



Meharry-Africa Program to Enhance Collaborative and Interdisciplinary Research (Meharry-Africa-PECIR)

Program Overview

The Meharry–Africa Program to Enhance Collaborative and Interdisciplinary Research (PECIR) aims to foster sustainable research partnerships between Meharry Medical College and African institutions, with a focus on genomics and precision health. The program seeks to strengthen global collaborations, research capacity of historically disadvantaged institutions, advance scientific discovery, and create reciprocal, high-impact partnerships benefiting institutions, faculty, students, and communities in both Africa and the U.S.

Program Goals

- **Strengthen global research capacity and Meharry’s presence in Africa** through high-impact, reciprocal partnerships advancing joint research, training, and workforce development across institutions.
- **Advance scientific discovery and innovation** to address healthcare challenges affecting populations of African ancestry.
- **Enable faculty collaborative research** that drives multi-institutional grant submissions and extramural funding success.
- **Position Meharry as a research-intensive (R1) institution** by expanding global research partnerships, funding, publications, and talent pipelines.
- **Build workforce capacity** by providing structured training opportunities for students, postdoctoral fellows, and junior faculty to promote research excellence and independence.

Collaborator Selection Criteria

- **Mission Alignment:** Commitment to advancing health care, genomics research, and improving the human condition of African ancestry populations.
- **Shared Impact:** Focus on mutual benefit and sustainability.

- Shared Databases & Biobanks: Collaborative resources to accelerate discovery and innovation.
- Workforce Development/ Training Impact: Each project must actively engage junior faculty and postdoctoral fellows through structured mentorship and progress tracking toward research independence. It should also provide training opportunities for graduate, postgraduate, and high school students, complemented by skill-building workshops in genomics, computational biology, and translational research.
- Adherence to research regulatory and ethical guidelines: IBC, IACUC, IRB, Radiation safety, Ethics etc.

Training Expectations

- Hands-on Research Experience: Participation in bench and social lab work in academic or healthcare settings, data analysis, or community engagement.
- Mentorship: Joint faculty guidance and mentorship on research designs and experimentation, tools and skills, data analytics, scholarly writing with high-impact publications, and career development. In the case of PhD students, investigators are expected to serve as mentors who provide guidance, support, and career development throughout the student's academic journey.
- Outcomes: Defined deliverables (e.g., presentations, abstracts, or manuscripts, fellowship applications, development of independent research projects, grant applications, K-series, submission of competitive grant proposals).

Budget Framework

- Three (3) competitive awards will be granted, with each award providing up to \$125,000 in total funding.
- Out of \$125,000, up to \$75,000 will be allocated to the Meharry Medical College research team, and up to \$50,000 will be allocated to the partner institution.
- Award Duration: Each award will support a project period of 2 years, allowing sufficient time to establish strong collaborations, generate preliminary data, and prepare competitive multi-institutional grant submissions.

Allowable Costs

- Supplies
- Staff salaries
- Research Publication costs, including reprints
- Participant compensation
- Total equipment costing less than \$5,000/Y. The equipment must be critical to the proposed work and not available in any existing Meharry/partner institution core.
- Registration fees for scientific meetings

- Exchange/conference Travel (up to \$3,000/partner)
- Data analysis or statistical consulting

Non-Allowable Costs

- Faculty salary
- Secretarial/administrative personnel
- Tuition and stipends
- Subcontracts
- Honoraria and travel expenses for visiting lecturers
- Recruiting and relocation expenses
- Rental of office or laboratory space
- Purchasing and binding of periodicals and books
- Renovations
- Major equipment (> \$5,000 unless justified)
- Furniture
- Food (except during travel to a subject-matter exchange visit or professional)
- Memberships (unless the membership allows a significant reduction in registration of professional subject-matter conference)
- Clinical trials

Eligibility:

- Faculty appointment at Meharry or collaborating institutions.
- Existing Memorandum of Understanding between Meharry and partnering institution
- For faculty-led collaborations without an existing institutional MOU: The PI from Meharry and the partnering institution must work together with the Office for Research and Innovation to establish a formal Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), which must be fully executed and signed by both institutions.

Application Process & Timeline

- **December 15, 2025:** Letter of Intent Due
- **January 05, 2026** – Full Application Opens
- **February 16, 2026** – Application Closes
- **April 15, 2026** – Award Notifications Issued

Application Components

- Cover Page: Principal Investigator(s) information, roles, and team members, Institutional signatory
- Expectations and contributions from each PI
- Specific aims (one page)

- Research Strategy (4 pages): Significance, innovation, and approach
- Planned Extramural Grant Applications: agencies, timelines.
- Student Training/ Fellowship Plan: Measurable outcomes required.
- Postdoctoral fellows Training Plan: Measurable outcomes required
- Early- Stage Investigators Training Plan: Measurable outcomes required
- Quarterly Milestones: Applications must include clearly defined milestones and deliverables by quarter to align with progress monitoring and fund release requirements.
- NIH Biosketch (5 pages max per PI).
- Budget & Justification (itemized details)
- Other Support: Pending/active funding.
- Institutional Letters of Commitment.
- References (not in page limit)

Review & Selection Criteria

- Scientific impact/significance, originality/innovation and feasibility
- PI track record in terms of research publications and other measurable outcomes with community impact
- Potential for external funding
- Student and post-doctoral fellows training outcomes
- Networking of early-stage and established investigators is preferred.

Conflict of Interest: Applications will be reviewed by reviewers with no potential conflicts of interest with the investigators or institutions.

Monitoring & Reporting

Each collaboration will be required to submit quarterly progress reports throughout the duration of the award. These reports are essential for monitoring progress, assessing outcomes, resolving issues, and ensuring continued funding over the 2-year project period.

Each quarterly report must include measurable research and training outcomes achieved during the reporting period:

- Number of students trained, categorized by level (PhD, graduate, undergraduate, high school, etc.).
- Skills gained by students, including laboratory techniques, bioinformatics, data analytics, and scholarly writing.
- Publications, presentations, and grant submissions resulting from the collaboration.
- A draft extramural grant Specific aims page, targeted funding agency, and planned submission timeline for external funding.

- Documented tangible research and training outcomes for postdoctoral fellows and early-stage researchers.
 - **Postdoctoral fellows' outcome:** May include but not limited to evidence of independent research development, mentorship activities, manuscript authorship, and conference participation.
 - **Early- Stage Investigators outcomes:** Mentorship activities, collaborative publications, grant submissions as PI/co-PI, and measurable progress toward research independence.

Key Funding Milestones and Approvals

- **6-Month Report** (Second Quarterly Report): Approval of this report is required for the release of the second installment. The committee will evaluate progress toward milestones, active research and training activities, and evidence of measurable outcomes.
- **End-of-Year Report (Year 1):** Approval of the end-of-year report is required for the release of Year 2 funds. The report must document cumulative progress, achievements, preliminary outcomes, and plans for the second year.
- **18-Month Report** (Third Quarterly Report of Year 2): Approval of this 18-month progress report is required for the release of the final funding installment. This report should demonstrate continued progress, updated outcomes, and readiness for final deliverables.
- **Final Report (End of Year 2):** The final report must include a draft extramural grant specific aims page and a submission timeline for external funding, as well as documentation of tangible research and training outcomes (e.g., fellowship or grant applications, manuscripts, preliminary data). Approval of this report finalizes the award and informs future funding opportunities.
- **Final Impact Report (End of Year 2)**
 - The final specific aims page and confirmation of planned or completed submission to the targeted funding agency.
 - Documentation of all tangible research outcomes, including manuscripts, abstracts, presentations, preliminary data, and submitted fellowship or grant applications.
 - A summary of training outcomes, including the number and type of trainees, skills gained, and scholarly products generated.
 - Evidence of capacity-building, and institutional impact, highlighting how the project has advanced collaborative research capacity at Meharry and partner institutions.

General Policies

- **Publications:** Must acknowledge PECIR program support in all published outputs and marketing materials.

- No Extensions: Unused funds are forfeited.
- Patents: Must notify the Institutional Offices for Research and Innovation of all partnering institutions.
- Compliance: IRB/IACUC / IBC and other applicable regulatory and ethical approvals required.