Request for Applications (RFA)
2025 University of Alabama at Birmingham and
McMaster University Joint Pilot Grants

PURPOSE: The partnership between The University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) and McMaster University (McMaster) was established to enhance the relationship between the two institutions through the promotion and development of collaborative research programs, academic and cultural exchange programs, and other cooperative activities.

The goal of the UAB-McMaster Joint Pilot Project mechanism is to catalyze innovation in any mission area that involves collaboration between investigators at UAB and McMaster University addressing a major health problem. Projects are encouraged to include interdisciplinary collaborations and seek co-funding (other institutes, centers, and/or Departments and Divisions). These projects are useful to generate preliminary data for larger projects, support promising investigators, and/or build capacity to improve outcomes over the long term.

DURATION OF FUNDING: 12-24 months
RANGE OF REQUESTED FUNDS: up to $100,000
NUMBER OF AWARDS: 1 or more depending on budgets

TIMELINE:

- RFA Released: August 25, 2025
- Application Deadline: November 17, 2025 (midnight CT)
- Awards Announced: December 15, 2025
- Earliest Funding Start: January 5, 2026

ELIGIBILITY: Applications may focus on research, training, service and/or education in a priority health area as defined by the Sustainable Development Goals #3 and others at https://sdgs.un.org/goals

Principal Investigators (PI) of the application must include a UAB faculty member and a faculty member at McMaster. Other MPIs or Co-investigators may be included from any UAB or McMaster school or partner country. Interdisciplinary teams and inclusion of trainees working with faculty are encouraged.

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS: Submit the following components via "InfoReady-UAB Office of Research Application Portal" [https://uab.infoready4.com/#] prior to the application deadline at midnight (Central Time) on November 17, 2025.

1. Cover Page: include project title, UAB's and McMaster's Principal Investigator names, titles, departments, phone numbers and e-mail addresses; names, titles and affiliations of other MPIs and/or co-investigators.
2. Specific Aims: up to one page overview that outlines significance/innovation, approach, and future funding plans.
3. Project Strategy: up to four single-spaced pages, 11-point Arial font, and 0.5-inch margins;

see **CRITICAL ELEMENTS** section below.

4. Budget: include the categories of materials and supplies; equipment; other activities and services needed to complete the project. Salary support for faculty is NOT allowed.
5. Budget Justification: Justify each amount requested and explain what the funds will accomplish. Please also include a description of any leveraged funds from other sources.
6. Funding Support (McMaster PI only): Signature and statement of approval of the department chair and/or Faculty Dean of the PI, affirming support and availability of funding contribution from their respective area.
7. Biosketch: National Institutes of Health (NIH) or Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) biosketch format of the PI and key investigators.
8. Submit one pdf file of all components, in the order outlined above.

CRITICAL ELEMENTS THE PROJECT SHOULD INCLUDE (4-PAGE MAX):

Significance and Innovation: Briefly explain the importance/significance of the proposed project. Describe the innovative nature of the proposal and how the proposed project will support the collaboration between UAB and McMaster and advance research, service, education, and/or partnerships. Describe how the project is unique compared to other efforts and what is new about the approach or the information that will result from the project. Note the specific funding sources and mechanisms to be targeted with the results from the proposed project, as well as the timeline for follow-on submissions.

Approach: Summarize the methodology/activities, data collection plans, and the timeframe that is proposed to address the specific aims.

Transformational Impact: Briefly describe the potential transformational impact of achieving these goals. Explain how findings and outcomes will enhance future larger projects and support additional funding proposals. Provide specific benchmarks for the duration of the study period.

Preliminary or Related Findings and Environment: Describe current and past efforts of the team that are relevant to this project. Describe any available resources such as local technology and/or support from co-investigators.

Investigators and Project team: Describe the expertise of the PIs and the collaborative team. PIs are encouraged to leverage other stakeholders within UAB and McMaster and/or local communities. Evidence of community engagement to ensure the proposed work aligns with community needs is encouraged where applicable. Explain how the team will interact to achieve the goals of the project and secure future funding. Team bio-sketches do not count towards page limits.

Bio-sketches: All applicants and collaborators should submit NIH or CIHR biographical sketches with personal statements adapted to describe defined roles on the project. The forms, instructions, and sample biographical sketches are available at https://grants.nih.gov/grants/forms/biosketch.htm (NIH) and https://cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/48437.html (CIHR). If NIH, use the biographical sketch form approved for use *on/after* January 25, 2022.

REVIEW PROCEDURES: Applications will be reviewed by faculty with appropriate expertise at UAB and McMaster. The evaluation will follow a scale 1-9 (similar to NIH) to assess Significance and Innovation (including targets for future funding), Approach, Impact, Preliminary or Related Findings

(including resources and feasibility), Project Team (including involvement of trainees and junior Investigators as well as community stakeholders) and Overall Impact.

FUNDS AVAILABLE: Final award decisions shall be made jointly by UAB and McMaster leadership (Steering Committee, co-chairs). It is anticipated that one or more awards (up to $100,000) will be awarded for this cycle based on scientific merit and promise. The award will become active once IRB approval, or HIREB approval at McMaster, is successfully obtained, if applicable.

AWARD DETAILS: Shared funding will be awarded from the relevant administrative offices at McMaster and UAB. All questions regarding the awarding of funding should be directed to the contact listed in the notice of award.

- Maximum award is $100,000. Indirect costs are generally not covered but line items (e.g. IRB/HIREB, communication, etc.) essential for the success of the project, should be included in the budget. Awards are one to two years in length, renewed annually after progress report. One no-cost extension may be requested at the end of the second-year budget period only.
- All costs must conform to the NIH Grants Policy Statement (GPS) and applicable U.S. Office of Management and Budget OMB circulars https://grants.nih.gov/grants/policy/nihgps/html5/section_7/7.2_the_cost_principles.htm or CIHR funding policies https://cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/204.html for necessity and reasonability, allocability, conformance and consistency, as well as allowability.
- Prior to the award of funding of a project involving human subjects, IRB/HIREB approval from all participating sites and human subjects training certification for all key personnel will be required. Approvals are not required to submit an application. For more information about human subjects approval, see: http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/ and http://www.uab.edu/research/administration/offices/irb/Pages/Home.aspx

POST-AWARD REQUIREMENTS:
- Awardees will be required to submit periodic progress reports and will receive email notification with guidance.
- Awardees will be expected to present the details of their study at a meeting or event to be announced in the coming year. This will provide an opportunity to identify additional synergies within UAB and McMaster, explore other means of support, and gather recommendations to enhance the project.

CONTACT INFORMATION: Please email the following with any questions regarding this RFA.

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