

# Boston Claude D. Pepper Older Americans Independence Center



February 2024

Re: Call for Pilot Project and Career Development applications in Aging-Related Research  
From: Shalender Bhasin, MD, PI and Director, Boston Pepper Center  
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## Key Dates:

Application due date: **April 1, 2024**

Notification on or before: **May 1, 2024**

Earliest funding start date: **September 1, 2024**

The Boston Older Americans Independence Center (OAIC) is pleased to invite applications for 2 core awards, the Pilot/Exploratory Studies Core (PESC) and Research Education Core (REC) Awards. These awards are designed to attract research in biological aging and functional independence. PESC awards are relatively small grants for established investigators who need pilot data to prepare for larger research grants focused on the OAIC theme, and REC awards are for the early career development of talented postdoctoral trainees to help prepare them for future K or equivalent grants. The Boston OAIC (a.k.a. "Boston Pepper Center") is a NIA-funded collaborative research program among investigators from Harvard Medical School and affiliated hospitals, Boston University and Tufts University. Scientists from any of these institutions or their affiliates are invited to apply.

## The awards should focus on the Boston OAIC theme: "Function Promoting Therapies."

This theme includes, but is not limited to the following areas of research:

- Causes, prevention, and treatment of age-related functional limitations/specific disabilities in older adults.
- Interventions to ameliorate functional limitations and disability in older adults, including drugs, devices, and behavioral approaches.
- Novel approaches for the measurement of function.
- Studies of the mechanisms of functional decline that have the potential for facilitating drug discovery.
- High throughput strategies for identifying novel therapeutic agents.
- Novel statistical or data-driven approaches for analyzing epidemiological data and high dimensional biological data related to the OAIC theme.
- Awardees are required to attend the National OAIC meeting at least once during the award period.

## ELIGIBILITY:

- **Rank.**
  - PESC Awards are for investigators at any stage of their career.
  - REC Awards are for junior faculty investigators at the pre-K award stage of their career.
- **Scientific merit.** The proposed study must advance scientific knowledge related to the OAIC theme.
- **Translational approach.** The proposed research will catalyze the development of interventions to prevent functional limitations in older people.
- **Future extramural funding.** Priority will be given to projects with the potential to lead to larger, more definitive studies that are competitive for extramural funding.
- **Utilization of multiple OAIC Resource Cores.** The Pepper Center has multiple research support cores (see <http://pepper.bwh.harvard.edu/>). Applications must utilize Pepper Center Cores and acknowledge their contributions in future publications and grant applications.

## APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS:

- The PESC application should include a) an abstract (30 lines), b) scientific proposal not to exceed three pages, c) an NIH biosketch and d) a detailed budget. We welcome applications from all disciplines.

- The REC application should include the above, as well as an additional page describing the candidate's career development plan and qualifications of the mentor in the field of aging. The mentor's NIH biosketch should also be included. The career development plan should take advantage of resources and coursework provided by the OAIC and Harvard Catalyst.
- The scientific proposal for both awards should include specific aims, hypotheses, background, relevance to functional limitations and disability in older adults, the interdisciplinary and translational nature of the project, research methods, analysis, and sample size justification.
- Formatting guidelines: Please use 11-point font or larger, do not include appendix material and note that cited references are not counted in the overall page limit.

**Duration of the Project:** 2 years\*

**Budget:** Varying amounts for two years depending upon availability of funds. Historically, between 4-6 applications have been funded during each cycle. PESC and REC candidates are encouraged to submit a budget ranging from \$35,000 – \$50,000 annually with the understanding that the funded amount may be lower. REC applications should designate approximately 50% of the award towards supporting the applicant's effort and career development activities.

**How to submit the application:**

Please submit your application as a single combined PDF to Lizbeth Torres, [ltorres8@bwh.harvard.edu](mailto:ltorres8@bwh.harvard.edu).

**Questions:** Should you have any questions, please, e-mail them to the Principal Investigator (Shalender Bhasin, MD) at [sbhasin@bwh.harvard.edu](mailto:sbhasin@bwh.harvard.edu) or the Scientific Director (Monty Montano, PhD) at [mmontano@bwh.harvard.edu](mailto:mmontano@bwh.harvard.edu).