

**MCKNIGHT BRAIN RESEARCH FOUNDATION (MBRF)
Meeting of the Research Committee
of the Board of Trustees**

**Tuesday, April 22, 2025
6:00 pm EDT – 7:00 pm EDT**

Members Attending: Dr. Madhav Thambisetty, Committee Chair; Dr. Sue Pekarske, Trustee;
Dr. Patricia Boyle, Trustee; Dr. Roy Hamilton, Trustee; Dr. Mike Dockery, MBRF
Chair

Also Attending: Ms. Melanie Cianciotto, Corporate Trustee; Dr. Lee Dockery, Chair Emeritus;
Amy Porter, Interim Executive Director

AGENDA

6:00pm EDT	1.	Call to Order/Roll Call	Dr. Madhav Thambisetty
ACTION	2.	Approval of Minutes, January 28, 2025	Dr. Madhav Thambisetty
	3.	Updated Activity Timeline	Dr. Madhav Thambisetty
6:20pm	4.	Current Programs	Dr. Madhav Thambisetty
ACTION		a. Review of the draft RFA for Innovator Awards in Cognitive Aging and Memory Loss (with AFAR)	
ACTION		b. Review of the draft RFA for Clinical Translational Research Scholarship in Cognitive Aging and Age-Related Memory Loss (with ABF)	
ACTION		c. Cognitive Aging and Memory Intervention (CAMI) Core Pilot Grant	
		• Proposal for 2025/2026 Renewal	
		• Request for LOIs and Proposals	
ACTION		d. Review of call for submissions for the MBRF/MBI poster reception at Society for Neuroscience 2025	
		e. Status of the Research Partnership with FNIH and NIA	
6:55pm	5.	Other Business	Dr. Madhav Thambisetty
7:00pm EDT	6.	Adjourn	Dr. Madhav Thambisetty
ACTION			

MINUTES
MCKNIGHT BRAIN RESEARCH FOUNDATION (MBRF)
RESEARCH COMMITTEE
CONFERENCE CALL
January 28, 2025

The Research Committee of the MBRF was called to order at 6:10 pm EST on January 28, 2025, by Dr. Madhav Thambisetty.

The following members were present:

Dr. Madhav Thambisetty, Chair of the Research Committee, Trustee
Dr. Patricia Boyle, Trustee
Dr. Roy Hamilton, Trustee
Dr. Sue Pekarske, Trustee

The following members were absent:

Dr. Mike Dockery, MBRF Chair

Others attending:

Dr. Lee Dockery, Chair Emeritus
Ms. Melanie Cianciotto, Corporate Trustee
Ms. Amy Porter, Interim Executive Director

1. Call to Order

Dr. Thambisetty welcomed the members of the committee to the call.

2. Minutes of the September 24, 2024, Meeting

The minutes of the September 24, 2024, Research Committee Meeting (Attachment 1) were approved as amended.

The changes were:

Item 5 – In the last sentence, insert “.” after Summit and delete “and”

Action Item 3 – insert “research” before summaries

Action Item 4 – insert “seek” before additional

Item 7 – In the last sentence insert “.” after yet and delete “and”

Action Item 1: The minutes of the September 24, 2024, Research Committee Meeting were approved as amended (Attachment 1).

3. Updated Activity Timeline

The committee reviewed the updated Activity Timeline (Attachment 2) for information.

4. Current Grants/Programs

a. 2025 Cognitive Aging and Memory (CAMI) Core Pilot Grant Applications

The CAMI Core met on January 17, 2025, to review six proposals. The scores and summaries of each discussion for all six proposals was include in the meeting materials (Attachment 3). Dr. Thambisetty shared he has no criticism of how the program has been re-energized and is excited by the upward trajectory of the program. The committee agrees with the slate and recommends it be presented to the board at the February 24, 2025 Trustee's meeting.

Action Item 2: The recommended slate will be shared with the Board at the February 24, 2025, Trustees' Meeting.

b. 2024 Research Partnership Report with FNIH/NIA

Dr. Thambisetty shared that we do not know if the report will be received; however, it is supposed to be provided to the MBRF prior to the February 24, 2025, Trustees' Meeting.

c. 2024 MBRF Innovator Awards in Cognitive Aging and Memory Loss (AFAR)

Dr. Thambisetty shared the press release announcing the recipients of the 2024 MBRF Innovator Awards in Cognitive Aging and Memory Loss for information (Attachment 4). The committee asked what media outlets AFAR uses to advertise the award. Ms. Porter will touch base with Ms. Patmintra regarding this issue and will provide an update at the February 24, 2025, Trustees' Meeting.

Action Item 3: Ms. Patmintra will provide an update on the media outlets AFAR uses to advertise the award at the February 24, 2025, Trustees' Meeting.

d. 2025 MBRF Clinical Translational Research Scholarship in Cognitive Aging and Age-Related Memory Loss (ABF)

Dr. Thambisetty shared the award notification letters that were sent to Dr. Giovanna Pilonieta and Dr. Deborah Rose for information (Attachment 5).

5. Other Business

Dr. Thambisetty shared a question has been raised because several posters presented at the 2024 SfN Poster Reception were not related to cognitive decline or memory loss. The call for abstracts does not specifically require alignment with the MBRF mission. After discussion, the committee decided the call for abstracts should not be changed as this may decrease the

number of posters presented. The committee would like to review the announcement to see if a subtle change in the wording would result in the submission of more posters aligned with the mission of the MBRF. This item will be added to the agenda of the next Research Committee Meeting which is scheduled for April 22, 2025.

6. Adjourn

Dr. Thambisetty asked if there was any further discussion. Hearing none, he called for adjournment of the meeting at 6:30 p.m. EST.

Summary of Action Items:

Respectfully Submitted,

Melanie A. Cianciotto
Corporate Trustee

Research Committee Activity Timeline

2022 - 2026

Updated for the April 22, 2025 Meeting of the Research Committee (highlights indicate items for discussion)

Duty (from Committee Charter)	Activity/Action	Outcome	Date	Comments
<i>"Encourage and assess research at the McKnight Brain Institutes (MBIs)"</i>	Review of the Annual Reports of the MBIs	Information for scientific review includes: scientific achievements, publications, presentations, collaborations	Annual Reports were reviewed by the Trustees on February 24, 2025	Reviewers presented at Feb. 2025 Trustees' Meeting. Follow up letters were written and sent to each of the MBIs. Letters are included in the May 14, 2025 trustee meeting material
	Review of all New Funding Requests from MBIs. As a rule, most Funding Requests should be reviewed by the Interventional Core Committee of the MBIs first.	The Leadership Council, by way of the CAMI-Core Chair, Dr. Sara Burke, submitted a proposal to relaunch the Pilot Grant Program.	The board approved the proposal to re-launch the CAMI Core Pilot Grant Program at \$75,000 per year for each award at its February 20, 2024 meeting. The CAMI Core Pilot Grant Review Committee met on January 17, 2025 MBRF Research Committee reviewed successful proposals on January 28, 2025 Recommended Funding	The revitalized CAMI-Core Pilot Grant program was officially launched at the 2024 IIM. Dr. Burke shared that 10 LOIs were submitted this year involving 28 faculty from the 4 institutes. Distribution by MBI is as follows: 10 from UAB, 8 from UF, 5 from UM, and 5 from UA. From the 10 LOIs, 8 teams have been invited to submit full proposals due Nov. 1, 2024. (The other 2 LOIs were not appropriate for CAMI-Core pilot funding.) The distribution by Faculty Rank is 9 New Investigators and 19 Established PIs. Trustees reviewed on Feb. 24, 2025 and approved funding of 3 pilot grants

Duty (from Committee Charter)	Activity/Action	Outcome	Date	Comments
<p><i>"Encourage and assess research at the McKnight Brain Institutes (MBIs)"</i></p>		<p>Dr. Sara Burke submitted a proposal to renew funding for the 2025/26 Pilot Grant Program and a draft Request for LOIs and Proposals</p> <p>Dr. Signorile requested a six month no cost extension to his pilot grant "Cued high-speed multidirectional yoga: Impact on retinal microvascular and cognitive measures"</p>	<p>The Research Committee will review on April 22, 2025 and respond to Dr. Burke with preliminary status/ approval</p> <p>The Research Committee approved the no cost extension by email on March 18, 2025. The Trustees approved it by email.</p>	<p>The MBRF Trustees will review for approval on May 14. Dr. Burke hopes to announce the renewal on May 15 at the Inter-Institutional Meeting in Miami</p>
		<p>UM submitted a request for \$250,000 to co-fund a fellowship over 5 years – The Evelyn F. McKnight Neurocognitive Clinical Scholar in Brain Health and Aging"</p>	<p>A memorandum notifying UM of the approval for funding the Evelyn F. McKnight Neurocognitive Clinical Scholar in Brain Health and Aging for a total of \$250,000 (\$50,000 over 5 years) to be matched by UM was signed on Nov 10, 2021</p>	<p>There is a balance of \$150,000 on this grant commitment</p>

Duty (from Committee Charter)	Activity/Action	Outcome	Date	Comments
<i>"Encourage and assess research at the McKnight Brain Institutes (MBIs)"</i>	Review of Travel Award Fund: Originally established to fund research scholars and faculty to visit other McKnight institutions.	Few applications for travel. The funds allocated for travel have been used to fund the activities of focus groups: Epigenetics, MRI standardization and cognitive test battery working group	Reviewed as needed	Travel funds have been approved to fund travel and lodging for Innovator Award winner(s) to attend the 2024 IIM meeting at UF – Dr. Denise Cai attended.
	Inter-Institutional Block Grants	Cognitive Assessment and McKnight Brain Aging Registry (MBAR) Core	The Leadership Council, by way of Dr. Kristina Visscher, submitted a proposal to support MBAR with remaining dollars. The proposal was approved with minor amendments by the research committee on April 25, 2024 and by the Full Board at its May 15, 2024 Meeting. The Board also approved an additional \$88,000 to cover the proposed budget for the MBAR over the next two years, based on a recommendation from the Finance Committee.	

Duty (from Committee Charter)	Activity/Action	Outcome	Date	Comments
<i>"Encourage and assess research at the McKnight Brain Institutes (MBIs)"</i>	Inter-institutional Block Grants	Cognitive Aging Core Working Groups	No Updates	5 Areas: Brain and Cognitive Health Cognitive Aging & Memory Cognitive Testing Battery Epigenetics MRI standardization
	Inter-institutional Block Grants	Bio-Informatics Core (Epigenetics)	No Updates	
	Inter-institutional Block Grants	Neuroimaging Core	No Updates	
<i>"Identify opportunities...to foster greater interest in cognitive aging and age-related memory loss (in the scientific community)"</i>	Research Partnership with the Foundation for NIH and the NIA.	1 st cycle-2009, 2 nd cycle-2014, 3 rd cycle-2019	2023 annual progress report was submitted in January and reviewed by the board on March 19, 2024 2024 annual progress report is due Jan/Feb 2025. NIA has submitted the information to FNIH per April phone call with FNIH by Amy. Waiting for FNIH to compile as a report and submit Final payment is due March 2025 Final report will be due	History: Established 2009 \$5 M over 5 years from MBRF; match from NIA and partners was \$23 M for total of \$28 M (17 five-year grants funded). The 2014 Partnership renewal funded one 5-year project for \$15 million with \$5 M from MBRF and \$10 M from NIA Current Cycle: NIA committed to provide \$15M to be pooled with MBRF's \$5M. Two grants were provided from the Research Partnership, led by to Dr. Thomas Perls and Dr. Emily Rogalski.

Duty (from Committee Charter)	Activity/Action	Outcome	Date	Comments
<p><i>Identify opportunities...to foster greater interest in cognitive aging and age-related memory loss (in the scientific community)"</i></p>		<p>Cognitive Aging Summit (CAS) IV</p>	<p>Jan/Feb 2026</p> <p>CAS IV, with a theme of "Precision Aging and Brain Health" took place on March 20-21, 2024. There were 170 in-person attendees and up to 449 virtual attendees. Session Chairs, NIA leaders, FNIH and the MBRF met for an Executive Session following the summit.</p>	<p>The FNIH/NIA developed the meeting summaries and the recordings have been posted online (here). Follow-up reflections and takeaways from the Summit and the Executive Session will be shared by NIA, by way of Dr. Molly Wagster and Dr. Jonathan King, later this year.</p> <p>In August, FNIH provided a report on the Cognitive Aging Summit IV. It is included in the material for the September 24, 2024, Research Committee meeting.</p>
	<p>MBRF Innovators Awards in Cognitive Aging and Memory Loss</p> <p>The McKnight Brain Research Foundation committed \$4.5 million over the next five years to support outstanding mid-career scientists committed to researching the basic biological mechanisms</p>	<p>AFAR award cycles under the current grant were implemented (2021, 2022, 2023)</p> <p>AFAR presented a renewal proposal to provide two 3-year awards each year for the next three years. It was approved by the MBRF board on March 19, 2024. The MBRF committed to \$4,626,500 over the next 5 years.</p>	<p>The research committee reviewed the draft RFA and Institutional Commitment Form at its meeting on April 25, 2024. The committee suggested several edits to the documents. The RFA and application were finalized and posted by AFAR at the end of May, following input from the</p>	<p>AFAR Review Committee: Chair: Dr. Anna Maria Cuervo Members: Dr. Rafa de Cabo Dr. Thambisetty Dr. Boyle and Dr. Roz Anderson Dr. Hamilton (joined in 2023)</p> <p>The Review Committee met on September 30 to review 9</p>

Duty (from Committee Charter)	Activity/Action	Outcome	Date	Comments
<p><i>Identify opportunities...to foster greater interest in cognitive aging and age-related memory loss (in the scientific community)"</i></p>	<p>underlying cognitive aging and memory loss.</p> <p>AFAR was invited to submit a renewal proposal for three additional years with updated program guidelines to broaden the applicant pool and able greater access to applicants from institutions with fewer resources</p> <p>AFAR submitted draft RFA and Instruction Sheet for 2025 Innovator Awards</p>		<p>Board at its meeting on May 15, 2024.</p> <p>2024 grant cycle deadlines include: *July 1: application period opens *August 12: application submission deadline *September 30: review committee meets *Oct 1: Award start date</p> <p>Research Cmte will review on April 22, 2025. AFAR hoping for approval before end of month Will need to get Trustee approval by email before their May meeting</p>	<p>applications (11 were submitted). Awards were made to Janine Kwapis, PhD of Pennsylvania State University and Sanaz Sedaghat, PhD, University of Minnesota as 2024 recipients after MBRF Trustee review and support. Having met all institutional requirements, November 2024 Dr. Christopher Thaiss' 2023 Innovators Award was transferred from Penn to the ARC Institute and Stanford</p>
<p><i>"Encourage young investigators in this area of research"</i></p>	<p>McKnight Brain Research Foundation Clinical Translational Research Scholarship with American Academy of Neurology (AAN) and American Brain Foundation (ABF)</p>	<p>Seven award cycles have been completed. Two awardees have received the CTRS every year since 2018, with the exception of 2023, when one award was made.</p> <p>Members of the 2022-23 Review Committee include Dr. Madhav Thambisetty and Dr. Patricia Boyle. Dr Hamilton joined in 2023-24.</p>	<p>The Research Committee approved the draft RFA for 2024 with minor amendments at the April 25, 2024 meeting.</p> <p>Upcoming 2024 grant cycle deadlines include: *May: application period opens</p>	<p><u>2023-24: Seventh Scholarships</u></p> <p>Two applications were submitted to the MBRF Award mechanism, and one was awarded to Haopei Yang, PhD. The Trustees determined that the other project did not align with the scope or spirit of the award guidelines.</p>

Duty (from Committee Charter)	Activity/Action	Outcome	Date	Comments
<i>"Encourage young investigators in this area of research"</i>		ABF submitted a draft 2025/26 RFA for MBRF review	<p>*September 10: application submission deadline *November 7: review committee met *January: notification of awardees *July: Award start date</p> <p>Changes to the draft RFA were submitted by the MBRF to ABF April 9, 2025. The Research Committee will review on April 22, 2025. ABF is hoping for end of month approval. Will need to get MBRF Trustee approval by email before May meeting.</p>	<p>10 applications were received by the deadline of September 10 and they appear to all be focused on cognitive aging. Last year only 2 applications were received; in 2023, 8 were received; and in 2022 there were 5 received.</p> <p>2025 Recipients (2) were notified by letter on January 5, 2025. An announcement of the 2025 recipients will be made at the AAN meeting in April. Names are kept confidential until then.</p>
	Poster Reception at Society for Neuroscience annual meeting	Poster sessions were held in 2008 - 2019, and began again in 2023.		Vicki Hixon submitted a proposal to organize the poster session to take place on October 6, 2024 in Chicago. The trustees approved the proposal at their March 19, 2024 meeting. On June 23 rd , Vicki sent a Save-the-Date to MBI leadership and communications teams to announce the event will take place on October 6, 2024 at the Chicago Hilton. Dr.

Duty (from Committee Charter)	Activity/Action	Outcome	Date	Comments
<p><i>"Encourage young investigators in this area of research"</i></p>		<p>A question has been raised – Several posters presented at the 2024 poster reception were not related to cognitive decline or memory loss. The call for abstracts does not specifically require alignment with the MBRF mission. This was discussed and considered to be okay although perhaps subtle wording could be added to encourage research in line with the mission</p>	<p>On April 22, 2025, The Research Committee will review the wording of the call for abstracts currently used by Vicki Hixon for the Poster Session</p>	<p>Patricia Boyle will attend as a representative of the MBRF.</p> <p>Ms. Vicki Hixon reported that 48 abstracts have been received with a few more expected before the event. Included in the Sept 24 meeting material are a list of those abstracts, a report and information about the event.</p> <p>There were 64 registered posters and 3 additional posters were added the night of the event.</p> <p>Vicki Hixon has submitted a proposal for the 2025 SfN Poster Session which will be reviewed by the Finance Committee on January 21, 2025.</p> <p>The SfN Poster Session was approved for 2025 by the Finance Committee and the Trustees</p>

McKnight Brain Research Foundation Innovator Awards in Cognitive Aging and Memory Loss

- [The Program](#)
- [Eligibility](#)
- [Selection Criteria](#)
- [Application Procedures](#)
- [Reporting Requirements](#)
- [Annual Meeting](#)

The McKnight Brain Research Foundation (MBRF) and the American Federation for Aging Research (AFAR) will provide up to two 3-year awards of \$750,000 (USD) each to advanced Assistant Professors and recently appointed Associate Professors (MDs and PhDs.) One award will be made to support studies focusing on clinical translational research and another award toward understanding basic biological mechanisms underlying cognitive aging and age-related memory loss.

The application deadline is August 12, 2025~~4~~.

The Program

The major goal of the program is to identify emerging scientific leaders by building a cadre of outstanding research scientists across the United States to lead transformative research in the field of cognitive aging.

The program targets full-time independent investigators at the rank of Assistant Professor or Associate Professor (or equivalent) with established independent research programs who have already demonstrated a firm commitment to cognitive aging research. It will add substantial start-up support for a period of three years to help these investigators develop and/or expand an outstanding research program in cognitive aging and memory loss.

One award will be made to support innovative studies focusing on **clinical translational research** and another will support innovative studies of **basic biological mechanisms** underlying cognitive aging and age-related memory loss. It is expected that the proposed research will yield transformative discoveries and thus proposals are invited that are high risk/high gain in nature and that would be less suitable for conventional sources of funding. For example, this support could be deployed towards conducting a pilot clinical trial, developing proof-of concept interventions to ameliorate age associated cognitive impairment, gather preclinical data to accelerate testing of potential interventions, and further study the mechanistic basis of age-associated cognitive impairment in relevant experimental models with a view to identifying novel treatment targets. Scientists proposing to pursue basic research should clearly articulate the potential of their findings to be translated into clinically relevant strategies, and/or treatments. Research studies at the intersection of age-associated cognitive changes and disease-related cognitive impairment may be considered if a strong case can be made for their relevance to cognitive aging and age-

related memory loss. However, research that is primarily focused on neurodegenerative diseases (e.g., Alzheimer's disease) will not be supported.

Two 3-year awards of \$750,000 (USD) each will be made in 2025~~4~~, of which a maximum of 10% may be used for indirect expenses or institutional overhead.

Eligibility

To be eligible, the applicant must:

- Have completed research training prior to the beginning of this award (October 1, 2025~~4~~):
 - o PhD candidates: no more than 7 years from the completion of formal post-doctoral research training post-PhD,
 - o MD or combined degree candidates: no more than 12 years from the date when finished residency.
- Exceptions to the 7 and 12 year limits may be considered for certain life events (e.g. familial, personal commitments or other exceptional circumstances). An exception request can be submitted by emailing an NIH-style biosketch to AFAR at grants@afar.org at least one week prior to the deadline date.
- Be an independent investigator at the rank of Assistant Professor or Associate Professor (*promoted to the rank of Associate Professor no earlier than October 1, 2022~~4~~*), who has received R01 funding (or equivalent funding such as an NIH DP5, R35 or NSF Research awards.)
- Be tenure-track faculty or equivalent in an academic or non-profit institution with evidence of long-term institutional support as indicated by commitment of resources including independent laboratory space, start-up research funds and personnel. Candidates not in a tenure-track position are also eligible and should demonstrate similar evidence of long-term institutional support and not be in a time-limited appointment.
- Have a proven track record of research accomplishments in cognitive aging as indicated by their publications in high-impact journals, awards, and other metrics of peer recognition.
- Provide evidence of institutional commitment as described in a [form completed by the Dean or CEO](#) and a letter of commitment signed by the Department Chair.
- Be in full time employment at an academic or non-profit research institution in the United States.

Commented [HH1]: To be updated.

The program **does not** provide support for:

- Senior faculty, i.e., at the rank of Associate Professor or higher who have held this position before October 1, 2022~~4~~.
- Assistant Professors who have not yet received R01 or equivalent extramural independent funding.
- Investigators who are conducting research at a federal government or for-profit institution.

- See comment above about disease specific research.

Questions about eligibility and suitability of research project can be addressed to grants@afar.org.

Selection Criteria

Five criteria are used to determine the merit of an application:

- Qualifications of the applicant;
- Quality and promise of the proposed research and its relevance to cognitive aging/age-related memory loss;
- Novelty/impact of the proposed research and potential to have transformative clinical impact;
- Excellence of the research environment;
- The commitment by the institution to the applicant as described in the institutional commitment form and letter.

Application Procedures and Timeline

Please refer to the [application instructions](#). Incomplete applications cannot be considered. All applications must be submitted via email to afarapplication@afar.org.

The applications will be reviewed by a committee whose recommendations will be presented to MBRF and AFAR for final funding decisions.

Please review [this link](#) which includes suggestions for submitting an LOI or application to AFAR. Click [here](#) for our Frequently Asked Questions page. If you are using animals in your research, please review [Principles of Animal Use for Gerontological Research](#) or this recent webinar recording from the Nathan Shock Centers of Excellence: <https://nathanshockcenters.org...>

MBRF and AFAR will not provide reviewer critiques to any applicants at any review level.

Timeline:

Application deadline: August 12, 2025~~4~~

Anticipated Award Announcement: September 30, 2025~~4~~

Award Start Date: October 1, 2025~~4~~

Reporting Requirements

Investigators will be required to submit a brief [narrative report](#) annually on the progress of their research. Final narrative and financial reports are required within three months following the end date of the award.

Annual Meeting

Recipients of this award are expected to attend the AFAR Grantee Conference. The purpose of the meeting is to promote scientific and personal exchanges among recent AFAR grantees and experts

in aging research. Grantees are also expected to attend the annual inter-institutional meeting of the MBRF.



McKnight Brain Research Foundation Innovator Awards in Cognitive Aging and Memory Loss

Institutional Commitment Form

Candidates for the [McKnight Brain Research Foundation Innovator Awards in Cognitive Aging and Memory Loss](#) must be independent investigators with independent research space. As part of the review the committee will evaluate the institutional commitment for each applicant in order to ensure that adequate research space and resources are available to the candidate.

To complete the application, this form must be completed by the Dean or the CEO of the institution. **In addition, a signed letter from the Department Chair must be submitted, as detailed in the instructions.**

The form and the letter are NOT to be included in the application, but must be submitted directly to AFAR by the person/office completing the form (NOT the applicant), to afarapplication@afar.org as a Word or PDF file by the application deadline.

Name, title, and address of official completing this form:

E-mail:

Phone:

Signature of Official: _____

First and Last name of Applicant: _____

1. Does the candidate have independent investigator status at their institution?

YES NO

2. Has the candidate's institution provided space and equipment specifically dedicated to their research program?

YES

Please Describe:

NO

3. Did the candidate receive intramural start-up funds when offered his/her current position? (AFAR

does not consider extramural funds from an outside organization/institution as 'start-up funds'.)

YES

Please provide \$ amount and details of start-up funds that are provided to cover your *direct costs*:

NO

4. Does the candidate have designated administrative support (e.g. someone who helps with editing and submitting grants, tracks budgets, etc.)

YES

NO

5. What was the start date of the candidate's current position?

Month/Day/Year:

6. Does your institution offer tenure:

YES

NO

a. If yes, is the candidate's current position a tenure track position?

YES

NO

b. If your institution does **not** offer tenure, please provide evidence of long-term institutional support

7. Indicate percentage of the applicant's professional time (FTE) allocated to:

a. Research: %

b. Teaching: %

c. Clinical: %

8. a. Describe overall annual research funding for your institution in 2024.

b. Describe the overall annual research funding for the department in which the investigator holds their primary appointment.

Commented [HH1]: Should we ask for dollar amount for direct costs only?

Commented [OvdW2R1]: For one of the our other programs it was commented that we should consider asking for direct funds only because some institutions will take out indirect cost out of the start up funds



9. Check any boxes that apply:

- Is your institution an undergraduate or graduate-degree granting institution, with at least 35% of undergraduate students supported by Pell grants, that has received less than six million dollars in NIH research project grant (RPG) support per year in three of the last five years?
- Does your institution grant doctoral degrees and has it received less than 25 million dollars in NIH RPG support in three of the last five years?
- Is your institution's historical and current mission to educate students from historically underrepresented populations in biomedical research?
- Other category: Please describe:
- None of these categories apply.

10. If there is anything else that may demonstrate the institution's commitment to the candidate please describe here:

AMERICAN FEDERATION FOR AGING RESEARCH
55 West 39th Street, 16th Floor, New York, NY 10018 (212) 703-9977

2025⁴ McKnight Brain Research Foundation Innovator Awards in Cognitive Aging and Memory Loss Application Instruction Sheet

Instruction Sheet: DO NOT INCLUDE with your grant application!

Please carefully read the [application guidelines](#) on the AFAR website, before completing this application. Frequently Asked Questions can be found [here](#), as well as [things to consider when applying](#).

INSTRUCTIONS: The application must be submitted via email to afarapplication@afar.org no later than **August 12, 2025⁴ at 5:00 p.m., EST, as a single PDF application, not to exceed 5MB**. No late submissions will be accepted. The application file should be named as follows: "last name, first name", for example "Lee, Pat.pdf".

The application should start with the title page, and budget pages of the application form, and then include the following five sections in this order:

1. Research proposal in **four** pages or less, including figures, addressing each of the following (Identify each section by the corresponding letter):
 - a. Novelty/impact and relevance to the field of cognitive aging and memory loss, and why the project has the potential to be transformative;
 - b. List of specific aims of the research plan;
 - c. Background information needed to understand the importance of the problem;
 - d. Preliminary data produced by the Principal Investigator;
 - e. Experimental design, with key methodologies; include pitfalls;
 - f. Brief discussion of implications for future research in your lab and elsewhere;
 - g. Relation of this work to current research in your lab and if/why this work is complementary and not overlapping.
2. Scientific Rigor: Describe, when applicable, sample size calculations, rationale for age groups, sex, statistical methods, design as well as power analysis, etc. (not to exceed one page). **Statistical analysis should be broken down by aims.**
3. Complete titles of essential references (not to exceed two pages).
4. NIH-style biosketch of PI (and collaborators, if applicable), using the new NIH format, not exceeding six pages each. *Include past, pending, and current funding using the NIH 'other support' pages.*
5. One-page letters of commitment should be included from collaborators/co-Investigators, if applicable.
6. Include only the application and required materials. If absolutely necessary for the review, the applicant may include one manuscript of a paper that has been accepted for publication but has not yet been published. Do not include any reprints or papers that have been submitted but not yet accepted for publication. If your manuscript has been placed in a repository this will be considered unpublished.

Sections 1-6 should be submitted with the application as a single PDF File.

7. Your Dean or the CEO of your institution must complete an institutional commitment form, which can be downloaded here: [MBRF AFAR Institutional Commitment Form](#).
8. A letter documenting the institution's commitment to the candidate should be prepared by the Chair of the department in which the candidate holds their primary appointment. The letter should include the following:

Commented [OvdW1]: Note: As of May 25 2025 there is a new NIH biosketch format - do we want them to use that (there are significant changes) or use the current format?

Commented [OvdW2R1]: <https://grants.nih.gov/policy-and-compliance/changes-coming-2025/common-forms-for-biosketch>

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- A statement of commitment to the candidate's development into a productive, independent investigator meeting the requirements of this award. It should be clear that the institutional commitment to the candidate is not contingent upon receipt of this award.
- Assurances that the candidate will be able to devote the required effort and time to complete the proposed project.
- Assurance that the candidate will have access to appropriate office and laboratory space, equipment, and other resources and facilities (including access to clinical and/or other research populations) to carry out the proposed project.
- Assurance that appropriate time and support will be available for any staff needed to complete the proposed project.

Section 7 and 8 are NOT to be included in the application. The form and the letter must be submitted separately by email to afarapplication@afar.org by the person or office who completed the respective document.

This page is the Instruction Sheet: DO NOT INCLUDE IT with your grant application!

20254 MBRF/AFAR Grant Application - Page 3

2. BUDGET

Up to \$250,000 in total cost per year may be requested.

Category	Year 1 MBRF/AFAR	Year 2 MBRF/AFAR	Year 3 MBRF/AFAR	Grand Total
Personnel				
Equipment				
Supplies				
AFAR Conference			\$2,000	
Travel				
Other Expenses				
10% Indirect Cost				

TOTAL

- Personnel funds can be used for P.I., research assistant(s), technician(s), postdoc(s), or graduate student(s)
- \$2,000 is budgeted to cover hotel, meals and other meeting incidentals related to attending the AFAR Grantee Conference in ~~Santa Barbara, CA~~ (not travel) and will be withheld from the final award amount
- Travel line item should include expenses for travel to the AFAR Grantee Conference in year 3 of the award. Allowable travel expenses are limited to reasonable expenses incurred by the grantee for domestic travel to attend a scientific meeting where the grantee is presenting research that has been supported by the award.
- Total budget requested from MBRF/AFAR may not exceed \$750,000, including up to 10% for institutional overhead (up to \$68,182)

(Note: AFAR does not provide funding for the purchase of personal computers or laptops or other costs not directly related to the research project, such as tuition, 'telecommunications' or similar.)

4. BUDGET DETAIL AND JUSTIFICATION

Use as much space as needed

20254 MBRF/AFAR Grant Application - Page 4

5. Does the research plan include use of human subjects? YES NO
Does the research plan include use of animal subjects? YES NO

Applicants should note that IRB certification (for human subjects) and/or Animal Use Committee approval (for animal subjects) must be provided to AFAR before a grant award can be made.

Applicants are urged to consult the AFAR website at <http://www.afar.org/research/funding/animal-use/> for advice on human and animal usage or this webinar recording from the Nathan Shock Centers of Excellence: <https://nathanshockcenters.org/june2021webinar-1>. The website includes a helpful set of guidelines for optimal use of rodents in aging research projects.

6. Indicate the candidate's % of time/effort that will be spent on the planned project:

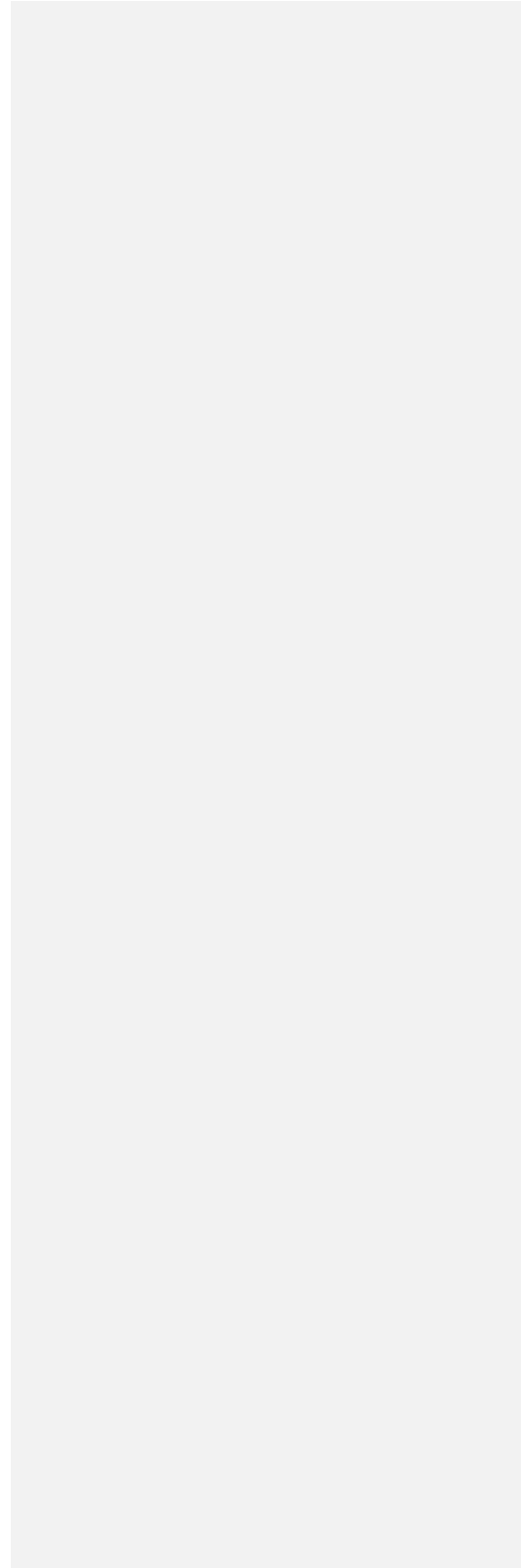
_____ %

7. a. Have you previously applied for an AFAR Grant? Yes _____ No _____
b. If yes, have you previously received any AFAR Grant? Yes _____ No _____

If yes, please provide name of grant, year received and title of project:

Applicant's Name:

[Start text of grant application and additional materials here, in the order as listed on the instructions page. Insert page number and applicant's name at the top of each page and use Arial font that is not smaller than 11 point with at least 1/2-inch margins on all sides. Any figures used must be included in the 4-page proposal.]



McKnight Clinical Translational Research Scholarship in Cognitive Aging and Age-Related Memory Loss

Funded by the McKnight Brain Research Foundation through the American Brain Foundation and the American Academy of Neurology

Application Deadline: September 9, 2025 (We asked for Red or Blue, but the Green is the new AAN logo color and they insist.)

This award aims to support young investigators in clinical studies relevant to age-related cognitive decline and memory loss. The award also recognizes the importance of rigorous training in clinical research and encourages young investigators to seek opportunities to establish future careers in the area of human cognitive aging. Please note: the focus should NOT be on a neurodegenerative dementia (e.g. Alzheimer's disease); however, proposals that focus on combined study of cognitive aging and neurodegenerative cognitive changes may be considered.

The award will consist of a commitment of \$65,000 per year for two years, plus a \$10,000 per year stipend to support education and research-related costs for a total of \$150,000. Supplementation of the award with other grants is permissible, but to be eligible to apply for this award, the other grant source(s) cannot exceed \$75,000 annually.

The American Academy of Neurology is firmly committed to embracing the diversity among our members, applicants, and reviewers and affirms the importance of equity and inclusiveness within the AAN research program.

(This is AAN's and ABF's policy but they are discussing whether it should be removed given the current climate.)

HOW TO APPLY

1. Visit [AAN.com/view/ResearchProgram](https://aan.com/view/ResearchProgram)
2. Go to "McKnight Clinical Translational Research Scholarship in Cognitive Aging and Age-Related Memory Loss"
3. Select "Apply now"

Please only submit one application - applicants are not allowed to submit applications for more than one award. Your application will also be considered for all relevant clinical research training scholarship awards.

Visit the [Frequently Asked Questions](#) portion of the website for more information.

IMPORTANT DATES

September 9, 2025: Application deadline – Note that this is the deadline for all documents, including those from the mentor and chair. Applications will be declined if this information is not submitted by September 9.

January 2026: Notification of recipients

July 1, 2026: Funding begins

ELIGIBILITY

1. For the purpose of this scholarship, research is defined as patient-oriented research conducted with human participants, or translational research specifically designed to develop treatments or enhance identification of age-related cognitive decline and memory changes. These may include epidemiologic or behavioral studies, clinical trials, studies of disease mechanisms, the development of new [technologies](#), and [health outcomes research](#).

[technologies, and health outcomes research](#). Disease-related studies not directly involving humans are also encouraged if the primary goal is the development of therapies, diagnostic tests, or tools to mitigate age-related cognitive decline and memory loss.

2. Recipient is interested in an academic career in neurological research who has completed residency [training or awarded](#) a PhD [degree](#) no more than 5 years prior to the beginning of this award (July 1, 2026). If you have completed both residency and a PhD, your eligibility is based on when you completed residency. If you completed a fellowship of any kind after residency, your eligibility is still based on the date you finished residency. The applicant must hold a post-baccalaureate PhD degree or equivalent, or a doctoral-level clinical degree such as MD, DO, DVM, PharmD, DDS, DrPH, or PhD in nursing, public health or other clinical health science.
3. The proposed program of training and research must be performed entirely within an institution in the United States accredited by the relevant accrediting authority.
4. Research studies at the intersection of age-associated cognitive changes and disease-related cognitive impairment may be considered if a strong case can be made for their relevance to cognitive aging and age-related memory loss. However, [research that is primarily focused on neurodegenerative diseases \(e.g., Alzheimer's disease\)](#) will not be supported. Applicants are encouraged to reference the [Opportunities for Action section](#) of the National Academies 2015 Cognitive Aging report for areas of research need.

A successful application should include the following:

- **Well-developed hypothesis:** The hypothesis is testable and presented in clear language.
- **Detailed statistical plan:** Statistical methods are well-designed and detailed.
- **Strong mentorship:** There is clear demonstration of strong mentorship to support the project.
- **Feasible primary outcomes:** Each aim is feasible, focused, and logical.
- **Innovation:** Project concept is original, novel, and will advance the applicant's long-term career goals.
- **Well-defined training plan:** There is a clear and gap-based career development plan.

EVALUATION AND SELECTION

Applications are evaluated by reviewers based on the following criteria:

- Quality and originality of the research plan
- Applicant's ability and promise as a clinician-scientist based on prior record of achievement and career plan, and NIH Biosketch
- Quality and nature of the training to be provided and the mentor-specific, departmental, and institutional training environment
- Innovation of the research plan approach
- Project significance: the ability to advance the field of cognitive aging

REQUIRED ATTACHMENTS FOR APPLICATION

1. PDF of Three-page Research Plan, including brief statements of aims, background, contemplated approaches to methodology and any supporting preliminary data/figures. References do not count toward the page limit. The research plan should be written by the applicant and should represent their original work. However, the applicant is expected and encouraged to develop this plan based on discussion with the proposed mentor. **It is appropriate, but not required, for the proposed work to be specifically related to the mentor's ongoing research.**
2. PDF of Applicant's NIH Biosketch. See this [link](#) for the most recent NIH Biosketch template

Once the above information is fully completed and **submitted** by the applicant:

3. The **chair** will receive an email with a link asking them to check a box confirming that the applicant's clinical service responsibilities will be restricted to no more than 30 percent of your time and include a list of applicant's non-research related service. The chair will NOT be asked to submit a letter.

4. The **mentor** will receive an email with a link to submit a letter of reference detailing their support of and commitment to the applicant and the proposed research and training plan. The letter should be 1,000 words or less and specifically indicate the mentor's role in the development and preparation of the applicant's research plan and should include:

- How the proposed research fits into the mentor's research program
- Expertise and experience in the area of research proposed and the nature of the mentor's proposed time commitment to the supervision and training of the applicant
- Mentor's prior experience in the supervision, training, and successful mentoring of clinician scientists
- Potential **for success of the** applicant's future research career. **and comparison of applicant to other trainees** *can future success be clarified?*
- ~~applicant among other residents~~
- Institution's commitment to 70 percent protected research time

5. The **mentor** will also be required to upload a NIH Biosketch.

ANNUAL AND FINAL PROGRESS REPORTS

An annual progress report is due in May of the first year. Renewal of the award in year two is contingent upon presentation of a satisfactory progress report. Additionally, a final research report and a final expenditure report are due within 60 days following the close of the grant term. The final expenditure report must be prepared by the institution's financial office.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Ashley Nielsen, Research Grants Administrator
Phone: (612) 928-6378
Email: research@aan.com

Cognitive Aging and Memory Intervention (CAMI) Core Pilot Grant Program

To: Mike Dockery, MD, Chairman of the McKnight Brain Research Foundation (MBRF)

From: Sara Burke, PhD, Chair of the CAMI Core Pilot Grant Program Committee

Subject: Recommendations for 2025-2026 CAMI Core Pilot Grant Program

BACKGROUND: In August 2023 the Inter-Institutional Leadership Council submitted a series of recommendations to the MBRF Trustees for maximizing the impact of MBRF's continued investments in Inter-Institutional efforts. Among these recommendations was "Creating an Infrastructure for the Inter-Institutional Pilot Grant Funding Mechanism." In response to that recommendation, the MBRF Trustees requested the reconstitution of the CAMI Core to run the Pilot Grant Program and recommended that this Core include equal representation of the MBIs and key individuals who will champion and promote this program within and across the MBI sites. The Trustees also asked to engage with the Leadership Council regarding a proposed plan for future implementation of the CAMI Core Pilot Grant Mechanism. The proposal was approved in 2024, and the current CAMI Core Committee would like to propose that we continue to implement this program in the same manner for a 2025-2026 funding cycle.

The primary objective of the CAMI Core Committee is to create a vibrant and impactful intervention hub for the four MBIs that fosters promising multisite collaborations to conduct pre-clinical and clinical intervention studies that will lead to high-profile, extramurally funded, and internationally recognized research programs. This vision will be actualized with the following objectives that are aligned with the original CAMI Core proposal:

CAMI Core Objectives:

1. Facilitate identifying potential Inter-Institutional collaborations by an enhanced Communications Strategy (see page 3) and leveraging resources from each Institute through the CAMI Core Committee Members who serve as pilot program champions.
2. Generate, and after approval by the MBRF Trustees, distribute Request for Funding Announcements for pilot intervention proposals.
3. Identify high-priority Letters of Intent to invite for full proposal submissions.
4. Prioritize pilot projects for funding through rigorous review by experts in cognitive aging research.

PROPOSED 2025/2026 PILOT GRANT PROGRAM:

Based on the Trustees' recommendation that the CAMI Core consist of members from each of the four MBIs, each institute nominated one member to serve a 2- or 3-year term. The intent of different initial term lengths is to ensure that there are always experienced Core Committee Members that retain critical historical and institutional knowledge across subsequent years. Following the initial terms, all future CAMI Core Committee Members will serve a 3-year term. Sara Burke (UF) has agreed to serve as Chair for the CAMI Core for the initial 3-year period, joined by a Co-Chair in year 3 who will take over Chair role in the subsequent year. The Co-Chair and 2027 Chair will be selected from the current CAMI Core Committee Members. Dr. Burke has also agreed to serve as a regular member for an additional year, to facilitate the transition of leadership. The current full committee includes:

CAMI Core Members:

Sara Burke, Chair burkes@ufl.edu (UF, Chair 2024-2025, Co-chair 2026, Member 2027)

Ihtsham ul Haq ihag@med.miami.edu (UMiami, Member, 2024-2026)

Matthew Grilli mdgrilli@arizona.edu (UA, Member, 2024-2027)

Keith McGregor kmmcgreg@uab.edu (UAB, Member, 2024-2026)

The roles of the CAMI Core members will be: 1) assist with drafting the annual request for applications (RFA) at the beginning of each year, 2) serve as a champion of the CAMI Core Pilot Grant Program at their home institution and solicit applications, 3) screen and select letters of intent

for full applications annually in July/August, 4) nominate potential external reviewers, 5) review 1-3 applications, and 6) participate in a review panel discussion session over zoom, with other committee members and MBI/external reviewers, as needed.

When the term of a CAMI Core member is complete, if they decide not to volunteer again, there will be two strategies for nominating a successor. Firstly, the Committee Member that is rolling off will nominate 2 potential successors from their home institution. Secondly, any previous Pilot Grant Awardees that are established faculty at the rank of Associate for Full Professor will be identified and nominated. A new CAMI Core Committee member from the same institution as the departing member will then be selected by the Council Leadership from that nomination list.

Role of the Chair: The chair will serve as the liaison between the CAMI Core Committee and Leadership Council to facilitate communication. The chair will also organize CAMI Core meetings, oversee drafting the annual RFA with the CAMI Core Committee based on recommendations from the Leadership Council, invite external reviewers, and organize the zoom review session. The Chair will also serve as the main liaison for the CAMI Core Pilot Grant Program to the MBRF Trustees by providing the annual timeline and updates regarding key steps in the process (for example, how many LOIs were received and how many were advanced). The Chair will also communicate any priority research areas recommended by the CAMI Core Committee and Leadership Council to the MBRF and ensure that the RFA aligns with any areas of focus being prioritized by both groups. Relatedly, the Chair will ensure that the RFA draft language is approved by the MBRF before distribution. Finally, after the scientific review is completed and funding recommendations have been made to the Trustees, the CAMI Core Chair will report to the Leadership Council a summary of the review discussion. This will ensure clear and efficient communication between the CAMI Core, MBRF Trustees, and Leadership Council even if the CAMI Core does not include a member from the Council in future years.

REVIEWERS: We would like to thank the MBRF Trustees for the acknowledgement and honorarium presented to the 4 external reviewers. This support enhanced our ability to recruit experts to participate in the CAMI Core Pilot grant evaluations. We would like to request support to conduct the review process in an identical manner during this 2025-2026 cycle. Details of the review process are included below.

Each pilot grant application requires faculty from at least 2 MBIs to collaborate to be eligible for this funding opportunity. Because it is a conflict of interest to have faculty members review grants submitted from their home institution, it is necessary to recruit reviewers from the MBIs as well as from outside the four institutes to provide an unbiased and expert evaluation of the science in each proposal. The Leadership Council and CAMI Core Committee has discussed how to facilitate the review of grants and has the following recommendations:

- 1) In addition to the CAMI Core Committee, 2-4 investigators from across the MBI sites will participate in the review. These reviewers will be invited from previous awardees that hold the rank of Associate or Full Professor. The Leadership Council and CAMI Core Committee recommend that the Notice of Award include a clause that awardees will be asked to participate in at least one Pilot Grant Review Panel once they reach the rank of Associate Professor or higher.
- 2) External reviewers at the rank of Associate Professor or higher will be invited to serve on the CAMI Core Pilot Grant Review Panel when LOIs are selected for full applications. This will ensure that sufficient numbers of reviewers with relevant expertise are available to participate in the review panel discussion and that each grant receives at least 3 independent reviews. Reviewers will be invited by the Chair based on the recommendations of CAMI Core Committee members. Depending on the number of LOIs selected to submit full grants, it is anticipated that approximately 4 external reviewers will be invited each year.
- 3) External reviewers will receive an evaluation rubric to score each grant and will be expected to review 3-4 grants and participate in a Zoom review discussion.
- 4) External reviewers will receive modest monetary compensation of \$200 for their service. This is comparable to what the NIH pays investigators who serve on a scientific review panel.

- 5) The Leadership council also recommends that external reviewers receive a thank you letter from the MBRF to document their service. This will be helpful for investigators seeking promotion because service on review panels is an important metric for showing national recognition of scientific expertise.
- 6) After the review panel is completed, anonymized reviews will be available to Pilot Grant applicants. These can help with the preparation of future applications, particularly for new investigators.

BUDGET: We thank the MBRF Trustees for their increased budgetary support of the CAMI Core pilot awards to \$75,000/year for two years for the last funding cycle. This enhanced commitment to this important initiative was instrumental in the increased interest in this award mechanism and the increase in applications. We would like to respectfully request, that this budget remain for the 2025-2026 cycle.

CAMI CORE PILOT GRANT SCIENTIFIC REVIEW PANEL: The consensus recommendation is that all submitted CAMI Core Pilot Grant applications will be discussed and scored by members of the scientific review panel, comprised of the external reviewers as well as CAMI Core Committee members and other MBI investigators from outside of the PIs home institutions. Scientific review panels will include a chair who runs the meetings and summarizes the discussion. This role will be filled by the CAMI Core Committee Chair, or Co-Chair (selected from the CAMI Core Committee) when a proposal involves the Chair's institution. If both the Chair and Co-Chair have a conflict, then the Chair will choose a review panel chair from among the non-conflicted panelists. These meetings will occur annually over Zoom and will take approximately 4 hours.

To facilitate career development of new investigators (maximum rank of Assistant Professor or Postdoctoral Scholar and no prior funding as a primary PI excepting non-training grants), the Leadership Council and CAMI Core Committee also recommend separate scoring criteria for new and established investigators. New investigators will submit a 1-page mentoring plan and timeline as part of the grant application. Grant funding recommendations will be based on evaluation discussion and scoring. It is recommended that there be no quota for funding a certain number of either junior or established PIs, while taking into account the importance of early support in launching a scientific career.

ROLE OF MBRF TRUSTEES AND GRANT ADMINISTRATION: Following the Scientific Review Panel, the CAMI Core Committee will submit funding recommendations to the MBRF for the final award decision. The MBRF will also collect annual interim reports required before the disbursement of Year 2 funds. The CAMI Core Committee and MBRF will work together to evaluate the annual progress and determine if Year 1 progress was sufficient to release Year 2 funds. The Leadership Council also recommends that the MBRF keep all historical documents regarding submissions, reviews, funding, and final outcomes. The CAMI Core Committee could work with the MBRF to establish a shared repository with this information, with access given to the MBRF and the CAMI Committee Chair.

PROPOSED TIMELINE FOR 2025-2026: Once the Leadership Council and MBRF trustees agree on a new structure for the CAMI Core Pilot Grant Program, we propose the following timeline:

May 14, 2025: Launch RFA at the MBRF Inter-institutional Meeting.

July 1, 2025: LOI due.

August 15, 2025: CAMI Core Committee selects LOIs for full proposal, nominates external reviewers, and invitations are sent by CAMI Core Chair.

November 5, 2025: Full application due.

November 25, 2025: Review assignments distributed to Committee Members and External

Reviewers.

January 5, 2026: Reviews due.

January 2026: Zoom CAMI Core Scientific Review Panel with all committee members, 4-5 external reviewers, the Executive Director, and MBRF Trustee representing the Research Committee.

February 1, 2026: Recommendations for funding to Trustees, meeting with Leadership Council in February to de-brief funding recommendations and revise RFA for the following year.

March 2026: MBRF will send Notice of Awards and MOUs for funding disbursement.

May 1, 2026: Tentative Grant start date.

April 1, 2027: Year 1 grant progress report due to MBRF Trustees to secure Year 2 funding by May 1, 2026.

**The MBRF Cognitive Aging and Memory Intervention Core
Inter-institutional Pilot Program
REQUEST FOR LOI and PROPOSALS**

APPLICATION RECEIPT DATE:

LOI Deadline: **July 1, 2025**

Full Application Deadline: **November 5, 2025**
(if invited to submit by the CAMI Core)

PURPOSE: The McKnight Research Foundation (MBRF) Cognitive Aging and Memory Intervention (CAMI) Core invites Inter-Institutional MBI applications for pilot studies related to interventions that aim to reduce age-related memory loss and cognitive decline. The specific goal of these projects will be to facilitate and nurture new Inter-Institute collaborations that will establish nationally renowned and impactful research programs for improving memory and cognition in older adults.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES: The MBRF Cognitive Aging and Memory Intervention Core was established to facilitate multi-site McKnight Brain Institute cognitive aging and memory interventions, as well as collect and disseminate information important for cross-site study collaborations. The Cognitive Aging and Memory Intervention Core will work with invited applicants to facilitate access to necessary resources for multi-site collaboration.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS: *Please read carefully.*

Applications are solicited from investigators from the four MBI sites.

- Applications must include principal investigators from at least 2 different MBI sites.
- Applications must propose preliminary or pilot interventions with promise for ameliorating cognitive decline associated with normative aging (that is, non-pathological aging), including memory decline.
- LOI submitted by the Deadline of July 1, 2025 following the format below.
- Only applications that have not been submitted for review to another extramural funding mechanisms and remain unfunded by any source will be considered.
- Awardees may be asked to serve as a reviewer for 1-2 cycles (2026 & 2027) after completion of their award cycle.
- Young investigators are encouraged to apply and it is strongly suggested that they identify a more senior collaborator/mentor at a different MBI site.
- Both pre-clinical/translational and clinical interventions are eligible for consideration.
- A clear role for principal investigators at both MBI sites must be described in the LOI. This could include data collection at multiple sites, imaging or unique microscopy resources, neurophysiology equipment, data analysis resources, as well as tissue or blood samples.
- Proposals that will leverage resources provided by the McKnight Brain Aging Registry are encouraged.

MECHANISMS OF SUPPORT: Grants will be funded for up to a total of \$75,000 per year for 2 years. Year 2 funding is contingent on submission of a progress report that includes specific plans and a timeline for the submission of a multi-investigator application for extramural funding.

APPLICATION PROCEDURES:

1) Pre-proposal Letter of Interest (LOI): A 2-page LOI, a cover sheet, and biosketches for multi-Principal Investigators are required for consideration (***DUE July 1, 2025***). The LOI should use 11 pt arial font with 0.5 inch margins and contain the following information:

- Significance and Innovation
- Brief description of hypothesis for the proposed intervention

- List of specific aims
- Description of the structure and need for multi-site collaboration
- NIH-biosketches for m-PIs (not included in page limit):
<http://grants.nih.gov/grants/forms/biosketch.htm>

The LOI must be sent by July 1, 2025 to Sara Burke (burkes@ufl.edu) and Matthew Grilli (mdgrilli@arizona.edu) via email attachment. LOIs will be reviewed by the MBRF Cognitive Aging and Memory Intervention Core Committee and selected investigators will be notified by August 15, 2025 whether they are invited to submit a full application.

2) Full Application: The full applications must be submitted by the deadline of Nov 5, 2025. The proposal should be sent to Sara Burke (burkes@ufl.edu) and Mathew Grilli (mdgrilli@arizona.edu) via email attachment in a single file in the PDF format.

Applications must include:

- Completed Coversheet
- A cover letter with the names and contact information and 5 potential qualified reviewers from outside the Evelyn F. McKnight Institutions.
- Face Page: Project Title, Senior/Key Personnel, Project/Performance Sites, Contact PI (and Contact PI information), along with the Project Summary (30 lines max).
- Research Plan - limited to 5 pages (not including References, 11 point Arial font, 0.5" margins) and should include:
 - a. Specific Aims
 - b. Research Strategy (Significance, Innovation, Approach)
 - c. Description of Multi-site MBI Collaboration
 - d. Timeline and Plans for extramural funding applications
 - e. References
- Preliminary data are welcome but not required
- Multi-PI plan and structure of collaboration (1 page maximum)
- For new investigators (at rank of Assistant Professor with no prior R01 or equivalent funding), a 1-page mentoring plan and timeline is also required
- Detailed Budget (Budget limited to \$75,000 per year in total costs) and Budget Justification. Indirect costs are not allowable
- Please no appendices
- NIH Biographical Sketches for Key Personnel: <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/forms/biosketch.htm>

APPLICATION REVIEW CRITERIA: Applications will be reviewed for scientific merit by 2-3 expert reviewers and evaluated by a scientific review panel consisting of CAMI-Core Committee Members and External Scientists. Applications will be rated based on 1) significance, 2) quality, innovation and feasibility, 3) collaboration across the MBI sites, and 4) likelihood of leading to a successful larger grant application. For new investigators, the mentoring plan will also be evaluated.

The rankings and final recommendations provided by the Cognitive Aging and Memory Intervention Core will be reviewed by the MBRF. Awardees will be contacted by email.

The anticipated funding start date of successful applications is May 1, 2026.

INQUIRIES: Inquiries regarding application and review procedures can be directed to the MBRF Inter-Institutional Cognitive Aging and Memory Intervention Core members:

Sara Burke, Chair burkes@ufl.edu (UF)
 Ihtsham ul Haq ihag@med.miami.edu (UMiami)
 Matthew Grilli mdgrilli@arizona.edu (UA)
 Keith McGregor kmmcgreg@uab.edu (UAB)

From: [Vicki Hixon](#)
To: [kathleenmcintyre@phhp.ufl.edu](#); [Smith, Tasha R](#); [melissach@ufl.edu](#); [Nolty, Peggy Ann - \(panolty\)](#); [Fox-Rosellini, Susan Eva](#); [Merritt, Stacy Suzanne](#)
Cc: [Cianciotto, Melanie](#); [carol@nsma.arizona.edu](#); [Bizon, Jennifer Lynn](#); [trundek@med.miami.edu](#); [Lazar, Ronald M](#)
Subject: MBRF Poster Reception
Date: Friday, August 2, 2024 4:05:37 PM
Attachments: [Abstract Template \(22\).pdf](#)
[Announcement 2024 \(2\).pdf](#)

Hi,
Please forward the information below to your faculty, postdocs, and students.

.....
Hi Everyone,
We are finalizing plans for the McKnight Brain Research Foundation Poster Reception which will be held on Sunday, October 6, 2024 at the Hilton Chicago from 5:00 - 7:00 pm. We are excited to have the opportunity for everyone to gather and share their research!

It is time to submit your abstract in order to be included in the event. Using the template below, please submit your abstract so we can plan accordingly.

First Author (Last name, first name):	Presenter (if someone other than First Author):
E-mail Address:	
Abstract Title:	
McKnight Institute(Arizona, Gainesville, Miami, UAB):	PI Lab:

ABSTRACT (PDF, Arial 11, One page limit)

Send your documents to: poster_session@mcknightbrain.org

Let me know if you have any questions.

Kindest regards,
~Vicki Hixon
