

**Trans-NORC
Visiting Scholar Program
2019 Funding Opportunity**



APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

I. PURPOSE:

The Pennington/Louisiana NORC is seeking applications to support training opportunities for NORC junior investigators in translational research in nutrition and obesity. Visiting Scholar awards will be targeted to New Investigators or Early-Stage Investigators, as defined by the NIH (for detail see http://grants.nih.gov/grants/new_investigators/). Support of these investigators is central to the aim of the Trans-NORC supplement to increase the critical mass of investigators performing research in nutrition and obesity. This is a competitive application to identify and select candidates. The overall objective of the program is to provide support so that junior faculty can extend and enhance their skillset in research by visiting laboratories of other NORCs, and working with mentors to learn new techniques or obtain expertise in a specific topic area. Visit the NORC Central website <https://norccentral.org/centers/> for more information on what is available at each NORC (technology and mentors).

There is a total of \$30,000 to fund 3-6 awards for a 1-2 week stay at another NORC laboratory.

II. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:

A goal of the NORC is to provide support to develop researchers who have a high likelihood of subsequently competing successfully for independent funding from the NIH or a comparable agency in nutrition and obesity research and if possible with a translational angle. The objective of this RFA is to support junior investigators in basic and clinical science, and to link them with mentors to assist their development in the field. It is specifically intended for investigators to learn new techniques and to acquire different skills and expertise by interacting with experts in the field.

III. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS:

The Visiting Scholar program emphasizes formal mentoring in both basic and clinical science. It will be available to **New and Early-Stage Investigators** as described at http://grants.nih.gov/grants/new_investigators/ in any discipline relevant to nutrition and obesity research. Applicants must hold a PhD, M.D., or equivalent degree. Eligible candidates can be Faculty or Senior Postdoc (2nd year or above) and must be a member of a NORC. Applicants have to show that the Visiting Scholar Program will fill a gap in their training, experience, or guidance in nutrition/obesity research to compete successfully for NIH funding as an independent investigator. Individuals who have had pilot funding but need additional training in a technique or to learn other skills to enhance development of an ongoing project are also encouraged to apply. Institutional commitment to support the Visiting Scholar's time during program activities is required. There is no citizenship requirement for scholar recipients.

IV. SUPPORTED ACTIVITIES:

The Visiting Scholar program will be coordinated through the Pilot & Feasibility Program and the Administrative Core of the Pennington/Louisiana NORC. The awarded funds will support

reasonable travel, housing, and research supply costs and need to be itemized in the budget. The Visiting Scholar Program **cannot include salary support** for himself/herself or for someone at the host institution. A central component of the Visiting Scholar experience will be time spent in the laboratory, clinic, or other research environment with his/her mentor(s).

V. FORMAT OF THE APPLICATION

Applications **must** be submitted via link - <http://norcfunding.pbrc.edu>

All materials submitted must follow the font and margin guidance for NIH applications available at: <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/phs398/phs398.pdf>.

Applications must include the following:

1. Face Page (using NIH Form Page 1) signed by authorized institutional representative
2. **Research Plan:** The Research Plan will consist of one page including:
 - Background and goals towards developing new skills in nutrition/obesity research
 - Activities to achieve these goals
 - Research topic that fits the NORC theme “Nutrition & Obesity”
 - Identification of appropriate basic science and/or clinical mentors
 - Timeline for the proposed visiting scholar activity
3. **NIH Biosketches** of the applicant and mentor(s), 5 page limit/each.
4. **Letters of support** from the mentor(s) at the hosting NORC, 1 page limit.
5. **Budget & Budget Justification** (using NIH Form page 4 and 5)
Expenditures Allowed:
 - Travel costs (domestic ONLY)
 - Housing while at the host institution
 - Research supplies directly related to the training experience
 - Meals
Expenditures NOT Allowed:
 - Salary support for the scholar or mentor
 - Foreign Travel
 - Office equipment and office supplies
 - Computers
 - Dues and membership fees in scientific societies

Although facilities and administrative costs are allowed under the terms of the prime award, **it is our belief that these funds should be used in the spirit intended i.e. direct costs in support of this project.** It is hoped that for an award of this type, your institution will consider these costs as matching funds to your project.

6. **Institutional Letter of Support:** Since longitudinal support of New and Early Career Investigators is essential to their ultimate success, applications must include a letter of support from an appropriate official at the applicant’s institution. Institutional Letters of Commitment should describe:
 - a. faculty release time,
 - b. leveraging of additional resources, and
 - c. cost sharing.

VI. TIMELINE:

Submission deadline - March 15, 2019

Please submit in **PDF format in color** to <http://norcfunding.pbrc.edu>.

Award Notification Date: April 30, 2019

VII. REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS:

The Pennington/Louisiana NORC will coordinate the application process for the Visiting Scholars Program. Final decisions on the visiting scholars resides with the NORC Steering Committee.

Applications that are complete and responsive to the RFA will be evaluated for scientific merit. Each of the criteria below will be addressed and considered in the review. Note that an application does not need to be strong in all categories to be judged likely to have major scientific impact. For example, an investigator may propose to carry out important work that by its nature is not innovative but is essential to developing the Visiting Scholar's career in clinical and translational research.

Significance: Does the proposal address an important gap in the applicant's progression towards developing a nutrition/obesity research career that would be filled by visiting the mentor's institution? If the aims of the application are achieved, how will the applicant's career be advanced? What will be the potential effect and impact of the proposed activities on the career of the applicant? What are the unique technologies, services, or resources provided by the mentor(s) that will significantly impact the career development of the applicant?

Approach: Is the conceptual framework for the time that the applicant will spend at the mentor's institution adequately developed, well integrated, well-reasoned, and appropriate to the aims of the proposed program? Does the applicant acknowledge potential problem areas and consider alternative tactics? Is the likelihood of successful completion high given the described environment at the mentor's institution and the applicant's abilities? Are the proposed timeline and interim milestones appropriate, feasible, and technically sound?

Investigators: Are the proposed Visiting Scholar and mentor(s) appropriately trained and matched to carry out this work? Is the work proposed appropriate to the experience level of the Visiting Scholar and other researchers? Does the mentee-mentor relationship bring complementary and integrated expertise to the project?

Milestones and Product Development Plan: Are the defined objectives/milestones and future career development plans appropriate and feasible? Feasibility should address the requirement that work be completed before the end of the funding period.

Additional Review Criteria:

In addition to the above criteria, the following items will be considered in the determination of scientific merit and the priority score:

Institutional Commitment: Evidence of longitudinal institutional commitment will be evaluated, as this will be central to the Visiting Scholar's ultimate success.

Protection of Human Subjects from Research Risk (if applicable): If the visiting scholar involves human subjects research, is the appropriate IRB approval with reference to the risks to the subjects included in the application?

Biohazards: If materials or procedures are proposed that are potentially hazardous to research personnel and/or the environment, reviewers will determine if the proposed protection is adequate.

Budget: The reasonableness of the proposed budget and the requested period of support in relation to the proposed research.

VIII. REPORTING

Awardees will be required to submit a Progress Report using a format provided by the Louisiana/Pennington NORC no later than 30 days after the end of the Visiting Scholar activity. Standard financial reports will be required per NIH guidelines. Awardees will also be required to submit a specified progress report 12 months following the award start date, to provide updates, such as manuscripts, publications or presentations since the visiting scholar opportunity.

Awardees will be required to cite the Pennington/Louisiana NORC grant (P30 DK072476) on future publications and presentations that are associated with this funding opportunity.

IX. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

Awards will be made by the Pennington/Louisiana NORC under the parent grant #P30 DK072476 from the National Institute of Digestive Diabetes Kidney (NIDDK).

Human Subjects Protection If the Visiting Scholar is involved in Human Subjects Research, the application must:

- Describe training or experiences involving human subjects as well as inclusion of appropriate IRB approval.
- *If applicable*, IRB approval must be obtained at both the applicant and host institutions before an award can be issued.

Additional Questions

Please contact jacqueline.fox@pbrc.edu for any additional questions on this opportunity.