CHARM
Center for HIV and Research in Mental Health

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS: CHARM DEVELOPMENTAL AWARDS

The Center for HIV and Research in Mental Health (CHARM) at the University of Miami is pleased to announce a Request for Proposals for projects in HIV/AIDS and mental health research.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Developmental Awards 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. Award proposals in any area relevant to the intersection of HIV and mental health disparities will be given full consideration. The CHARM Developmental Awards Program encourages proposals addressing the intersection of HIV and mental health in South Florida. Priority research areas, informed by the CHARM Community Advisory Board, 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
- Youth prevention interventions addressing HIV and mental health
- Haitian-Americans and HIV stigma
- Adaptation or development of interventions or implementation strategies that address HIV and mental health related disparities
- Developing or pilot testing implementation strategies to improve the reach, adoption, implementation, or maintenance of evidence-based HIV/MH interventions
- Studies evaluating implementation determinants (i.e., barriers/facilitators of implementation outcomes) of evidence-based HIV/MH interventions
- Any research area listed in Part 2, Section I of PAR-20-308, except those specific to HIV-associated CNS dysfunction/disease.

CHARM's Developmental Awards Program includes two types of awards, CHARM Pilot Awards, and CHARM Scholar Awards, which are described below. Awards will provide up to $45,000 in direct costs for a one-year funding period. Up to 3 awards will be granted in this cycle. Applicants can only apply for one award.

CHARM PILOT AWARDS

Pilot Awards provide research support to conduct community-engaged research projects for generation of preliminary data to increase competitiveness for future extramural HIV/AIDS and mental health research funding. This is a traditional pilot award / research project, and a minimum of 10% of PI time should be budgeted for.

CHARM SCHOLAR AWARDS

Scholar Awards provide salary (minimum of 25% principal investigator effort), research and career development support for promising early career investigators aiming to transition to independence as HIV/AIDS and mental health researchers. The scholar awards typically do not involve new data collection, but instead involve doing a secondary data analysis project with existing data and/or data being collected as part of a parent study.

ELIGIBILITY:

- Applicants must be post-doctoral associates or fulltime faculty members at CHARM affiliated institutions (University of Miami [UM], Florida State University, Florida International University, or Nova Southeastern University) at the time of the award.
- Applicants from outside of UM will need a mentor or Co-Investigator from CHARM at the University of Miami.
- Career Stage: Pilot Award applicants may be early career investigators (post-doctoral associates or assistant professors), or mid-level/senior investigators new to the area of HIV and mental health research. Scholar Award applicants must meet NIH criteria for early-stage investigator.
  - Post-doctoral associates must submit a Letter of Intent (LOI) prior to applying for a Developmental Award. 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.

MENTORSHIP

Developmental Award applicants must identify at least one mentor who will provide support to the applicant in the form of scientific mentorship and teaching, career guidance, and a research environment that is able to foster the applicant's work. A letter of support from the mentor is required describing the mentorship plan. Mentor letters for Scholar Award applicants must describe the following: a career development plan for the applicant; the applicant's potential for an independent research career; research and training support available to the mentor and the applicant; and how the applicant's proposal differs from the mentor's (or mentors,' if more than one) work.

The mentor's NIH Biosketch is required with the applicant's submission.

The mentor is expected to critically review the applicant's proposal and all associated documents prior to submission.

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 Community Advisory Boards, Co-I, consultants, or Site PIs for data collection in community-based participatory research, with corresponding budget allocation based on scope of work. Community partners could be individuals with lived expertise and/or individuals involved in implementation of HIV/MH services (i.e, implementation partners). The proposal must explain a) how the project will engage the community/local agencies, 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. The proposal must include a letter of support from the community partner or agency.

AWARD FUNDING – DIRECT COSTS

Funds Available and Budgetary Limitations: Awards will be of up to **$45,000** (direct costs only) for a one-year period (anticipated 02/01/2025 – 01/31/2026). 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. Principal Investigator (PI) Effort: Budgets must include a minimum PI effort of 10% for Pilot Awards and 25% for Scholar Awards. The PI effort requirement may be met through commitment, in writing, of funded effort support from the applicant's chair, dean or mentor.

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 (with accompanying letter of support). 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.

APPLICATION SUBMISSION and GUIDANCE PROCESS

Proposal submission is a multi-step process that includes 1) a Letter of Intent (LOI) – optional for faculty but required for post-doctoral associates, 2) optional Speed Review (strongly advised to lay the foundation for a full application) and 3) Full Application. Submission instructions and links follow. Applications will be reviewed and scored by a CHARM panel consisting of faculty and community members. Projects approved by CHARM are then prepared for submission to NIH for their approval.

CHARM offers multiple opportunities for guidance and feedback to applicants through the following mechanisms:

- Informational and "Brainstorming" sessions: [please see CHARM RFA INFORMATIONAL SESSIONS: BRAINSTORMING FOR POTENTIAL APPLICANTS section of this RFA for more information]
- Speed review of Specific Aims [please see SPEED REVIEW section of this RFA for more information]
- Consultations – for methods, community engagement, mentorship [Please use the CHARM Research Navigation Portal]

• LOI Submission (optional except for post-docs): https://redcap.link/n4hm7mgn

• Speed Review Submission (optional except for post-docs): https://redcap.link/8ssrkngm

• Full Application Submission: https://redcap.link/xsr9k4g4

APPLICATION DUE DATE AND AWARD DEADLINES

Applications are due no later than 5 p.m. on August 1, 2024.

Letter of Intent (LOI) Submission (optional except for post-docs)	May 3, 2024, 5:00 PM EST
Information & Brainstorming Sessions for Potential Applicants	April 19, 2024, 1:30 – 3:00 PM EST May 1, 2024, 3:00 – 4:30 PM EST
Specific Aims and Community Engagement Plan draft due (if participating in Speed Review)	May 17, 2024, 5:00 PM EST June 10, 2024, 5:00 PM EST
Speed Review 1 Speed Review 2	May 31, 2024, 1:30 – 3:00 PM EST June 24, 2024, 1:30 – 3:00 PM EST
Application to CHARM	August 1, 2024
Peer Review and announcement of applications selected for funding consideration	October 2024
Full NIH application sent to CHARM for submission to NIMH (for selected applications)	December 13, 2024
Anticipated award period	February 1, 2025 to January 31, 2026

APPLICATION CONTENTS

Applications should follow NIH guidelines for formatting (Arial 11 point font, single-spacing, 0.5" all margins) and include the following sections:

- Public Health Relevance (3 sentence limit – lay language)
- Project Summary/Abstract (30 lines of text limit)
- Specific Aims (1 page limit)
- Research Strategy (6-page limit)
- Community Engagement (400-word limit)
- Career Development Goals, Future Funding, and Mentorship Plan (3-page limit)
- Budget & Budget Justification (No page limit)
- Biosketches (PI, mentor(s), key personnel) (5-page limit per Biosketch)
- Letters of Support and Commitment (mentor, community partner and others as needed)
- CHARM Center Usage (No page limit)
- Bibliography & References Cited (No page limit)

SUBMISSION CONFIRMATION

If your application is submitted correctly, you will receive an automated email within minutes of submission confirming receipt of your application. If you do not receive this email within a few minutes of submission, you should resubmit the application or contact Yanexy Rivera at ydc9@miami.edu for assistance.

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:

• Significance: 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?

• Innovation: Is the project original and innovative? Does the project develop or employ novel concepts, approaches, methodologies, tools, or technologies for this area?

• 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?

• Investigator: Are the PD/PIs, collaborators, and other researchers well suited to the project? If Early-Stage Investigators or New Investigators, or in the early stages of independent careers, do they have appropriate experience and training? If established, have they demonstrated an ongoing record of accomplishments that have advanced their field(s)? If the project is collaborative, do the investigators have complementary and integrated expertise; are their leadership approach, governance and organizational structure appropriate for the project?

• Community Engagement: 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?

• Career Development & Mentorship: What is the likelihood that the career development and mentorship plan will contribute substantially to the scientific development of the candidate and lead to scientific independence?

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS AND NIH REVIEW

Prior to issuance of a Notice of Award by CHARM, the Pilot Award and Scholar Award applications selected for funding consideration will be forwarded to NIH for review and approval. Applicants may be asked to make revisions to their application prior to submission to NIH. The package to be submitted to NIH includes all of the sections of a full NIH grant proposal (e.g., Human Subjects Protection, Facilities and Other Resources) as well as "Just in Time" information (e.g., Other Support, proof of CITI Training, IRB approval letter).

PROGRESS REPORTING & COHORT MEETING PARTCIPATION

To allow tracking of the progress and success of each project, the CHARM Pilot and Scholar 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 meetings to discuss progress and receive feedback from the CHARM investigators. Pilot awardees and Scholar awardees are also required to present to the CHARM Community Advisory Board (CAB).

APPLICATION GUIDANCE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

SPEED REVIEW

The goal of the Speed Review is to provide investigators applying for a Developmental 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 2 faculty members with experience as NIH reviewers and with a background in HIVand/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 Reviews will be held on May 31 and June 24, 2024. Both events will take place 1:30 – 3:00 PM via Zoom.

• Participation in this program is voluntary but strongly encouraged and is required for post-doctoral fellows.

• Participants should be investigators planning to apply for a CHARM Developmental award. The PI of the proposed 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 5:00 PM EST on the respective due dates:

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

      2. a paragraph (separate from the former) explaining a) how the project will engage and involve the community,

• Video: Overview of Speed Review, CHARM Mentoring Program and Community Engagement. Applicants are expected to watch this video before the Speed Review meeting.

CHARM RFA INFORMATIONAL SESSIONS: BRAINSTORMING FOR POTENTIAL APPLICANTS

The CHARM Developmental Core will host two informational sessions upon the release of the RFA to describe the Award process, priority areas, offer guidance, and answer any initial questions. The informational sessions for this cycle will be on April 19, 2024, 1:30 – 3:00 PM EST and May 1, 2024, 3:00 – 4:30 PM EST. The sessions will take place through Zoom. Below are the Zoom meeting details:

Meeting ID for April 19, 2024: 928 4398 4486

https://miami.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJYlc-qhpj8uEtLBTWkzaD1O9sLnG88scww2

Meeting ID for May 1, 2024: 939 1426 1496

https://miami.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJckdu2qqDouE9Ic04V5ohNbzoymIWhcdDG1

OPTIONAL PRE-SUBMISSION CONSULTATIVE SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE THROUGH THE CHARM RESEARCH NAVIGATION PORTAL

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.