CHARM
Center for HIV and Research in Mental Health

Funding Opportunity Announcement: CHARM Pilot Awards

INFORMATION AND INSTRUCTIONS

CHARM Mission

The Center for HIV and Research in Mental Health (CHARM) at the University of Miami aims to catalyze mental health and HIV science with the over-arching theme of ***promoting, developing, and supporting high-impact, high-quality, community-engaged HIV research addressing mental health and related disparities as a scientific, strategic, and mentoring resource to end the HIV epidemic.***

Purpose of the CHARM Pilot Awards

CHARM will be accepting applications for pilot projects in HIV/AIDS and mental health research. The purpose of this program is to stimulate new, community-engaged research projects for generation of preliminary data to increase competitiveness for future extramural HIV/AIDS and mental health research funding.

Proposal Areas of Interest

Pilot award proposals in any area relevant to the intersection of HIV and mental health disparities will be given full consideration. Priority research areas, informed by the CHARM Community Advisory Board and Executive Committee, include but are not limited to:

- Impact of social determinants of health on HIV and mental health disparities, and factors of resilience
- Uptake or implementation of injectable ARVs for PrEP or HIV treatment (including addressing side effects)
- Quality of life needs for people living with HIV (e.g., housing, nutrition/food security, education, self-advocacy)
- Access to substance use and mental health interventions
- Intimate relationships (e.g., for serodiscordant partners)
- Adaptation or development of interventions or implementation strategies that address HIV and mental health related disparities
- Research on scaling up or scaling out preventive or treatment interventions (including structural interventions) that impact disparities at the intersection of HIV and mental health.
- Any research area listed in Part 2, Section I of PAR-20-308, **except** those specific to HIV-associated CNS dysfunction/disease.

The Pilot Awards Program encourages proposals addressing the intersection of HIV and mental health in South Florida. However, international projects will be considered in the current cycle.

Number of Awards, Funding Amount & Award Period

Up to two (2) pilot awards will be awarded this cycle in the amount up to **$45,000** in direct costs with a 1-year project period (approximately June 1, 2024, to May 31, 2025). At least one Pilot Award will be implementation science-focused, with priority areas informed by the Equitable Implementation Science (EIS) Core.

Applicant Eligibility of

All eligibility criteria must be met as of date of submission (August 30, 2023).

- University of Miami (UM), Florida State University, Florida International University, or Nova Southeastern University affiliation is required.
  - Please note: Applicants from outside of UM will need a mentor or Co-Investigator from CHARM at the University of Miami
- Fulltime faculty members who are in their early career or new to HIV and Mental Health Research
- Interested post-doctoral fellows must submit a Letter of Intent (LOI) prior to applying. If invited to submit an application, post-doctoral fellows will be required to submit a Letter of Support from the Chairperson of their home department indicating support for the application and a potential research/faculty appointment at the completion of the post-doctoral fellowship.
- [Early career faculty](#) and post-doctoral fellows will be required to submit a letter of support from a primary mentor for their applications.

Core Usage

All applicants are encouraged to use the CHARM resources pre-submission and post-award, as applicable. Applicants are advised to consult with the *Methods Core* on quantitative and qualitative methods and statistical issues. The *Mental Health Disparities Core* provides consultation on community engagement, and culturally tailored assessment and intervention approaches for research projects. Early career faculty and post-doctoral fellows can consult with the *Developmental Core* to identify a primary mentor, develop a mentoring plan, and receive feedback prior to submitting a pilot award application. The *Equitable Implementation Science (EIS) Core* can provide consultations on implementation science components of research projects.

Please visit the [CHARM website](#) for information on the available resources and services. To request support or schedule a consultation, please visit the [CHARM Research Navigation Portal](#).

Community Engagement

All applicants must identify a community partner that is engaged in the design and execution of the project as well as in the interpretation and publication of findings. Community partners can be engaged at varying levels including as Co-I, consultants, or Site PIs for data collection in community-based participatory research, with corresponding budget allocation based on scope of work. The proposal must include a letter of support from the community partner or agency. The proposal must explain a) how the project will engage the community, b) the role of the proposed community partner(s) or agency(ies), and c) how the findings may impact and be disseminated to the community. Applicants are encouraged to identify and correspond with their community partner or agency early in the proposal development process.

Proposal Submission Process

Proposal submission is a multi-step process that includes 1) an optional **Letter of Intent (LOI), 2)** an optional **Speed Review (strongly advised to lay the foundation for a full application)** and 3) a **Full Application**. Submission instructions and links follow.

- LOI Submission (optional except for post-docs): https://redcap.miami.edu/surveys/?s=L9N83FC8RL
- Speed Review Submission (optional except for post-docs):
  https://redcap.miami.edu/surveys/?s=KRY8KRH99C
- Full Application Submission https://redcap.miami.edu/surveys/?s=LH7WK7P8TL

Proposals approved by CHARM will need to be prepared as full NIH proposals and sent to NIMH for agency approval. Applicant principal investigators (PIs) and their grant management offices are responsible for preparing the full proposal with CHARM support in a timely manner.

Speed Review

The goal of the Speed Review is to provide investigators applying for a pilot award with feedback that will increase the likelihood of obtaining funding. Participants in the Speed Review will receive one-on-one feedback on their Specific Aims page from faculty with experience as NIH/CDC/PCORI reviewers and with a background in HIV

and/or mental health research. Members of the CHARM Community Advisory Board will provide feedback on community engagement during the Speed Review meeting or shortly after.

The Speed Review will be held on July 19, 2023 (1:30 – 3:00 PM) via Zoom to enable participants to apply the feedback to applications being submitted to CHARM on August 30, 2022.

- Participation in this program is voluntary but strongly encouraged for junior and mid-level investigators and those senior investigators new to the area of HIV and mental health research, and required for post-doctoral fellows.

- Participants should be investigators planning to apply for a pilot award. The PI of the proposed pilot application must be present during the Speed Review. Primary mentors for early career faculty and post-doctoral fellows are encouraged to attend.

- Participants should submit the following by June 23, 2023 by 5:00 PM EST.

    1. a single page draft of the proposed specific aims and

    2. a paragraph (separate from the former) explaining a) how the project will engage the community, b) the role of the proposed community partner(s) or agency(ies), and c) how the findings may impact and be disseminated to the community.

- Each applicant will have 20 minutes of feedback on their application per reviewer; following the first reviewer, the applicant will meet with the next reviewer.

Speed Grant Review Duration (1.5 hours)

- Video: Overview of Speed Review, CHARM Mentoring Program and Community Engagement (25 minutes)

    o Applicants are expected to watch this video before the Speed Review meeting.

- Speed Review (approximately 1.5 hours)

- Summary (5 minutes)

Deadlines and Award Timeline

RFA disseminated	May 8, 2023
Letter of Intent (LOI) (Optional except for post-doctoral fellows)	June 4, 2023, 5:00 PM EST
Specific Aims and Community Engagement Plan draft (if participating in Speed Review)	June 28, 2023, 5:00 PM EST
Speed Review (Optional except for post-doctoral fellows)	July 19, 2023, 1:30 – 3:00 PM EST
Application to CHARM	August 30, 2023, 5:00 PM EST
Announcement of applications selected for funding consideration	October 2023
Full NIH application sent to CHARM for submission to NIMH	January 22, 2024
Award period (Tentative)	June 1, 2024 to May 31, 2025

Budget

Funds Available and Budgetary Limitations: Awards will be of up to **$45,000** (direct costs only) for a one-year period (06/01/2024 – 05/31/2025). Expenses should be restricted to personnel, research supplies, cost for subject participation, test supplies, community engagement and technical support. Applicants must provide a budget justification, including a detailed description of the role for each investigator or community member considering the proposed effort, and each item listed in the budget. Fringe rates prescribed by the applicant's institution should be used. Names and positions of all personnel must be individually listed and the percentage of time to be devoted to the project by each person should be noted. If an individual is being listed with effort but no salary support, they typically should be listed as mentor or other significant contributor. If an individual has not yet been hired, please list as "TBD." Applicants may be asked to revise the proposed budget and corresponding justification before funding consideration.

Evaluation Criteria

Reviews will be based on scientific merit and the likelihood of attracting NIH or similar funding in the future. All applicants will receive feedback on their proposals. Specific criteria include:

- Innovation to HIV/AIDS and mental health research: Is the project original and innovative?
- Significance to HIV/AIDS and mental health research: Does this study address an important problem? If the aims of the application are achieved, how will scientific knowledge or clinical practice be advanced? What will be the effect of these studies on the concepts, methods, technologies, treatments, services, or preventative interventions that drive this field?
- Approach: Are the conceptual or clinical framework, design methods, and analyses adequately developed, well integrated, well-reasoned, and appropriate to the aims of the project? Does the applicant acknowledge potential problem areas and consider alternative tactics?
- Scientific merit of proposed research
- Probability of subsequent NIH or other peer review funding
- Investigator productivity
- Collaboration with community partner/agency: Is the community partner/agency appropriate for the proposed project? What is the role of the community partner/agency and are they appropriately compensated? How will the project engage the community? How will the findings impact the community? To want extent and in which manner is the project involving the community partners? To want extent are plans for engagement and participation in the design, implementation, and dissemination of findings reflective of a partnership with the community?
- Feasibility of study completion within the award period

Additional Requirements and NIH Review

Prior to issuance of a Notice of Award by CHARM and NIH, the pilot award applications selected for funding consideration will be forwarded to NIH for review and approval. This process may take approximately 2 to 3 months. Therefore, while the applications selected for funding consideration will be forwarded to NIH early in January 2024 the Notice of Award will be issued after this process is complete.

The PIs whose applications are selected for final review by NIH will be required to provide their current Other Support, proof of CITI Human Subjects Research Training, information included in the Human Subjects section of an NIH grant, IRB approval letter, and other Just in Time information.

Progress Reporting & Cohort Meeting Participation

To allow tracking of the progress and success of each project, the CHARM funded pilot awardees will be required to attend monthly cohort meetings with the Developmental Core and submit a brief progress report every 6 months, whether interim or final, until the end of the project. Progress reports must include an update on progress for all aims and an NIH inclusion enrollment table. Recipients are highly encouraged to participate and present in the CHARM Research in Progress (RIP) monthly meetings to discuss progress and receive feedback from the CHARM investigators. Pilot awardees are also required to present to the CHARM Community Advisory Board (CAB).

CHARM Webinar

The CHARM Developmental Core will host a webinar upon the release of the RFA to describe the Award process, priority areas, offer guidance, and answer any initial questions. The Webinar for this cycle will be on Thursday, May 18th at 2:00 pm. The Webinar will take place through Zoom. Below are the Zoom meeting details:

Meeting ID: 940 0103 5618

Passcode: 413660

https://miami.zoom.us/j/94001035618?pwd=bkNOSTU1OXpzaWsxSy8zU0haVHhjQT09