
Cizik Nursing Research Institute - Pilot Funding Opportunity

Epigenetics Add-On Awards to Support R01 Development

The **Cizik Nursing Research Institute (CNRI) Biobehavioral Health Core** is pleased to announce a pilot funding opportunity to support the integration of **epigenetic and DNA methylation analyses** into existing research programs. This initiative is designed to help investigators generate high-quality preliminary data to strengthen future **NIH R01 applications**.

Award Overview

- **Number of awards:** Up to two
- **Award amount:** \$20,000 per project
- **Project period:** Funds intended for rapid pilot analyses for data for the Fall 2026 NIH cycle due dates

Funds must be used to support **epigenetic analyses of existing data or biospecimens** through the CNRI biobehavioral health lab service center. Each award is expected to support the processing of approximately 50 samples (e.g., 25 cases / 25 controls), depending on the specific epigenetic approach.

Scope of Supported Research

Proposed projects should leverage **previously collected data or biobanked samples**—either from an active study or an existing repository—to add a focused epigenetics component (e.g., DNA methylation clocks or other epigenetic markers). The goal is to enhance an ongoing or well-developed research direction by incorporating epigenetic measures that will meaningfully inform future hypothesis-driven work.

Funds may not be used for new data or biospecimen collection.

Eligibility

- Open to **all CNRI members**
- Investigators from **any UTHealth Houston school** are eligible to apply
- Principal Investigators must be positioned to submit an **NIH R01** (or equivalent) following completion of the pilot work

Application Requirements

Applications are limited to three (3) pages and should clearly articulate:

- The central research question and overall scientific direction, including how the proposed epigenetic analyses will strengthen or extend the existing research program

- A forward-looking plan describing how the resulting data will inform and support a future R01 application
- A description of the existing data and/or biospecimens to be analyzed, including sample availability and relevance to the proposed aims

Applicants must also include an NIH-style biosketch for the Principal Investigator.

Review Criteria

Applications will be evaluated based on:

- Scientific premise and rigor
- Strategic use of epigenetic analyses
- Likelihood that the pilot data will support a competitive future R01 application

Key Dates

- **Application deadline:** April 10
- **Award notification:** May 10

Applicants are strongly encouraged to attend our lunch and learn event, which will discuss applications in epigenetics and the service center capabilities: March 25, 12-1pm. Register at this link: <https://forms.office.com/r/BwuHeJCiZS>

CNRI membership is open to all UTHHealth Faculty. Sign up here:

<https://www.uth.edu/nursing-research/membership>

For questions about the pilot award, consultations about project ideas or for more information about the biobehavioral health lab capabilities please contact:

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Submit pilot applications at this link: <https://forms.office.com/r/au6jsHpfUj>