Request for Applications

PILOT FUNDING FOR STEM CELL RESEARCH

ELECTRONIC RECEIPT DATE: May 14, 2026

THIS MUST BE SUBMITTED USING THE APPLICATION FORM FOUND on the Indiana CTSI website

Applications are submitted through the Indiana CTSI's grants management software WebCAMP. The WebCAMP user's guide is available under the funding announcement here:
https://indianactsi.org/translational-research-development/open-funding-opportunities/

Questions, please contact:

Scientific questions:
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Administrative questions:
Linda Anderson
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WebCAMP questions:
Julie Driscol
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INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS

GENERAL:

The IU Stem Cell Research Pilot Grant Program, supported by the IU Lab National Security Biotechnology Challenge, is designed to promote and expand stem cell research across Indiana University through the Indiana University Stem Cell Research Center. This Center serves as a cross-campus hub to coordinate and advance stem cell-based technologies that align with the strategic priorities of the National Security Commission on Emerging Biotechnology (NSCEB), particularly in accelerating innovation and workforce development in emerging biotechnologies.

A central focus of the program is to accelerate the development and application of New Approach Methodologies (NAMs), including stem cell-derived organoids and organ-on-chip systems. These human-relevant platforms provide transformative capabilities for disease modeling, drug discovery, and biosecurity applications, while reducing reliance on animal models and enhancing the predictive power of experimental systems. By supporting these efforts, the program contributes to national priorities in biotechnology innovation, competitiveness, and preparedness.

The program specifically aims to fund projects with strong scientific merit that can generate preliminary data leading to competitive extramural funding and/or novel intellectual property (IP). Proposals will be evaluated based on both scientific quality and their potential to catalyze future grant submissions, new collaborations, and technology development. Applicants must clearly articulate how pilot funding will enable new directions, overcome existing barriers, and position the work for external support, including identifying relevant funding mechanisms or translational pathways.

All proposed work must be conducted within the applicant's laboratory and directly involve stem cell-based research. Funds are restricted to research-related expenses and cannot be used for non-research purposes. Applications are limited to a maximum request of $10,000, with a project duration of up to one year.

WHO MAY APPLY:

All full-time faculty, regardless of tenure status, having a primary appointment as Assistant Professor and above at any IU campus are eligible to apply.

RESTRICTIONS:

1. **Facilities and Administrative (F&A) Costs:** Facilities and Administrative (indirect) costs are not allowable under this program.
2. **Use of Funds:** Awarded funds will be allocated through the IU Stem Cell Research Program and must be used exclusively to support stem cell research activities. Allowable expenses include research-related supplies, reagents, and core facility usage. Funds may not be used for non-research expenses, including salary support (unless explicitly approved), travel unrelated to the project, or other non-research purposes.

LEVERAGING OF EXISTING RESOURCES:

Applications that demonstrate strategic and efficient use of existing resources will be strongly prioritized. Investigators are expected to leverage available infrastructure—such as core facilities, shared equipment, established collaborations, and vendor partnerships—to maximize the impact of limited pilot funds. Proposals that clearly articulate how these resources will be utilized to enhance feasibility, reduce costs, and accelerate progress toward meaningful outcomes will be viewed as more competitive.

To aid in the successful pursuit of these projects, the following vendor resources have been identified, although applicants are encouraged to seek out additional opportunities to leverage resources:

1. Stem Cell Technologies: 20% discount for all first time customers and award winners for the purchase of stem cell-related supplies and reagents.
2. BrainXell Inc.: 25% discount for award winners for the purchase of pre-differentiated iPSC-derived cell types.

APPLICATION GUIDELINES

1. There is a maximum $10,000 limit per proposal and funding may ONLY be used for stem cell research-related supplies and reagents.
2. The Research Plan should clearly describe the proposed project and how pilot funding from this mechanism will enable new or expanded stem cell research efforts. Applications should explicitly articulate how the award will (i) initiate or "jump-start" a new line of investigation, particularly for investigators new to stem cell research, (ii) strengthen a planned or pending extramural grant submission, and/or (iii) support the development of novel intellectual property (IP). Strong applications will define specific milestones and outcomes that demonstrate how pilot funding will generate preliminary data, establish feasibility, and position the project for future external funding or translational advancement.
3. The Research Plan **may not exceed two single-spaced 8.5 x 11 pages** with 1/2-inch margins on all sides**.** Font must be 11 points or larger and be similar to Arial, Helvetica, or Georgia.
   - The proposal should contain some background for the project to assist reviewers in situating the specific aim(s).
   - At the end of the proposal, discuss the specific aims of the targeted future funding to allow evaluation of whether the expected outcome of this pilot proposal will lead to future funding or development of intellectual property.
   - It is also expected that successful applications will effectively leverage existing resources (e.g. collaborators/consultants with appropriate expertise, discounts from vendors, existing institutional core resources, etc) to maximize use of funds to help ensure the goals of the submission of competitive external grant submissions.
   - Please remember that while every effort will be made to secure reviewers with specific expertise, this is not always possible. Avoid non-standard abbreviations and technical jargon
4. A references section should be included but is not considered in the 2-page limit.
5. A biosketch must be provided for each PI and co-PI using the current NIH or the new SciENcv format. Each biosketch is limited to 5 pages in length and should include a personal statement relative to this proposal, positions, honors, contribution to science and selected research projects that are most relevant to the proposed project.
6. An "other support" section must be included in current NIH or the new SciENcv format for each investigator. This section is not subject to a page limit. It must provide details of all grant funding. This includes any funding through program projects, centers, joint grants and any other mechanisms. If no other relevant funding is available, please submit an "other support" page noting this status.
7. **Proposals are due May 14, 2026 and must be submitted online via the 'Start a Submission' link and application form found on the Indiana CTSI website .**
8. Projects should have a start date no earlier than **June 1, 2026,** and the requested project period may not exceed **12 months**.

<u>Applications should follow this sequence, using the Stem Cell Research Pilot application form</u>
<u>(note pagination will vary depending on content included):</u>

Page 1-2 **Face Page**: specify the proposal title, the principal investigator and his/her affiliation, the total dollar amount requested, and up to five keywords that describe the project (to be used in identifying reviewers).

Page 3 **Abstract**. The abstract should provide a clear, concise, and accurate description of the proposed project (500-word maximum), including its overall objective and specific aims. It should be written in plain language understandable to a broad scientific audience. In addition to summarizing the work, the abstract should clearly convey (i) the relevance of the project to stem cell research and the mission of the Indiana University Stem Cell Research Center, (ii) how the proposed work represents a new direction or entry into stem cell research (if applicable), and (iii) the anticipated impact of the project, including its potential to generate preliminary data for future extramural funding and/or intellectual property (IP).

Page 4 -5 **Research Plan**: Describe the overall scope of the proposed project and clearly justify how pilot funding will enable new or expanded stem cell research efforts. Applications should articulate how the award will (i) initiate or "jump-start" a new line of investigation—particularly for investigators new to stem cell research, (ii) strengthen a planned or pending extramural funding application, and/or (iii) support the development of novel intellectual property (IP). Proposals must clearly state the project's relevance to stem cell research and its connection to human health.

The Research Plan should include:

- **Background and Rationale:**
  Provide sufficient background to place the project in context and justify the proposed approach. Briefly describe any preliminary work that supports the feasibility of the project.
- **Proposed Work:**
  Clearly describe the specific experiments or activities to be performed during the funding period. Define expected outcomes and how the proposed work will generate critical preliminary data or proof-of-concept results.
- **Future Funding and Impact:**
  Describe how the results of this pilot project will be used to support future extramural funding and/or IP development. Applicants should outline the anticipated next-step funding mechanism(s) (e.g., NIH, NSF, foundation), including a general timeline and, where possible, specific funding opportunity announcements.
- **Alignment with Future Aims:**
  Briefly describe the specific aims of the anticipated future proposal to enable reviewers to assess whether the proposed pilot work will effectively position the project for success.
- **Leveraging Resources:**
  Explicitly describe how existing resources (e.g., collaborations, core facilities, institutional infrastructure, vendor partnerships) will be leveraged to maximize the impact of the requested funds and ensure project feasibility.

The research plan must not exceed the TWO PAGE LIMIT.

Page 6** **References**: Not included in the 2-page limit. They should be inserted after the text of the research plan.

Page 7** **Budget** (very brief): Limit the proposed budget to the cost of the research. Provide the source of your cost estimate.

Page 8-12** **Biosketch**: Include a biographical sketch of the principal investigator in **the current NIH or new SciENcv format** including a personal statement (5-page maximum per investigator) and for all additional investigators listed on the project (PI + co-PI + co-investigators)

Page 13** **Other Support**: Must be included for <u>each investigator</u> in **the current NIH or new SciENcv format**. It is critical that the Other Support page be clear, detailed and include funding through program projects, centers, joint grants, etc., as well as the role of the applicant in each grant and any potential overlap.

Page 14+ **Supporting Information**: Attach as an addendum any supporting materials. This section should NOT be used as an extension of research plan.

*** Pagination will vary based upon inclusion of resubmission comments and/or length of references.*

REVIEW PROCESS

Proposals will be judged highly on the likelihood of generating new extramural grant support along with scientific merit using an NIH style review sheet. Including specifics regarding the anticipated scope and sources of funding of the resulting proposals will be helpful to the reviewers. The committee must be able to discern why pilot funding is needed in addition to funds currently available to the PI.

CONTACTS

<u>*For questions regarding scope of the proposal, please contact*</u>:

Scientific questions:	Jason Meyer	meyerjas@iu.edu
Adminstrative questions:	Linda Anderson	lshenson@iu.edu
WebCAMP questions:	Julie Driscol	judrisco@iu.edu

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS FOR AWARDEES:

All award recipients must agree to comply with internal award funding reporting requirements as described below.

1. Progress reporting at the end of the award.
2. Follow up summary after the expiration date of the funding period, to provide (a) publications (b) grants submitted; (c) grants funded that used data generated by this award, and (d) intellectual property.
3. By accepting this award, grant recipients agree to have their names and project titles used in association with IU Lab and/or the IU Stem Cell Research Center.
4. Grant recipients are reminded to acknowledge receipt of IU LAB and IU Stem Cell Research Center support in any presentation or publication of work