

Introduction & Overview

The Center for Adolescent Reward, Rhythms, and Sleep (CARRS) is a NIDA-funded P50 Center of Excellence at the University of Pittsburgh. CARRS is seeking pilot study applications for clinical and basic science research projects addressing relationships between circadian rhythms, sleep, and substance use risk. Pilot grants are intended to foster innovative research methods and questions in the early stages of development. We particularly encourage applications from early-stage investigators, investigators from groups that are underrepresented in biomedical research, and interdisciplinary research teams. You must be affiliated with the University of Pittsburgh to apply.

We plan to fund four grants of up to $25,000 per year for two years (i.e., $50,000 total per award). No preliminary data are required. Funds cannot be used for indirect costs or investigator salary support. Funding will start on or after August 1, 2022.

Key Dates

Application Submission deadline: March 1, 2022 by 11:59:59 pm, EDT.

Anticipated Start Date: August 1, 2022.

Pilot Grant Scope

The CARRS pilot grant program seeks to support high-risk, high-reward experiments that could lead to breakthroughs regarding the interplay between substance abuse, circadian rhythms disruptions, and sleep in adolescence. Pilot projects may include basic, translational, or clinical research approaches. We are interested in attracting new investigators and novel measures, methods, and analyses; therefore, prior success in our topic areas is not required. However, applicants are strongly encouraged to collaborate with existing CARRS Cores and Projects. An overview of CARRS Projects and Cores can be found at the [CARRS Center website](https://carrs.pitt.edu) (https://www.carrs.pitt.edu).

Examples of how projects could interact with CARRS include:

(1) Utilizing statistical approaches from the Data Management and Statistical Analysis Core (Core C), or developing novel analyses in collaboration with Core C;

(2) Adding additional measures or methods to projects currently in progress;

(3) Conducting novel analyses on biobanked specimens collected in the Phenotyping Core (Core B);

(4) Use of the heterogeneous (HS rats) bred in Core B either with or without circadian/sleep manipulations.

The investigator is responsible for obtaining appropriate approvals from the Institutional Review Board and/or the Animal Care and Use Committee.

Eligibility

The CARRS pilot program is open to University of Pittsburgh postdoctoral trainees, residents, graduate students, and faculty at the rank of Assistant Professor. Trainees whose primary mentor is one of the CARRS investigators are not eligible.

Funding Information

Applicants can request up to $50,000 in direct costs, with a maximum funding period of two years. Four awards are anticipated, although we may award two grants in 2022, and reopen the application process in 2023 to fund two more.

Funding cannot start until all necessary regulatory approvals have been received (IRB, IACUC, etc). The anticipated start date of funding is August 1, 2022.

The CARRS Pilot Grant Program cannot pay institutional overhead as part of this program. In addition, this money cannot be used for salary support for investigators. A budget and a budget justification (1 page maximum for each) are required as part of the application. If the project will use existing CARRS resources, please contact the leader of the Core or Project to discuss this.

Review Criteria

Preference will be given to proposals that:

* Bring new investigators/approaches to the study of substance abuse, sleep, and circadian rhythms
* Include cross-department/school collaborations or interdisciplinary research teams
* Have the potential to generate data to support future R01-type grant applications.

Application Requirements

Applications must clearly state the relevance of the proposed project to adolescent substance abuse, circadian rhythms, and/or sleep.

* Applications must be submitted online via the Powered by PInCH platform. Create your account at this link: <https://pwdbypinch.pitt.edu/CARRS_2022/Contest/LogOn>
* Applicants should first create a new project on the platform. Project creation should only take a few minutes, and asks applicants to register their project in the system by providing the following information:
  + A title for the project (50-character limit)
  + A short description (200-character limit) of the project
  + In the “Project Summary” box, please write “Please refer to research plan”.
* After the applicant creates the account, please upload the application in **a single PDF document**.
* Please start each section on a separate page, following the order of the application as listed below, and adhere to the maximum number of pages allowed for each section.
* Label each section and include the applicant’s name in the upper right corner of each page.
* Please follow NIH format guidelines: Arial, Helvetica, Palatine Linotype, or Georgia fonts, with a font size of 11 or larger and a minimum of ½ inch margins.

Proposals should be brief and include these sections:

1. Title and Abstract (2 pages maximum)
2. Biosketch for Investigator/Critical Personnel (NIH format) (up to 5 pages)
3. Research Plan (3 pages maximum, inclusive of Specific Aims and Research Plan, e.g., Significance, Innovation, and Approach; no appendices are allowed)
4. Budget (up to $50,000 over two years) (1 page max)
5. Budget Justification (1 page max)
6. Letter of Support from Mentor (for applicants who are still in training)

Other Requirements

If funded, a one-year progress report and a final report will be required.

Submission Information

Please submit applications by March 1, 2022 using the CTSI portal. For questions with your application, please contact Sarah Aerni at aernise2@upmc.edu

Interested applicants may discuss potential submissions with:

CARRS Director Colleen McClung; Email: McclungCA@upmc.edu

CARRS Co-Director Daniel Buysse; Email: BuysseDJ@upmc.edu

