



# Center of Innovation Grants Program Guidelines

## For invited applicants only

The Center of Innovation program of the North Carolina Biotechnology Center (North Carolina Biotechnnology Center) is intended to promote a strategic focus on innovation in and development of selected biotechnology-dependent industries and to enhance commercialization of research in those areas.

Initial Centers of Innovation will complement efforts already under way in the state to align academic and industrial resources in specific sectors. Planning for the first four Centers of Innovation are currently underway in the following fields:

- **Marine Biotechnology**
- **Nanobiotechnology**
- **Advanced Medical Technologies**
- **Drug Discovery**

**Future Centers of Innovation will serve other industrial sectors in which biotechnology could play a central role in increasing North Carolina's competitive advantage in innovation, commercialization, industry growth and job creation.**

Potential applicants will need to demonstrate that they have established a cohesive academic-industry consortium in order to receive an invitation to submit an application.

## Centers of Innovation

A Center of Innovation will focus on the identification, development, and commercialization of research within a specific biotechnology-dependent industry. These Centers are intended to catalyze the state's efforts in the research and commercialization of strategically-selected biotechnology-dependent industries for the statewide benefit of North Carolina.

A Center of Innovation will meet these goals through:

- Development of innovative strategic public-private partnerships and alliances involving multiple universities, commercial and economic development organizations, non-profit organizations and industry partners across the state
- Establishment and implementation of new strategies to utilize the state's natural and institutional resources for strengthening commercially viable biotechnology-dependent sectors of the economy
- Creation of an innovative pipeline of commercialization built upon existing university research expertise, infrastructure and technology transfer to stimulate, encourage and assist new private sector partnerships and company formation
- Recruitment of new sources of funding (including public and private) for the targeted sectors to achieve financial sustainability

## Award Information

Awards in this program will be made in two phases.

### Phase I Planning Grant

*Phase I awards will be made to invited applicants from nonprofit institutions in North Carolina to support the development of a preliminary business, organizational and operational plan including a pro forma budget with two years of operational milestones.*

Phase I awards will be a 12 month, \$100,000 planning grant. **The award of a Phase I Center of Innovation Planning Grant does not guarantee that a Center of Innovation will be established.** Consortia that have been awarded a Phase I grant, have met all conditions for the release of Phase I funds and prepared the required Phase II application documents will be invited to apply for an initial tranche of Phase II funding.

### Phase II

Phase II awardees will receive up to \$2.5 million awarded over four years, contingent upon completion of targeted milestones. Preparation of the required application documents during Phase I and approval by North Carolina Biotechnology Center will transition an awardee into the initial tranche of Phase II funding which may be used to secure permanent leadership for the COI. Required milestones following placement of an Executive Director will include developing the required 5-year business plan and launching the COI as a formal entity. Limited funding for start-up activities will be considered in this initial funding tranche as detailed in the preliminary business plan.

## Who may apply?

Only invited applicants may apply. Please contact North Carolina Biotechnology Center staff if you are interested in applying and feel you have collaboration in place capable of meeting the Phase I requirements.

## Phase I Application Requirements

The application must include the following:

- Submission of the on-line application form (this is a password protected form that requests information such as project title, project director, sponsoring organization, etc.)
- A proposal narrative that includes
  - Title page
  - Abstract
  - Executive summary (one page),
  - Description of the intended use of the Center of Innovation award and the targeted biotechnology-dependent sector (no more than **10** pages; graphics and figures are welcome)
- A North Carolina Biotechnology Center budget form as well as a narrative budget justification.
- Required supporting documentation:
  - North Carolina Biotechnology Center Fiscal Agent Letter
  - Letters of support from existing and potential collaborators and partners indicating how they will participate in the planned COI (e.g. technology transfer offices, institutional officials)
  - Letters of support from a Regional Advisory Committee of the North Carolina Biotechnology Center (multiple letters are encouraged)

## Funding Restrictions

Phase I funds may be used for the following purposes:

- Market research (this should be a priority activity)
- Project Director release time and fringe benefits
- Salary and fringe benefits for key project personnel (including summer salary)
- Travel for planning meetings directly related to the project
- Expenses related to conferences and events directly relevant to the project
- Limited legal fees
- Consultants

- ⊗ *Grant funds may not be used for building construction or renovation, out-of-state collaborators, office supplies, overhead and indirect costs or tuition. In addition, funds are NOT intended for direct laboratory research costs.*

*Please contact Biotechnology Center staff with any questions about allowable budget items prior to formal submission.*

## Phase II Application Requirements

A formal request written to the Senior Director, Centers of Innovation Operations for Phase II funding is required.

The Phase I funding should be used to prepare the documents that are required to transition to Phase II funding. An application for the initial Phase II funding tranche must have five (5) documents.

1. A preliminary business plan that includes:
  - a. An overall needs assessment of the sector in North Carolina and a clear description of the role and value of the Center of Innovation to sector development.
  - b. Identification and delineation of market needs and sector focus of the COI.
  - c. Identification of key strategic partners (university, business, and nonprofit) and the role of each partner in proposed COI activities.
  - d. Two (2) years of anticipated quarterly milestones.
2. A *pro forma* budget that covers the outlined two years of milestones.
3. A preliminary organizational plan that includes:
  - a. A draft organizational chart for the planned Center of Innovation.
  - b. A development plan for the external Advisory Boards (Science/Industrial and Directors).
  - c. Letters of commitment from key strategic partners and any other supplemental material.
4. An operational plan for the first tranche of Phase II funding that includes:
  - a. A detailed timeline and set of milestones that the COI will address with this first tranche of Phase II funding.

- b. Identification of person(s) on the COI leadership team responsible for achieving milestones through the period defined in the initial Phase II request.
- c. A monthly budget and specific operational activities for the first six months OR until an Executive Director is secured.

5. North Carolina Biotechnology Center Fiscal Agent Letter (template will be provided).

This Phase II funding request must be aligned with proposed milestones identified and detailed in the plan discussed above.

The milestone activities must include, but are not limited to:

1. A timeline with associated activities leading to the hire of a COI Executive Director.
2. Specific activities related to establishing the Center of Innovation as a formal entity and the refinement of the business plan which will include details on the business execution of the COI.
3. Details on COI implementation with a budget request and an accompanying timeline for the next tranche of Phase II funding.

Additional tranches of Phase II funding will be based on needs of the COI applying for the funding. The Senior Director, Centers of Innovation Operations at the Biotechnology Center will work with each COI to determine what documentation will be needed.

## Post-award reporting

Each awardee must comply with applicable state reporting requirements for funds received in a given fiscal year. In addition, brief post-award reports are required for Phase I awards. A mid-year report or conference may also be required. Phase II reporting requirements include (at a minimum) unaudited yearly financials, semi-annual reports, and annual meetings with North Carolina Biotechnology Center Staff.



## For more information

Contact the director of the local regional office of the North Carolina Biotechnology Center:

- *Eastern North Carolina* (Greenville) – Steve Casey, Vice President, Statewide Operations, [steven\\_casey@ncbiotech.org](mailto:steven_casey@ncbiotech.org)
- *Greater Charlotte* (Charlotte) – Marjorie Benbow, Director, [marjorie\\_benbow@ncbiotech.org](mailto:marjorie_benbow@ncbiotech.org)
- *Piedmont Triad* (Winston-Salem) – Gwyn Riddick, Director, [gwyn\\_riddick@ncbiotech.org](mailto:gwyn_riddick@ncbiotech.org)
- *Southeastern North Carolina* (Wilmington) – Randall Johnson, Director, [randall\\_johnson@ncbiotech.org](mailto:randall_johnson@ncbiotech.org)
- *Western North Carolina* (Asheville) – Steve Lockett, Interim Director, [steve\\_lockett@ncbiotech.org](mailto:steve_lockett@ncbiotech.org)

Or

**Mary Beth Thomas, Ph.D.**, Vice President,  
Centers of Innovation Operations  
[marybeth\\_thomas@ncbiotech.org](mailto:marybeth_thomas@ncbiotech.org)

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See our Centers of Innovation Web page at  
[www.ncbiotech.org/services\\_and\\_programs/COI/](http://www.ncbiotech.org/services_and_programs/COI/)