Clinical and Translational Science Institute (CTSI)
Bridges to Translation RFA
Pilot Project Funding Available

Release Date: July 21, 2015
REQUIRED Letter of Intent (LOI) Due Date: August 21, 2015 (Link To Form)
Application Due Date: September 15, 2015
Anticipated Award Date: November 1, 2015

I. Introduction

The Penn State Clinical and Translational Science Institute (CTSI) invites applications for pilot projects designed to break down roadblocks across the translational spectrum. The long-range goal of the Penn State CTSI is to develop, implement, and make available to the community at large, new methods to promote health and to predict, prevent and effectively treat human disease. The translation of biomedical discoveries to clinical application is a long and complex process with high costs and substantial failure rates. The CTSI seeks to fund pilot projects that address roadblocks at any stage in the translational process, including but not limited to:

- Projects that move research from one translational phase to the next (e.g., T1 to T2)
- Projects that seek to develop a novel technology, tool or methodology including new collaborations with industry
- Projects focused on multidisciplinary collaboration between basic science researchers and clinical investigators
- Projects focused on dissemination and implementation
- Projects that develop novel statistical methods and models to analyze data
- Operational projects that speed up the process of translation, focusing on methods and processes such as training for clinical research staff, team science/mentoring programs, patient recruitment initiatives, and regulatory and ethics training
- Projects focused on integration of translational science across its multiple phases and disciplines within complex populations and across the lifespan

The CTSI will provide up to $300,000 to support between 5-10 multi-investigator projects. Projects should be completed in 12 months. Successful applications will describe how the project will advance clinical and translational science. Also, given the enabling capacity of engaged communities for the translation process, applications should specify plans for community connections, with “community” being defined broadly (e.g., patients, health care providers, community organizations, industry, educators, researchers, other groups within the university). Community connections might include plans for outreach and dissemination.

II. Eligibility Criteria and Criteria for Review.

The Principal Investigator (PI) must hold a Pennsylvania State University faculty appointment. This includes faculty members at the Penn State Hershey Medical Center and research faculty
at University Park. We expect that proposals from multi-disciplinary, cross-campus teams will be most competitive.

In addition, to be eligible, each project must include:

1. A compelling statement of the project’s translational potential and a description of the community(ies) the project will serve.

2. A research plan with defined “next steps” beyond the pilot funding (i.e. external funding, product development, dissemination).

3. A detailed budget with justification. Limited salary support is available for faculty, and no more than $10,000 (direct salary fringe is not included in the $10,000 limit) annually may be allocated to faculty salaries for a given project. (Funds may be budgeted for research coordinators, research techs, nurses, graduate student salaries, etc.)

4. A detailed project timeline of 12 months. (Note that progress reports are required at regular intervals throughout the length of the project.)

Funds may not be used to support:

- Student or postdoctoral fellow independent research (note that portions of stipends are permitted for postdocs and graduate students working directly on the pilot project)
- Tuition
- Publication costs
- Funding for the kinds of activities supported by departments and colleges (e.g., travel to conferences, basic software purchase)
- Summer salary (where applicable)

Criteria for Review

Reviewers will consider each of the five review criteria (below) to assess merit.

- **Significance:** Does the project address an important problem or critical barrier to improving health and/or healthcare? Is the project’s translational potential clear and compelling?
- **Investigators:** Do the PI and collaborators have the expertise needed to conduct the project? Do the investigators capitalize on differing disciplinary perspectives?
- **Innovation:** Does the project challenge or shift current research or practice paradigms, advance novel concepts, approaches/methods, instrumentation, or interventions or apply these in novel ways?
- **Approach:** Are the procedures and analysis plans justified and appropriate to accomplish the specific aims? Will the project provide the foundation for a competitive proposal for external funding and dissemination? Was the community connection for the project well described?
- **Collaboration:** How does the proposed project benefit from the collaboration of investigators? Is there a new member of the investigative team? Are the disciplines
represented complementary, and does the research plan appear to build on the expertise of the entire team?

III. Letter of Intent - Required

A non-binding letter of intent including the name of the Principal Investigator, names of co-investigators and collaborators, a working title for the proposal, and 2-4 sentences describing the broad theme(s) of the project must be received by August 14, 2015. The Letter of Intent must be submitted to be considered for funding.

IV. Format and Submission of Proposals

Proposals should be submitted in two parts: 1) a MS Word file of the Proposal Title, PI Name and Abstract; and 2) a pdf file of the entire application (proposal and all supporting documents) to: Rebecca Jenkins (rjenkins@hmc.psu.edu).

Proposals should be single-spaced, in Arial 11 font, left-aligned with half-inch margins. Proposals should not exceed 5 pages for Sections 4–9 below. Appendices should not be included. Your proposal must be complete when submitted and include all items noted below.

Remember that reviewers may not have specific expertise in your area. Therefore, proposals should be written for a broad academic audience.

Proposal Sections

1. Title of Proposal

2. Name of Principal Investigator, Co-Investigators and Collaborators

   Degree(s), Departments, Colleges

3. Lay Abstract (no more than 300 words)

   Provide a succinct overview of the proposal, including how the proposal will address a translational roadblock. Assume that reviewers do not have technical knowledge in a specific field. Avoid or explain technical jargon, field-specific terminology, and acronyms.

4. Specific Aims

   List the specific aims and the rationale for each.

5. Significance/Impact

   Describe how addressing the study aims will promote the translation of scientific knowledge into health impact.

6. Approach

   Describe the activities that will be undertaken to address the study aims.

7. Community Engagement
Specify plans for community connections, with “community” being defined broadly (e.g., patients, health care providers, community organizations, industry, educators, researchers, other groups within the university).

8. **Investigators and Environment**

Describe the qualifications of the investigative team, the role each team member will perform, and resources in the environment that will support the conduct of the study. Indicate if this is a new team or if there is a new member of the team. Describe multidisciplinarity and, if included, the cross campus collaborations within the team.

9. **Timeline, Anticipated Outcomes and Future Plans**

Describe the project timeline over a 12-month period. Plans for specific products and outcomes should be specified, including dissemination of results. Examples include: presentations at CTSI events, grant submissions, papers submitted, or the development of a new interdisciplinary team for future grant submissions. For external funding, please include potential sponsor(s) (e.g., specific NIH institute) and the expected date for submitting the first application.

10. **Literature Cited**

11. **CTSI resources**

The following services are available through the CTSI. Please indicate which services would be useful for this project.

- [ ] CRC
- [ ] BERD (Biostatistics)
- [ ] REDCap
- [ ] i2b2
- [ ] EMR Data
- [ ] Ethics Consultation
- [ ] Community Engagement Consultation
- [ ] Other (specify): ____________________________________________________________

12. **Budget and Justification**

Provide an itemized budget and budget justification including salaries, fringes, and other expenses, etc., (IAFs will not be used). No more than $10,000 (direct salary) may be allocated to **faculty** salaries in any project year. Fringe is not included in the $10,000 limit. (Funds may be budgeted for research coordinators, research techs, nurses, graduate student salaries, etc.)

As part of the budget justification, describe the roles and experience of the investigators and any other personnel included in the proposal.

**F&A costs (indirects) are not provided.**

13. **Provide the name email address and phone number of your department’s budget coordinator.**
14. **Letter of Support from the PI’s Department and Affirmation of Participation from all collaborators.**

Applications must include a support letter or e-mail from the department head/chair or vice chair or vice dean for research as well as a note from each collaborator that acknowledges his/her participation (e-mail is acceptable).

15. **NIH Biosketches (new format) for the PI and each co-investigator and/or collaborator.**

Format for biosketch available at:

[http://www2.med.psu.edu/researchconcierge/new-nih-biosketch/](http://www2.med.psu.edu/researchconcierge/new-nih-biosketch/)

Interested investigators are welcome to consult with the CTSI’s Informatics, Biostatistics, Community Engagement, and/or Ethics key function areas prior to submission. To request a consultation, [submit a CTSI service request form](mailto:submit%20a%20CTSI%20service%20request%20form).

**NOTE:**

For projects that will be funded, additional ‘Just-in-Time’ information will be required. This includes Institutional Review Board (IRB) and/or IACUC approval as relevant, along with conflict of interest information.

**Questions** about this Pilot Project Funding opportunity should be sent to: Rebecca Jenkins ([rjenkins@hmc.psu.edu](mailto:rjenkins@hmc.psu.edu)).