PILOT PROGRAM FULL APPLICATION (PHASE 2) GUIDELINES

OVERVIEW:

The Center for Clinical and Translational Science (CCTS) Pilot Grant Program serves a vital function in advancing translational research by funding a combination of broad translational and multidisciplinary projects and targeted priority areas as identified by the CTSA Program. The Center for Clinical and Translational Science (CCTS) announces the availability of pilot grant funding for research project development. **These pilot grant awards will be for <u>one-year</u>, up to $30,000, with funding starting on June 1st, 2024.**

P.I. ELIGIBILITY:

Principal Investigators must be clinical, research, or tenure track UIC faculty or Senior Scientists at UIC. Although adjunct faculty cannot serve as PIs, they may serve as named investigators, collaborators, or key personnel. Post-doctoral fellows may also serve as key personnel but cannot be PIs.

DUE DATE:

Friday, March 8th, 2024 at 5:00pm CDT, through the CCTS Awards site: https://awards.ccts.uic.edu/

SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS:

Applications will **ONLY** be accepted via electronic submission in the Awards system from **January 22nd through March 8th, 2024 at 5:00pm CDT**. To submit your full application, navigate to the CCTS Awards site homepage using your UIC credentials (via Shibboleth). Upon login, on your "My Projects" homepage, you will see your submitted LOI with access to the full application.

APPLICATION DATA FIELDS:

The following information will be completed in the data fields in the electronic application system in addition to demographic information:

- **Lay Summary**: Paragraph (250 words) that describes the overall goal and specific aims of the project, and research design. This should be understandable at an eighth-grade reading level for a person with no science experience.
- **Community Impact Statement:** Paragraph on community relevance (maximum 100 words) that includes the project title and is understandable at an eighth-grade reading level for a person with no science experience. Paragraph should answer the following question, "How important is funding this research to improving human health, either in the near or distant future?"
- **Suggested Grant Reviewers:** The names and emails of three potential faculty reviewers can be included in the application. Suggested grant reviewers cannot have any significant conflicts of interest. Conflicts of interest include being in the same division/department, being a member of the same lab, publishing together or

collaborating in the last 5 years, etc. Final reviewers and reviewer eligibility will be determined by the CCTS.

- **Plans for External Funding:** Paragraph (600 words maximum) describing a detailed plan for submission of competitive applications to external funding agencies (priority will be given to applications planned for NIH funding). Program announcements and other pertinent NIH initiatives should be included. If known, applicants should specify the institute and program officer for the planned submission.

APPLICATION DOCUMENTS:

The below documents will be uploaded in the electronic application system in their respective fields under the "Uploads" section. The documents can be uploaded as PDF or MS Word. Your application should address the scoring criteria defined in the Review Criteria section.

1. **RESEARCH PLAN** (maximum of 5 pages) divided into the following sections:
    a. **Specific Aims and Hypotheses:** Indicate the specific aims that the applicant intends to accomplish with this award and the associated hypotheses.
    b. **Significance and implication of results:** Discuss the scientific knowledge that led to the stated hypothesis and specific aims, why this project is novel, the importance of the proposed research and its potential relevance, if successful.
    c. **Research Strategy**: Briefly describe the procedures and methodology that will be used to accomplish the specific aims, and discuss how potential pitfalls might be avoided. Include:
        i. **Study design**
        ii. **Investigative team and partners**
        iii. **Study sample** (include recruitment if applicable)
        iv. **Outcomes and data collection plan**
        v. **Sample size estimations** (if applicable)
        vi. **Analysis plan**

2. **MILESTONES**: Prepare a milestone-based workplan that includes a description of operational milestones, completion criteria, expected start and completion dates. An "operational milestone" is an objective, measurable event that is indicative or project progress occurring as proposed in the application. Milestones should not exceed 3 months from start to completion. Plans for future grant submission and publications are required milestones. See the following example:

	Milestone	*Completion criteria*	*Anticipated start date*	*Anticipated completion date*
1	*Obtain IRB approval*	*IRB approval letter*	*June 1, 2024*	*June 28, 2024*
2	*Hire research assistant (RA)*	*Hired and trained RA*	*June 1, 2024*	*Sep 1, 2024*
3	*Recruit for focus groups*	*Full sample recruited*	*Sep 1, 2024*	*Nov 30, 2024*
	Etc			
12	*Submit R21 to NIMHD*	*Submitted grant*	*March 1, 2025*	*May 31, 2025*

3. **REFERENCES:** Provide a short list (not more than 30) of applicable literature citations. Literature citations are not part of the 5-page limit for the application.

4. **BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH:** Use the NIH format for all PI and Co-Investigators (5-page NIH format limit https://grants.nih.gov/grants/forms/biosketch.htm). Please use the newly revised format required after May 25, 2021. All biosketches should be merged into one pdf document prior to uploading.

5. **BUDGET & BUDGET JUSTIFICATION:** Use NIH detailed budget Form 4 and Form 5 (https://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/phs398/fp4.pdf). All guidelines pertaining to allowable expenses on federal grants will be applicable for these awards. A **budget justification is also required** for all expenses. In addition, please note:
   a. Funding should start June 2024 and end May 2025
   b. No funding is allowed for Principal Investigator or Co-Investigator Salary.
   c. No funding will be provided for books and subscriptions, membership fees, graduate student tuition remission.
   d. If equipment is budgeted, it will need a thorough justification.

6. **ANIMAL CARE REQUIREMENTS (IF APPLICABLE):** If projects involve animals, investigators must have IACUC approval by the funding start date OR should provide a brief explanation of pending review.

7. **PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS (IF APPLICABLE):** For projects involving human participants, proof of IRB approval or exemption should be included in the application. Alternatively, the investigator may provide evidence of IRB submission/pending review or a timeline of their submission plan.

8. **LETTER OF SUPPORT:** A signed letter of support is required from the PI's Department Head outlining the importance of the project, the need for this pilot funding, and other resources that are available to the PI (including if the PI already has start-up funds being used for research in the related area). The letter must also provide a statement of the protected time needed to perform the pilot study. You may also include any required letters of support (e.g. from clinical sites or community collaborators).

REVIEW PROCESS:

We invite applicants to submit the names of up to three potential reviewers (see prior section for descriptions of reviewer conflicts of interest). Reviewers will score the proposals and forward their recommendations to the CCTS Executive Review Committee. Scoring will occur based on the 9-point NIH scale and will evaluate the following factors:

- **Significance:** How important is the problem being addressed? How will completion of the aims advance science and/or clinical practice?
- **Approach**: Are the strategies described appropriate to accomplish the aims? Are potential problems and solutions addressed?
- **Investigators**: Is the investigative team appropriate for the proposed research in terms of skills, resources, and mentorship?
- **Innovation**: What is novel about the proposed research and/or methods?
- **Collaboration**: Is the team interdisciplinary? Are multiple colleges and/or community partners involved? What is the level of involvement of collaborators?
- **Feasibility**: Is the proposed research feasible with the time and resources available?

- **Community Impact**: How much will the proposed research improve human health in the near or distant future?
- **Future Funding Potential**: How likely is this research to lead directly to additional funding, preferably NIH-level funding?
- **Future Publications**: How likely is this research to result in at least one publication within one year of completion?
- **Overall Impact:** The likelihood for this research to exert a sustained, powerful influence on the research field involved.

The CCTS Executive Review Committee will serve as the council making final funding recommendations. We aim to announce award decisions by Monday, April 22nd, 2024.

FUNDING & COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS:
Funded projects are required to submit brief semi-annual progress reports as well as a final report. Investigators must acknowledge CCTS funding in all publications and presentations. Investigators will also be invited to participate in further activities with the CCTS as appropriate (e.g., seminar presentations, training course lectures, and review of future applications). No pilot funds will be released without complete IRB and/or IACUC approval or exemption from UIC's Internal Review Board as well as the NIH NCATS Scientific Review Committee. Additionally, all Pilot awardees must comply with the NIH Public Access Policy and are required to submit journal articles that arise from NIH funds to the digital archive PubMed Central.

APPLICATION FORMAT:
Applications should adhere to the following formatting specifications:
- Maximum of 5 pages for the Research Plan
- 11-point Arial font
- Single-spaced
- 0.5 inch margins on all sides
- 8 1⁄2" x 11" (i.e. standard size) paper
- Pages numbered
- Word or PDF files

QUESTIONS
Contact Mary Campbell, Pilot Program Coordinator, Center for Clinical and Translational Science, at **mcampb22@uic.edu**.