

**Pivot Pilot Grant Program - Program Announcement Year 1**  
**Funding Period: 9/1/26-8/31/27 – Funding: \$50,000 to \$125,000 (total available \$250,000)**

## OVERVIEW

### Goal

- To support pilot projects to help investigators pivot, realign or expand their research programs toward NIH research priority areas by generating preliminary data focused on securing new external funding.
- This RFA is for Einstein or Montefiore faculty members whose grants or grant applications were negatively affected by shifts in administration priorities and/or whose research programs are no longer aligned with current [NIH focus areas](#) or NIH Institute priorities.

### Objectives

1. Support **strategic re-positioning** of existing research programs into clearly distinct new directions not duplicative or derivative of ongoing or previously funded work.
2. Enable investigators to develop and validate **new scientific hypotheses, methodologies, populations, or mechanistic pathways** aligned with current and emerging NIH priorities.
3. Encourage **new collaborations with investigators who add complementary expertise** that will strengthen grant applications to increase competitiveness for successful funding.
4. Generate **high-quality preliminary data, feasibility evidence, or proof-of-concept results** for near-term extramural grant submission.

### Key Dates (all due by 11:59 PM ET)

- **LOI due:** March 23, 2026
- **Invitation to submit full application:** April 20, 2026
- **Full applications due** (invited only): June 1, 2026
- **Notice of Award:** July 30, 2026
- **Start date:** September 1, 2026

## ELIGIBILITY

- **Institutions:** Albert Einstein College of Medicine and Montefiore Medical Center (Moses, Weiler, Wakefield, CHAM).
- **Investigators:** Faculty with at least 80% FTE (MD, PhD, MD-PhD, or equivalent) who currently hold or previously held external research funding. Multidisciplinary teams strongly encouraged.
- **Not eligible:** PIs/MPIs who held an ICTR, Cancer Center, or other NIH-center pilot, a TEAM pilot, or a Seed Fund or Acceleration Fund pilot awarded in 2025 or 2026.
- **One application per cycle** as PI/MPI (Co-I on another application is acceptable).

## APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

**Phase 1: Letter of Intent (LOI)** – 1 page, at least 11 pt font addressing topics below + PI/MPIs Biosketch(es) (in one pdf)

- Current research focus, how research program was affected by changing federal priorities, rationale for pivoting (brief).
- Proposed new direction or pivot and reason for selecting it.
- Specific aims, hypothesis, scientific significance and innovation and experimental approach.
- Explanation of how this project differs from existing funded research and does not overlap.
- Extramural funding plan (target agency/mechanism and anticipated submission date).
- **Submit LOI here:** [LINK](#)

## Phase 2: Full Application (by invitation; single PDF)

### 1. Cover letter:

- Current research focus, how research program was affected by changing federal priorities, rationale for pivoting, and how data will enable extramural funding (agency + mechanism + target date)
- If applicable, commitment to obtain **IRB/IACUC/IBC** approvals prior to funding start; application should be started with full application submission.
- Acknowledge award is **non-transferable**; notify administrator if leaving during project year.

### 2. Abstract (≤150 words)

### 3. Detailed budget (PHS 398) + justification: \$50,000 to \$125,000 may be requested for a one-year period

### 4. Biosketches (PI/MPI/Co-Is; SciENcv format)

### 5. Other Support (PI/MPI; SciENcv format)

### 6. Specific Aims (1 page maximum)

### 7. Research Plan (2 pages maximum) including rationale for pilot, significance, innovation experimental approach and feasibility, and timeline/milestones appropriate for a one-year award

### 8. Literature Cited

### 9. Human Subjects/Vertebrate Animals (if applicable; ≤1 page)

**Submission:** Detailed instructions will be sent upon acceptance of LOI.

## APPLICATION REVIEW AND AWARD INFORMATION

- **Process:** LOI review by committee → invited full application review by committee → administrative review.
- **Feedback:** Brief summary of critiques provided for full applications.
- **Criteria:** See **FAQ** for detailed criteria and common pitfalls.

## AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

- **Notices:** Email confirmations at key milestones (LOI receipt, invitation, submission, decision).
- **Reporting:** Progress report and invention statement due **August 31, 2027**, and final progress report due **August 31, 2028**.
- **Prior approvals:** IRB/IACUC/IBC must be in place **before** funds are released (lack of approvals will delay start).
- **Carryover:** Awards are for one year; extension to complete the project and carryover of funds for up to **one year** may be requested but must be justified.
- **Non-transferable:** Awards **cannot** be transferred if the PI leaves Einstein; notify Samuel Pugo ([Samuel.PugoMarte@einsteinmed.edu](mailto:Samuel.PugoMarte@einsteinmed.edu)).

## CONTACTS

**Submission Questions:** Samuel Pugo – [samuel.pugomarte@einsteinmed.edu](mailto:samuel.pugomarte@einsteinmed.edu)  
**Program Questions:** Jessica Kahn - [jessica.kahn@einsteinmed.edu](mailto:jessica.kahn@einsteinmed.edu)  
or Harris Goldstein – [harris.goldstein@einsteinmed.edu](mailto:harris.goldstein@einsteinmed.edu)

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## Pivot Pilot Grant Program – Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

### 1) What types of projects fit this mechanism?

Projects that enable investigators to develop and test new scientific hypotheses, methodologies, populations, or mechanistic pathways aligned with current and emerging federal priorities are appropriate for this mechanism. Projects should support strategic re-positioning of existing research programs without duplicating ongoing funded work. Establishment of new collaborations that enhance competitiveness for successful funding to strengthen the application are encouraged. Projects that generate high-quality preliminary data, feasibility evidence, or proof-of-concept results for near-term extramural grant submission will be prioritized.

### 2) Do you prioritize collaborations or community partnerships?

Yes. Priority is given to proposals that strengthen collaboration across Divisions, Departments, Centers or Institutes, and/or that propose collaboration with someone who has the expertise to support a pivot (e.g. new model systems, new mechanisms). Engagement with community partners (e.g., patient groups) is encouraged.

### 3) How important is a downstream funding plan?

Very important. Competitive applications clearly describe how results will be used as **preliminary data** for **extramural funding** (e.g., NIH/NCATS, FDA, AHRQ, PCORI, DoD, foundations), including a **target mechanism** and **submission date**.

### 4) What are the detailed review criteria?

Reviewers assess:

- **Responsiveness** to the RFA
- **Overall impact** and importance (**significance/innovation**)
- **Rigor and feasibility** of the approach
- **Investigators and environment** (team expertise, resources, collaboration plan)

### 5) What are common reasons for non-funding?

- Lack of evidence that the proposal represents a **pivot or new direction** for the investigator.
- Weak plan for **future grant** or IP; unclear that data will support a competitive submission.
- **Overlap** with existing funded work.
- Scope **outside** this announcement or non-responsive aims.
- Unlikely to complete project or to **spend funds within the project period**.
- **Missing required elements** (biosketches, letters, approvals).

**6) May salary support be requested?**

Salary support for research personnel (e.g. research coordinators, assistants) may be requested. Faculty support up to 10% effort (+ fringe) may be requested for the PI or MPI, during the one-year funding period.

**7) Are equipment purchases allowed?**

No. Equipment is **not** an allowable cost. (Fringe on personnel is allowable; indirects are not.)

**8) Can I submit multiple applications?**

No. An investigator may apply **once per cycle** as **PI/MPI**.

**9) Am I eligible if I held a pilot grant last year?**

PIs/MPIs who held an ICTR, Cancer Center, or other NIH-center pilot, an Einstein Strategic Plan TEAM pilot, or a Seed Fund or Acceleration Fund pilot **awarded in 2025 or 2026** are not eligible this cycle.