ROCKY MOUNTAIN CANNABIS RESEARCH CENTER

University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus

ROCKY MOUNTAIN CANNABIS RESEARCH CENTER (RM-CRC) PILOT PROJECT PROGRAM REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

I.   Funding Opportunity Summary and Key Information

The [Rocky Mountain Cannabis Research Center](#) (RM-CRC) is pleased to announce research funding opportunities for cannabis research Pilot Projects. There are two categories of Pilot Project awards:

1. RM-CRC Pilot Project awards for established investigators

2. RM-CRC Early Investigator Pilot Project awards for early career investigators/junior faculty who have not yet received substantial research funding.

Award Categories:	RM-CRC Pilot Project	1-year pilot awards ($50,000) 2-year pilot awards ($50,000/year)
	RM-CRC Early Investigator Pilot Project	1-year pilot awards ($50,000) 2-year pilot awards ($50,000/year)
Award Period:	1 Year 2 Years	11/1/24 - 10/31/25 11/1/24 - 10/31/26
Contact:	Paula Riggs, MD Director, RM-CRC Pilot Project Core RMCRCPilotProjects@cuanschutz.edu	

II.   Important Dates

4/1/24	RFA Release Date
4/12/24	Pre-Application Informational Call #1 – 1-2pm Mountain Time https://ucdenver.zoom.us/j/4549512872?omn=95081374516
5/1/24	Mandatory Letter of Intent to Apply Deadline
5/22/24	Pre-Application Information Call #2 – 1-2pm MT https://ucdenver.zoom.us/j/4549512872?omn=95081374516
7/1/24	Application Submission Deadline
8/1/24	Anticipated Notice of Selection
11/1/24	Award Start Date

Pre-Application Informational Calls: Specific questions not addressed in the RFA may be asked during the pre-application informational calls. Each call includes a presentation about the program, application process and review criteria, resources, collaborators and mentors, followed by an open Q&A session with the Program Director. Participation in the pre-application informational calls is encouraged but not required.

III.   Background

The RM-CRC is funded by the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA; grant P50 DA056408) and is supported by the University of Colorado School of Medicine (SOM) and the Department of Psychiatry. The RM-CRC's Pilot Project Program plans to fund 3-5 innovative cannabis research pilot projects per year, the results of which will inform directions for the future research of the RM-CRC and new grant applications. The

RM-CRC Pilot Project Program is designed to attract established investigators from multiple disciplines to increase the diversity of the research portfolio of the University of Colorado School of Medicine and other affiliated institutions by promoting interdisciplinary cannabis research and fostering multidisciplinary collaborations across research centers and programs. RM-CRC Early Investigator Pilot Project awards are designed to provide research opportunities for early career investigators, with special emphasis on recruiting junior faculty from diverse backgrounds and groups underrepresented in medicine (URM). We encourage URM applicants to review the RM-CRC website for other URM resources, salary support, and mentorship opportunities at https://medschool.cuanschutz.edu/psychiatry/programs-centers/rocky-mountain-cannabis-research-center.

IV.   Funding Priorities

Cannabis-related research appropriate for RM-CRC Pilot Projects include, but are not limited to the following:

- Neuroscience research - basic, clinical and translational
- Studies that elucidate the neural correlates and functional neural circuitry impacted by various endocannabinoids
- Functional and structural neuroimaging studies
- Studies addressing genetic influences on cannabis use
- Novel methods to more accurately measure and quantify acute and longer-term cannabis exposure
- Studies evaluating the health effects of acute and longer-term cannabis exposure in medical settings
- Studies evaluating the impact and health effects of cannabis use in individuals with specific medical conditions (e.g. diabetes, dementia, pregnancy; chronic pain)
- Interdisciplinary translational cannabis research
- Studies focused on health equity, diversity and health disparities in cannabis research
- Studies evaluating the impact of cannabis use in substance treatment populations (e.g. substance treatment or post-treatment outcomes)
- Studies evaluating the impact of cannabis use within specific age groups or developmental stages across the lifespan
- Studies evaluating the acute and/or chronic health effects and risks associated with the use of cannabis products with lower vs higher THC concentration
- Bidirectional impact and relationship between cannabis use and social determinants of health
- Novel methods to translate findings from the laboratory, clinic, or community into prevention and treatment interventions
- Innovative approaches to accelerate the pace of advancements in cannabis research
- Secondary data analysis of existing data sets (e.g. ABCD, NSDUH, etc.)

If you are unsure whether your pilot research topic falls within the scope of this RFA, please contact the RM-CRC Program Director at RMCRCPilotProjects@cuanschutz.edu to request a consultation.

V.   Award Categories and Eligibility

The RM-CRC Pilot Project Program plans to fund 3-5 projects per year. Applicants must have a full-time faculty appointment at the University of Colorado Denver/Anschutz Medical Campus and/or one or more of the following affiliate institutions: University of Colorado Boulder, Georgia State University, Emory University. An individual may be included as Key Personnel on only one Pilot Project application in an award year. Graduate students, undergraduate students, and PRAs are encouraged to participate in non-Key Personnel roles. All awarded projects which include human subjects research are subject to Institutional Review Board (IRB) policy.

Applicants who are submitting or listed as Key Personnel on Pilot Project applications must become **affiliate members of the RM-CRC** in order to submit an application. Affiliate membership entitles you access to various RM-CRC resources but does not obligate you to participate in any studies or activities. A simple membership application form can be found at https://redcap.link/rm-crc-membership .

The RM-CRC plans to fund 3-5 Pilot Project awards annually across two categories:

1. **Pilot Project Award:** The RM-CRC seeks to attract experienced investigators across diverse fields of expertise and medical subspecialties. Applicants for this pilot award are expected to have previous success in obtaining external funding for research projects, with an emphasis on broader research experience rather than a specific focus on cannabis-related studies.

2. **Early Investigator Pilot Project Award:** Applications from early career investigators will be reviewed and awarded separately from those from more established investigators. Early Investigator Pilot Project awards provide opportunities for junior faculty who have not yet received substantial extramural research funding. Especially encouraged are applications by junior faculty from diverse backgrounds and underrepresented groups in medicine, for whom additional resources (e.g. salary support) may be available; please see RM-CRC website for additional details.

   Mentor/Co-I Not Required: Junior faculty applicants who are assistant professors with previous research experience and/or who have received K or R21 awards but have not yet received an R01 or other higher level extramural research funding as principal investigator are not required to include a more senior faculty mentor as a Co-I on their Early Investigator Pilot Project applications.

   Mentor/Co-I Required: Junior faculty who are instructors, senior instructors, or early assistant professors with limited research experience and no prior research funding must include a more senior faculty mentor (Associate Professor or above) as a Co-I on their pilot project application OR request to be paired with an RM-CRC faculty mentor/Co-I on their application. Post-doctoral fellows may be eligible to apply for mentored Early Investigator Pilot Project Awards if they have a current junior faculty appointment OR a letter of institutional commitment of faculty appointment at an RM-CRC affiliated institution, if awarded.

   Please contact us at RMCRCPilotProjects@cuanschutz.edu if you would like to be paired with an RM-CRC faculty mentor/Co-I on your application.

VI.   Application Process

1. Letter of Intent (LOI)

Investigators considering applying for RM-CRC Pilot Project awards must submit a Letter of Intent (LOI) to RMCRCPilotProjects@cuanschutz.edu which includes the following information:
- Descriptive title of proposed Pilot Project
- Specify project award category (i.e. Pilot Project award, Early Investigator Pilot Project award, mentored or non-mentored)
- Name(s), address(es), e-mail(s) and telephone number(s) of the PI(s)
- Names of other Key Personnel including mentor/Co-I (if applicable)
- Participating institution(s)
- Brief description (1-2 paragraphs) of the proposed Pilot Project and cannabis-related research question(s) addressed.

While the LOI is mandatory, the information collected is not binding and minor changes may be made at the time of application. The LOI is not used to determine inclusion or exclusion of applicants for full application. Applicants who do not submit an LOI by the specified deadline (5/1/24) will not be eligible to submit a full application. Principal Investigators will receive a confirmation e mail after LOI submission.

2. Application Materials. Submitted applications are consider final and may not be modified or revised prior to review. Applications should include the following:

- Cover Sheet
  - Project title
  - PI name, title, faculty rank, institutional affiliations
  - Mentor/Co-I name, title, faculty rank, institutional affiliations (if applicable)

- Abstract (200 words or less)
  - Provide the rationale for the work (research question); methodology or description of approach; how the proposed project will contribute or address cannabis research priorities or gaps

- Research Plan (5 pages total)
  - Specific Aims/Objectives (1 page maximum)
  - Background and Significance
  - Innovation
  - Approach
    - Preliminary Studies (if applicable)
    - Design
    - Methodology
    - Analysis Plan
    - Project Timeline

- References

- NIH Biographical Sketches: PI, Co-I(s)
  - Use [NIH Biosketch](#) format including Personal Statement addressing your qualifications for your role on the project.

- Budget
  - Budgets should not exceed $50,000/year in direct costs with a maximum of $100,000 (direct costs) for 2-year projects.
  - Provide a Detailed Budget using the NIH R&R SF424 Budget form which can be downloaded at https://grants.nih.gov/grants/forms/grant-application-standard-form-424-research-related.
  - Provide a Budget Justification document which explains all costs associated with the project.
  - The timeline for project completion may not exceed 2 years including data analysis and reporting results. No-cost extensions (NCE) are not allowed. For 2-year projects, second year funding is contingent upon adequate progress in Year 1.

- Letters of Support
  - Mentors: Applications from junior faculty who are post-doctoral fellows, instructors, or early Assistant Professors must include a letter of support from a senior faculty mentor/Co-I (i.e. Associate Professor or Professor).
  - Post-doctoral fellows who do not currently have a junior faculty appointment should provide a letter of institutional commitment of faculty appointment at an RM-CRC-affiliated institution, if awarded.
  - Junior faculty applicants, especially clinicians, will also be asked to provide a letter from their respective department, division director or section head confirming that the junior faculty member will have protected research time to complete the pilot project if awarded.

Application Formatting and Submission Guidelines:

- Arial font, size 11
- Single spaced
- 1" margins
- No appendices are allowed
- Applications must be received no later than 5pm MT on 7/1/24 and submitted electronically as a **single document** in Adobe PDF format to RMCRCPilotProjects@cuanschutz.edu.

VI. Review Process and Selection Criteria

The RM-CRC Pilot Project Review Committee will be comprised of research faculty experienced in cannabis research. Applications will be reviewed using NIH review categories and scoring criteria and the extent to which the proposal addresses RM-CRC research priorities. Funding recommendations will be based on an

assessment of the merits and potential impact of each application and the extent to which the proposal addresses RM-CRC research priorities. A comparison of the budget request to the proposed scope of work and timeline for project completion will also be reflected in the numerical score by which applications will be ranked. Applications will be funded in order of rank until funding is exhausted. The Pilot Project Review Committee will present funding recommendations to the RM-CRC Executive Committee for approval. All funding decisions are final. Brief, written feedback will be provided to unfunded applicants.

VIII. Award Requirements

All RM-CRC Pilot Project awards are distributed after RM-CRC, institutional, and federal pre-approval requirements have been met:

1. **IRB/Regulatory Approvals:** Awardees must obtain research approval from appropriate institutional review bodies or any other regulatory group relevant to their project. Applicants are strongly encouraged to demonstrate capacity in their application to obtain regulatory (including IRB) approvals within 3 months after Notice of Award selection (8/1/24) to avoid delays in releasing award funds.

2. **Progress Reports**: All funded grantees are required to submit a mid-project progress report approximately 9 months after release of award funds, and a final progress report within 30 days after project completion that addresses and evaluates project implementation, project results, and lessons learned. An additional report is required one year after pilot project completion detailing all presentations, publications and grant applications (pending or funded) relating to the pilot project. Publications and presentations related to the pilot project must acknowledge RM-CRC grant funding support.

IX. Questions & Requests for Consultation/Technical Assistance

Please submit all questions regarding this funding opportunity or requests for individual consultation or technical assistance in preparing your application to (RMCRCPilotProjects@cuanschutz.edu)

> **Applications must be submitted as a single PDF file by 5pm MT on 7/1/24**
> **to** RMCRCPilotProjects@cuanschutz.edu