

SPECIALIZED CENTERS OF RESEARCH IN RHEUMATOID ARTHRITIS (RA SCOR)
SPECIALIZED CENTERS OF RESEARCH IN OSTEOARTHRITIS (OA SCOR)
SPECIALIZED CENTERS OF RESEARCH IN OSTEOPOROSIS (OP SCOR)

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National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases

Letter of Intent Receipt Date for RA and OP SCORs: July 1, 1991

Application Receipt Date for RA and OP SCORs: October 15, 1991

Letter of Intent Receipt Date for OA SCORs: November 1, 1991

Application Receipt Date for OA SCORs: February 14, 1992

BACKGROUND

The National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases (NIAMS) invites grant applications from interested institutions for Specialized Centers of Research (SCORs) in three areas of special importance to the Institute: rheumatoid arthritis, osteoarthritis, and osteoporosis. This represents the first recompetition of the NIAMS SCOR program, begun in 1987. At this time the number of SCOR grants (nine) and the distribution, three each in RA, OA, and OP, will remain the same.

RESEARCH GOALS AND SCOPE

A SCOR consists of a cluster of individual, but interrelated, basic and clinical research projects, each with high scientific merit and clear research objectives. Examples of disciplines that could contribute to a SCOR include, but are not limited to: biochemistry, genetics, molecular biology, immunology, pathology, epidemiology, rheumatology, orthopedic surgery, bioengineering, and statistics. Each center has a central research theme that provides for research on significant problems of etiology, pathogenesis, diagnosis, prevention, and treatment related to the program area. Other characteristics of the SCOR include: a research plan emphasizing current multidisciplinary fundamental and clinical research; an environment encouraging active

collaborations among individual clinical and basic research investigators within the SCOR, and among other SCORs.

Support for large clinical trials or for applications that contain exclusively clinical or exclusively basic studies will not be provided within this SCOR program. Applicants from institutions which have a General Clinical Research Center (GCRC) funded by the NIH National Center for Research Resources may wish to identify the GCRC as a resource for conducting the proposed research. In such a case, a letter of agreement from either the GCRC program director or principal investigator could be included with the application.

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR INCLUSION OF WOMEN AND MINORITIES IN CLINICAL RESEARCH STUDIES

For projects involving clinical research, NIH requires applicants to give special attention to the inclusion of women and minorities in study populations. If women or minorities are not included in the study populations for clinical studies, a specific justification for this exclusion must be provided. Applications without such documentation will not be accepted for review.

MECHANISM OF SUPPORT

The administrative and funding mechanism will be the Specialized Center of Research (P50) grant award. Regulations and policies that govern the research grant programs of the Public Health Service will prevail. The award will support research projects and core functions.

To be eligible for an award, an application must include both basic (laboratory-based) and clinical investigation. Each individual research project must stand on its own merit and complement other projects. Thus, a project, regarded as highly meritorious in isolation could be recommended for deletion from the program if it is perceived as being totally independent from the program as a whole.

Separate cores are not a mandatory component, although experience has shown them to be useful and economic. A core is defined as a resource shared by multiple investigators that should enhance research productivity and increase the functional capacity of the SCOR. Examples of core functions include biochemical analysis, electron microscopy, or data management.

The award of grants pursuant to this Request for Applications (RFA) is contingent upon the receipt of applications judged by peer review to be of excellent to outstanding merit and the availability of appropriated funds for this purpose. The yearly direct cost budget requested must not exceed \$1 million. SCOR awards will be issued for a period of five (5) years and may be renewable on a competitive basis.

REVIEW PROCEDURES AND CRITERIA

All applications submitted in response to the RFA will be reviewed first for completeness and responsiveness to this RFA. A preliminary evaluation (triage) by a peer review group to determine the relative merit of an application relative to other applications may be performed. The further evaluation of remaining applications for scientific and technical merit will be by an initial review group which will be convened solely to review these applications. A site visit is not planned. Each proposal should, therefore, be complete in itself and be prepared as if no site visit is expected.

Factors to be considered in evaluation of the scientific merit of each application will be those used in the review of traditional research project grants applications, including the scientific merit of each proposed project and the scientific merit of combining the component parts into a SCOR. Applications judged to be nonresponsive to the RFA will be returned to the applicant.

Following assessment by the initial review group, applications will be evaluated by the National Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases Advisory Council.

METHOD OF APPLYING

Prospective applicants should obtain the supplemental program guidelines developed by NIAMS for its SCOR program from the Centers Program Director listed below. Prospective applicants are encouraged to submit to the Centers Program Director a nonbinding letter of intent to apply by July 15, 1991 (RA and OP SCORs) or November 14, 1991 (OA SCOR). The letter should include a descriptive title, the name and address of the Principal Investigator and other key investigators, and the names and address of any other participating institutions.

The letter of intent is not mandatory and does not influence review or funding decisions, but it will assist the NIAMS to plan the review. It will also ensure that each potential applicant receives relevant program information prior to expending considerable effort in preparing the application.

Applications must be submitted on the standard PHS 398 application form (rev. 10/88) available at most institutional business offices or from the Division of Research Grants, NIH (telephone number: 301-496-7441). On item 2 of the face page of the application, applicants must enter: RFA AR-91-01 Specialized Centers of Research in Arthritis and Musculoskeletal Diseases. The RFA label (found in the 10/88 revision of application form PHS 398) must be affixed to the bottom of the face page of the original copy of the application. Failure to use this label could result in delayed processing of your application such that it will not reach the review committee in time for review.

Send the original and six copies of the application to the NIH Division of Research Grants (DRG), no later than October 15, 1991, for an RA or OP SCOR and February 14, 1992, for an OA SCOR.

IDENTIFICATION OF CONTACT POINTS

Inquiries regarding this announcement, the guidelines for structuring a Specialized Center of Research application, and method of applying should be directed to:

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This program is described in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance, No. 93.846. Grants are awarded under the authority of the Public Health Service Act, Section 301 (42 USC 241) and administered under PHS grant policies and Federal Regulations, most specifically at 42 CFR Part 52 and 45 CFR Part 74. This program is not subject to review by a Health Systems Agency.