



Research Benefitting Rural Populations Pilot Grant Opportunity Request for Applications March 2021

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE LETTER OF INTENT (LOI)

The UAMS Translational Research Institute (TRI) invites applications for pilot grants involving research benefitting rural populations. The mission of TRI is to develop new and novel approaches that will measurably address the complex health challenges of rural and underrepresented populations. For this Request for Applications (RFA), TRI seeks proposals that employ novel approaches to healthcare issues that particularly affect **rural populations** and/or that directly examine or impact rural health. Topics of interest include projects that utilize technology or that test specialized approaches that facilitate the evaluation or monitoring of health parameters among rural populations. Such projects include (but are not limited to) approaches that employ telehealth, remote patient monitoring, and/or other digital health methods. In addition, projects that address health challenges of rural populations, such as access to medical care, are also of high interest.

Priority will be given to projects that generate critical data to improve competitiveness for future extramural funding and/or facilitate new, multi-disciplinary research collaborations, including collaborations between the disciplines noted above. Projects at all levels of the translational research spectrum will be considered; in particular, priority will be given to projects that meet an immediate translational need or that can be incorporated into clinical practice in the short-term. Projects with the potential to develop into future multisite studies will also receive special consideration.

These awards will NOT support projects that are minor offshoots of ongoing research by existing teams. Likewise, these awards will not support bridge funding to previously funded investigators.

Budgets up to \$50,000 for a one year project will be considered. A review of the budget will be part of the funding decision, and applications with less than the maximum budget are encouraged. All pilot projects must be designed to be completed within the one year.

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 this pilot grant opportunity.

Previous TRI Pilot Grant awardees must submit proof that they have both published at least one manuscript in a peer-reviewed publication and submitted an application for extramural funding based on the previously funded pilot project. Further instructions are provided on the LOI cover page and template.

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Required Pre-Reviews and Approvals

Depending on the details of the project, those selected for full application may be required to obtain pre-reviews and/or approvals from their departments or other UAMS committees. For example, all cancer related studies must receive PRMC approval before proceeding with an IRB submission. TRI Program staff will use your LOI to determine which pre-reviews and/or approvals you will need to proceed. All pre-reviews and approvals must be completed by May 14, 2021 in order to proceed with your application.

Regulatory Approvals

Projects selected for full application must be submitted to the relevant research regulatory body (IRB and/or IACUC) for approval by May 21, 2021 and must receive full approval, if applicable, before August 1, 2021.

Projects exempt from IRB submission must provide an official letter from the IRB stating that the proposed research has been determined as non-human subjects research. Proof of IRB and/or IACUC submission OR a non-human subjects determination letter should be [emailed](#) to Chrissie Barnes by 4:00 p.m. on May 21, 2021.

Receipt of a human subjects research determination request DOES NOT satisfy the requirement for proof of IRB submission. Proof of IRB submission is satisfied by: 1) a non-human subjects determination letter, or 2) proof from CLARA that your request for IRB review has been submitted.

For projects that incorporate animal research, please submit a copy of an email from IACUC certifying that your request has been submitted for review.

IRB and/or IACUC approvals must be [emailed](#) to Chrissie Barnes by August 1, 2021. The expected start dates for all projects is August 1- October 1, 2021 depending on the NCATS Prior Approval process (see NCATS Review of Awardees section below). All projects must be completed within one calendar year. Extensions on pilot grants will not be permitted.

Consultations and Budget Review

All projects invited to submit a full application are required to consult with the following TRI groups: 1) Biostatistics, Epidemiology, and Research Design (BERD) group with respect to design and statistical approaches; 2) Comprehensive Informatics Resource Center (CIRC), with respect to informatics approaches and needs (1 and 2 are a combined review); 3) review by the Institute for Digital Health and Innovation (IDHI), if appropriate; and 4) the Budget Manager for TRI Laura Wilson for budgeting and allowable costs. These consultations are free to pilot program applicants and characteristically enhance the research quality and scientific rigor of these applications. More details on how to arrange these consultations will be provided to applicants who are invited to submit a full application.

NCATS Review of Awardees (Post selection but Prior to Approval and Funding)

Before a notice of award can be issued by TRI, each selected application must undergo an additional scientific review by the National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences (NCATS). We anticipate project start dates to be August 1- October 1, 2021. More information regarding the NCATS Approval process will be provided to awarded applicants in June.

LETTER OF INTENT (LOI) SUBMISSION PROCESS

LOIs are solicited broadly from UAMS and related campuses including CAVHS, ACH, and the UAMS northwest campus. All applicants are required to submit a cover page and a one and a half page Letter of Intent (LOI), and PI biosketch. A copy of the cover page and LOI Instructions are available to download on the [RFA page](#) of the TRI website. **The LOI packet must be submitted by 4:00 p.m., April 12, 2021** via email to [Chrissie Barnes](#). **Please note that the Cover Page, LOI, and PI biosketch must be merged and submitted as a single pdf document.** Contact Chrissie Barnes at 501-526-8730 if you have any questions.

Letter of Intent (LOI) Format

The LOI Cover Page can be downloaded from [TRI's website](#). The LOI should be typed, single-spaced with 0.5 inch margins and no longer than 1,000 words. 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:

- Project Title
- Project Summary - Summarize the project and the importance of the proposed research at a level easily understood by diverse scientific disciplines.
- Potential Impact on the rural health/healthcare.
- Approach - Briefly describe the scientific approach used to address the research question.
- Plan for Extramural Funding - Describe your specific plan of obtaining extramural funding. The plan 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.
- New Multi-Disciplinary Research Collaborations - Describe how the project will solidify new multi-disciplinary research collaborations.

Only a copy of the PI's biosketch is needed at the LOI phase. A sample biosketch and form is available online at <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/forms/biosketch.htm>.

LOI Review and Selection

The LOI review committee will consist of UAMS senior faculty and staff. Each LOI will be reviewed based on the criteria listed above. A subgroup of applications will be invited to submit a full application. We anticipate selecting approximately 8 LOIs for invitations to submit a full proposal.

The LOI review and selection committee will prioritize projects with a high likelihood to obtain future extramural funding. Likelihood of future funding from extramural sources is strongly influenced by training, environment, and productivity (e.g., peer reviewed publications) that are appropriate for the PI and Co-I's current state of professional development. Successful LOIs will address these factors in addition to the specific future funding mechanisms that will be targeted.

FULL APPLICATION REVIEW AND SELECTION

Full applications will undergo review by two specific content experts and one community member. The community members comment on feasibility, impact, and the relevance of the research to the local community at large. One of our goals is to integrate community reviewer perspectives into shaping our translational research agenda and helping researchers communicate to the local public about research occurring at UAMS. Community reviewers will read, score and discuss the applications.

The full application process also 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 three to five-minute informational video which explains the project to a general/lay audience.

Full applications will be peer-reviewed for scientific and technical merit using the NIH-based review system. This system includes Overall Impact, Significance, Investigator, Innovation, Approach, and Plan for Extramural Funding. Full applications will be prioritized for funding by an NIH-style study section. Applications receiving the highest priority will be presented to the TRI Leadership Council for final approval.

A summary statement that evaluates the strengths and weaknesses of the application will be provided to the PI whether the project was funded or not.

TIMELINE

LOI Due Date	April 12 (4:00 p.m.)
Full Applications Invited	By April 19, 2021
Pre-Reviews (if applicable)	May 14, 2021
Budget Review	Initiate by May 14, 2021
Proof of Regulatory Submission Due	May 21, 2021 (via email- 4:00 p.m.)
Full Application Due	May 28, 2021 (12:00 noon, via online system)
Lay Videos Due	June 7, 2021 (4:00 p.m.)
Awardees Announced	July 19, 2021
Regulatory Approval Due, if applicable	August 1, 2021
Estimated Start Date for Projects	Once Prior Approval is granted, August 1- October 1, 2021

Please contact Chrissie Barnes (by [email](#) or call 526-8730) if you have any questions the application process.