



NCRR: A Catalyst
for Discovery

NCRR Fact Sheet

The National Primate Research Centers (NPRCs)* provide nonhuman primates as models of human health and disease for basic and clinical biomedical research. Strategically located across the country and closely affiliated with academic institutions, these eight centers offer convenient access for large numbers of eligible biomedical and behavioral investigators.

Nonhuman primates' close molecular, immunological, reproductive, and neurological relationships to humans make them essential surrogates for humans in biomedical studies related to major human diseases. Funded through NCRR's Division of Comparative Medicine, the NPRCs maintain more than 20,000 nonhuman primates, mostly macaques. NPRCs also provide nonhuman primate cells, tissues, organs, and biological fluids.

The NPRC's specialized resources are intended to assist investigators who receive their primary research funding from the National Institutes of Health (NIH), but these centers also may host investigators who have peer-reviewed support from other Federal, state, and local agencies, as well as from research foundations and the private sector. Each NPRC has a Visiting Scientist Program that offers advanced training and research in nonhuman primate biology. Collaborative arrangements between funded investigators and the centers' core scientific staff are encouraged, subject to the availability of resources and center staff time.

Access Criteria

The following standardized criteria and procedures have been implemented at each NPRC to facilitate use of center resources:

- The nature and scope of the proposed research must be best conducted with nonhuman primates and be compatible with available center resources.
- The proposed research must have high scientific merit as determined by peer review.
- NIH-funded research projects take precedence over research activities funded by other sources.
- Project grants must contain appropriate budgets for the NPRC portion, including animal per diem costs, NPRC service charges, and related items. Sharing of animals during experimentation and returning the animals to the colony for future experimental use may reduce overall costs.
- Availability of NPRC resources, including animals, space, research services and support, and special requirements, such as biosafety facilities, are also limiting factors that must be considered by an investigator applying to use an NPRC.
- Moving animals into or out of the NPRC facilities is not allowed because of potential contamination (e.g., viral, microbial). Thus, the proposed research using live animals must use NPRC animals, and the research must be conducted at the NPRC.

* The National Primate Research Centers were formerly called Regional Primate Research Centers. The name was changed in April 2002 to reflect the broader support provided by the centers.

The National Center for Research Resources ensures that essential tools and research resources are readily available to NIH-supported investigators nationwide. NCRR-supported resources—a comprehensive range of human, animal, technological, and more—enable biomedical research advances.

Access Procedures

- Before applying for project funding, an investigator must submit a research proposal to the NPRC. The NPRC program director then consults with the center's research services, veterinary, and colony management staff members at the center to assess resource availability and project feasibility. (Note that special requests or conditions regarding animals of certain age, gender, weight, or other stipulations affect the NPRC's capability to meet a researcher's needs.)
- Once resource availability and project feasibility have been established, the center staff will provide budget information to the investigator regarding NPRC costs to be included in the formal research project application.
- The scientific merit of the proposed research must then be evaluated through the NIH peer-review process or through a similar process at other agencies. However, small pilot projects with other funding sources may be considered. In the latter case, an NPRC Research Advisory Committee conducts the peer-review process.
- In addition to the scientific peer review, a protocol approved by the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committees (IACUC) at the investigator's institution and the NPRC must be in place. Protocols must also be established to address biosafety concerns. (Note that these issues can be addressed simultaneously with the scientific evaluation but are frequently raised during the peer-review process.)
- As soon as the investigator receives notification of project funding, the NPRC director should be advised so that the resources at the center may be reserved for the project.
- Investigators who wish to obtain biological materials, such as blood samples, organ tissues, and biological fluids, should contact the NPRC staff.

All publications resulting from research conducted at or with center resources must bear an appropriate acknowledgment of the NPRC's support.

Other NCRR publications:

NCRR Reporter magazine

NCRR Highlights magazine

Research Resource directories

Program fact sheets

National Primate Research Centers

California National Primate Research Center
University of California, Davis

New England National Primate Research Center
Harvard University, Southborough, MA

Oregon National Primate Research Center
The Oregon Health Sciences University, Beaverton

Southwest National Primate Research Center
Southwest Foundation for Biomedical Research,
San Antonio, TX

Tulane National Primate Research Center
Tulane University, Covington, LA

Washington National Primate Research Center
University of Washington, Seattle

Wisconsin National Primate Research Center
University of Wisconsin-Madison

Yerkes National Primate Research Center
Emory University, Atlanta, GA

Inquiries

For additional information about the Visiting Scientist Program and resources available at a specific center, including applying to utilize a center's resources, contact the center director or appropriate contact person listed in the Comparative Medicine Directory at <http://www.ncrr.nih.gov/ncrrprog/cmpdir/cmdirectory.asp>

Prepared: April 2002

For program information:

Division of Comparative Medicine
NCRR-NIH
6701 Democracy Boulevard, Room 948
Bethesda, MD 20892-4874
phone: 301-435-0744
fax: 301-480-3819
e-mail: CMADIR@mail.nih.gov

For general NCRR information:
phone: 301-435-0888
NCRR Web site: <http://www.ncrr.nih.gov>