



## REQUEST FOR RESEARCH PROPOSALS

### ROSA Center Pilot Awards

*Supporting new research on stress and neural regulation  
of reproductive aging health outcomes*

*Please direct any questions to Mara Hampson [mbampson1@bwh.harvard.edu](mailto:mbampson1@bwh.harvard.edu).*

Applications Due: <b>February 13, 2026</b>	Award Announced: <b>April 1, 2026</b>	Earliest Start Date: <b>April 15, 2026</b>
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The **Reproductive Outcomes of Stress and Aging (ROSA) Center** is pleased to announce a request for research proposals (RFP) of ROSA Center Pilot Awards.

The ROSA Center is investigating how stress exposures and neural regulation of stress affect women's health during and after menopause. Research and educational outputs from the Center are aimed at ameliorating the adverse health consequences of reproductive aging among postmenopausal women. Currently, the ROSA Center is in its second five-year funding period. In this renewal period, ROSA Center science focused on the impact of both individual- and neighborhood-level stress exposures on common menopause-related symptoms of vasomotor symptoms (VMS), sleep, mood, memory, and cognition.

The ROSA Center is one of ~10 Specialized Centers of Research Excellence (SCORE) on Sex Differences nationwide and is currently co-funded by the Office of Research on Women's Health and National Institute on Aging from 2020-2030. Our overall goal is to catalyze the growth of translational women's health and sex-differences research through cutting-edge and synergistic research Projects and Cores under effective administrative leadership.

ROSA Center Pilot Awards must align with the broad goal of the ROSA Center to research stress exposures, reproductive aging, and women's health. Responsive proposals will focus on the impact of individual and/or neighborhood-level stressors on one or more of the following:

- Vasomotor symptoms (VMS)
- Sleep
- Mood
- Memory
- Cognition

Awards are intended for early-stage investigators (postdocs and junior faculty). These Pilot awards are well suited for investigators seeking to obtain preliminary data to facilitate applications for future NIH K-or R-level awards. Pilot Awardees are expected to participate in the Center's Career Enhancement Core's (CEC) robust monthly educational and career development programming, co-led by Kathryn Rexrode, MD, MPH and Janet Rich-Edwards, ScD, MPH.



Programming will include structured monthly seminars and Work-In-Progress meetings that focus on developing skills and methods training in incorporating sex as a biologic variable (SABV) when planning, analyzing, and reporting data, as well as topic-specific didactic sessions in women's health, sleep medicine, neuroscience, and dementia. The ROSA Center's Pilot Awardees will be required to present their work at Work-In-Progress meetings. In addition, Pilot Awardees will be expected to present their work at and participate in periodic ROSA Center-hosted meetings (i.e., Steering Committee, Advisory Board) and NIH/National SCORE network-hosted select meetings and symposia, all of which provide valuable scientific and networking opportunities to engage across a broad women's health research community.

Up to two ROSA Pilot Awards will be distributed. Each Awardee will receive a total of \$60,000 over 2 years (up to \$30,000/direct costs per year). Pilot Awardees are required to identify a primary research mentor for the proposal.

**Timeline:**

Applications open December 15, 2025

Applications due at noon on February 13, 2026

Award recipients announced on April 1, 2026

Earliest start date is April 15, 2026

**Eligibility:**

- Holds a primary appointment at Harvard Medical School rank of Research Fellow, Instructor or Assistant Professor.
  - One of the awards will be given to a candidate from any HMS-affiliated teaching hospital (e.g., BCH, BIDMC, BWH, DFCI, MEEI, McLean, MGH, SRH), HMS department, or the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health.
  - One award will be given to a candidate whose primary appointment is at a Mass General Brigham affiliated hospital.
- Has earned a doctoral degree (MD, PhD, and/or ScD or equivalent)
- Has the commitment of a mentor with extensive research experience who will mentor the applicant for the duration of the pilot award.
- Is **not** a current or past Principal Investigator on an NIH R01, R29 or subproject of a Program Project (P01), Center (P50, P60, U54) grant, individual mentored career development (K-series) grant, or other equivalent NIH research grant award; **except** for R03 and R21 awards.
- Both U.S. and non-U.S. citizens are welcome to apply.

**Application Materials:**

**Application Due February 13, 2026, at 12:00pm:**

1. Research statement: A two-page maximum research proposal describing the proposed scientific work. Applicants should plan a two-year funding period when creating their research proposal. Figures, tables, images, and a timeline may be included within this limit. References may be separate.
2. Statement of future plans: A description of plans for future studies and grant applications using these project data, and a summary of career development and specific gaps in knowledge and/or mentorship (150-word max).
3. Commitment to participate in ROSA Center programming: A brief statement regarding availability and interest in presenting at ROSA Center events. (100-word max)



4. Budget and Justification: Applications must include a two-year line-item budget **using the provided budget template**. Projects will be funded to a maximum of \$60,000 (\$30,000 direct costs/year). All expenses must be directly project-related. Salary is allowable. A brief written justification for each requested expense must be included (200-word max).
5. Biosketch in standard NIH format.
6. Letter of Support: A Letter of Support from the primary research mentor should be included (1-page max, on letterhead).

All items above must be compiled into a single PDF, in the above order, and submitted electronically by 12pm on February 13, 2026 to [mhampson1@bwh.harvard.edu](mailto:mhampson1@bwh.harvard.edu).

Application text must be in Arial, 11-point font. Single-spacing is allowed. All margins must be at least 0.5 inches. Incomplete applications and applications submitted in multiple files will not be considered.

### **Proposal Review Criteria:**

Proposals will be reviewed by a panel of established researchers and will be judged on the following criteria:

- Alignment with the ROSA Center mission and scientific focus. For more information about the ROSA Center projects, visit our [website](#).
- Clinical, population, and preclinical science proposals are all welcome as long as they have a potential clinical translation that is described in the proposal. While clinical impact is not an expectation during the project period, translational scientific merit and potential for ultimate clinical impact will be considered.
- Projects that provide the opportunity for collaboration with other SCORE sites are of interest. More information about the SCORE program can be found [here](#).
- A research career focused on the health of women and/or sex-informed medicine
- Enthusiasm and willingness of the Investigator to participate in ROSA Center activities, including presenting at ROSA Center meetings and symposiums.
- Feasibility for completing the aims of the proposal during the funding period with the amount of awarded resources.
- Likelihood of independent funding based on the preliminary data to be developed; strategies for moving the project forward beyond initial to more stable funding will be evaluated.
- Investigator qualifications; opportunity to bring new investigators into the ROSA Center and the national SCORE community.

### **Terms of the Program:**

At twelve months, the Awardee and mentor will be asked to submit a brief formal progress report delineating the completed work and plans for the remaining grant period. A formal written report will also be required at the end of the 2-year funding period. Pilot Awardees are required to attend monthly seminars, works-in-progress sessions and the bi-annual ROSA Center research symposia. In addition, there may be other events such as periodic ROSA Center-hosted meetings (i.e., Steering Committee, Advisory Board) and NIH/National SCORE network-hosted select meetings and symposia.

The Pilot Awardees must maintain their appointment at Harvard to maintain eligibility to participate in the ROSA Center's Pilot program and funding.

*Funding for this award is provided by an NIH U54 SCORE Award (U54AG06232) and Mass General Brigham.*