

**Call for Proposals:
Trainee and Early Career Pilot Grants in Human Laboratory Addiction Research**

Overview. The USC Institute for Addiction Science (IAS; ias.usc.edu) is pleased to announce a program to support trainee and early career pilot projects focusing on human laboratory addiction research. This program aims to support junior researchers in developing small-scale experimental or translational studies that leverage the IAS Biobehavioral Research Facility, a newly renovated state-of-the-art 2,600 square foot clinical research space expressly designed for addiction science at the USC Health Science Campus. This facility includes a simulated bar; simulated cannabis dispensary/tobacco retail space; reverse-airflow experimental suites with one-way mirrors for inhalational drug administration studies; reception and waiting area; offices and conference room; biospecimen storage access; and private patient and exam space. While all types of proposals will be considered, projects that leverage the Facility to conduct experimental studies to evaluate mechanistic and/or translational questions relevant to any area of addiction science are especially encouraged. Projects leveraging the simulated bar/tobacco retailer/cannabis dispensary space are particularly encouraged. Projects that emphasize transdisciplinary collaborations, and that address questions related to diversity or health equity, are also highly encouraged.

Guidelines and Submission

Eligibility. Eligible applicants include trainees (doctoral students or post-doctoral fellows), newly appointed assistant professors (at this rank fewer than 2 years), and non-faculty research scientists within 8 years of receipt of their terminal degree. Faculty and research scientist applicants must be a member of IAS. Doctoral student applicants must be currently enrolled in a USC doctoral program and in good standing and must have a primary faculty mentor co-investigator from their own school who is an IAS member. Faculty mentors are encouraged to serve as Co-Principal-Investigators on trainee-initiated projects.

For doctoral student and postdoctoral applicants, projects should align with the applicant's research and training goals. For doctoral students, projects should ideally represent a component of the applicant's dissertation research. For early career investigators, projects should be intended to generate pilot data to support external (NIH) grant applications and/or to develop new multi-investigator research programs.

Submission Instructions. Applicants should submit a brief (up to 1 page) letter of intent at least 30 days before the application deadline of: **June 1, 2024**

Application Components (all single spaced with 0.5" margins, 11pt font):

- Cover page including: (a) the names, professional titles, affiliations (school/department), and email address of the PI and each investigator, and (b) the title of the proposal
- Biosketches or CVs of the PI/applicant and each investigator (<5 pages each)
- A proposal narrative (up to 2-3 pages total) that briefly addresses each of the following:
 - Background, specific aims and scientific premise

- Abbreviated overview of methods (including explanation of why the facilities are necessary or advantageous to support the scientific aims)
- Description of how frequently you anticipate using the space/facility
- Description of any supplies/equipment (beyond budgeted items) that are necessary for the work (e.g., physiological monitors, breathalyzers, furniture items, etc.)
- Explanation of how the project aligns with the applicant's training goals, research program, or plans for seeking subsequent external funding
- A brief summary of any anticipated regulatory (e.g., IND waiver) or registration (ClinicalTrials.gov) requirements, if applicable
- A rationale for the proposed sample size
- Brief summary of the project timeline and publication/dissemination plans
- Total anticipated budget and budget justification

Review Criteria. Proposals will be reviewed by a USC IAS Review Committee. Scoring of proposals will be based on the standard NIH 9-point scoring system. Review and scoring will also emphasize the following components:

- Projects should capitalize on resources in the IAS Biobehavioral Research Facility (<https://ias.usc.edu/research/research-facilities>) to conduct research with human participants
- Applicants are encouraged to propose an experimental design to evaluate causal or mechanistic hypotheses related to a clinical or public health question in addiction science
- Projects focusing on *translational* or *reverse-translational* research questions are highly encouraged
 - Examples might include testing a new candidate intervention in a small-scale experimental study; testing the impact of drug or product features (e.g., nicotine content, flavors, packaging) on use behavior or purchasing behavior; evaluating potential mechanisms of interventions typically delivered in population contexts (e.g., public health messaging, pricing/taxation)
- Incorporation of questions pertaining to diversity, equity, or disparities is highly encouraged
- Proposals that are multidisciplinary and collaborative in nature are encouraged, including those that a) bridge research disciplines in addiction science, and/or b) involve multi-lab collaborations

Additional Proposal Elements/Requirements

- Graduate student applicants should identify a faculty mentor who commits to sponsoring the project and relevant study-related applications (e.g., IRB application, clinical trials registration), as applicable. Faculty sponsors should serve in a Co-PI/MPI role and provide a brief letter of support attesting to their roles.
- Funded investigators may be asked to consider incorporating IAS-recommended "core" laboratory assessment instruments (if feasible, and as applicable depending on project aims and scope). This element will be addressed after the award stage and does not need to be addressed in the application.
- To support future collaborative and data integration projects, funded investigators will be asked to archive their final (de-identified) datasets in an IAS human laboratory data repository, if feasible. Data use agreements will be developed in collaboration with investigators, as applicable.
- Trainee applicants (graduate student, post-doc) are asked to identify an IAS faculty member to serve as a data custodian (i.e., contact person for records retention, future data requests, etc.).

Award Size, Duration, Restrictions

This program will initially support one-year pilot awards (up to \$10,000 each). Funds are intended to support research-related costs (supplies, experimental stimuli, software, participant payments, hourly research assistant support, etc.). Funds cannot be applied to applicants' or investigators' salaries or stipends, or to publication fees or travel. If necessary, the review committee may make recommended budget revisions prior to proposal submission or prior to funding. Projects should be completed within 12 months of funding. Trainee applicants are highly encouraged to seek external awards (e.g., graduate research awards, dissertation awards, F31/F32) to support expansion of the project scope, sample size, or number of experiments.

Reporting. All projects selected for funding will be required to submit a 6 month and final progress report and present on the findings at a future IAS Institute-Wide Meeting and/or a future IAS Research Program Meeting.

Application Procedures. Please send your letter of intent (no less than 30 days before the application deadline) and final application (with all above components in single PDF document) to Victoria.williams.0@usc.edu.