



Request for Proposals for Early State Investigator Mentoring Program and Pilot Funding Center on Aging and Population Sciences (CAPS)

Proposal Submission Deadline: January 31, 2026

Expected Start Date: September 1, 2026

We invite investigators to submit proposals for pilot funding to support research projects focused on aging populations. These pilot research projects would be funded for the period from **September 1, 2026 through August 31, 2027**. Pilot projects may be funded up to \$40,000 in direct costs.

Pilot project awardees will be enrolled in a two-year program in which they will be assigned a senior grant-funded mentor to advise them through the process of conducting the pilot study and submitting a larger proposal to NIA. Enrollees will benefit from an intensive summer grant writing workshop and networking opportunities across campus and nationally.

Eligible candidates

Investigators who are either submitting their first K or R application, or are based at institutions or in states with historically low NIH funding levels

Questions may be addressed to: Robert Crosnoe or Karen Fingerman at caps@utexas.edu

Submit proposals to caps@utexas.edu

Subject: Attn: Pilot Project Proposal

Pilot Project Goals

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.

Proposals will be given priority that address:

- **Biosocial Processes:** How the dynamic interplay of biological and social processes affects the body, the brain, and overall health and aging outcomes.
- **Family and Social Engagement:** How demographic patterns and trends affect family and other social ties, the kinds of social ties people have as they age, and how those ties affect health and aging.
- **Socioeconomic and Institutional Contexts:** How socioeconomic and institutional contexts (e.g., state-level policies, neighborhoods, housing, workplaces, schools) throughout life operate as powerful social forces that shape biology, health, and the pace of aging.

Pilot projects should be designed to support the development of a larger research project that will be submitted under an NIA grant mechanism (K01, R03, R01, R21). Pilot projects are not intended to support work to complete a study or as an addendum to an existing project. NIA considers the success rate of grants submitted from the pilot projects when making decisions about funding future CAPS pilot projects.

Budget

Pilot projects may be funded up to \$40,000 in 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.

Indirect costs should be included using your institution's federally negotiated rate. In special circumstances, larger budgets will be considered. To prepare a budget for the application, please contact caps@utexas.edu.

Project time periods are 2 years: 1 year to complete the pilot project and 1 year to submit a grant application. All pilot project work must be accomplished during the 1st year. An external grant from the pilot project must be submitted within two years of the award. Again, this is an important metric in reporting to NIA on the success of our pilot program.

Pilot Project Proposal Requirements (See template below)

- **Investigators and affiliations**
- **Project title**
- **Statement of the purpose of the pilot in one sentence: This pilot project will do XXX.**
- **Text of the Proposal (approximately 2 pages total)**
 - **Specific Aims**
 - **Significance and Methods**
 - **One to two sentences explicating the innovation. Examples: “This project innovates by XXX”, “This projects extends research in this area by doing XXX”**
 - **Match with CAPS Themes**
- **End Products**

Please state the phrase as: The R01 or R21 arising from this project will go beyond the pilot by doing XXX/examining XXX/applying this method to XXX
- **Timeline (approx. ¼ page)**
 - Tasks and goals for the project broken down by quarters.
 - Plan for submitting larger grant to NIA, specifying the mechanism
- **Budget (approx. ½ to 1 page)**
 - Detailed budget
 - Budget justification
- **NIH Biosketch**

Please format your proposal using the template at the end of this announcement

Projects selected for funding will also be required to provide an NIH section on human subjects

- **NIH protection of human subjects information including enrollment table**
- **IRB approval**

Review Criteria

- **Topic area:** Alignment with aging in sexual minority populations, CAPS themes and population science
- **Potential impact and innovation:** Extending prior science via cutting-edge methodology or conceptual framing
- **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. The feasibility of a successful larger grant application is a key criterion.
- **Investigators:**
 - Track record of publication
 - Strong description of plan to submit a proposal

PLEASE USE THIS TEMPLATE IN PREPARING YOUR PROPOSAL

Principal Investigator and affiliation

Example Applicant, Assistant Professor, Sociology, the University of Texas at Austin

Co-Investigator and affiliation (optional)

Example Co-Investigator, Professor, Economics, the University of Texas at Austin

Project Title

Disability of a family member, caregiving behavior, and caregiver health outcomes in middle and late adulthood

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this project is to establish the feasibility of XXX/generate administrative linkages between XX dataset and XX records/

Aims – Please present a brief snapshot of each Aim here:

Aim 1. XXXX

Aim 2. XXX

Significance

Innovation (see note on p. 2)

Method – Please develop each Aim here

Provide scientific premise, public health significance, goals for each Aim
Research design for each Aim.

CAPS Themes

Provide a paragraph that indicates how the proposed Aims and research questions are linked to one or more of the themes.

End product – Indicate the plan for a larger NIA grant proposal

The ultimate goal of this project is to prepare an R01 application to the NIA about disparities in XXXX. The R01 or R21 arising from this project will go beyond the pilot by doing XXX/examining XXX/applying this method to XXX To achieve this goal, the investigators will use the pilot data to XXXX.

Timeline

Prepare a detailed timeline for each quarter of the year of the pilot proposal.

Quarter	Dates	Activities
1	Sept-Nov, 2026	
2	Dec- Feb, 2026-27	
3	March-May, 2027	
4	June-Aug, 2027	

Budget

Biosketch

Provide an NIH formatted biosketch for each investigator.

Biosketch format pages instructions and samples are available here:

<https://grants.nih.gov/grants/forms/biosketch.htm>