CFAR Adelante Program
Cohort IV (8/1/21 – 7/31/23)
Request for Applications

I.   **Basic Information**

I.1.   **<u>Purpose</u>**

Even as Latinx populations in the United States continue to bear a disproportionate burden of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, there remains a dearth of culturally responsive research specific to the needs and concerns of Hispanic/Latino people.

Adelante — which means forward or onward in Spanish — is funded by the NIH to help change that.

Through CFAR Adelante, the NIH-funded Centers for AIDS Research (CFAR) are working to advance HIV research in Latinx communities by providing mentored development to early-career investigators whose research focuses on decreasing HIV-related health disparities among Hispanic/Latino people.

I.2.   **<u>Overview</u>**

The CFAR Adelante program is funded by the NIH/NIMHD and administered through two NIH-funded Centers for AIDS Research (CFARs): **District of Columbia** and **Emory University**.

Collectively, the DC and Emory CFARs provide oversight for **three-member Adelante teams** who conduct two-year mentored community-based research projects that focus on reducing HIV health disparities among Latinx populations.

CFAR Adelante Teams should be supportive, diverse, and interdisciplinary. Each team consists of:

- A **Scholar** who is an early stage investigator in HIV. **It is not required that Scholars be affiliated with an NIH-funded CFAR**. The Scholar's role is to take the lead in:
    - Developing and implementing their CFAR Adelante mentoring plan;
    - Developing and implementing the Team's research plan;
    - Communicating with team members, study staff, and study subjects;
    - Disseminating study findings to the lay and academic communities;
    - Developing applications for further funding from NIH.

- A **Collaborating Partner** who is a representative from a Community-based Organization that serves Latinx populations. The Collaborating Partner's role is to participate in:
    - The design and implementation of the Scholar's mentoring plan;
    - The design and implementation of the Team's research plan;
    - Study subject recruitment and retention activities, as needed;
    - Translating and disseminating study findings through organizations and institutions that work with Latinx populations;
    - Contributing to peer-reviewed publications and research applications that are based on project findings, for further funding through the NIH.

- A **CFAR Mentor** who is an NIH-funded independent investigator in HIV and is affiliated with one of the NIH-funded CFARs. The Mentor's role is to participate in:
    - The design, implementation, oversight, and evaluation of the Scholar's mentoring plan activities;
    - The design, implementation, and scientific oversight of the Team's research plan;
    - The use of study findings to develop peer-reviewed publications and research applications for further funding through the NIH.

Applicants may request assistance in identifying a potential CFAR Mentor by contacting Allison O'Rourke, the Adelante pre-award project coordinator – see contacts on p. 9.

Adelante projects are single Principal Investigator (PI) awards, with a Team's **Scholar** serving as PI.

CFAR Adelante awards are funded for a **two-year period** that includes a Research Preparation Period of approximately 4 months followed by a Research Implementation Period of approximately 20 months.

The 4-month **Research Preparation Period** is used to **secure all needed regulatory approvals** (IRB, clinical, international) and **implement the Scholar's mentoring plan**. The mentoring plan, which is

collectively designed by all three team members, should include training, skill building, mentoring, and education activities that help prepare the Scholar to answer the project's research question in a scientifically rigorous and culturally responsive manner.

The 20-month **Research Implementation Period** is used by all three team members to engage in study activities, to disseminate project findings through organizations and institutions that work with Latinx populations, and to develop peer-reviewed publications and research applications for further funding through the NIH.

I.3. **Funding**

CFAR Adelante program funding is provided by the US National Institutes of Health as a supplement to the District of Columbia CFAR (P30AI117970) and the Emory University CFAR (P30AI050409). Adelante awards are contingent on the availability of funds from these sources.

Funding permitting, we anticipate making up to four awards in this round (Cohort IV; 8/1/2021-7/31/2023). Awards are funded for two years and are non-renewable.

Applicants may request up to **$100,000 in direct costs per year** ($200,000 over two years) plus applicable indirect costs that do not exceed 100% of directs.

Funding may be used for salaries, technical support, laboratory supplies, equipment, and for research- or training-related activities including but not limited to enrollment in training classes or workshops, travel to the CFAR Mentor's institution, and travel to the research field site.

I.4. **Eligibility**

Scholar Eligibility

Individuals who are members of racial and ethnic groups that are underrepresented among National Institutes of Health (NIH)- funded research scientists are strongly encouraged to apply.

CFAR Adelante Scholars are not required to be affiliated with an NIH funded CFAR.

All Scholars must meet the following criteria:

- United States citizen or permanent resident;
- A strong interest in research related to prevention, care, and treatment of HIV in Latinx populations;
- Commitment to professional development;
- Availability to participate for the full two years;
- Faculty or equivalent appointment at an institution or organization that is capable of directly receiving NIH research funding;
  - o Post-doctoral fellows are eligible to apply if they have a faculty appointment in place at the time the CFAR Adelante Cohort IV project funding begins (August 1, 2021). A letter from the applicant's department chair, verifying their faculty position and start date, must be included in the application package.
- Meet the NIH definition of an Early Stage Investigator at the time that funding begins.

Collaborating Partner Eligibility

The Collaborating Partner on a CFAR Adelante team must be a staff member of a (501(c)(3) designated community-based organization that serves Hispanic/Latino people.

According to 20 USCS § 7801(6), the term "community-based organization" (CBO) means "a public or private nonprofit organization of demonstrated effectiveness that is: (A) representative of a community or significant segments of a community; and (B) provides educational or related services to individuals in the community."

<u>CFAR Mentor Eligibility</u>

The CFAR Mentor on a CFAR Adelante team must be a senior investigator at an institution affiliated with an NIH-funded CFAR, have a history of NIH independent funding in HIV/AIDS, possess strong mentorship experience, and have a commitment to participating for the full two years. Applicants who would like assistance in identifying an eligible CFAR mentor may contact Allison O'Rourke, the Adelante pre-award project coordinator (see contacts on p. 9).

<u>Additional Team Member Eligibility</u>

Applicants also have the option of including additional team members. At a minimum, optional team members must have experience doing research with Latinx populations.

I.5. **Project Scope**

Proposed research projects must be aligned with NIH NOT-OD-20-018: **UPDATE: NIH HIV/AIDS Research Priorities and Guidelines for Determining HIV/AIDS Funding** (the Priorities) and should address Latinx-population needs in the United States. International research may be allowed if it is a small subset of a larger domestic study. For more information about international research see the FAQ page at the CFAR Adelante website.

The proposed research project should be achievable within a 20-month research implementation period.

Eligible research topics may include but are not limited to:
- Developing, testing, and implementing strategies to improve HIV testing and entry into prevention services by Latino/Hispanic people.

- Long-term prevention strategies specific to Latinx populations for HIV-relevant coinfections and comorbid conditions across the lifespan

- Effective socio-behavioral interventions to achieve uptake of HIV prevention and treatment strategies by Latino/Hispanic people and reduce health disparities among Latinx populations.

- Implementation research tailored specifically for Latinx populations that are designed to ensure that biomedical and other prevention and treatment strategies are initiated as soon as possible, that retention and engagement in treatment services is increased, and/or that maintenance of optimal prevention and treatment responses are achieved.

- Research that examines HIV-related health and social issues in Latinx populations, such as other infectious or non-infectious conditions and substance use or mental health disorders that are clearly linked with HIV (transmission/acquisition, pathogenesis, morbidity and mortality, stigma) in sub-populations or settings with high HIV prevalence or incidence.

Clinical trials, as defined in NOT-OD-15-015, cannot be funded. This includes any research study in which one or more human subjects are prospectively assigned to one or more interventions (which may include placebo or other control) to evaluate the effects of those interventions on health-related biomedical or behavioral outcomes.

Some clinical research will require additional NIH review. See the CFAR Adelante FAQ page for more information. If an applicant is unsure if their proposed approach qualifies as clinical research or a clinical trial, or if it will require additional NIH CFAR clinical review, please contact the CFAR Adelante Science Officer, Dr. Maria Cecilia Zea, at zea@gwu.edu to discuss the proposed research.

I.6. **Program Benefits**

In addition to providing funding for research projects, the CFAR Adelante program also provides:

- Three in-person workshops (Orientation, Midcycle, Close Out)

- Quarterly continuing education webinars

- Monthly virtual gatherings of the cohort hosted by program staff

- Supplemental funding for Team Scholars to attend domestic or international research conferences for the purpose of continuing education or presentation of data.

- Supplemental funds that are available for use in extending a Team's project activities, covering travel costs for Collaborating Partners and/or Mentors to attend research conferences, and providing resources to overcome unexpected barriers to research productivity.

II.   **Application Instructions**

CFAR Adelante projects are selected through a two-stage process:
1) Submitted concept proposals are competitively reviewed,
2) A subset of reviewed concept proposals are invited to develop and submit full applications.

II.1.   **Timeline / Deadlines**

Our anticipated timeline is:

- **Concept Proposal due: Monday, January 11, 2021 (5:00pm EST)**
    Notification of Outcome: February 18, 2021

- **Invited Applications due: Wednesday, April 21, 2021 (5:00pm EDT)**
    Estimated notification of Outcome: July 1, 2021

- **Project Period: August 1, 2021 – July 31, 2023**

II.2.   **Concept Proposals**

Preparation:

Concept Proposal forms and instructions are available on the Applications page of the Adelante website. Questions about proposal content or format should be directed to CFAR Adelante pre-award project coordinator, Allison O'Rourke (orourkea@gwu.edu).

Submission

Submit concept proposals by uploading a completed form packet as a single .pdf document to: bit.ly/Adelante-ConceptProposal.

Review

A Review Committee composed of CFAR members and others with relevant expertise in research with Latinx populations will convene to review submitted concept proposals and select a subset to be invited to go forward as full applications. Only applicants invited to submit a full application may receive feedback on their proposal.

Criteria for review will include:

1. How well the proposal addresses the primary aims of the Adelante program.

2. Likelihood that findings from the proposed project will support a successful NIH R-level application in HIV research.

3. Feasibility that the proposed project can be executed within the time period and available budget.

4. Team members' eligibility and experience.

II.3.   **Invited Applications**

Preparation:

Full applications will only be accepted from applicants who have been invited to go forward after competitive Concept Proposal review.

Adelante applications should be prepared as if the PI is submitting an NIH R03 application, using the Forms F form-set associated with PA-20-200, the NIH Parent R03 FOA.

Page Limits:
All page limits are as standard for an NIH R03. These include a 6 page Research Strategy. For specifics on page limitations for each section of the application see this NIH website:
https://grants.nih.gov/grants/how-to-apply-application-guide/format-and-write/page-limits.htm#other

Adelante-specific Modifications

- **Budget**:
    - o Use a detailed, not modular budget
    - o Requested support for project collaborators who are not at the same institution as the PI must be listed as **consultant costs**.

        If a collaborator not at the PI's institution *cannot* accept consultancy fees, a subcontract will be issued to his or her institution. Subcontract costs must be listed in the budget as "**consortium costs**" with applicable indirect costs included.

    - o Tuition, fees and stipends for graduate students are not allowable.

- **Attachments** (n=3):
    - A. Mentoring Plan. (maximum 2 pages)
        Content of the Mentoring Plan should include, at a minimum:
        - o Separate lists of the Scholar's **professional development goals** for:
            - o The 4-month research preparation period
            - o The 20-month research implementation period
        - o For each professional development goal on the list, a two-column table that includes:
            - o Proposed **mentoring, education, and/or training activity(s)** that will support progress in achieving the goal;
            - o One or more **SMAART outcome objectives** that will allow periodic evaluation of progress toward achieving the goal. (*See this document, accessible from the Invited Applications page on the CFAR Adelante website, for instructions on creating SMAART outcome objectives*).
        - o A **communication plan** that describes:
            - o The method(s) that members of the CFAR Adelante team will use to meet (e.g. in person, online, by phone, email, etc)
            - o The frequency that members of the team intend to meet in pairs or as a group;
            - o The circumstances under which members of the team will be in contact with each other between regularly scheduled meetings.
    - B. CFAR Adelante Team Agreement
        - o Download a blank MS Word copy of the CFAR Adelante Team Agreement from the Invited Application page of the Adelante website.
    - C. Future Plans for NIH Funding. (maximum 1 page).
        CFAR Adelante grants are intended to lead directly or indirectly to NIH R01 applications in HIV research. The Future Plans for NIH Funding attachment should describe:
        - a) How the proposed project aligns with the updated NIH HIV/AIDS Research Priorities and Guidelines for Determining HIV/AIDS Funding (NOT-OD-20-018).
        - b) The applicant's desired long-term program of HIV research and the role that the proposed project would play in implementing that program.

    c) The remaining work, if any, that will need to take place between the end of the CFAR Adelante project and submission of the first follow-on NIH application.

- **Letters**:

  In addition to any other Letters of Support (LOS) included in the application, include letters from:

  o Each non-PI member of the proposed CFAR Adelante Team:

      ▪ Expressing support for the project and describing their role in it.

  o The PI's Department Chair:

      ▪ Verifying the PI's faculty status and – if applicant is still a post-doc at time of application – starting date for faculty status.

  o The Director of the CFAR Mentor's home CFAR:

      ▪ Verifying that the Mentor is a member of that CFAR.

  o The Director of any CFAR Core that will be providing services for the project:

      ▪ Describing the resources (services / expertise / materials / equipment / space) that will be provided for the project and the cost, if any, for those resources that should be included in the project budget.

Submission

Applications must be submitted on behalf of the applicant by a signing official in the PI's institutional Office of Sponsored Programs or organizational equivalent. The application package should be submitted as a single .pdf document via a link that will be provided by email when a Team is invited to submit a full application.

Review

Each application will be assigned a minimum of two reviewers.

The evaluation criteria will be standard for an NIH R03 application with the addition of the following Adelante-specific criteria:

Future Plans for NIH Funding:

- Does the proposed project have a high potential of contributing to a future NIH R-level application?

Mentoring Plan:

- Are the PI's professional development goals for the project period identified?

- Is the proposed list of mentoring, education, and/or training activities appropriate for meeting the stated professional development goals?

- Is the proposed list of SMAART outcome objectives appropriate for assessing progress in meeting the stated professional development goals?

- Is a communication plan provided that describes the frequency, under what circumstances, and how members of the CFAR Adelante team will be in formal and informal contact with each other?

  o Does the proposed communication plan and accompanying CFAR Adelante team meeting schedule demonstrate a commitment to meeting the goals and objectives described in the mentoring plan?

III. **Award Requirements**

- **Regulatory Approvals**
  - Copies of all required regulatory approvals must be on file with the CFAR Adelante post-award project coordinator prior to the initiation of the research implementation period.
  - As appropriate, these may include NIH CFAR clinical research approval and NIH CFAR international research approval.
    - Applicants who anticipate conducting clinical and/or international research, or research with an NIH-designated vulnerable population, should contact the CFAR Adelante Program Officer, Dr. Kimbi Hagen (kbs.hagen@emory.edu), prior to submitting an application in order to discuss the NIH CFAR's rules and regulations regarding your project.

- **Meeting Attendance**:
  - All **Scholars** will be required to attend monthly virtual meetings hosted by program staff and quarterly continuing education webinars.
  - All **Mentors** will be invited to attend periodic conference calls hosted by program staff to discuss upcoming events and expectations relevant to their mentee (Scholar).
  - All **Collaborating Partners** will be invited to join the **Scholars** in attending quarterly continuing education webinars
  - **All required CFAR Adelante team members** will attend CFAR Adelante workshops that will be held at three points in the program cycle: Orientation, Midcycle, and Close Out. *Note: Travel expenses for attendance at all required meetings are covered by the Adelante program, and do not need to be accounted for in awardee budgets.*

- **Presentations:**
  - Each CFAR Adelante team will be required to make a joint presentation of their final research findings during the Close Out workshop.

- **Reporting:**
  - Transition Report: Toward the end of the four-month research preparation period, each Team's CFAR Mentor is expected to submit a brief report describing whether their mentee (the Team's Scholar) has made sufficient progress in achieving the professional development goals described in their Mentoring Plan to justify the release of funding for the proposed research implementation period.
  - Progress Reports: Awardees will be required to submit annual progress reports during the two-year project period and for five years following its conclusion.

- **Overlap:**
  - In the event that other pending support is funded which overlaps with or reduces a Scholar's effort on the Adelante project, the Scholar must notify Dr. Kimbi Hagen, the CFAR Adelante program officer, and Galina Terbova, the CFAR Adelante finance manager. The Scholar's funding status will be reviewed and if it is determined that they are unable to meet the specific aims of the proposal, or if the Adelante aims overlap substantively with other NIH-funded research, the CFAR Adelante award may be revoked.

IV. **CFAR Adelante Contacts**

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