research Involving Enhanced Potential Pandemic Pathogens* (HHS P3CO Framework) (<https://www.phe.gov/s3/dualuse/Pages/p3co.aspx>).

1.3 Eligibility

The CREID Pilot Research Program is designed for researchers that are in the early stage of their careers, including applicants from lower- and middle-income countries (LMICs) who are poised to lead research studies, as well as postdoctoral fellows and investigators that fit within the National Institutes of Health (NIH) definition of New Investigator. Candidates from high-income countries must have a clinical or research doctorate (including PhD, MD, DO, DVM, ScD, DNS, PharmD or equivalent doctoral degrees), and LMIC candidates must have at least a master's degree or equivalent and 4+ years of relevant research experience, with some exceptions.

1. LMIC Applicants:
 - a. LMIC applicants with at least a master's degree or equivalent degree and 4+ years of experience.
 - b. Applicant recommended by a CREID Research Center PI who does not fit any of the other criteria.
2. Postdoctoral Fellows and/or Clinical Research Fellows
 - a. If the applicant holds a clinical doctoral degree (MD, DO, DVM, DNS, PharmD), applicants must provide evidence of formal research training completed prior to submission of application.
 - b. Should have protected time to devote to proposed research project.
3. New Investigator
 - a. Not previously competed successfully as PD/PI for a substantial independent research award. See the NIH website for more information on the definition of substantial research: (<https://grants.nih.gov/policy/early-investigators/list-smaller-grants.htm>)

Both international and U.S. (domestic) researchers are eligible to apply, inclusive of those who have an official affiliation with a CREID Network Research Center and those who are not currently affiliated with the CREID Network.

- For unaffiliated applicants, they must establish a collaboration with a CREID Research Center. Additional information about each Research Center is included on the CREID Network website (<https://creid-network.org/>).
- All applicants must submit a Letter of Collaboration from the affiliated CREID Research Center Principal Investigator with which they are collaborating.

Applying as Co-PIs

Two applicants can apply as Co-PIs for a single application; however, the budget ceiling remains the same (\$150,000 in total costs). If the two applicants are from different institutions, each applicant must provide a detailed budget, with the total of the 2 budgets not exceeding \$150,000 in total costs. Co-PI applicants will need to include a justification for the Co-PI approach and add a plan for managing the project jointly.

1.4 CREID Research Center Engagement

Each CREID Research Center is limited in the number of applications they can support. Applicants are encouraged to discuss their application with Research Center leadership as early as possible to ensure alignment with Research Center priorities and to confirm support before submission of the Letter of Intent.

As part of the application package, each applicant must include a Letter of Collaboration from the affiliated CREID Research Center. The Letter of Collaboration must address the following questions:

- Does this applicant and their proposed research study build the capacity at the Research Site for the Research Center?
- How will the Research Center contribute to the development and success of the applicant?
- Will the proposed research study allow the applicant to expand their skill set?
- Is the proposed research study structured to establish linkages with in-country stakeholders?
- Will the proposed research study lead to a conference abstract or publication?
- Will the proposed research study establish the applicant as a mentor for other early career researchers?
- If the application includes Co-PIs, how will the Co-PI approach strengthen the proposed research study, as well as ensure adequate skills building for each applicant?

1.5 Funding

Awards will be made to the applicant’s home institution in their name. Budget requests need to reflect the actual needs of the proposed project. If 2 applicants apply as Co-PIs, if selected, the applicants’ home institutions would each receive a subaward, with the total funding for the combined award not exceeding \$150,000.

Type	Period of Performance	Maximum Total Cost (Direct and Indirect)
Grant	12 months	\$150,000 USD

1.6 Pilot Program Timeline

Call for Applications Release	January 29, 2021
Deadline to submit questions (via email)	February 12, 2021
Response to questions posted on CREID website	February 19, 2021
Letter of Intent due (via email)	February 25, 2021
Application submission deadline (via email)	March 12, 2021
Award notices	May 7, 2021

2. Application

All applications must include the following elements (as applicable) in the order as listed in this announcement. Page limits are noted where applicable. Failure to include a required element may result in the application not being reviewed. Start each component on a new page with the component title, PI name, and study title at the top of the first page. All applications must be in English.

Questions about the application process will be received until February 12, 2021, by e-mail to info@creid-network.org. The CREID CC will post questions and responses on the CREID Network website (<https://creid-network.org/pilot-program>) by February 19, 2021.

2.1 Letter of Intent

A letter of intent (LOI) must be submitted by February 25, 2021 via email (info@creid-network.org).

The LOI shall not exceed two pages and provide:

- The title of the application
- The name(s) and affiliation(s) of the applicant PI and, if any, co-PIs
- The address, phone number, and e-mail address of the applicant PI
- The name of the CREID Research Center the applicant PI is affiliated or collaborating with
- The name and position of the Mentor
- A brief overview of the study including research aims and objectives, and a list of the sites where the study will be conducted
- If you are proposing a human subjects' or animal research study, please describe the already approved study it is nested within and your plan to obtain an IRB or IACUC modification for the proposed study within 2 months of award.
- If you are proposing a study involving a select agent, indicate the select agent and address the issue identified in Section 1.2 about prior approval.

The LOIs are for planning purposes only and no response from the CREID CC is required to proceed with the full application. If any concerns or questions are identified upon review of the LOI, the CREID CC will contact the investigators to share that information.

2.2 Full Application Format and Deadline

All applications should be submitted as a single PDF file, except for the full budget PDF form, which should be a separate file. All text should be in Calibri with a font size of no less than 11, with normal text spacing required. All margins should be at least one inch. Inclusion of URLs to provide additional information is prohibited in all sections. All required templates are available on the CREID Network website: <https://creid-network.org/pilot-program>

**All final applications must be submitted
via email as PDF files no later than
11:59 PM Eastern Time,
Friday, March 12, 2021
info@creid-network.org**

2.3 Full Application Submission Requirements

The full application consists of the following components:

Item	Description
Application Cover Sheet	See CREID website for template, https://creid-network.org/pilot-program

Item	Description
Title	Provide the title of the proposed project
Study Personnel (1-page limit)	Demonstrate that the applicant PIs, collaborators, and other researchers are well suited to the project, have an ongoing record of accomplishments, and address how the study personnel will work together, including roles and responsibilities for each team member. The applicant should include a mentor in the personnel section; however, mentors should not anticipate financial compensation for the role. All funds will go to the institution affiliated with the applicant.
Research Aims & Objectives (1-page limit)	Research aims and objectives should be clearly defined and sensibly tied to a definite research question. A clear endpoint or set of endpoints should be tied to each objective.
Study Rationale/Research Gap/Impact (1-page limit)	Projects should address an important problem, gap, or a critical barrier to progress in the field of study. The project should address an area of need targeted by the CREID Network. All projects must be in line with the scientific mission of the CREID Network. Priorities specific to this Call for Applications are included in Section 1.2. See the CREID website for more information on each Research Center and the Network priorities (https://creid-network.org/).
Significance and Approach (1-page limit)	State how the project has the potential to significantly address an important problem or critical barrier to progress in the field. A successful application will also describe how the proposed research meaningfully expands on existing research without overlapping current studies or the unique contribution of the project to the research community and how it will not replicate current studies but move beyond with an innovative approach or objectives.
Research Methods (4-page limit)	The overall strategy, methodology, statistical plan, and analyses should be well reasoned and appropriate to accomplish the specific aims of the project. A sample size estimate must be included and supported by a power analysis or other justification that demonstrates the adequacy of the sample size. Address how potential problems will be resolved, identify possible alternative strategies, and include benchmarks for success.
Research Performance Sites (1-page limit)	Applicants should describe how the project benefits from unique features of the scientific environment, or collaborative arrangements. A description of all locations should also be provided and how each proposed site contributes to the study and how the applicant will use these sites to complete the study protocol.
CREID Research Center Collaboration (1-page limit)	The collaborating CREID Research Center should be meaningfully integrated into the project to support the applicant with oversight, guidance, and coordination, and provide analytic support, as needed, in designing study randomization and performing statistical analyses. The Pilot Research Program application and proposed work should be closely linked to the work or expertise of the collaborating Research Center.

Item	Description
<p>Mentoring Plan (2-page limit)</p>	<p>Applicant should describe the mentoring plan agreed upon with the applicant’s mentor, including what the mentor’s expertise is and how that aligns with the applicant’s career goals, how the mentor will help build the applicant’s leadership, independence, and meet their professional development goals; a communication plan for ongoing, active engagement with the mentor; and, how frequently the applicant will more formally meet with the mentor.</p>
<p>Vertebrate Animals Section Requirements (3-page limit)</p>	<p>Include a summary of the parent study and IACUC approval information for the study.</p> <p>1. Description of Procedures (Vertebrate Animals Section) Provide a concise description of the proposed procedures to be used that involve live vertebrate animals. Identify the species, strains, ages, sex, and total number of animals by species to be used. If dogs or cats are proposed, provide the source of the animals.</p> <p>2. Justifications (Vertebrate Animals Section) Provide justification that the species are appropriate for the proposed research. Explain why the research goals cannot be accomplished using an alternative model (e.g., computational, human, invertebrate, in vitro).</p> <p>3. Minimization of Pain and Distress (Vertebrate Animals Section) Describe the interventions to minimize discomfort, distress, pain, and injury. These include analgesia, anesthesia, sedation, palliative care, and humane endpoints.</p> <p>4. Method of Euthanasia (Cover Page Supplement / PHS Fellowship Supplemental Form) Provide a justification for methods of euthanasia that are not consistent with the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) Guidelines for the Euthanasia of Animals. If answer is “No” to the question “Is method consistent with AVMA guidelines?”, describe the method and provide scientific justification in the text field provided.</p> <p>Vertebrate Animals Section OLAW (nih.gov)</p>

Item	Description
<p>Human Subjects Research (3-page limit)</p>	<p>Include a summary of the parent study and IRB approval information for the study.</p> <p>All applicants proposing human subjects research, either exempt or non-exempt, should address the following elements on the Protection of Human Subjects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risks to the subjects • Adequacy of protection against these risks • Potential benefits of the research to the subjects and others • Importance of the knowledge gained or to be gained <p>For more information on human subjects' research, please visit the NIH website: https://grants.nih.gov/policy/humansubjects.htm.</p> <p>Complete the Research and Project Related Information Form (on CREID Network website https://creid-network.org/pilot-program) and respond to the elements listed above with your application. For guidance on completing the form, please see G.220 - R&R Other Project Information Form (nih.gov).</p>
<p>Research and Related Budget and Budget Justification</p>	<p>A full budget, with total costs of no more than \$150,000, must be submitted on the form available on the CREID Network website: https://creid-network.org/pilot-program.</p> <p>A budget justification which describes the labor and other direct costs necessary to complete the project must be included here. The budget should reflect direct and indirect costs for the 1-year period of the award. The budget should include travel costs to attend the 3-day CREID Network Annual meeting in the Rockville, MD area. If you plan to travel to another site or lab as part of your research study, please include those costs in your budget, staying within the budget ceiling of \$150,000.</p> <p>If two applicants apply as Co-PIs for a single application, the budget ceiling remains the same (\$150,000 in total costs). If the two applicants are from different institutions, each applicant must provide a detailed budget, with the total of the 2 budgets not exceeding \$150,000 in total costs.</p> <p>Because CREID Pilot Program funding is available through a NIAID award, all subawards will be subject to the same policies and restrictions as the NIAID award for the CREID CC.</p>
<p>Supporting Documentation</p>	<p>Start each document on a new page with complete header information. Include only those components described below; inclusion of items not requested may result in the removal of those items or administrative withdrawal of the application.</p>

Item	Description
	<p>Biographical Sketch and Other Support. All applications must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant PI Biographical Sketch (<i>four-page limit</i>) • Applicant PI Previous/Current/Pending Support (<i>no page limit</i>) • Mentor Biographical Sketch (<i>four-page limit</i>) • Mentor Current/Pending Support (<i>no page limit</i>) • Key Personnel Biographical Sketches (<i>four-page limit each</i>) • Key Personnel Current/Pending Support (<i>no page limit</i>) <p>A biosketch template is available on the CREID website: https://creid-network.org/pilot-program. Please see the NIH website for instructions on completing the biosketch template: Biosketch Format Pages, Instructions and Samples grants.nih.gov</p> <p>Co-PI Plan (only needed if applying as Co-PIs) (1 page limit): If two applicants are applying as Co-PIs on the same application, include a plan that details:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What each Co-PI will contribute to the proposed research study • How the Co-PIs will jointly work with the affiliated Research Center • How the Co-PIs will jointly manage the proposed study <p>References Cited (no page limit): List the references cited in the Research Methods (including URLs if available) using a standard reference format that includes the full citation (i.e., author[s], year published, title of reference, source of reference, volume, chapter, page numbers, and publisher, as appropriate).</p> <p>List of Abbreviations, Acronyms, and Symbols: Provide a list of all abbreviations, acronyms, and symbols used in the application.</p> <p>Facilities, Existing Equipment, and Other Resources: Describe the facilities and equipment available for performance of the proposed project and any additional facilities or equipment proposed for acquisition at no cost to the award. Describe how containment facilities are appropriate for the proposed research. Indicate whether Government-furnished facilities or equipment are proposed for use. If so, reference should be made to the original or present Government award under which the facilities or equipment items are now accountable. See CREID website for template: https://creid-network.org/pilot-program</p> <p>Letters of Organizational Support (two-page limit per letter): Provide a letter (or letters, if applicable), signed by the appropriate organization official, reflecting the institution’s commitment to the completion of the study, including protected time of the applicant to complete the study, laboratory space, equipment, and other resources available for the project.</p>

Item	Description
	<p>Letter of Collaboration from CREID Research Center PI (<i>two-page limit per letter</i>): Provide a signed letter from the collaborating CREID Research Center contact PI that will demonstrate that the PI has the support or resources necessary for the proposed work. See Section 1.4 for questions the Research Center PI must address in the Letter of Collaboration.</p> <p>Letter from Mentor (<i>two-page limit</i>): Provide a signed letter from the designated mentor that demonstrates the mentor will support the applicant as outlined in the mentoring plan.</p>

3. Application Review and Selection Process

3.1 Review Criteria

To determine scientific and technical merit, all applications will be evaluated by a peer-review committee according to the following scored criteria.

3.1.1 Research Rational, Strategy, and Feasibility

- How the overall strategy, methodology, and analyses are well-reasoned and appropriate to accomplish the specific aims of the project.
- How the potential problems, alternative strategies, and benchmarks for success are presented.
- How the study, as proposed, is likely to be completed in the designated time period and available budget.

3.1.2 Significance & Impact

- How the project addresses an important problem or a critical barrier to progress in the EID field consistent with the mission and objectives of the CREID Network.
- How the project aims are achieved, how the scientific knowledge and/or technical capacity will be advanced.

3.1.3 Personnel

- How the background and expertise of the PI(s) and other key personnel demonstrate their abilities to perform the proposed work.
- How the levels of effort by the PI(s) and other co-investigators are appropriate to ensure the successful conduct of the project.
- How the PI(s)'s and co-investigators' record(s) of accomplishment demonstrate their abilities to accomplish the proposed work.

3.1.4 Environment

- How the scientific environment is appropriate for the proposed research.
- How the research requirements are supported by the availability of and accessibility to facilities and resources.
- How the quality and extent of organizational support are appropriate for the proposed research.

3.1.5 CREID Research Center Collaboration Plan

- How the project fits within the Research Center's overall objectives or expertise.
- How the Research Center guidance is integrated into the project and how complimentary are the roles and responsibilities between the applicant and the Research Center collaborators.
- How the collaboration plan is appropriate for overall success of the project.

3.1.6 Mentoring Plan

- How appropriate the plan is for communication throughout the project timeline.
- How reasonable the expectations are for roles and responsibilities in mentor/mentee relationship.
- How well the applicant's professional development goals will be met through this award.
- How involved the mentor is in helping build leadership, independence, and meeting the applicant's professional development goals.
- How the mentor's biosketch demonstrates appropriate expertise to mentor the applicant.

In addition, the following unscored criteria will also contribute to the overall evaluation of the application:

3.1.7 Budget

- Whether the budget is appropriate for the proposed research and within the funding limitations.
- Whether there is sufficient LOE for the PI to complete the research study as described.

3.2 Programmatic Review

Following the Peer Review, the Programmatic Review of applications will be made by the CREID CC and NIAID's Division of Microbiology and Infectious Diseases (DMID). The CC, in collaboration with DMID, will make funding recommendations using the following criteria:

- Ratings and evaluations of the peer reviewers
- Relevance to the mission of the CREID Network, as evidenced by the following:
 - Relative impact
 - Program portfolio composition
 - Programmatic relevance
 - Adherence to the intent of the award mechanism
- Availability of funds

Final selection of research grants will be made by the CREID Coordinating Center.

4. Award Process

Awards will be made to the applicant's home institution in their name.

If your application is recommended for funding, award negotiations will be held between your institution and the CREID CC to establish the scope of the final award. All official negotiations of the budget, terms, and conditions of any resulting award will be conducted between the Business Official of your institution and the RTI Subcontracts Specialist. All awards, and changes to all awards that result in substantive changes to the budget, including major modifications of the awards and changes across cost categories, require approval from the CREID CC and DMID.

5. Post-Award Requirements

5.1 Regulatory Approvals

Pilot awardees must submit all required regulatory documents and approvals to the CREID CC before the study can be initiated. This includes IRBs, IACUC, CITI certificates for key personnel, etc. as appropriate. The applicant must submit any renewals and/or updated regulatory documents within 2 months of

award. In addition, if the study has an international component, information on study location, site contacts, and FWA (for human subjects' research) will be required.

5.2 U.S. Government Approvals

Additional U.S. Government approvals may be required prior to initiating the Pilot Research Award, depending on the scope of the proposed research.

- DMID is required to submit any project foreign components through internal NIH systems for approval before studies can be initiated. The CREID CC will collect the information from the applicants and their application that is needed for this approval. Awards that include foreign components may be subject to U.S. State Department approval.
- The CREID CC and/or NIAID may require additional documentation/information as it pertains to planned select agent research.

5.3 Protocol

Awardees will be required to submit a protocol for their study within 2 months of award. See template on the CREID website (<https://creid-network.org/pilot-program>.)

5.4 Reporting

One interim progress report (6-month) and a final report (12-month) will be required by each awardee. The report template will be provided by the CREID CC. In addition to written progress reports, oral presentations will be expected at the CREID Network Annual Meeting and may be requested to the Steering Committee meetings.

5.5 Citing CREID in Scientific Products

Pilot Study Awardees are required to cite the CREID CC award number and the assigned Pilot Award number (1U01AI151378 xxx) in all scientific products resulting from the work funded through this program, including conference presentations and posters, peer reviewed journal articles, and other scientific endeavors.

6. Capacity Building and Mentoring Resources

The Pilot Research Program will include capacity building and mentoring activities and resources. The CREID CC will conduct a needs assessment survey of pilot awardees at the start of the award period to determine webinar topics. Capacity building and training activities will be implemented in partnership with the CREID Research Centers. Activities and resources will include establishing a mentoring agreement between the awardee and their mentor, holding quarterly meetings between the CREID CC and the awardees, peer mentoring, capacity building webinars, and in-person events.

6.1 Pilot Research Program Mentor

Each awardee has identified a mentor as part of their application. The CREID CC will provide an agreement that each party must sign to formally establish the mentoring relationship. The agreement will establish clear expectations for both the mentor and the awardee. This collaboration will provide a platform for the pilot awardee to discuss their research ideas and receive critical feedback on how to strengthen their approach and to understand and avoid roadblocks. The mentor can also provide connections to others working on the same ideas for collaboration and help the pilot awardee avoid duplication of effort.

The CREID CC will be available on an ad hoc basis to the mentors to provide guidance or support as needed.

6.2 Quarterly CREID CC and Pilot Awardee Meetings

The CREID CC will convene the pilot awardees on a quarterly basis to check in on how their research is progressing and to ensure the mentoring relationship is going well. The CREID CC will utilize this meeting to identify additional topics for capacity building webinars.

The pilot awardees may need statistical mentoring from a CREID CC or Network statistician for guidance on issues related to study design and statistical analysis. The CREID CC will identify a statistician to provide this guidance.

6.3 Peer Mentoring

The CREID CC will facilitate peer mentoring by forming a cohort among the pilot awardees so they can share information, ask questions, and discuss scientific research and career development issues with each other. The CREID CC will utilize Microsoft Teams to create a peer-to-peer mentoring community to foster and enhance real-time communications. Teams includes chat threads that can be designated for different conversations (e.g., biospecimen management, data analysis, quality assurance, specific viruses, such as Coronavirus, Flavivirus, etc.). The CREID CC Pilot Program lead will be part of these chat threads and will monitor the online engagement to identify and resolve issues that may arise.

6.4 Capacity Building Webinars

The CREID CC will coordinate webinars several times a year utilizing Zoom to include formal training presentations and question-and-answer discussion sessions between CREID Network investigators and awardees on an area of interest. These webinars will be recorded for viewing later. Possible topics could include (1) protocol development; (2) high-quality data collection and processing; (3) efficient development of study materials, including manuals of operations, and training materials; (4) detailed project team training on all aspects of implementing a study; (5) use of data capture systems; (6) study data oversight, quality assurance, and monitoring procedures; (7) statistical analysis; (8) biospecimen tracking, and (9) lab quality assurance.

6.5 CREID Network Annual Meeting

Pilot Study Awardees are expected to attend and participate in the CREID Network Annual Meeting. The CREID CC will coordinate capacity building and mentoring activities as part of the Annual Meeting. A Pilot Research Program session will be on the agenda for awardees to present on their research project. Mentoring activities could include speed mentoring session where investigators spend 10 minutes discussing a topic of interest with a senior researcher, then move on. These sessions will be held individually or in small groups of pilot awardees paired with a senior researcher and may be held virtually as needed. Capacity building activities could include a brief topic presentation or Q&A session followed by a mixer to allow junior and senior investigators the opportunity to connect on scientific areas of joint interest and develop mentoring relationships.

6.6 Scientific Conferences and Events

The CREID CC will coordinate activities, such as networking opportunities at in-person conferences. The CC will identify a select set of priority conferences each year to target for networking opportunities to bring together CREID Network researchers with Pilot Program awardees.

7. Pilot Research Program Evaluation

The CREID CC will evaluate the Pilot Research Program annually through a series of surveys conducted with the pilot awardees, the mentors, and the CREID Research Center PIs. The evaluation will focus on the Pilot Program details as well as the mentoring and capacity building activities. The CREID CC will utilize this feedback to make changes to the program in future years.

The CREID Network External Advisory Committee will review the progress of the CREID Network annually, including the CREID CC, and will provide recommendations to NIAID.