

Request for Applications: MIST Scholar Award in Mucosal Immunity (<http://www.mucosal.org/>)

Research Objectives:

Purpose:

The purpose of this RFA is to encourage early stage scientists and/or clinicians to pursue careers in understanding immune defense mechanisms and immune regulation at mucosal surfaces, including respiratory, gastrointestinal and urogenital tract mucosa. A long-term goal of the Mucosal Immunology Studies Team (MIST) is to contribute to the knowledge base needed to facilitate future development of vaccines and immunotherapies to protect mucosal surfaces from infection and immune-mediated pathology. High emphasis will be placed on proposed studies that provide a more sophisticated understanding of mucosal immune defense mechanisms, explore novel hypotheses, or address difficult unsolved questions in mucosal immunity and that have the capacity to develop into independently supported projects.

Background:

The mucosal epithelium, with its tremendous combined surface area throughout the various organ systems, is a critical site for host-microbe interaction. This surface is where the host interfaces with the colonizing microbiota and is the primary site of entry for many pathogens. Since most pathogens first contact the host through the mucosal surface, and efficient person-to-person transmission of many pathogens results from an initial mucosal infection, development of vaccines and therapies that target and protect mucosal surfaces would be a significant achievement. Despite several successes in mucosal vaccination and substantial research devoted to mucosal vaccine development, the critical elements required for protective mucosal immunity are not well understood.

Research Objectives and Scope:

While the overall scientific objective and scope of this proposal follow those of the original RFA-AI-15-023, the specific objective of this RFA is to encourage and provide critical support for young investigators who are in the process of establishing independent research laboratories working to define fundamental aspects of immunity at mucosal surfaces.

Examples of research areas supported by this RFA include, but are not limited to:

Studies of mucosal epithelia; mucosal IgA and mucosal B cell responses; mucosal antigen sampling and presentation; and mucosal immunity and inflammation.

Examples of research NOT supported by the RFA:

Clinical trials; HIV/AIDS/SIV; studies that focus on skin or epidermis; projects focused on autoimmune or inflammatory diseases such as inflammatory bowel disease, celiac disease, cystic fibrosis, etc., or on asthma/allergy that do not provide a clear justification of how the study would provide new information about mucosal defense or mucosal immunoregulatory mechanisms relevant to infection or related immunopathology/inflammation; studies focused primarily on specific microbes, infections, vaccines, or adjuvants that do not use these agents as probes to gain new insights about mucosal immune mechanisms, including studies focused on non-immune mechanisms of pathogenesis; investigations that do not focus on the study of mucosal immune defense mechanisms.

Submission guidelines

Eligibility Requirements

Individuals capable of conducting an independent research program and having the skills, knowledge and resources necessary to carry out the proposed research are invited to work with their institution/organization to develop an application for support.

Applicants must have a junior faculty position (assistant professor, instructor, or equivalent) at the time of application and must not have been awarded an RO1 or RO0. Applicants who had previously been awarded a K award or other career development award remain eligible.

Applicants may submit only one application with the applicant as the Principle Investigator. There is no limit to the number of awards from each institution.

Letter of Intent:

Applicants may send a letter of intent to Annette Rothermel (arothermel@niaid.nih.gov) by **March 15th, 2018** that includes: a descriptive title of proposed activity; the name, address, and telephone number of the PI; and the name of the participating institution.

Application deadline:

Applicants must submit application by midnight **April 2, 2018**. Applications received after the deadline will not be considered for funding.

Budget and Project Period:

This award has a maximum project period of two years, and a maximum budget of \$75,000 direct costs per year. It is expected that 4-6 awards will be made, contingent upon availability of funds. The second year of funding will be contingent upon availability of funds and administrative review of scientific progress in the first year.

Indirect Costs and other Award Information:

MIST is funded by the NIH Immune Defense Mechanisms at the Mucosa Cooperative Study Group Infrastructure and Opportunities Fund (RFA-AI-15-023). Washington University School of Medicine (WU) administers this fund and these awards will be made as a sub-award from WU. As such, all federally negotiated indirect cost agreements apply to this application.

MIST Scholars will be requested to present their research at the annual MIST steering committee meeting.

Application Review

The grant review process begins after receiving a completed application and usually requires up to 6 weeks provided the applicant has complied fully with the application procedures/guidelines. The submission of an incomplete grant proposal may cause delays in MIST's review and consideration of the request.

Reviewers with relevant expertise will be assembled by MIST and will consider the scientific merit of the proposal and whether or not the application was responsive to this RFA. The review panel may include MIST and non-MIST members.

The final funding decision will be made by the MIST steering committee no later than **June 1, 2018**. Applicants will receive notification of final outcome via e-mail. Telephone or e-mail requests for results prior to this date will not be responded to.

Dates of Award:

The earliest anticipated start date will be **July 1, 2018**. The award will be for two years, with the second year of funding contingent upon availability of funds and administrative review of progress made.

Resubmissions and Renewals:

Resubmission and renewal applications are not permitted in response to this RFA.

Application Procedures

Applications for grants must be emailed to MIST, and should be as brief as appropriate to present the necessary information listed in the application checklist below. The content listed on the checklist needs to be formatted in 11-point font on numbered, single-sided pages.

Please send inquiries and completed applications to: Denise Dorsey at denised@wustl.edu

IMPORTANT NOTES:

• APPLICANTS WHO ARE DEEMED INELIGIBLE FOR THIS AWARD AND/OR DO NOT FOLLOW THE INSTRUCTIONS FOR PREPARING AN APPLICATION MAY BE ADMINISTRATIVELY DISQUALIFIED AND NOT REVIEWED.

Grant Application Instructions and Checklist

An incomplete grant application will cause delays in the Committee's review of your request. Please find form templates at the following link: <https://mucosal.org/application.php>.

PHS398 Form Page 1

Please fill out all the sections of the PHS398 Form Page 1 (see NIH PHS398 instructions), including:

- Title of the project/program
- Investigator's information
- Request for initial budget
- IRB information
- Institutional Signature Required

Biosketch (Current NIH format) for Key Personnel

Biosketch must include the following with a page limit of 4 pages:

- Personal statement
- Positions and Honors
 - Professional and research experience
 - Professional affiliation
- Contributions to Science
- Research
 - Current research
 - Completed research

Budget Sheets (PHS398 Form Pages 4 & 5)

Budget sheet must include the following:

- Budget dates
- List personnel using Cal, Acad, or Summer to enter months devoted to project
- Enter dollar amounts requested (omit cents) for salary requested and fringe benefits
- Enter total costs for consultation, equipment, supplies and others.
- Budget justification

Research Strategy

Concept sheet has a **3 page limit** and must include the following:

- Specific aims/Research Strategy
- Describe how this project contributes to novel aspects of mucosal immunity
- References

NIH Checklist Form Page

Letter of Intent to Establish a Consortium Agreement with Institutional Signature