

2026 BHI-CAHBIR Trainee – RU-NB Faculty Collaborative Pilot Grant Program

The Rutgers Brain Health Institute (BHI) and the Center for Advanced Human Brain Imaging Research (CAHBIR) are pleased to announce the availability of \$35,000 Trainee-RU-NB Faculty Collaborative Pilot Research grants to fund neuroimaging research by RU-New Brunswick graduate students and post-doctoral fellows and their faculty mentors at CAHBIR.

Eligibility: Graduate students receiving funds must either be in a doctoral program in an RU-NB department OR be in the lab of an RU-NB faculty member. Post-doctoral fellows must be in a lab of an RU-NB faculty member to be eligible. Funding is provided by the RU-NB chancellor's office, leading to the focus on RU-NB graduate students and labs.

Number of grants available: Up to 3 awards are available.

Objective: There are fiscal barriers to initiating neuroimaging research as a trainee. The Trainee-RU-NB Faculty Collaborative Pilot grants are aimed at aiding trainees in developing research projects that make use of CAHBIR facilities. They also aim to assist in the development of the skills necessary to successfully executing the MRI research. An additional goal of these grants is to provide preliminary data for the trainee and/or sponsor to use when pursuing external fellowship or research grants.

In addition to providing funds for pilot neuroimaging studies, the grants aim to provide training in study design, execution and analysis. A core piece of this training is a 10-hr workshop aimed at familiarizing researchers with MRI scanning, design and analyses. Funds from the grant can be used to also pay hourly fees for consultation and assistance with image analyses.

Human Brain Imaging Core facility capabilities: A state-of-the-art research-dedicated 3T Siemens Prisma scanner with 64 and 20 channel head/neck coils, MRI-compatible visual/auditory stimulation and behavior/physiological response equipment including eye tracking, mock scanner and a contrast agent injector. The core facility also provides expert technical support to users with all levels of experience. More information about CAHBIR is available at <https://sites.rutgers.edu/cahbir/>. CAHBIR also provides the ability to collect **EEG** data and perform **rTMS** within CAHBIR lab space in the RWJMS Staged Research Building, and investigators may include use of these systems as part of their research proposals.

- 1) **Application format and budget preparation:** Applicants should provide a 3-page description of the proposed research that includes specific aims, and a significance statement. Within the research description, please describe explicitly how the pilot funding will promote the student's research and grant proposals. In addition to the 3-page research description, applications should include Literature Cited, Budget, and NIH Biosketches for both themselves, and their lab's Principal Investigator. If there are additional faculty sponsors other than the lab PI, their biosketch should also be included. A **sponsor letter** from the trainee's lab PI is also required. The sponsor letter should include both a statement of support/recommendation, and a brief statement of how the work proposed fits relative to the PI's own current or future research program. The application should be single-spaced and use font/size Arial 11 with 0.5 inch page margins. All applications **must include** the Cover page and submission checklist linked here [BHI-CAHBIR-Application-Cover-Page-Checklist-2026.docx](#). The application should be combined into one PDF document with the Cover page in the front.

Budgets: Of \$35,000 awards, at least \$20,000 must be spent on CAHBIR services, which may include scanner reservations run by our MRI technologist at a rate of \$750/hr, technical support (protocol design and set up or Luci/Zald consultation at \$200/hr, programming and analyses or specific training in using equipment at \$145/hr). A data archiving fee of \$30 per subject should be included for every scan. Additionally, because of the computational demands (on google cloud services and Amarel), a one-time fee of \$250 should be budgeted if CAHBIR is assisting with analyses. Studies should budget for neuroradiological reads of incidental findings (\$60 per read) based on expected rates of such findings in the population being studied (recommended budgeting of 5% of young healthy subject samples, and a minimum of 20% of older samples). A mock scanner is available for acclimating participants to the scanner

environment (\$40 per hour) and is recommended for studies with children or highly anxious individuals and saves money from subjects who withdraw from MRI studies due to claustrophobia. \$250 should be budgeted for the MRI workshop provided annually by CAHBIR faculty. The remaining \$15,000 can be used for participant recruitment costs, lab supplies, or staff costs. A maximum of \$7,500 can be used towards the trainee's academic year or summer stipend. No overhead costs or faculty salaries are allowed on the grant award. Equipment purchases > \$500 require approval from the BHI and will only be approved if the equipment will be owned by the BHI after completion of the project.

Mock Budget- one year	Number	Cost
Workshop (\$500 per attendee)	2 attendees	\$500
CAHBIR Technical Support: Protocol design/setup/Consultation (\$200 hr)	5 hours	\$1000
CAHBIR Technical Support: Programming/analysis/training (\$145 hr)	35 hours	\$5,075
Scanner Reservation (\$750 hr), includes MRI technologist	20 hours	\$15,000
Mock Scanner (\$40 per hour)	2	\$80
Data Archiving (\$30 per subject)	20	\$600
Computing Fees	1 time fee	\$250
Neuroradiologist read of incidental findings (\$60 per read)	2	\$120
Within scanner eye tracking or psychophysiology (\$20 per hour)	20	\$400
Phlebotomy (\$175 per hour not including supplies)	-	-
EEG (\$50 per hour)	-	-
rTMS (\$145 per hour)	-	-
Participant Fees (\$20 per hour)	20 subjects (3 hrs)	\$1200
Lab supplies		\$1000
Trainee Stipend (includes fringe)		\$7500
Undergraduate Research Assistant	161 hours @\$17 per	\$2250
Total pilot grant award		\$34,975

The awardees of meritorious applications, selected from the scientific review, will be asked to obtain IRB approval for the proposed within four months of being informed of the scientific review results. Funds will not be awarded until IRB approval for the project has been documented. CAHBIR staff can provide assistance in developing documents for the IRB, especially as it relates to MRI procedures, risks, incidental findings, and analyses. The process of IRB approval once a protocol is submitted can take 8 weeks or longer. Regardless of the speed of the IRB, it will be the responsibility of the applicant to obtain the IRB approval within four months of award notice; therefore, it will be critical to begin the IRB application and submission process as soon as your project is selected and respond in a timely manner to address issues raised by the IRB. Because the funding for these awards is not open ended, studies that do not obtain IRB approval within 4 months may not be able to receive further funding and will be asked to forfeit previously unspent funds.

Review process: All trainee grant proposals will undergo a review process organized by BHI/CAHBIR. They will have an initial review to judge scientific quality and be assigned a priority score by reviewers. All applicants will receive brief critiques of their proposals. Depending upon the number of applications deemed worthy of funding, the reviewing committee may provide an applicant an opportunity to revise and resubmit a proposal that was found to have strengths but addressable weaknesses.

Post-award reporting: The awardees will be asked to provide a progress report within a year of the award notice. With sufficient progress, investigators may request either a no-cost extension or a funded supplement at that time. All awardees will be required to submit a final progress report within 6 months of the end of the award. This report must include the status of manuscripts arising from the pilot award and grant applications submitted, as well as results obtained and significance of those results. The Awardees must acknowledge the BHI-CAHBIR grant program in publications or presentations that result from the grant project. Awardees must also report any extramural awards received as a consequence of the pilot project.

Submission deadline: Applications are due by **May 4, 2026**. Awards will be announced by June 15, 2026.

Questions: Questions about the proposals should be directed to david.zald@rutgers.edu