

This request for applications is to provide pilot funding to early-stage investigators in the PKD field and established investigators who are new to PKD research.

About The Polycystic Kidney Disease Research Resource Consortium (PKD RRC)

The goal of the PKD RRC (pkd-rrc.org) is to accelerate discovery in the field of polycystic kidney disease by promoting innovation and resource sharing.

The PKD RRC Pilot and Feasibility Program

The PKD RRC Pilot and Feasibility (P&F) program will provide funds for one year to eligible investigators for the development of innovative and high impact projects broadly related to the study of polycystic kidney and liver disease. Although projects may be in any area, projects focusing on the following areas of emphasis are encouraged:

- Application of novel or emerging technologies to decipher mechanisms of PKD or identify treatments.
- Use of
• and novel data sets (For example “omics” or EHR databases) to address basic and clinical questions in PKD, with appropriate validation.
- Use of PKD RRC pre-clinical models to: a) decipher the early events/pathways involved in cyst initiation/formation or b) to test therapeutic strategies
- Human biomarker studies utilizing the PKD RRC biorepository.
- Studies aimed at understanding the functions of polycystin-1 and -2, fibrocystin and other cysto-proteins or their domains.
- Studies developing innovative human iPSC-derived organoid or human tubuloid models of PKD to understand cystogenesis or test new therapies.
- Development of innovative resources that will advance the study of PKD. Examples include **but not** limited to:
 - Implementation of innovative informatics approaches for aggregating PKD “omics” data.
 - The use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools applied to PKD.
 - Novel approaches to generate immortalized human kidney cell lines that maintain epithelial characteristics.
 - Generation of novel *in vitro* PKD models for rapid, high throughput drug testing for PKD.
 - Generation of reporter mice to investigate relevant PKD signaling pathways.

Proposals outside of these areas of emphasis that involve discovery (hypothesis-generating) and/or innovative (high-risk/high-reward) research/resource generation will also be considered. Research involving human subjects is limited to observational studies with non-invasive or minimally invasive testing. Clinical trials, as defined by the NIH (<https://grants.nih.gov/policy/clinical-trials/definition.htm>), are beyond the scope of this program. Funding is expected to prepare the applicant(s) to submit a future investigator-initiated project (eg. NIH R01). Applicants are encouraged, but not obligated, to make use of PKD RRC resources and expertise (www.pkd-rrc.org).

Eligibility

- Established investigators, who bring new and unique expertise to advance innovative research in polycystic kidney and liver disease, are encouraged to apply.
- Established investigators are not eligible if they have had prior funding for PKD research, including grants from NIH (any mechanism), Department of Defense, Veteran’s Administration, PKD Foundation or American Heart Association.
- Early-stage investigators (ESI), as defined by NIH

(<https://grants.nih.gov/policy/early-investigators/index.htm>)

- Applicants must have an independent faculty position at the time of the application.
- Investigators at non-domestic (non-U.S.) entities (foreign institutions) are not eligible to apply.
- PKD RRC key personnel are not eligible to apply.
- PKD RRC Coordinating Site will confirm the applicant's funding history. Applications that are non-compliant will be administratively withdrawn.

- Applicants with prior PKD RRC Pilot and Feasibility awards may apply, but those applications may receive lower priority when funding decisions are made.

Full Application: Deadline 5 PM EST February 23, 2026

The application must be typed in Arial font, 11 point or larger with single spacing and margins of at least ½ inch on all sides. Page numbers should be included. Appendices are not allowed. All tables, graphics, and supporting documentation must be contained within the proposal itself. No additional materials may be submitted after the receipt date.

- Email a single PDF containing the Application to info@pkd-rrc.org. **The deadline for submitting the proposal is 5 PM EST February 23, 2026.** An email confirming receipt will be sent to the applicant.

- The Application should include the following sections:

1. NIH PHS 398 face page

2. Abstract (250 words or less)

3. Detailed Budget Form and Justification

as described below.

4. Biographical Sketches

An NIH biographical sketch with other support (current and pending) is required for the PI and any key personnel.

5. Research Plan (Up to 3 pages total)

A. Progress report (if renewal application)

B. Specific Aims

C. Research Strategy

1. Background and Significance: Discuss the scientific problem or challenge that will be addressed, and why it is important to the field of PKD. State the premise of the research project, including any strengths and weaknesses of prevailing relevant theories.
2. Innovation: Briefly discuss any pioneering or high-risk approaches that, if successful, will lead to groundbreaking or paradigm-shifting results or resources.
3. Research Approach: Describe preliminary data and the scientific plan and explain how anticipated results will lead to future funding. If applicable, describe the proposed use of PKD RRC cores, resources, and expertise.

6. Literature Cited (No limit)

7. Vertebrate Animals and/or Human Subjects (No Limit)

8. Resource Sharing Plan (No Limit)

Budget

Applicants may request up to 100,000 (direct + indirect costs) for one year. A maximum of \$10,000 may be used to support the principal investigator's salary and fringe. A narrative justification should be provided for key personnel and any major equipment (cost greater than \$5,000) deemed to be necessary for the proposed project. This is a federal grant, so federally negotiated F&A rates apply.

Second Year Funding

Applicants will be able to apply for a second year of support (renewal application) when future RFAs are released. However, the granting of additional funds will be competitive and based on the availability of funds and demonstrated progress during Year 1.

Application Review

The PKD RRC Central Coordinating Site will review applications that are submitted for completeness and compliance with this funding opportunity announcement. Applications that are incomplete, non-compliant and/or nonresponsive will not be reviewed. Higher priority will be given to investigators who have not previously held a PKD RRC funded pilot award. Applications will be reviewed by at least three subject matter experts using the NIH simplified review framework. Applications will be given scores (1-9) for: Factor 1: Importance of the Research and Factor 2: Rigor and Feasibility. The expertise of the investigators and environment will be evaluated as sufficient or not. Reviewers will strongly consider the goals of the program regarding areas of emphasis, to support discovery (hypothesis generating), innovative (high-risk/high-reward) research or innovative resource generation. All decisions are final, and appeals will not be accepted for applications submitted in response to this solicitation. Unfunded applications can be submitted as an amended application in subsequent cycles, but there will not be an option to respond to reviewers' critiques. Funding is expected to begin by Mid 2026.

Expectations of Awardees Receiving Pilot Funding from the PKD RRC

- Awardees are expected to join the PKD RRC as external members and take advantage of the research collaboration framework offered by the consortium.
- Awardees may be asked to participate in future grant reviews for the pilot program.
- Awardees are expected to present their research at the PKD RRC annual symposium and/or educational activities organized by the PKD RRC
- Investigators are expected cite support from the PKD RRC in all related publications and presentations.

If you have any questions about the PKD RRC Pilot and Feasibility Program, your eligibility, or the application process, please contact us at info@pkd-rrc.org.

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