

Fed Bernal, PhD
Branch Chief

Pauline Cupit, PhD
Program Officer

Division for Research Capacity
Building (DRCB)

Centers of Biomedical Research Excellence: Development Phase (COBRE-D) (P30 - Clinical Trial Not Allowed)

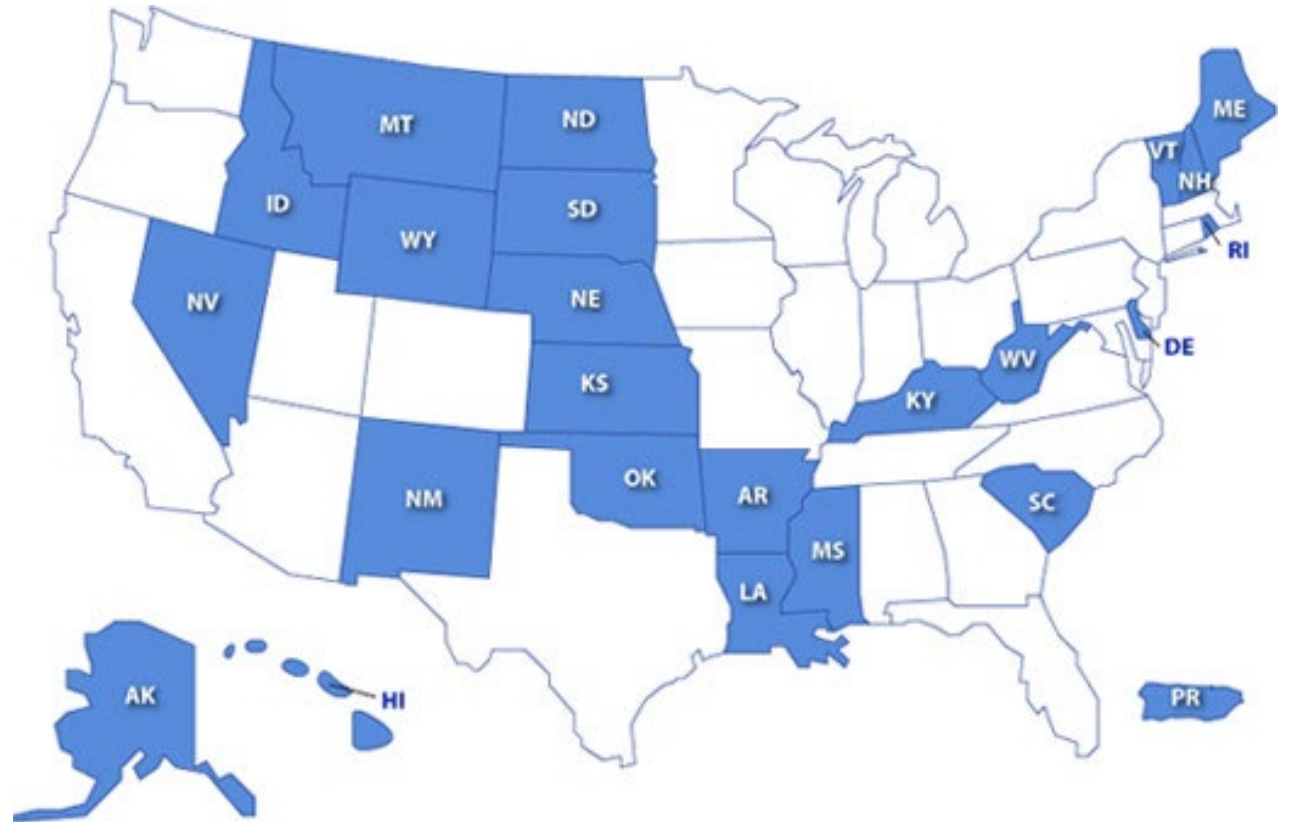
PAR-27-054

Informational Webinar

September 9, 2026

Institutional Development Awards (IDeA)

Congressionally mandated program that builds **biomedical research capacity** at institutions in **23 states and Puerto Rico** with historically lower NIH funding by supporting competitive basic, clinical, and translational research aligned with NIH mission and priorities



IDeA Program Components

COBRE (Centers of Biomedical Research Excellence)

- Supports the establishment and development of innovative biomedical research centers of excellence in an area of strategic importance
- **PAR-27-054** (COBRE-D) and **PAR-27-055** (COBRE-E/S)

INBRE (IDeA Networks of Biomedical Research Excellence)

- Supports a statewide network of institutions to build biomedical research capacity by developing faculty and providing opportunities to students
- Forecast: **PAR-26-026**

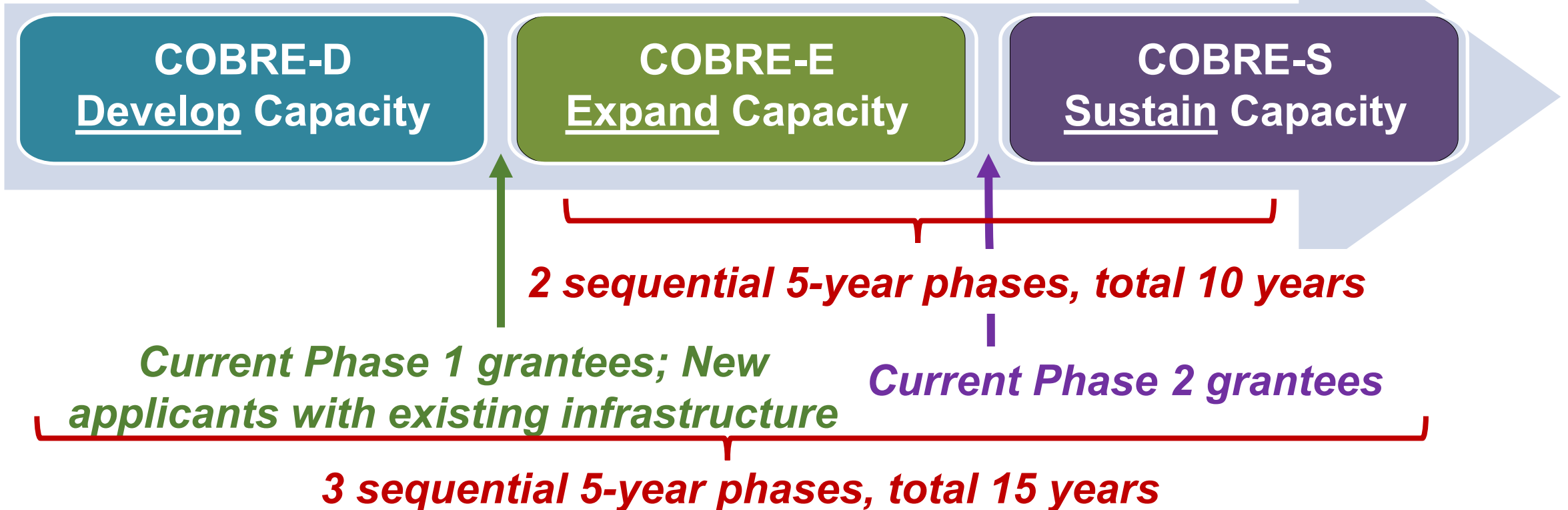
IDeA-CTR (IDeA Clinical and Translational Research)

- Builds and expands clinical and translational research capacity to enable research on diseases and health conditions prevalent in IDeA states
- **PAR-27-056** (CTR-D and CTR-N)

COBRE Program Framework

COBRE-D: Develop capacity in a broad area of strategic importance that does not exist at the institution(s)

*COBRE-E/S: **Expand** and **sustain** existing infrastructure into a broad area of strategic importance to the institution*



COBRE-D Major Highlights (PAR-27-054)

Award Information

- New **P30** applications only; resubmissions not accepted
- Only one application per organization; partnerships between two eligible organizations are permitted.
 - Focuses research capacity building in a strategic priority area while avoiding internal competition that could hinder center development and COBRE-E readiness
- **Budget:** \$400K direct costs in Year 1; \$1.8M per year in Years 2-5
- **Years 2-3:** Limited A&R or equipment purchases support to update research space

Key Updates from Previous COBREs

- Three receipt dates per year: **Sep 25, Jan 25, May 25**
- Clinical trials are not allowed.
- **P20 to P30 shift:** Supports infrastructure, shared resources, and faculty development and advancement of their research programs; no research/pilot projects

What No Research or Pilot Projects Means

COBRE-D Research Program Development Focus

- Builds infrastructure, administrative framework, and support systems for early-/mid-career faculty hires to develop independent research programs
- Prioritizes sustainable research program development over short-term research/pilot projects
 - Enables faculty with the flexibility to build a broad foundation for multiple lines of inquiry, wider grant opportunities, and long-term scientific independence
- Directs resources toward shared cores/services, mentoring, career development, retention, and faculty success
- Positions faculty and the institution for future COBRE-E competitiveness

Key Considerations Before Applying

- **Review NOFO to confirm fit, eligibility, and requirements**
- COBRE-D is **not** trainee support or a P01-style multi-project grant
 - PD/PI receives salary support with minimum **3 person-months level of effort (LOE)** but no COBRE research support for PD/PI or research team.
 - PD/PI must hold independent research grant support for COBRE-D eligibility at the time of submission.
- **Engage institutional leadership early**
 - Confirm institutional support and proposed center alignment with an area of strategic importance
 - Recognize COBRE PD/PI leadership as an institutional service requiring support
 - Seek institutional commitments to faculty recruitment and retention, capacity building toward COBRE-E competitiveness, and long-term sustainability

Is COBRE-D the Right Fit for Your Organization?

COBRE-D organizations are expected to have:

- A biomedical scientific area of strategic priority currently lacking both infrastructure and early- to mid-career investigators
- A broad research focus to build capacity aligned with organizational priorities
- **Partnership option:** Two organizations lacking capacity in proposed broad research area may partner; application must justify the need and mutual benefits.

Measurable objectives for COBRE-D grant recipients:

- Demonstrate organizational support for capacity building in proposed strategic research area, and a sustainable path to COBRE-E
- Conduct recruitment activities for early-/mid-career investigators in the proposed area
- Establish research, career development, mentorship, and grant-writing plans for supported investigators

COBRE-D Institutional Eligibility

Eligible Organizations (see Section III of NOFO)

- Only institutions in an IDeA-eligible state, commonwealth, or jurisdiction are eligible to apply (**limited competition**).
- **No active COBRE grants** at the time of submission, including grants in no-cost extension

Important Reminder

- Only one COBRE-D application per institution is allowed.

Program fit: Proposed scientific area must align with institutional strategic priorities and not duplicate a previously supported COBRE Center at applicant institution. Applications in areas where the institution already has a level of research capacity that can be repurposed, they should apply for COBRE-E.

COBRE-D PI/PD Eligibility

Eligibility Requirements

- Established biomedical research scientist with administrative and mentoring experience to lead the COBRE
- PD/PI on at least one active, peer-reviewed, externally funded **research grant** in same general scientific area as proposed COBRE
 - Grants in no-cost extension count as active.
 - NIH RPGs that count toward PI eligibility (e.g., R01, R03, R15, R16, R21, R35); other federal or non-federal grants may also qualify
- **Full-time primary appointment at applicant organization** at the time of submission
- For MPI applications, each PD/PI must meet **all** eligibility requirements.

Restrictions

- COBRE PD/PI may not simultaneously lead more than one IDeA award; prior COBRE PDs/PIs are **ineligible** except those who served only in an interim capacity.

COBRE-D Application Components

Component	Component Type for Submission	Page Limit	Required/Optional	Minimum	Maximum
Overall	Overall	12	Required	1	1
Administrative Core	Admin Core	6	Required	1	1
Research Core	Core	6	Optional	0	2
Faculty Development Core	Core	6	Required	1	1

Leveraging other NIH-supported resources, especially COBRE, INBRE, and IDeA-CTR programs is encouraged

COBRE-D Budget Framework

Budget Area	Limit/Guidance
Overall budget cap	Year 1: \$400K direct costs Years 2 to 5: \$1.8M/year direct costs
Administrative Core - Administrative management - Alterations & renovations or equipment	Up to \$1.3M/year in Years 2 to 5 Includes faculty start up and administrative funds - Up to \$200K/year in Years 2 to 5 - Up to \$300K total in Years 2 and/or 3 to update research space
Research Core Setup, staff/supplies, equipment/upgrades	Funded from <u>remaining</u> direct costs within the \$1.8M/year cap
Faculty Development Core Faculty development support activities	Funded from <u>remaining</u> direct costs within the \$1.8M/year cap

Note: Faculty hiring budget packages are not capped; no separate fixed caps for the Research Core or Faculty Development Core; if the Administrative Core uses the full \$1.3M/year, up to \$500K/year combined remains for both cores

Overall Component Requirements Part 1

Research Plan

- **Justification for Establishment of the Center**
 - Rationale for center, alignment of scientific area with organization's strategic plan, existing research capacity to support center activities, and partnership need/benefits, if proposed
- **Organization and Management Plan**
 - Allocation of funds across components and how all parts fit together to build research capacity and establish a cohesive center
- **Plan for an Internal Advisory Committee (IAC)**
 - One senior institutional official, for example, Dean/VPR; two appointed senior faculty; and two institutional stakeholders, for example, facility or sponsored programs managers (**name members in application**)
 - IAC Members may not hold any other center position.

Overall Component Requirements Part 2

Research Plan

- **Faculty Development Plan**

- Support early-/mid-career investigator hires through mentoring, leadership development, and research management training
- Addresses how new faculty will establish independent research programs and collectively advance a coherent biomedical research area aligned with organizational priorities

- **Letters of Support (include prior COBRE awards/subcontracts)**

- Single letter from senior institutional official, e.g., President/Dean, outlining institutional strategic plan, center alignment with research capacity priorities, infrastructure/expertise gaps, existing resources, and commitment to COBRE-E competitiveness

- **Proposed Partnerships**

- Each institution provides a letter outlining center roles, collaboration/resource sharing, coordinated support, and independent COBRE-E transition plans.

No additional letters of support are allowed in the Overall Component or any other component.

Administrative Core

Budget

- Up to **\$1.3M/year** in Years 2 to 5, including faculty startup and administrative funds
 - **Administrative management:** Up to **\$200K/year** in Years 2 to 5
 - **A&R/equipment:** Up to **\$300K** total in Years 2 and/or 3 to update research space
- Each PD/PI requires minimum **3 person-months** level of effort; maximum **6 person-months** may be charged for salary.
- Include mentor support, maximum 1 person-month and recruitment funds

Research Strategy

- Management of center administration, fiscal, and scientific activities described in Overall plan
- Plans for faculty recruitment and retention, hiring timelines, and search strategies
- Annual evaluation plan with timelines/milestones and strategies to remedy deficiencies
- Process for assessing and implementing IAC recommendations
- Plans for A&R or equipment, if requested

Research Core (Optional)

Budget

- Funds may support core setup, personnel/supplies, equipment acquisition, and instrumentation modernization.

Research Strategy

- **Core Director** must have appropriate expertise and experience to lead a core.
- **Core** should support center scientific breadth and complement existing resources.
 - Must be at **primary or partner performance site; may not duplicate existing services**, and accessible to institutional and other IDeA-state investigators
- Describe core technologies/services, equipment or facility modifications, and fit with existing infrastructure; identify user base and how services build research capacity, and support early-/mid-career investigators
- Include a business plan for core operations

Research Cores are optional. Applicants can leverage, modify, or expand existing institutional, IDeA, or other federally supported resources to meet center needs.

Faculty Development Core

Purpose: Manage faculty development activities that support advancement and retention of faculty hires and center investigators

Budget

- Funds to develop center-wide career, scientific, and professional development activities
- Costs to support key personnel salaries, travel, and supplies; costs may be higher in early years

Research Strategy

- Describe strategies for implementing the Faculty Development Plan
- Explain funding guidance and grant coaching for faculty hires, including how mentors will be assigned and tailored to faculty needs
- Identify networking opportunities across institutional and scientific communities
- Describe faculty hire impact on research capacity at applicant and partner organizations, if applicable

Review Process Step 1 Administrative Review

- **Center of Scientific Review (CSR)** assigns applications to a Special Emphasis Panel (SEP) for review
- **CSR checks applications** for completeness and compliance; NIGMS POs verify eligibility
- **Incomplete, non-compliant, or ineligible applications** will be withdrawn

To Avoid Withdrawal:

- Read the NOFO instructions carefully
- Submit a few days before due date to allow time to review and correct application, if needed

Common Issues: Ineligible PI or organization(s), proposed clinical trial, missing attachments (such as the required institutional Letter of Support)

Review Process Step 2 Scientific Review

Panel Assignment

- Applications are assigned to SEPs; number of panels depends on application volume.
- All reviewers receive the same orientation materials and review guidance.

Reviewer Assignments

- At least three reviewers are assigned to each application.
- Three primary reviewers review the Overall component.
- At least two reviewers review each of the components.

Process

- Generally, top half of applications by merit are discussed.
- Assigned reviewers comment on each component before panel discusses the Overall center.
- Applicants receive a Summary Statement.

Application Preparation Guidance

Understand NOFO and Review Criteria

- Read **PAR-27-054** early, including Related Notices in the Overview Section, and ensure compliance with applicable policy notices
- Review Section V carefully and use it as a guide; it defines how reviewers will evaluate and score the application.

Confirm Eligibility and Application Requirements

- Determine organizational eligibility before investing in application development
- **Form a strong IAC** early to guide faculty recruitment, faculty development, and research infrastructure planning for a successful transition to COBRE-E
- Verify required components, budget limits, application restrictions, submission requirements, and page lengths

Q&A

Please enter your questions using the Q&A button in Teams

For questions specific to an institution's particular situation, send an email to the contacts in the NOFO (PAR-27-054)

COBRE-D: Email: NIGMS_COBRE_D@mail.nih.gov