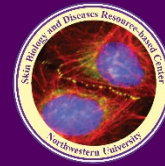


# Northwestern University Skin Biology and Diseases Resource-based Center



## PILOT GRANTS AVAILABLE: Request for Proposals

The NIH-funded multidisciplinary Northwestern **Skin Biology and Diseases Resource-based Center (SBDRC)** is offering **Pilot and Feasibility** awards for proposals that involve research in cutaneous biology. Three general awards and a 4<sup>th</sup>, funded by the **HAIR Program** for research related to hair/ hair follicle biology, are being solicited.

Eligible applicants are: a) junior faculty members who investigate a novel aspect of cutaneous biology; b) established federally funded investigators with no prior work in skin biology who apply their expertise to a skin disease-related problem; and c) any faculty scientist who proposes a project that engages a clinician in translational research that contributes to our understanding or potential therapy of skin disease. **We encourage investigators from outside of the Dermatology Department to apply.** The ultimate goal of these SBDRC-funded Pilot and Feasibility studies is the future submission of proposals for new federally funded skin-related grants.

Pilot and Feasibility studies are funded at \$25,000/year for 1 year, with a possible 2nd year renewal pending a progress report and new proposal/new title that extends the work.

The format of the application is as follows:

- **2-3 Page Research Plan** summarizing background, significance, specific aims, and special approaches of the study
- **Projected use of the SBDRC Core(s):** **Core directors are delighted to discuss potential use**, including availability of skin cells and tissue from diverse patient populations
- **Projected Budget and Budget Justification** of proposed study (*Limit: \$25K direct costs; ≥40% of budget must be allocated for SBDRC Core services and charged directly*)
- **NIH Biosketch** of PI (*SciENCv generated*)
- List of **Current PI Funding**
- Data Sharing Plan
- Must submit/provide IRB and ACUC/Vertebrate Animal Section form approvals before funding is provided.

**Application deadline is March 6, 2026**

**Applications may be submitted on our website:**

[skinresearch.northwestern.edu](http://skinresearch.northwestern.edu)

Projects are evaluated by our Pilot and Feasibility Committee and funding decisions made by April 1, 2026. **Awardees are expected to immediately prepare any materials for IRB/Human Subjects and ACUC approvals as appropriate (using the precise title of the proposal).** The official start date for these awards is targeted to be July 1, 2026. **All approvals from each awardee must be submitted before funding for any of the projects are sent from the NIH and disbursed.**

The SBDRC supports 3 Service **Cores** that facilitate completion of Pilot and Feasibility-funded projects:

The **Skin Tissue Engineering and Morphology (STEM) Core** provides human skin tissues and primary cultures of skin cells, particularly human and mouse keratinocytes, fibroblasts and melanocytes. This Core generates 3-D skin equivalent cultures of human and mouse keratinocytes, including using disease-specific keratinocytes that can be co-cultured with melanocytes and/or fibroblasts. This Core also provides histopathology and immunohistochemical staining.

The **Translating Experimental Skin Testing with Immune Tracing, Informatics and Technology (TEST IT<sup>2</sup>) Core** provides:

(i) Immune monitoring (in vitro and in vivo in mice and humans at a single cell level, including multispectral imaging, transcriptome, secretome and protein analysis and (ii) an immunology-focused human studies facility for probing human disease and testing the impact of environmental agents and drugs prior to clinical trials. This Core also provides access to a tissue repository and has a dedicated bioinformaticist to assist in interpretation.

The **Gene Editing, Transduction and Nanotechnology (GET iN) Core** generates constructs to deliver: (i) cDNA; (ii) stem-loop shRNA/MiR precursors; (iii) mature RNAi; and (iv) MiR inhibitors into skin cells. Vectors are available to: (i) generate iPS cells from skin cells; (ii) generate reporter cells for *in vivo* and *in vitro* cell tracking; (iii) simultaneously express multiple transgenes and shRNAs; and (iv) target expression by vectors with skin cell-specific promoters. CRISPR/Cas9 editing is available by both viral constructs and non-viral delivery of Cas protein. The Core also uses nanotechnology-based innovations to deliver material into skin cells and human skin.

**Please pass this call for grant applications to those who may be interested.**

Questions regarding the Pilot and Feasibility Program or the application process can be directed to:

Dr. Amy Paller [apaller@northwestern.edu](mailto:apaller@northwestern.edu), Dr. Rui Yi [yir@northwestern.edu](mailto:yir@northwestern.edu), or Dr. Kurt Lu [kurt.lu@northwestern.edu](mailto:kurt.lu@northwestern.edu)