



Translational
Research Institute

TRI Pilot Awards Request for Applications August 2017

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE LETTER OF INTENT (LOI)

The UAMS Translational Research Institute (TRI) is pleased to invite applications for TRI Pilot Awards. **The intent of NCATS' CTSA Translational Pilot Program is to develop novel technologies and methodologies, to test the feasibility of novel approaches, and to stimulate inter-disciplinary collaborations that test generalizable solutions to translational research problems.** TRI has restructured its Pilot Program to align with these national priorities. There will be four focus areas of TRI pilot awards: 1) health concerns and challenges of rural and underrepresented populations, 2) implementation science to incorporate new research findings into the health care system, 3) translational biomedical informatics approaches that examine rural health and health care issues, and 4) community/stakeholder-partnered research. The biannual RFA will rotate among these four emphasis areas. **The emphasis area for this RFA is implementation science.**

Budgets up to \$50,000 will be considered. A review of the budgeting will be part of the funding decision, and applications with less than the maximum budget are encouraged. All projects must be completed within one year. Based on the directives of the new RFA, pilot projects addressing animal model/pre-clinical studies will no longer be considered for funding, and all studies must include a human or clinical element.

Focus Area

Much has been written about the “science-to-service gap” in health care. Thus far, the literature indicates that gaps between research and practice can result from multiple factors, including educational and knowledge deficiencies and disagreements, time constraints for practitioners, lack of decision support tools and feedback mechanisms, and poorly aligned incentives. Further, an emerging Implementation Science (IS) literature documents development and testing of a wide array of implementation strategies and interventions that address known barriers and improve implementation and sustainability of evidence-based practices. Examples of strategies under study include automated clinical reminders, audit and feedback systems, academic detailing and other targeted professional development programming, incentives or disincentives, training of local “champions” and opinion leaders, facilitation, and leadership training. Gaps in the field of IS include a lack of rigorous comparisons of the effectiveness using IS strategies in the implementation of multiple evidence-based practices (EBPs) and in multiple contexts. Those contexts include assessment of effectiveness of IS approaches in resource-limited (e.g., rural) settings and of effectiveness strategies in sustaining implementation of EBPs within institutions and health care systems.

While this round of applications will not exclude any IS-related proposals based on topic area, high priority areas for funding will be 1) the development and pilot testing of implementation strategies in preparation for future large-scale research studies (e.g., R01), and 2) implementation research in the context of rural and underserved populations and/or clinical locations.

These funding priorities serve the mission of TRI to develop new and novel approaches that will measurably address the complex health challenges of rural and underrepresented populations.

The TRI Pilot Awards Program will fund projects that facilitate translational research and have potential application to other translational research projects. TRI seeks pilot projects that address urgent research translation needs that have high potential for impacting one or more translational roadblocks; that facilitate research integration into the clinical environment, health care systems, or both; that encourage rapid translation of results; or that address a combination of these goals. Priority will be given to: 1) projects likely to ultimately obtain extramural funding; 2) projects likely to obtain critical data that will significantly advance their research toward a novel intervention (e.g., clinical trial, implementation trial, community engagement trial); 3) projects with high potential for a rapid transformative impact on human health or healthcare delivery; and 4) projects likely to facilitate new, multi-disciplinary research collaborations. These awards will NOT support projects that are minor offshoots of ongoing research by a funded investigator or that simply provide bridge funding to previously funded investigators.

Eligibility

Full-time faculty at UAMS, ACH/ACRI, or CAVHS who hold non-temporary positions at the rank of Instructor or above are eligible for TRI Pilot Awards.

Additional Requirements

****Please note that the project must be submitted for IRB approval or human subjects research determination by October 23, 2017 and must receive IRB approval before a pilot project account can be opened (but no later than January 1, 2018). All projects will end on November 30, 2018.** Extensions on pilot grants are only allowed in special, extenuating circumstances. All projects invited to submit a full application will be required to receive consultations from TRI's Biostatistics, Epidemiology, and Research Design (BERD) group and from TRI's Budget Manager, Laura Wilson. The consultations are free to pilot program applicants, and TRI will help facilitate; more details will accompany instructions for the full application.

Letter of Intent (LOI) Submission Process

The TRI Pilot Awards require the submission of a cover page and a one-page Letter of Intent (LOI) that summarizes the proposed research. The Cover Page and LOI **must be submitted by 12:00 p.m., September 11, 2017 to nlindelicato@UAMS.edu**. Please note that the Cover Page and LOI must be merged and submitted as a single pdf document. Please contact Nia Indelicato at 501-526-0363 if you have any questions.

Letter of Intent Format

The LOI should be typed, single-spaced with .5 inch margins and no longer than one page. Acceptable fonts are Arial, Tahoma, or Calibri with a font size of 11 point. Figure and Table legends may use smaller font but no smaller than 9 point. Please use appropriate headings in preparing your proposal. All proposals should be submitted as a Portable Document Format (**PDF**) file. The LOI must provide information on each of the following points, which will be **major factors** in scoring and selecting invitations to submit a full proposal:

- 1. Project Title**
- 2. Project Summary** - Summarize the project and the importance of the proposed research at a level easily understood by diverse scientific disciplines.
- 3. Translational Impact/Innovation** - Discuss the significance of this project in terms of innovation, translational potential, and impact on human health.
- 4. Approach** - Briefly describe the scientific approach used to address the research question.
- 5. Plan for Extramural Funding** - Describe your specific plan of obtaining extramural funding. This should include what this project will provide with regard to the likelihood of the type of grant (including proposed project length, agency, and date of submission) that will be targeted.
- 6. New Multi-Disciplinary Research Collaborations** - If applicable, describe how the project will solidify new multi-disciplinary research collaborations.

LOI Review and Selection

The LOI review committee will consist of TRI senior faculty and staff. Each LOI will be reviewed and scored based on the criteria listed above. A subgroup of applications will be invited to submit a full application.

Full Application Review and Selection

Full applications will be peer-reviewed for scientific and technical merit using the NIH-based review system. This system includes Overall Impact, Significance, Population Focus, Investigator (**team-based science is highly encouraged**), Innovation, Approach, and Sustainability. **Based on these assessments, applications will receive a priority score. The score along with a summary statement that evaluates the strengths and weaknesses of the application will be provided to the PI whether the project has high enough priority for funding or not.** Applications receiving the highest priority score will be recommended for funding and presented to the TRI Leadership Council for final approval.

Full applications will also undergo review by a community member who will comment on the relevance of the research to the local community at large. A goal of TRI is to integrate community reviewer perspectives into shaping our translational research agenda and be able to communicate to the local public about work funded at UAMS. Community reviewers will read, score and discuss the applications. **The full application process now includes preparation of a two-page summary of the application's content with reduced jargon to promote readability at a nonscientific high school reading level, as well as a five to ten minute promotional video which explains your project to a general/lay audience.**

TIMELINE

LOI Due Date	September 11, 2017 (12:00 noon)
LOI Scored	Week of September 11, 2017
Full Applications Invited	September 18, 2017
Full Application Due Date/IRB Submission Date	October 23, 2017
Study Section	Week of November 6, 2017
Announce Awardees	November 13, 2017
Earliest Project Start Date	November 15, 2017
Latest Start Date/IRB Approval Date	January 1, 2018
Project End Date	November 30, 2018