

2021 NUCATS Institute Pilot Research Awards

Request for Proposals

NUCATS Clinical and Translational Pilot Awards (\$30,000 maximum)
NUCATS Dissemination and Implementation (D&I) Pilot Awards (\$30,000 maximum)
Joseph and Dorothy Giddan Child Health Research Awards (\$200,000 maximum)
Northwestern Medicine Clinical Innovation Awards (\$30,000 maximum)

Extended Submission Deadline: Friday, August 13, 2021, by 5:00 p.m. CT

Introduction

The Northwestern University Clinical and Translational Sciences (NUCATS) Institute would like to announce the Request for Proposals for the 2021 Pilot Research Awards, including the NUCATS Clinical and Translational Pilot Awards, the NUCATS Dissemination and Implementation Pilot Awards, the Joseph and Dorothy Giddan Child Health Research Awards, and the Northwestern Medicine Clinical Innovation Awards.

Summary of Funding Initiatives

Initiative	Maximum Award Funding	Maximum Funding Timeframe	Prioritized Applicants
Clinical & Translational Pilots	\$30,000	12 months	Proposals Led by Junior Faculty* (Not Yet Established a Significant Funding Base)
Dissemination & Implement. Pilots	\$30,000		
Giddan Child Health Research Awards	\$200,000	24 months	Faculty (All Ranks, Tracks)
NM Clinical Innovation Awards	\$30,000		

*Junior faculty defined as the Instructor and Assistant Professor ranks, regardless of track.

NUCATS Clinical and Translational Pilot Awards Initiative

Funding Level: \$30,000 maximum; Funding Timeframe: 12 months maximum

Earliest Anticipated Funding Start Date: October 15, 2021

The NUCATS Clinical and Translational Pilot Awards Initiative is seeking proposals for highly innovative, multi-disciplinary clinical and translational research projects where the potential for strong clinical or translational impact on human health is clear. Proposals may also request funding for projects involving critical steps in the device and drug development pathway or for a need, while critical to translational science, that is too small to be suitable for conventional research funding mechanisms (e.g., biostatistics support for the development of preliminary data). Although proposals are encouraged from across the broad domains of clinical and translational research, we are especially interested in projects that:

- maintain a high likelihood of translation to clinical or population health impact
- align with the Chicago Department of Public Health's Healthy Chicago 2025 goals
- address health disparities/health equity

NUCATS Dissemination and Implementation Pilot Awards Initiative

Funding Level: \$30,000 maximum; Funding Timeframe: 12 months maximum

Earliest Anticipated Funding Start Date: October 15, 2021

Video

The NUCATS Dissemination and Implementation Pilot Awards Initiative is seeking proposals that explore innovative approaches to the dissemination and implementation (D&I) of research findings that address the gap between research discoveries and the translation of this knowledge into evidence-based programs, practices, or policies in the clinic or community to improve public health. (See pages 5 & 6 of this RFP for supplemental instructions for D&I Pilot Award proposals.)

2021 NUCATS Clinical and Translational Pilot Awards, NUCATS Dissemination and Implementation Pilot Awards, Joseph and Dorothy Giddan Child Health Research Awards, and NM Clinical Innovation Awards

Joseph and Dorothy Giddan Child Health Research Awards Initiative

Funding Level: \$200,000 maximum; Funding Timeframe: 24 months maximum

Earliest Anticipated Funding Start Date: October 15, 2021

The Joseph and Dorothy Giddan Child Health Research Awards Initiative is seeking proposals for highly innovative, lab-based basic or lab-based translational research projects that expand the knowledgebase in the field of child health. Applicants must propose such research addressing a significant child health problem that is based in the laboratory to meet eligibility criteria. Proposals for behavioral or social science projects will be considered non-responsive. Maximum allowable budget per award year is \$100,000, up to \$200,000 over a 2-year period.

Northwestern Medicine Clinical Innovation Awards Initiative

Funding Level: \$30,000 maximum; Funding Timeframe: 24 months maximum

Earliest Anticipated Funding Start Date: October 15, 2021

The Northwestern Medicine (NM) Clinical Innovation Awards Initiative is seeking proposals that advance translational research projects or support early, novel scientific ideas that have the potential to transform the practice of medicine. Applicants should propose projects that challenge existing paradigms or clinical practice, explore innovative hypotheses, and/or address critical barriers to progress. Ideal projects will demonstrate innovation and novelty of the proposed clinical and translational research.

Review Criteria

Ideal proposals will clearly demonstrate the following elements:

- Innovation and novelty of proposed research
- Be based upon a concept that is too preliminary to qualify for federal funding programs
- A strong team and appropriate infrastructure to support the project
- Strong potential to lead to meaningful impact on human health – successful proposals will provide a clear description of this impact
- Clear objectives, a detailed feasibility plan, analysis plan, timeline, anticipated results, and outcome measures
- A plan to complete funded activities within the proposed timeframe and to secure follow-on funding upon completion of the pilot project

Principal Investigator Eligibility

Eligibility for these funding mechanisms (NUCATS Clinical and Translational Pilot Awards, NUCATS Dissemination and Implementation Pilot Awards, Joseph and Dorothy Giddan Child Health Research Awards, and the Northwestern Medicine Clinical Innovation Awards) is limited to Northwestern University faculty, who may or may not also hold appointments in one of NUCATS' clinical affiliate institutions (Northwestern Memorial HealthCare, Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago, or Shirley Ryan AbilityLab). Faculty applicants must be engaged in research and be eligible to apply for follow-on external grant funding. For the NUCATS Clinical and Translational Pilot Awards and NUCATS Dissemination and Implementation Pilot Awards, the NIH-style review panel will prioritize proposals led by junior faculty (Instructor and Assistant Professor ranks, regardless of track) who have not yet established a significant funding base. NUCATS Dissemination and Implementation Pilot Award applications: Additional eligibility requirements are described in the supplemental instructions on pages 5 & 6.

Please note: Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine residents, clinical fellows, and postdoctoral fellows are not eligible to apply as a principal investigator or co-principal investigator. Such trainees are eligible to have a limited role on a proposal. These mechanisms are intended for faculty to develop data supporting applications for external funding, and not for trainee career or proposal development.

Dream Team Recommender Tool

Applicants are encouraged to use the Dream Team Recommender (DTR) tool to search for possible collaborators. *Use of this tool is entirely optional and has no impact on evaluation of an application.* DTR is a web application that was deployed to facilitate the assembly of scientific teams. The DTR application is based on the Northwestern Scholars database and uses matching and ranking algorithms for individual faculty members to self-assemble teams or for research managers to staff research teams based on individual attributes (such as skills or areas of expertise) and prior networks (such as co-authorship).

DTR has been developed and built by the Science of Networks in Communities (SONIC) Research Group at Northwestern University as part of a research project funded by NIH. If you wish to participate in SONIC's associated research study, you will have the option to do so by accepting the consent form. However, you may use DTR even if you decline to participate in the research study. The application is available at <https://dtr.soc.northwestern.edu/>. Users should login using NetID credentials.

Allowable and Non-allowable Expenses

- Examples of **allowable** expenses include:
 - Consultation with Northwestern faculty and/or staff with quantitative analysis expertise in the Biostatistics Collaboration Center (BCC)
 - Consultation with Northwestern faculty and/or staff with qualitative analysis expertise
 - Computational Cluster CPU time to run specific analyses
 - Community Co-PI compensation
 - Laboratory or hospital tests (e.g., CBCs)
 - Participant recruitment stipends
 - Regulatory support from NUCATS
 - Analysis of samples by a Northwestern University or affiliated core facility
 - Design/printing of materials (D&I Pilot Award proposals only)
 - Event expenses (D&I Pilot Award proposals only)
- Examples of **non-allowable** expenses include:
 - Consultants
 - Salary expenses (faculty, staff, or student), except as noted above
 - Technology development
 - Travel
 - Tuition expenses
- Indirect Costs: No indirect costs will be funded.
- Trial Phase: Pilot research funds may not be used for clinical trials beyond phase IIA.

Proposal Format

All proposals **require**:

- **Cover Sheet:** Complete the required cover sheet. (<https://www.nucats.northwestern.edu/docs/cover-sheet-nucats.docx>)
- **Scientific Research Strategy:** In 2,000 words or less, applicants should address the project's significance, hypothesis, aims, analysis plan, impact, deliverables, lack of alternate funding, and plans for future funding. The 2,000-word limit does not include figures or references.
 - Applicants are strongly encouraged to provide detailed feasibility and analysis plans.
 - When describing plans for future funding, include as much specific detail as possible (e.g., intended mechanism and/or targeted RFA).
- **Budget:** NIH-style budget (including, when applicable, (a) specific line-item estimates from the applicable NU cores and/or resources or (b) separate budget expenses/amounts for the academic and community co-PIs; <https://www.nucats.northwestern.edu/docs/budget-nucats.docx>)

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- **Note:** If the proposed project has secured support for expenses in excess of the maximum budget cap allowed in this request for proposals, the applicant must clearly document guaranteed complementary funding.
- **Biosketch(es):** NIH-style biosketches for all key personnel (principal investigator, co-investigators, other significant contributors)
- **Other Support:** NIH-style other support document for all key personnel (principal investigator, co-investigators, other significant contributors)
- **Other Documents:** Total cost estimate from a core, such as the EDW, if utilized

Incomplete proposal submissions will not be considered by the NUCATS Pilot Awards Scientific Review Panel.

Prior Approval Requirement

NUCATS Clinical and Translational Pilot Awards & NUCATS Dissemination and Implementation Pilot Awards

Only: Our funding agency requires additional documentation prior to the release of funds. Applicants will be required to cite our grant in your IRB or IACUC documentation and related publications, and we will need to forward your IRB or IACUC approval, protocol, and consent form to the NIH for review and approval prior to the commencement of the project. This process typically takes 30-90 days, depending on the complexity of the proposal and potential risks to participants. Funds may not be used for clinical trials beyond phase IIA.

Confidentiality

Proposals are reviewed internally and are considered confidential information, not to be disclosed to anyone outside the review process.

Deadline

The proposal submission deadline is **Friday, August 13, 2021, by 5:00 p.m. CT**. Submit electronic copies of proposals to: <https://competitions.fsm.northwestern.edu>.

Questions

Questions regarding the proposal process may be directed to Keith Herzog, Institute Administrator, NUCATS Institute at 312-503-2383 or Keith.Herzog@northwestern.edu. Questions regarding NUCATS Competitions may be directed to competitions@northwestern.edu. Please direct questions specific to the NUCATS Dissemination & Implementation (D&I) Pilot Awards to Jessica Johnson at Jessica.johnson01@northwestern.edu or Juan Villamar at juan.villamar@northwestern.edu.

NUCATS Dissemination & Implementation (D&I) Pilot Awards
Supplemental Instructions

NUCATS seeks proposals for NUCATS Dissemination & Implementation (D&I) Pilot Awards that support dissemination and implementation activities related to the translation of evidence-based practices, policies, and programs/interventions into community, clinical, and public health practice settings to improve the health of the public.

For purposes of these awards, dissemination is defined as the targeted distribution of information and intervention materials to a specific public health or clinical practice audience. The intent is to spread knowledge and the associated evidence-based program/intervention. Successful dissemination may occur quite differently depending on whether the audience consists of community members/patients, caregivers, practitioners, public health practitioners, policymakers, employers, administrators, or other stakeholder groups.

Implementation is the use of strategies to adopt and integrate evidence-based health interventions and change practice patterns within specific settings. Implementation efforts must seek to understand the behavior of health and healthcare professionals and support staff, health organizations, community members/patients and caregivers, and policymakers in context as key variables in the sustainable adoption, implementation, and uptake of evidence-based interventions.

NUCATS D&I Pilot Award proposals should explicitly describe how this pilot funding would (1) be critical to or enhance the chances of funding specific proposals in the future and/or (2) strengthen academic-community partnerships that can lead to future dissemination and implementation activities.

Proposals will typically fall into one of two areas:

- **Preparing for future grant submissions that involve dissemination and implementation.** Aims and activities of a NUCATS Dissemination & Implementation Pilot Award in this area might include:
 - Engaging with and establishing partnerships with key stakeholders required for successful implementation of a specific evidence-based practice/intervention
 - Conducting interviews and meetings with key stakeholders from multiple sectors (e.g., healthcare systems, public health, policy, payors, community groups, political groups, patients, and community members) to identify and examine contextual barriers and facilitators to implementation and/or to establish implementation plans
 - Identifying or tailoring implementation strategies (Powell et al., 2015) that may be tested in a future research grant
 - Developing appropriate practice/intervention adaptations to better align with the needs of community, healthcare system, or public health practice partners
 - Developing and pilot testing measurement tools for evaluating different aspects of dissemination and implementation research

- **Dissemination and implementation of evidence-based practices/interventions.** Aims and activities of a NUCATS Dissemination & Implementation Pilot Award in this area might include:
 - Training of community or healthcare providers to deliver (i.e., implement) a specific evidence-based practice/intervention
 - Conducting small scale (i.e., 1-2 sites) rollout and testing of dissemination and implementation activities
 - Distributing materials and information to potential practice/intervention adopters and evaluating their perspective on the likelihood they will adopt the practice/intervention

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NUCATS D&I Pilot Awards Eligibility

NUCATS Dissemination & Implementation Pilot Awards proposals are required to include both Northwestern investigators and relevant stakeholders (e.g., community, clinicians, policymakers, public health practice partners). This includes an academic co-PI that is faculty in one of NUCATS' partner institutions and a community co-PI that is representative of the dissemination/implementation system. The proposal should illustrate that the submitting partnership is a collaborative effort between the researcher/research team and the major community/practice partner(s). The community/practice partner could be a community-based organization, clinical entity, or public health practice organization (e.g., Chicago Department of Public Health, Chicago Public Schools). There should be established working relationships necessary to prepare and complete the proposed project and plans for further funding. NUCATS' Center for Community Health offers guidance and support for partnership development. To learn more, [click here](#).

NUCATS D&I Pilot Awards Selection Criteria

NUCATS will fund projects that are focused on conducting dissemination and implementation on a small-scale or performing necessary, preliminary work to establish dissemination and implementation plans for subsequent research.

NUCATS D&I Pilot Awards Proposal Review

Proposals are ranked on standard NIH criteria, including significance, investigator(s), innovation, approach, and environment. Proposals to this mechanism should be informed by appropriate frameworks or models appropriate for dissemination and implementation. Aims should address system level factors appropriate for the proposed pilot. Applicants should include quality and feasibility of stakeholder and academic partner engagement, quality and feasibility of proposed activities, potential for positive community impact, and consideration/plans for sustainability. Proposals that only address patient/client level factors will be considered non-responsive.

NUCATS D&I Pilot Awards Contacts

Potential applicants are strongly encouraged to contact the Center for Community Health to discuss possible proposal ideas. Please direct questions specific to the NUCATS Dissemination & Implementation Pilot Awards to Jessica Johnson at Jessica.johnson01@northwestern.edu or Juan Villamar at juan.villamar@northwestern.edu.

Reference

Powell BJ, Waltz TJ, Chinman MJ, et al. A refined compilation of implementation strategies: results from the Expert Recommendations for Implementing Change (ERIC) project. *Implement Sci.* 2015;10. doi: 10.1186/s13012-015-0209-1.