Request for Pilot Proposals for 2025
Center on Aging and Population Sciences (CAPS)

We are submitting a renewal application for the NIA-funded Center on Aging & Population Sciences. The renewal application will include brief proposals for 5 pilot projects.

We invite investigators to submit brief proposals to support pilot research projects for the period from **July 1, 2025, through June 30, 2026**. Guidelines for the proposal format are indicated below.
Note that we will be submitting these proposals in 2024 to be funded in the summer of 2025, 15 months later.

Proposal Deadline: February 1, 2024

Pilot projects should incorporate one or more of the following themes.
We seek cutting-edge research to illuminate how biological, psychosocial, and environmental factors intersect throughout the life course to generate disparities in health and well-being at older ages**.**

> **Life Course Precursors of Health Inequities** examines how experiences earlier in the life course (e.g., childhood adversity, educational experience, geographic contexts, bias, and discrimination) generate risks or advantages for aging, health, and well-being, and at older ages.
>
> **Family Demography and Social Connections** focuses on how family, relationships, social engagement and caregiving, and living arrangements affect aging-related health outcomes in older adulthood.
>
> **Social Contexts of Biological Processes** examines how social contexts intersect with genomic, epigenetic, and biological factors (e.g., physiological dysregulation) to shape trajectories of physical and cognitive aging.

Goals

Pilot projects should be designed to support the development of a larger research project that will be submitted under an NIA grant mechanism (R03, R01, R21). Pilot projects are not intended to support work to complete a study or as an addendum to an existing project.

Budget

Pilot projects may be funded up to the amount of $40,000 (direct costs). Pilot project budgets may be used to cover expenses related to the proposed study within guidelines for federally allowable expenses, including summer salary. In special circumstances, larger budgets will be considered.

Pilot Project Proposal Requirements (See example below)

- **Project title, Investigators, and affiliations**
- **CAPS Themes**: List one or more of the themes above
- **Significance and Aims (7 lines)**
- **Approach (10 to 11 lines**)
- **Outcomes and Next Steps:** 3 to 4 lines
- **Use of Funds** 2 to 3 lines

***Please do not exceed the stipulated number of lines 25 to 27 lines total. The proposal has space limits.**

Selected projects will be asked to provide the following section. Support will be provided to prepare these sections:

- **NIH protection of human subjects information including enrollment table**
- **NIH formatted biosketch**
- **Resource sharing**

Review Criteria

- Topic area: Alignment with CAPS themes and population science
- Potential impact and innovation: Extending prior science via cutting-edge methodology
- Scientific design: Including conceptual framework, methodology, and measurement
- Feasibility: Timeline and budget appropriate for project goals and design
- End product goals: Presentations, publications, and grant submission
- Investigators:
    - Early stage investigators:
        - Track record of publication
        - Strong interest in the grant proposal process and intention to submit a proposal
        - Consultants and mentors appropriate for the project
    - Mid-career and senior investigators
        - History of high-impact research
        - Funding record
        - Investigative team has a high potential for funding from the NIA
- Project teams including investigators who are:
    - New to aging research
    - From under-represented groups
    - Multidisciplinary

Questions may be addressed to:
Karen Fingerman, kfingerman@austin.utexas.edu or Debra Umberson, umberson@austin.utexas.edu

Additional information is available at https://liberalarts.utexas.edu/caps/research/pilot-projects/call-for-p30-pilot-proposals-for-2025-26.html.

Submit proposals to caps@utexas.edu
Subject: Attn: P30 Pilot Project Proposal

EXAMPLE

***Title: Neighborhood characteristics throughout life and midlife cognitive functioning*:** PI **Munoz** (Assistant Professor, Human Development and Family Sciences). **CAPS themes**: Life Course Precursors of Health Inequities

Significance and Aims: Early-life disadvantage and stress have been linked to cognitive impairment at older ages. Although neighborhood characteristics have been linked to cognitive functioning concurrently, scholars have not asked whether residential *history*—in particular, disadvantage in earlier-life neighborhood contexts—influences cognitive functioning in midlife. This study aims to: **1)** ascertain whether residential neighborhoods can be successfully coded for *neighborhood resources* and *deprivatio*n from childhood to midlife using historical data indicative of neighborhood context (e.g, Census tract data) and **2)** examine whether neighborhood resources and deprivation are associated with daily cognitive performance in midlife.

Approach: This project will examine neighborhood resources and deprivation experienced throughout life in relation to daily fluctuations in cognitive performance among adults in midlife using two datasets: Effects of Stress on Cognitive Aging, Physiology and Emotion (ESCAPE; *N* = 257, ages 25-65; predominantly African American), and the Colorado Adoption/Twin Study of Lifespan behavior and cognitive aging (CATSLIFE; *N* = 969, aged 28-48; predominantly White). Both data sets contain participants' residential addresses in 5-year intervals from childhood through midlife. Munoz will generate indices of *neighborhood deprivation and resources* based on neighborhood characteristics (e.g., income, poverty level, education, unemployment, etc.) for each time period. Both studies also used ecological momentary assessment to collect validated measures of cognitive functioning in the context of daily activities for 2 weeks. Munoz will harmonize data from the 2 studies to examine these issues.

Outcomes and Next Steps: This study will generate preliminary data for an R21 proposal to address the critical but as yet unexamined question of whether sensitive periods or cumulative effects of place-based deprivation over the life course predict cognitive functioning in midlife.

Use of Funds: Graduate assistant to label address data with geolocation and Geographic Information Systems consultant to assist in coding of historical information for neighborhood resources and deprivation indices