VBRN Project Award

**Purpose:** Project awards support multi-year research projects on a focused topic with a clearly defined hypothesis, supported by preliminary evidence of feasibility. After the conclusion of this project, PIs should be well positioned to apply for independent NIH support, e.g., R15 Award.

**Project Duration:** Two years

**Eligibility:** Faculty members who are full-time tenure track at Northern Vermont University, Middlebury College, Norwich University, or Saint Michael's College. Research must meet the mission of NIH. Clinical trials are not allowed. To determine whether the proposed study is a clinical trial, use the [NIH decision tool](#). NIH funding doesn’t preclude further VBRN support, but in our mission supporting early investigators with no NIH history is a priority.

**NIH Mission:** NIH is the steward of medical and behavioral research for the Nation. Its mission is to seek fundamental knowledge about the nature and behavior of living systems and the application of that knowledge to enhance health, lengthen life, and reduce illness and disability.

**Funding Level and Allowable Expenses:** Direct costs up to $75,000 per year may be requested. NIH requires that a Project Award PI spend on average 50% effort in research over the award year, which can be divided into summer and academic year time. Permitted expenses include PI salary for summer and/or academic year, technicians, supplies, small equipment, undergraduate wages, participant costs and conference travel. Use of the funds must be outlined and justified as part of the application.

**Review of Applications:** VBRN applications now receive their initial review from a Third party service (AIBS) that contracts with experts in the specific areas of the application to produce high quality reviews that address the scientific merit of each of the submitted proposals. These experts deliver reviews organized around the NIH review criteria and exhibit the depth characteristic of the review of an R15 application. The NIH 9-point rating scale is used for individual criteria and overall merit.

When the third party reviews are returned to VBRN, they are reviewed by the VBRN Director and Program Coordinator to determine their suitability to funding, based on available resources, program strategic imperatives*, and BPI institutional impact. The applications along with external reviews and Director recommendations are forwarded to our External Advisory Committee, who make their funding recommendations. Applications recommended for funding by this three-stage process are then submitted to the NIH, who issues final approval. NIH does not typically conduct its own independent review of the scientific merit; they typically are more concerned with budget and regulatory compliance issues. VBRN's goal is to fund as many Awards as possible, but fund only meritorious applications.

*VBRN will assess applications with respect to alignment with VBRN strategic objectives and mission. For this cycle we are particularly interested in applications that foster inter-institutional collaborations and include a data science component. NIGMS would like to see INBRE Programs encourage the utilization of large, publicly available datasets, e.g. phenotypes of human populations, in research by INBRE-supported faculty members.

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<th>Project Award Key Dates</th>
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<tr>
<td>Grant Writing Workshop Attendance</td>
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<td><strong>DATE:</strong> September 30, 2022</td>
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To be eligible for 2023–2025 Project Award funding, faculty must attend the VBRN Grant Writing Workshop on September 30, 2022. This event will be in person unless special arrangements are made in advance.

<table>
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<th>Letter of Intent</th>
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<td><strong>DUE:</strong> November 1, 2022</td>
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Applicants must submit a Letter of Intent (LOI) to VBRN with a working title and key words by November 1, 2022. VBRN will distribute the LOI template to those who attended the Grant Writing Workshop.

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<th>Application Due Date</th>
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<td><strong>DUE:</strong> January 13, 2023</td>
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Project Award applications are submitted online via the VBRN application site, which will be accessible beginning in early December 2022. Funding decisions are made and communicated to applicants by the end of March. Note that formatting must adhere to NIH standards as outlined on their [website](#).

For the following application components, use the hyperlinked documents as provided. Please submit all documents in the PDF format, except for the Budget and Budget Justification, which should be submitted as Word documents.

All applicants must contact a federal Program Officer at an NIH Center or Institute to verify that the proposed research is fundable by the NIH. Project applications are not generally renewable except under extraordinary circumstances. If a Project Award renewal is contemplated, please contact the Director and Program Coordinator in advance of the deadline for permission to submit a Project Award renewal. If a Project Award renewal is granted, the applicant’s current science mentor must review the proposal before submission.

Application components include:

- [Face Page](#) (submit as PDF. Face Page may be emailed to vbrn@uvm.edu by January 18, 2023 if there are delays in obtaining institutional signatures)
  - Must be signed by BPI Coordinator and institutional grants officials (boxes 12 and 13)
  - List direct costs only (boxes 7a and 8a)
  - List total costs (including Facilities and Administrative costs, boxes 7b and 8b)
Funding Period:
June 1, 2023 - May 31, 2025

Funding of awards is contingent upon NIH approval. Award funds must be spent in the award period; carryover of funds is not allowed.

Project Award Conditions:

Year One (June 1, 2023-May 31, 2024)**

Completion of the following:

- Individual Development Plan (IDP) due September 1, 2023.
- Two telephone discussions of the IDP with the VBRN Director, the VBRN Program Coordinator, and the BPI Coordinator. These conversations are planned for September 2023 and May 2024.
- Annual VBRN survey and periodic VBRN longitudinal surveys.
- VBRN Student Application for each student funded by VBRN prior to their start time in your research program.

**Funding for the second year is contingent upon meeting the requirements in Year One.

Year Two (June 1, 2024-May 31, 2025)

Completion of the following:

- Individual Development Plan (IDP) due September 1, 2024. This IDP should represent an update and revision of what was filed in the previous year.
- Two telephone discussions of the IDP with the VBRN Director, the VBRN Program Coordinator, and the BPI Coordinator. These conversations are planned for September 2024 and May 2025.
- Annual VBRN survey and periodic VBRN longitudinal surveys.
- VBRN Student Application for each student funded by VBRN prior to their start time in your research program.
- A copy of the approved research protocol
- Research Plan (submit as PDF)
- Budget (submit one document for each year of the Award, and both as Word documents)
- Project Summary and Relevance (submit as PDF)
- Research Resources and Environment (submit as PDF)
- Biobibliography (submit as PDF)
- Submit for all senior/key personnel and other significant contributors
- Not to exceed 5 pages per person
- For human subjects research, IRB approvals*
  - NHLBI Human Subjects and Clinical Trials Information Form (note, human subjects research is permitted; however clinical trials are no longer supported)
  - The approved IRB research protocol
  - Human Subjects education certification for all key personnel
  - Applicable, complete Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee(s) (IACUC) approvals*
  - A copy of the approved research protocol
  - Vertebrate Animals Section
  - Supporting documents (as applicable, e.g. Letters of Support, Equipment Quotes, etc.)

*IRB and IACUC approvals must be submitted with the application by the due date. A proposal will not be reviewed with a pending status. If the institutional approval expires over the duration of the two-year award, the PI is responsible for sending an updated approval letter.

Attendance at the following:

- Annual VBRN Faculty Retreat in Summer 2023.
- VBRN Professional Development Seminar in Winter 2024.
- Annual VBRN Career Day for students in April 2024.

Note that while attendance at the Grant Writing Workshop is not required, attendance is strongly encouraged.

**Funding for the second year is contingent upon meeting the requirements in Year One.

Any work resulting from this Award must acknowledge VBRN as a source of funding, details of which can be found on the VBRN website and in the faculty handbooks. All publications from VBRN-funded research are required to meet the NIH public access policy. Details on this requirement can be found in the VBRN faculty handbook.