



CLINICAL TRANSLATIONAL RESEARCH (CTR) PILOT PROJECTS REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

Institute for Integration of Medicine & Science / Clinical & Translational Science Award

Deadlines: Letter of Intent – December 13, 2024; Full Proposal – To be determined

Overview

The Institute for Integration of Medicine & Science (IIMS) is soliciting proposals for pilot project awards. The primary goal of this program is to support early-stage, collaborative, translational and clinical studies that will lead to increased interdisciplinary, institutional, and community-based research likely to compete successfully for national grant support and ultimately to improve human health. The program is supported by various institutional funds. **Applicants must adhere fully to the guidelines and formats stipulated in this RFA, as non-complying applications may be administratively inactivated.**

For **questions**, please contact Cindy Castilleja (castillejac@uthscsa.edu) at 210-744-6446.

Eligibility

Applicants must hold a faculty-level appointment at the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio (UTHSCSA) or one of its CTSA partner/collaborator institutions (San Antonio Metropolitan Health District, San Antonio Military Health System, South Texas Veterans Health Care System, Texas Biomedical Research Institute, University Health, University of Texas San Antonio, University of Texas Austin). **Applicants from partner institutions must include a meaningful collaboration with a UTHSCSA Co-Investigator.** Pilot awards target **junior faculty** (Assistant/Associate Professor) with potential for career development impact. **Full Professors may serve only as a Co-Investigator along with a junior faculty Principal Investigator.**

Submission, terms, and conditions

An individual may submit **no more than one project as Principal Investigator** but may also serve as a **Co-Investigator** on one other project.

All applications (both letters of intent and full proposals) must be **submitted through the Survey Monkey Apply** platform under the Principal Investigator's account. The funding opportunity at that site is listed as: [2025 IIMS CTR Pilot Projects](#).

A required letter of intent (LOI) must be submitted by Friday, December 13th at 11:59 pm. The LOI should include the following:

- Descriptive title of the project
- Name and title of the PI and, if applicable, Co-PI, and Co-I
- Summary of the project (**maximum 600 words**)
- List of 3 to 4 potential reviewers from UTHSCSA or CTSA partner institutions, but not from the same department or research group as the PI.

Invitations to submit full proposals

LOIs will be reviewed by IIMS/CTSA leadership to identify those having the best alignment with IIMS programmatic goals and objectives. Applicants will be notified in January 2025 as to whether

their project has been selected for submission of a full proposal. Criteria for selection will include the following:

- Compliance with the foregoing eligibility and submission guidelines
- Relevance to clinical/translational research; **studies on human subjects/populations or human biospecimens will be prioritized over those using animal models or *in vitro* systems.**
- Collaborative team-science approaches
- **Likelihood of downstream outside grant funding**

Awards

Awards will be made for a one-year project period starting on or about **July 1, 2025**. Progress reports will be required six months (brief) and 12 months after the initiation of funding. In addition, a follow-up survey of related grants and publications will be solicited at 24, 36, and 48 months. Recipients who fail to submit timely and meaningful progress reports will be deemed ineligible for future funding cycles. For projects involving the use of human subjects or vertebrate animals, no expenditures will be permitted until IIMS is provided with a copy of the official letter of approval by the appropriate Institutional Review Board (IRB) or Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC), respectively. Investigators are encouraged to submit IRB and IACUC protocols early in order to avoid significant delays in project initiation. Excessive delays in meeting these regulatory requirements may result in withdrawal of the award. Applicants must also be up to date on compliance with institutional research training and conflict of interest disclosure policies.

Budget and financial policies

Budgets are to be submitted only at the time of an invited full-proposal application (i.e., not with the LOI). The maximum budget for these one-year awards is **\$50,000**. Facilities and Administrative (F&A, indirect cost) expenses will not be reimbursed. Funds cannot be used to support the salary of the PI or faculty-level collaborators. Although the PI (and Co-PI/Co-I, if applicable) should be listed in the personnel section of the summary page, there is no minimum effort requirement. Salary (plus associated fringe benefits) may be requested for non-faculty support staff, including post-docs. Other allowable expenses include: equipment essential for the project (maximum \$5,000, including computer hardware); PI or Co-PI domestic travel to relevant scientific meetings (maximum \$1,500); consumable laboratory supplies; animal purchase and per diem; core facility fees at IIMS, Texas Biomed, UTSA, or other sites; consultation fees (maximum \$5,000); computer time; software; publication / presentation expenses; costs related to human subject enrollment and management (listed as “Patient Care Costs” on budget page); and other expenditures that can be justified as being essential for the completion of the project. Note that for projects making use of an IIMS Clinical Research Unit (CRU), a budget for these expenses **must be developed in advance** and submitted with the full application. For a quote, complete the **Study Data Collection Form** and contact **Lisa Fleming** (flemingl1@uthscsa.edu). Tuition expense is not an allowable budget item. Account management will be centralized within IIMS-CTSA with expenditures and encumbrances being committed as they are incurred. For projects supported at other CTSA partner institutions, funds will be disbursed at appropriate intervals, based on the receipt of invoices for budgeted expenditures.

Application requirements and format

Invited full applications should be prepared using the templates provided and uploaded as a single pdf document. Font size can be no smaller than 11 point, preferably Arial or Times New Roman. The font size for figures, figure legends, charts, and tables may be smaller, but must be clearly legible. Margins all-around should be at least 0.5”. Pages should be numbered sequentially. The

length of the Research Plan (narrative with illustrations and tables included) is limited to 4 single-spaced pages. The organization of the proposal should be as follows:

- [SurveyMonkey Apply website](#) funding opportunity - **2025 IIMS CTR Pilot Projects**
- **Link to additional application forms** ([here](#))
- Project summary (level appropriate for scientific peers in the field)
- Pilot budget template is included in the application (no separate attachment needed)
- Additional information regarding the project (maximum 1 page) to include as appropriate:
 - Past IIMS funding and list of grants obtained or applied for resulting from IIMS support
 - Pending or planned scientifically related applications to other pilot project programs (e.g., Pepper Center, School of Medicine, SNPRC), including a summary of potential overlap
 - Career development potential, if applicable
 - Prospects and specific plans for outside funding (**this is a key required element**)
 - Collaborative, interdisciplinary, or community engagement features, if applicable
 - Description of how the pilot project will interact with existing programs of the IIMS-CTSA, Texas Biomed, UTSA, UT Austin, or other CTSA partners, as appropriate.

PDF Attachments (in this order)

- CRU budget, if applicable – (see above)
- *Biographical* sketch for PI (maximum 5 pages; for NIH template see <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/forms/biosketch.htm>)
- Biographical sketches for other key personnel (maximum 5 pages each)
- [Research plan](#) (maximum 4 pages)
 - Hypothesis and specific aims
 - Background and significance
 - Preliminary data
 - Work proposed (including statistical analysis, power calculations, pitfalls, alternatives)
- [Literature citations](#) (be selective, but no page limit – use continuation page)
- Letters of support (brief) from core directors or Research Imaging Institute are encouraged (if applicable)
- Letters of collaboration (optional)
- Appendices are **not** allowed
- A UTHSCSA Certificate of Proposal (COP) is **not** required

Review process and criteria

Applications will undergo a two-tiered system of review. The first phase, or scientific review, will be performed by appropriate content experts, as well as representatives from CTSA resources and services and other CTSA partner organizations. Scientific merit will be scored by these reviewers based on the following criteria:

- Significance
- Novelty / innovation
- Strength of the study protocol, including:
 - Design
 - Feasibility
 - Preliminary data (to the extent available)
 - Integration with ongoing research
 - Quality of the investigative team
- Likelihood of future NIH, VA, DoD, or other competitive external funding

- Contribution to career development of the PI or other team members, if applicable
- Extent of meaningful interdisciplinary collaboration and / or community engagement
- Use and leveraging of IIMS-CTSA, Texas Biomed, UTSA, UT Austin, or partner resources (for example, core facilities, biobanking)
- Potential for ultimately improving health outcomes
- Protection of human subjects and experimental animals

A programmatic review will then be performed by the IIMS-CTSA leadership team for program relevance and potential public health impact, taking advantage of input from institutional and community partners. Funding decisions will be based on scientific merit, as well as programmatic considerations, such as breadth and depth of the overall pilot study portfolio, interactions among partners, community involvement, and balance among program areas and disciplines.

Special emphasis on health disparities

Projects that address health equity in the context of prevalent disparities in access to or quality of care among minority groups in our region (e.g., Hispanics, veterans, military personnel, rural residents) are of high priority.

UTSA-UTHSCSA jointly funded project

UTSA has committed to joint funding (50/50 split with UTHSCSA) of a meritorious collaborative project involving Co-Principal Investigators from the two institutions.

Texas Biomed-UTHSCSA jointly funded project

Texas Biomed has committed to joint funding (50/50 split with UTHSCSA) of a meritorious collaborative project involving Co-Principal Investigators from the two institutions.

Funding expectations

It is anticipated that this IIMS Clinical Translational Research program will support 5 projects.

Responsibilities of the Principal Investigator

The principal investigators of funded projects are required to:

- Abide by NIH rules and regulations
- Abide by IIMS-CTSA policies and procedures
- Provide demographic information in a timely fashion, as required before expenditures can be authorized
- At the time of funding provide a complete list of other support, including other pilot project mechanisms, along with explanations of any potential scientific or budgetary overlap
- Provide a waiver of Facilities and Administrative (F&A) fees or Indirect Costs from your institution if you are a non-UTHSCSA investigator
- Submit complete and timely progress reports
- Acknowledge support from IIMS funds in all publications and reports generated with pilot project resources (details to be provided at the time of funding)