



**ACTG Request for Applications
HIV Infection, Aging, and Immune Function Long-Term Observational Study
(HAILO Study)**

Deadline: July 28, 2021, 11:59 PM EDT

I. Introduction

The AIDS Clinical Trials Group (ACTG) study A5322 (“Long-term Follow-up of Older HIV-infected Adults in the ACTG: Addressing Issues of Aging, HIV Infection, and Inflammation”), also known as HAILO (HIV Infection, Aging, and Immune Function Long-Term Observational Study), assesses clinical, immunological and functional health of older U.S. persons with HIV (PWH). HAILO is a multicenter prospective observational study. All HAILO participants have been under observation since antiretroviral therapy (ART) initiation and were previously under follow up in the observational study A5001, ACTG Longitudinal Linked Randomized Trials (ALLRT) protocol. At study initiation, HAILO included 1035 PWH ≥40 years old from 32 clinical research sites in the U.S. and Puerto Rico.

During HAILO visits, which occur annually (previously semi-annually), data collected have included medical chart diagnoses and medications, interviews and self-administered questionnaires on behaviors, anthropomorphic measurements, neurocognitive and physical function evaluations, laboratory testing, and biologic specimen storage comprised of PBMC, plasma, and sera, as well as urine at select time periods.

Average duration of follow-up for HAILO participants since ART initiation is 15 years as of December 2020. Eighty-four percent of the cohort remains on-study.

The average participant age at HAILO enrollment was 51 years (range 40-78), with 19% of participants female, 29% Black, non-Hispanic, 20% Hispanic. Ninety-one percent are virally suppressed, with average CD4 count 617 cells/mm³ (range 449, 822). The number of individual ART exposures has been discrete for most participants.

II. Purpose and Scope

The purpose for this Request for Applications (RFA) is to fund projects to utilize HAILO data and specimens, with a focus on age-related issues in HAILO. The RFA is targeting early career investigators to submit proposals for pilot studies for completion within one year. Funded applicants will present their study results during the Annual ACTG Network Meeting in June 2022. Funded applicants will be encouraged to use the results of the pilot studies as preliminary data in applying for independent R21 or R01 funding to NIH.

Since ART initiation, biologic specimens including PBMC, plasma, and sera have been collected on an annual or semi-annual basis. For each HAILO participant, there exists an average of 15 years of repository specimens. This availability includes pre-ART specimens; 97% of HAILO participants have stored plasma, 81% PBMC, and 37% sera obtained just at or before ART initiation.

Examples of scientific questions for consideration:

- Characterization of trajectories of levels of systemic biomarkers of inflammation, immune function, viral reservoirs and genetics with correlation of incidence of major clinical events (cardiovascular disease, renal disease, cancer, diabetes, fractures, etc.)
- Associations of levels of systemic biomarkers of inflammation, immune function, viral reservoirs, and genetics with trajectories of (a) neurocognitive function and (b) functional status, including frailty;
- Correlations between levels of systemic biomarkers with social determinants of health including social support, depression, independent activities of daily living;
- Evaluations of specific ART exposures upon the above clinical events (as well as weight gain and anthropomorphic measurements) and the potential mediating effects of systemic biomarkers;
- Effects of use of metformin and other drug treatments for non-HIV comorbidities upon systemic biomarkers of inflammation, immune function, and viral reservoirs.

III. Eligibility

- The ACTG Network is distributing this RFA to ACTG members and to the 17 CFARs.
- The RFA is open to any investigators interested in developing research in the area of HIV and Aging.
- As noted above, the ACTG will preferentially select proposals led by early career investigators or investigators who have not previously pursued research in the area of HIV and aging.
- Collaboration with HAILO protocol team members and ACTG Network members is strongly encouraged whenever possible.
- Proposing investigators should work with the sample repository and study statistical team to assure that relevant samples and data elements for the proposal are available; otherwise the proposal may be deemed nonresponsive to the RFA.

IV. Funding Source and Mechanism

The ACTG anticipates funding up to three awards of \$50,000 each (total direct cost in US dollars) for completion within no later than one year. Applicants should add institutional facility and administrative (F&A) costs to the total direct cost using the appropriate negotiated indirect cost rate for their institution in order to determine total cost for each proposal.

Support for repository specimen identification/shipment and for statistical analyses as needed, will be available through the Statistical and Data Management Center (SDMC); the budget does not need to include these costs.

The ACTG Leadership and Operations Center at UCLA will issue the contracts.

V. Application Procedures

Applicants must submit the following items via <https://submit.mis.s-3.net/> by no later than 11:59 PM EDT on July 28, 2021.

- NWCS (New Work Concept Sheet); form and instructions available for download at <https://submit.mis.s-3.net/>
- Budget on PHS 398 ([Word](#) or [PDF](#)) and justification – combined into single file (Word or PDF)
- NIH biosketch for each investigator – combined into a single file (Word or PDF)

VI. Evaluation Criteria

Reviewers will evaluate proposals based on the potential impact to the HIV and aging field, on the potential to inform future ACTG intervention studies, and on the likelihood to complete the project within the timeframe outlined above.

VII. Review Process

A panel comprised of HAILO/ACTG investigators and others with aging expertise will review the proposals and provide recommendations for funding to the ACTG Scientific Agenda Steering Committee (SASC). The SASC will make the final decision.

VIII. Key Dates/Timelines

Release of solicitation:	June 24, 2021
Letter of intent due date:	July 9, 2021
Application due date:	July 28, 2021
Review date:	August 2021
Award date:	September 2021

IX. Inquiries

For proposal science or specimen availability questions, contact ACTG.CoreA5322@fstrf.org

For budget questions, contact actginvoices.loc_ucla@fstrf.org

For application submission questions or issues, contact ACTGLeadershipSupport@DLHCorp.com