

TRANSLATIONAL SCIENCE PILOT PROJECTS - REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

Institute for Integration of Medicine & Science / Clinical & Translational Science Award,
Texas Biomedical Research Institute, and University of Texas at San Antonio

Deadlines: **June 30, 2021** (Letter of Intent) & **July 30, 2021** (Full Proposal)

Overview

The Institute for Integration of Medicine & Science (IIMS), Texas Biomedical Research Institute (Texas Biomed), and The University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) are soliciting proposals for pilot project awards. The primary goal of these programs 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 programs are supported by the Clinical and Translational Science Award (CTSA) from the National Institutes of Health (NIH), as well as 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.**

Eligibility

IIMS-CTSA Program

Applicants must hold faculty-level appointments at the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio (UTHSCSA) or one of its CTSA partner institutions (San Antonio Metropolitan Health District, San Antonio Military Health System, South Texas Veterans Health Care System, Texas Biomedical Research Institute, University Health System, University of Texas San Antonio, University of Texas School of Public Health (San Antonio Regional Campus), University of Texas College of Pharmacy). Faculty are encouraged to collaborate with individuals from CTSA partner organizations. Previous pilot project award recipients may apply again, but the new application must be a distinct project or a substantial departure, not a simple extension of the previously funded project. Pilot awards target in particular junior faculty with potential for career development impact. However, senior faculty are eligible if the project is a novel departure from currently funded programs.

Texas Biomed Program

Applicants to the Texas Biomed program must be collaborating investigators, with the PI being a Texas Biomed faculty member and the Co-Investigator a UTHSCSA faculty member.

UTSA Program

Applicants to the UTSA program must be collaborating investigators, with the PI being a UTSA faculty member and the Co-Investigator a UTHSCSA faculty member. The UTSA PI must be full-time, tenure track or tenured faculty at UTSA, in residence at the time of application.

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 (<https://apply-uthscsa.smapply.io/>) under the Primary Investigator's account. The funding opportunity at that site is listed as: **2021 IIMS/CTSA Pilot Projects**

A required letter of intent (LOI) must be submitted by Wednesday, June 30, 2021 at 11:59 pm and should include the title of the project, principal investigator (PI), a very brief summary of the project and a 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. Note that the LOI is required for planning purposes but will not serve as a screening tool for proposal submission (i.e., all PIs submitting the LOI should proceed to full proposal preparation). The deadline for receipt of the full application is **Friday, July 30, 2021 at 11:59 pm**. If you have any questions, please contact Cindy Castilleja (castillejac@uthscsa.edu) at 210-744-6446.

Awards will be made for a one-year project period starting on or about **September 1, 2021**. 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. In addition, CTSA-supported projects comprising either human or vertebrate animal research must be pre-approved by the National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences. 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

The maximum budget for these one-year awards is **\$50,000**, although proposals with smaller budgets will be considered and reviewed under the same criteria. 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 \$10,000, 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 allowed budget item. Account management will be centralized within IIMS-CTSA, Texas Biomed, or UTSA with expenditures and encumbrances for UTHSCSA projects 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

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 - **2021 IIMS/CTSA Pilot Projects**
- Link to additional application forms ([here](#))
- Pilot budget is included in the application and does not need to be attached separately
- Project summary (level appropriate for scientific peers in the field)
- Additional information regarding the project (included in the application and does not need to be attached separately) to include as appropriate:
 - Past IIMS funding (TTR and/or pilot project awards) 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, or other CTSA partners, as appropriate.

Attachments –

- 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 required (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 the Pilot Project Study Section, including appropriate content experts and 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 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, 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, Texas Biomed, and UTSA leadership teams 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 areas

IIMS-CTSA

Since the intent of this pilot project solicitation is to support a broad range of clinical and translational research activities, the topics for proposals are unrestricted. However, several areas are highlighted for their special relevance to IIMS programmatic goals. Proposals responsive to the following specific IIMS/CTSA interests are especially encouraged:

- COVID-19 – Proposals on SARS-CoV-2 / COVID-19 are considered a high priority, especially projects focusing on health disparities, vaccination, diagnostic testing, or cohorts with special features (e.g., post-acute sequelae, breakthrough infections in vaccinated persons, COVID in children or the elderly).
- Community Engagement – Proposals for community-based research initiatives, including Practice-Based Research Networks, health outcomes research, epidemiology, and public health research are encouraged. Projects that address the focus areas and needs identified in the 2019 Bexar and Atascosa County Community Health Needs Assessment Report <https://www.dropbox.com/s/r2dh9mutplel74t/Community%202019%20CHNA%20Report.pdf?dl=0> will receive special consideration.
- 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 are of high priority.
- Biomedical Informatics – IIMS is especially interested in projects that will develop and/or utilize databases that cross the domains of clinical research, clinical medicine, and population health. Proposals to develop novel systems for enhancing communication and data sharing among researchers in various settings (e.g., academic, healthcare, public health, community, mobile health systems) are of interest.

Texas Biomed

A primary intent of the Texas Biomed pilot project component is to promote collaborative interdisciplinary research between Texas Biomed and UTHSCSA faculty scientists, especially projects that bring basic scientists together with clinical/translational investigators. A broad range of proposal topics, including but not limited to those listed above, will be considered for funding. Priority will be given to studies that are focused on infectious diseases or related inflammatory diseases and fit in the three programmatic areas of Texas Biomed (Host-Pathogen Interactions, Population Health, and Disease Intervention and Prevention).

UTSA

A primary intent of the UTSA pilot project component is to promote collaborative interdisciplinary research between UTSA and UTHSCSA faculty scientists, especially projects that bring basic scientists together with clinical/translational investigators. A broad range of proposal topics, including but not limited to those listed above, will be considered for funding.

Funding expectations

It is anticipated that this program will support the following numbers of projects in the various categories:

- IIMS-CTSA translational program – 6 projects
- IIMS-CTSA/Texas Biomed collaborative program – 2 projects
- IIMS-CTSA/UTSA collaborative program – 2 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/Texas Biomed/UTSA, and/or CTSA partner 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, Texas Biomed, and/or UTSA grants and institute/center funds in all publications and reports generated with pilot project resources (details to be provided at the time of funding)