The Alliance
for Clinical & Translational Research

PILOT PROJECT PROGRAM

HEALTH RESEARCH CORE

DEADLINE

April 27, 2026

APPLY HERE

2026

Supported by the National Institute of General Medical Sciences of the National Institutes of Health under award number 2P50GM133807-06.

Call for Pilot Projects

PURPOSE

The goal of the Alliance Pilot Projects Program (PPP) is to increase the number of scientists engaged in clinical and translational research dedicated to studying health conditions affecting our population. The Pilot Projects are one-year feasibility studies designed to allow investigators to test ideas suitable for development into independent applications, such as NIH career development (K-series) or small/developmental research project grant (RPG) awards.

A Pilot Project (PP) should be led by junior faculty (early-stage or new investigators), clinical fellows, or mid-career investigators entering a new research area who are interested in developing as independent investigators. Projects are encouraged to create multidisciplinary collaborations that include Alliance and community partners. At least one project will involve community-engaged research.

The objective of the PPP is to increase the cadre of independent investigators by advancing their development in clinical and translational research. The PPP will address the objectives of the IDeA-CTR by sustaining collaboration and coordination in clinical and translational research and addressing health conditions that prevalently affect our population in Puerto Rico.

The PPP will also support the Alliance's objective to integrate basic, clinical, and translational research among Alliance partners, collaborating partners, and IDeA state organizations. Additionally, the PPP will facilitate access to resources, mentorship, and technology to support the success of URM investigators in transitioning to independent researchers.

This call provides the guidelines and evaluation criteria for research proposal submissions.

Research Scope

Research proposals must involve translational research **addressing significant health concerns across communities in Puerto Rico and the US mainland** and must align with NIH research priorities and guidelines.

Available support

- 3 awards
- **Up to $50,000**
- One-year study

ELIGIBILITY

The **Project Lead (PL) must be a junior faculty (early or new investigators) member,** a clinical fellow, or a mid-career investigator entering a new research area in an academic and/or research Institution in Puerto Rico

Clinical research is strongly encouraged and will be prioritized. Project must include collaborations among basic, clinical (including behavioral), and/or translational scientists. Community projects must be community-based, and include community and academic partners, and Community Engagement.

Collaboration among other institutions of the Alliance is highly recommended and will be prioritized. Collaborations with the Alliance partners are encouraged.

RESTRICTIONS

- **Postdoctoral scholars** and others holding non-independent positions **are not eligible to lead** any HR Core projects.
- Projects may **not overlap** with ongoing **funded projects** of the project leads.
- Project leads may **not receive simultaneous research support** as project leads from this or another IDeA parent award (e.g., COBRE, INBRE, IDeA-CTR, CTR-N, or CTR-D) but may be eligible to serve as project lead of a supplement to an IDeA award.
- **Collaborations with Foreign Institutions**/Foreign Components are **not allowed.**

Requirements

- Proposed research projects must involve **translational research addressing significant health concerns across communities in Puerto Rico** and the U.S. mainland and must align with NIH research priorities and guidelines.
- If proposing a preclinical study, investigators must clearly explain why this approach is necessary, why the study cannot be conducted using clinical research methods, and how the outcomes of the preclinical study will inform and lead to clinical research.
- **Mentor(s):** A committed and experienced mentor is required. Both local and distance mentoring are encouraged. A mentor letter of support is required.
- **Career Development Plan:** A detailed career development plan with clear outcome measures is required.
- Prior **Approval from NIGMS**: Prior approval is required before initiation of the project (coordinated by the Alliance).
- **Compliance** with applicable regulatory requirements (e.g., IRB, IBC, or IACUC certifications, required trainings, IRB or IACUC approval or submission, etc.) is required.
- **Collaboration** among Alliance institutions **is highly recommended** and prioritized. Collaborations with other IDeA-CTRs are encouraged.
- If selected for funding, the **Project Lead (PL) is encourage to submit an NIH** research grant (or equivalent) during the funding period.

Project Lead Responsibilities:

1 **Present one or two abstracts at scientific meetings.**

2 **Participate in the Alliance Scientific Day and Mock Review.**

3 **Attend meetings requested by Alliance Leadership and Cores**

Submission of one peer-reviewed publication is encouraged.

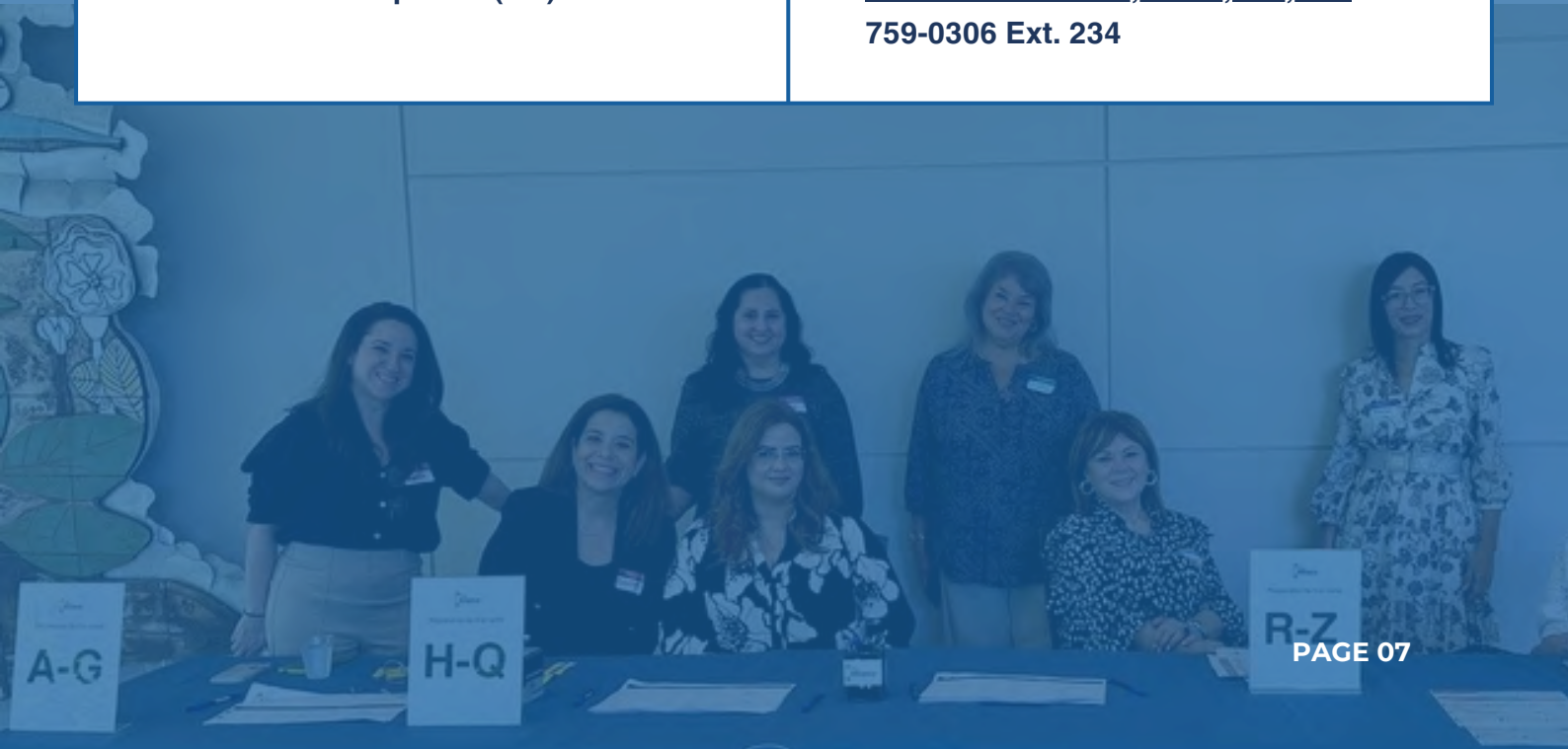
Important Dates

PPP Call for 2026-2027:	**March 2026**
Project submission deadline:	**April 27, 2026**
Evaluation Process:	**April 28 - May 26, 2026**
NIH evaluation Process:	**June 1, 2026**
Earliest date to start:	**July 2026**

Pre-Submission Consultation

Applicants are strongly encouraged to consult with the relevant Alliance Cores

Cores	Contact
Research Design, Compliance and Data Management (RDCD)	• Naydi Pérez, MS 787-759-0306 Ext. 239 • RedCAP: Janmarie Sierra, MSc • Research Subject Advocate: Adelma Rivera, BSN, RN 787-759-0306 Ext. 224
Clinical & Technological Research Resources (CTRR)	• Denisse Melecio Álamo, MBA 787-759-0306 ext. 232 • Bárbara Guzmán, BSN, RN, MPH 787-759-0306 Ext. 236
Community Engagement & Outreach (CEO)	• Edna Acosta Pérez, PhD, MSc • Bárbara Carlo, BBA 787-759-0306 Ext. 249
Professional Development (PD)	• Karen Pabón-Cruz, DrPH, MS, CT 787-759-0306 Ext. 234



Application Process

All Project applications must adhere to the following page order and specifications. Those applications that do not follow these specifications will be returned without review.

PROPOSAL FORMAT

Applicants must submit a 3-page proposal prepared in accordance with **NIH R21 guidelines** and use the most recent NIH format.

APPLICATION COMPONENTS

Applications must be prepared using **PHS398** forms and include the following:

- **Face page** (signed by institutional signing official)
- **Biographical Sketch**, NIH Biographical Sketch Supplement, and **Current and Pending (Other) Support** will be required for application due dates and all Just-in-Time, Research Performance Progress Reports, and Prior Approval submissions on or after January 25, 2026. For all project leaders and mentors should follow the NIH format.
- **Project Summary**
- **Detailed budget** and **budget justification** (Form Page 4) and detailed budget justification (2-3 pages). Only direct funds can be requested. Funds may cover up to 20% of the PIs time, up to $20,000 for a technician or study coordinator's salary, expenses associated with research procedures, and/or for on-site and off-site visits. Traveling to scientific meetings to present an abstract is limited to domestic travel and should not exceed $2,500. Medical and/or lab supplies directly related to the proposed study are allowed. Request for equipment requires a quote, proper justification, and plans for future use once the project is completed.

BUDGET RESTRICTIONS

- **Funds cannot be used for graduate students** or **postdoctoral stipends**, but students and postdocs may receive salary support as research staff from an awarded project.
- **Funds cannot be used by or by collaborators at organizations in non-IDeA states or at foreign sites**. However, funds may be used in other IDeA and non-IDeA states and foreign sites for fee-for-service activities such as learning new techniques, sample and data analysis, workshops, etc. (For advice, please contact antonia.ortiz@upr.edu).

Application Process

- **Specific Aims** (1 page) Should include a brief description of the knowledge gap to be filled with the proposed project, list the goals and the specific research outcomes it intends to accomplish, state the hypothesis to be tested. State the relevance the proposed project as it related to the health conditions in Puerto Ricans.

- **Research Strategy** (3 pages) including:
  - Scientific premise for the proposed project includes consideration of the strengths and weaknesses of the published research or preliminary data crucial to the support of the project. Significance, preliminary studies (scientific premises), and Innovation (1/2 page)- This should include one paragraph regarding the significance of the proposed study and its relevance to health conditions in Puerto Ricans; and a paragraph explaining how the proposed project is innovative.

  - Description of the experimental design and methods proposed and how the investigator will achieve robust and unbiased results. Approach, Research Design and Research Timetable (1½-2 pages)–Describe the experimental approach for each aim proposed including the methods (data collection) and statistical analysis (including interpretation). Include a section of pitfalls and alternative strategies. A timetable for the proposed project is required and should include plans for abstract presentations and/ or peer-reviewed manuscript submission, and submission of NIH or equivalent funding grant.

- **Bibliography and References Cited**
- **Authentication of biological and chemical resources**
- **Checklist Format Page** with F&A cost breakdown

- **Human Subjects Section,** Human Subjects (if applicable):
  - PHS Human Subjects and Clinical Trials Information Form
  - IRB Submission (required by the time of Review by HRRC)
  - Human Subjects Certification (required even if research is exempt)
- **Clinical Trials** (if applicable):
  - PHS Human Subjects and Clinical Trials Information Form
  - IRB Submission (required by the time of Review by HRRC)
  - Documentation of IND/IDE status for studies that are subject to FDA regulation
  - Human Subjects Certification (required even if research is exempt)
- **Vertebrate Animals** Vertebrate Animals (if applicable):
  - IACUC approval (required by the time of Review by HRRC)
  - Vertebrate Animals Section

Application Process

- **Targeted/Planned Enrollment** Table, if applicable.
- **IRB or IACUC**, Institutional Biosafety Committee, and Good Clinical Practice (as applicable) Submit approval letter or evidence of submission. If the proposal consists of multiple institutions, it should have the reciprocal IRB or dual approval from the primary institution and UPR-MSC. (For advice, please contact adelma.rivera@upr.edu).
- **Training Certifications** All investigators must submit certifications for training in Human Subject Protection, HIPAA & GCP. If the project involves infectious material (i.e. clinical samples, bacterial strains, etc) or animals the investigators must also submit training certificates for Biosafety and/or & IACUC training as applicable.
- **Multiple PD/PI Leadership Plan** (if applicable)
- **Resource Sharing Plans** (including data sharing, model organism sharing, and genome-wide association study [GWAS], if applicable).
- **Letters of Support** Key Personnel, and Consultants.

Incomplete applications will not be reviewed

Download the complete checklist

Awardees

DELIVERABLES

- One or two abstract presentations at scientific meeting
- One peer-reviewed publication submission is encouraged.
- Encourage to submit an NIH research grant (or equivalent) during the funding period.
- Participate in the Alliance Scientific Day

ALLIANCE COMPLIANCE

- The Alliance and its partner institutions are committed to full compliance with current and future NIH policies and guidelines. The Alliance does not support any Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) related activities, including research and training activities or programs. Support will not be provided for proposals/research studies that conflict with these standards.
- Noncompliance Procedure: will result in discontinuation of the funding from the Alliance and appropriate disciplinary actions depending on the case.

INQUIRIES

Valerie Wojna, MD	**Core Leader**	**valerie.wojna1@upr.edu**
Martin Hill, PhD	**Pilot Project Director**	**Mhill@psm.edu**
Antonia L. Ortiz,BS,MT,CHS	**Core Coordinador**	**Antonia.ortiz@upr.edu, 787-759-0306 Ext. 227**