

UI Pilot Grant Program for Translational Stroke Studies

The University of Iowa Carver College of Medicine is sponsoring a pilot grant initiative to encourage innovation in cerebrovascular translational science across campus. The University of Iowa is one of the 27 institutions selected as a regional coordinating center for NIH StrokeNet, a research network that aims to advance acute stroke treatment, prevention, and recovery by promoting translational research in stroke, as well as achieving efficiency in conducting clinical trials. As part of this new network, the NINDS has initiated dedicated RFAs for translational research initiatives in stroke that can be tested through NIH StrokeNet in phase I-III trials <http://www.nihstrokenet.org>.

This pilot interdisciplinary award aims to help UI investigators across campus generate enough preliminary data for novel and promising stroke (ischemic & hemorrhagic) interventions. Examples include treatment of acute stroke, recovery, prevention, as well as biomarkers (including neuroimaging).

To be competitive for this unique funding opportunity related to NIH StrokeNet the project has to support or validate a promising therapy that can be eventually implemented in a StrokeNet clinical trial.

Both basic and clinical science experiments will be considered. Animal experiments should be translatable in nature, and therefore aiming to satisfy the NINDS requirements for development stroke therapies (STAIR & RIGOR criteria). Human experiments should aim to generate preliminary data supportive of an eventual trial and includes, but are not limited to, Phase I dose-escalation studies, validating biomarkers (serum or imaging) or epidemiological analysis.

Eligibility

Faculty and trainees at the University of Iowa investigating novel stroke interventions (acute treatment, recovery or prevention), or biomarkers that could be used in intervention trials. While post-doctoral students, fellows and clinical residents may apply, such applicants are required to have faculty members as co-investigators.

Investigators should have an ongoing or planned partnership with physicians and staff of the Division of Cerebrovascular Diseases in the Department of Neurology and the UIHC Comprehensive Stroke Center. Applicants are encouraged to work with members of the stroke division for guidance and suggestions before the submission. Funded projects are expected to work closely with translation stroke program.

Application

A two-page application (Arial 11-point font with at least 0.5-inch margins) will be needed for the selection process. The first page should include the following items:

- 1) PI and Collaborators
- 2) Background
- 3) Preliminary Data (if available)
- 4) Aims
- 5) Methodology
- 6) Hypotheses
- 7) Future plans for translation into stroke interventions
- 8) Expected Impact on Improving Outcomes in stroke treatment, recovery, or prevention
- 9) Plans for collaboration with the Cerebrovascular Division in the Department of Neurology
- 10) Statement whether prior CCOM funds have been received by PI, and the outcome of those projects regarding funding

The second page should have an itemized budget. Requests of up to \$50,000 will be allowed. This program expects to fund two applications every 2 years. Applicants must justify their intended use of funds and are encouraged to take advantage of ICTS core resources.

Please note that grants will typically be funded for a two-year period for a total of \$50,000. Investigators must submit a new application to be considered for additional funding. In rare circumstances, pilot funds will support the purchase of necessary small equipment with proper justification. **Faculty salary and meeting travel expenses are not allowed.**

Expectations of awardees

It is expected that pilot recipients will: 1) participate in and present their work at research seminars of the Division of Cerebrovascular Diseases, 2) Support an eventual U01 application as part of NIH StrokeNet, and 3) Recognize the Carver College of Medicine for the grant support.

Review Process

The pilot grant review committee is chaired by Dr. Marlan Hansen and includes members of the ICTS, Neurology, Epidemiology and Internal Medicine Departments. Proposals are reviewed according to five equally weighted criteria for: i) innovation, ii) scientific merit, iii) investigative team, iv) potential for improving stroke outcomes, and v) potential for future funding through NIH StrokeNet.

Key Dates

Application Due Date	September 25 th , 2026
Notification of Pilot Grant Awardees	October 30 th , 2026
Pilot Grant Funding Begin	November 15 th , 2026

Please direct applications and questions to:

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References

Landis, S. and M. Fisher, *Why the United States needs a network for stroke clinical trials*. Stroke, 2013. **44**(5): p. 1217-8.
Paul A. Lapchak, John H. Zhang, and Linda J. Noble-Haeusslein: *RIGOR Guidelines: Escalating STAIR and STEPS for Effective Translational Research*. Transl Stroke Res. 2013 Jun; 4(3): 279–285