The Autophagy, Inflammation, and Metabolism (AIM) CoBRE Center is offering pilot awards in support of its mission to advance investigation into the role of autophagy in disease.

AIM’s Pilot Program provides grants to investigators with the intention that they will use the funds to generate data to apply for external funding (preferably through a variety of NIH mechanisms, but also through other funding sources). AIM is currently accepting grant applications for the 2018 funding period. Proposals must be received by 5:00PM MST on December 1, 2017.

For 2018, AIM pilot proposals should incorporate a basic science approach and should address the topic of autophagy in any disease context. Proposals that also incorporate investigation into inflammation or metabolism will be prioritized.

One of AIM’s goals is to increase the autophagy-based research community at UNM and within New Mexico. Use of AIM’s scientific core facilities is strongly encouraged for AIM-supported pilot projects. AIM supports the following scientific core facilities and capabilities:

**Autophagy core (Director: Larry Sklar, PhD)**
1. Animal resource: Breeding pairs of autophagy and autophagy-related gene transgenic mice for research in pilot, mPI and main personnel laboratories (IACUC approval needed)
2. Cellomics high content microscopy: Quantitative microscopy for autophagy and lipid droplets as well as other intracellular profiles/organelles (e.g. lysosomes, peroxisomes, potentially mitochondria, nuclear translocation etc). Data generated are based on unbiased data collection and represent various numerical parameters (number/cell; area/cell, % overlap, etc.) + statistics on large number of cells.
3. Amnis: as above (autophagy measures) for non-adherent cells.

**Inflammation and Metabolism core (Director: Eric Prossnitz, PhD)**
1. Seahorse: Oxidative phosphorylation vs glycolysis on adherent and non-adherent (special gel embedded) cells.
2. Amnis: flow cytometry for intracellular cytokines, and other profiles in inflammatory/immune cells, etc.

**FUNDING**
It is anticipated that up to three pilot awards will be funded each cycle (contingent on anticipated availability of funds), with an award date of January 1, 2018. Awards will be made for one year of support up to $20,000 per year, depending upon the availability of funds. Budgets may include lab supplies and salary support for graduate students or other personnel as needed to complete the proposed work. During this first year of pilot award funding, awards will cover only an 8 month period (Jan 1, 2018 to August 31, 2018), and extensions of this timeline will not be allowed.

**ELIGIBILITY**
We welcome faculty applicants from the University of New Mexico Health Sciences Center. To be eligible for funding, applicants must be PI-eligible employees of the University of New Mexico. One of AIM CoBRE’s primary goals is to mentor and support junior investigators, so funding priority will be given to researchers who have not received research funding as a PI on
a federally funded grant. Senior investigators will also be considered if they can demonstrate that their application represents a significant change in the scope of their current research program.

**DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION**
Deadline for this submission cycle is 5:00PM Friday December 1, 2017.

**MENTORING AND THE AIM PILOT PROGRAM**
An important part of AIM is to provide mentoring services to junior, unfunded, and to more senior investigators who feel they need mentoring advice. As part of the AIM pilot award program, each applicant at the Assistant Professor level or lower is expected to name a formal mentor with whom regular mentoring interactions will occur, and to create a mentoring plan. The mentor may be any qualified senior investigator at UNM HSC.

**APPLICATION GUIDELINES**
Applications should be prepared in general accord with the NIH PHS 398 application guidelines (3/2016 revisions) available from https://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/phs398/phs398.html.

Applications must be submitted electronically as a singe pdf document by 5:00PM on the deadline date. **Applications received after this time will not be reviewed.**

Please include the following sections in your application:

4. A detailed budget justification
5. A research proposal of no more than three pages (Specific Aims +2) that contains the following sections.

Each section must be addressed separately with its own heading:

a. Specific Aims
b. Research Strategy
   i. Significance
   ii. Innovation
   iii. Approach
c. A statement to indicate how the project will use AIM core facilities. If core facilities are not relevant to the project, please state and explain.
d. A mentoring plan that lists a formal mentor.
e. Grant submission plan to include a description of planned NIH or other funding agency submissions
f. Literature cited (not included in the three page limit)

Please use 11-point Arial font with one (1) -inch margin on all four sides. (Write concisely and limit the amount of general background to the essentials that reviewers will need to be aware of to appreciate the proposed research.)
7. A list of current and pending support. Provide a listing of all current research support from all sources. For each source listed, please provide the following information: Name of funding source, title of project, project start/end dates, and amount of direct costs available (or available to you if a multi-PI grant), and percent effort. If you are a junior faculty member, please include the following details of your startup package in this list: amount initially provided, current unspent balance, and expiration date or other restrictions if any.


REVIEW PROCESS
Given that an important goal of the AIM CoBRE is to enhance the odds of investigators obtaining NIH funding for their project(s), NIH review criteria and procedures will be used. Each proposal will be scored according to the five NIH criteria: Significance, Investigator, Innovation, Approach and Environment. For information on these criteria and procedures see NIH notices NOT-OD-09-024 and NOT-OD-09-025.

It is anticipated that at least two reviewers who will be selected to avoid conflict of interest will review each proposal.

Final decisions regarding awards will be made by AIM CoBRE Executive Committees and the AIM CoBRE PI (Vojo Deretic, PhD) based on the reviews provided in consultation with CETI’s Steering Committee and External Advisory Committee.

CONDITIONS OF AWARD
IACUC or IRB approval is not necessary to apply for funding, but must be received before an award can be made. As such, IACUC or IRB applications must be SUBMITTED prior to application. Awardees will be required to sign a memorandum of agreement as a condition of project funding. This memorandum will serve to indicate the recipient’s willingness to:
1. Attend AIM functions,
2. Take advantage of AIM’s mentoring and support activities,
3. Participate in annual External Advisory Committee (EAC) meetings and program review,
4. Cite AIM and NIGMS in any publications stemming from their pilot project,
5. Present their work at any local or national meeting as requested, and
6. Submit an annual progress report.

QUESTIONS
All questions on the AIM CoBRE pilot program or related to this announcement should be directed to Sally Ann Garcia (sangarcia@salud.unm.edu) in the AIM program office (505-272-9374) or to Mark R. Burge, MD (mburge@salud.unm.edu, phone 505-272-4658).