Northwestern University
NUCATS
Clinical and Translational Sciences Institute

Date: February 16th, 2026

To: University Chairs, Chiefs, Center and Institute Directors, Training Program Directors, and Faculty

From: Susanna A. McColley, MD, FAAP, Scientific Director, Interdisciplinary Research Partnerships, Stanley Manne Children's Research Institute, Professor of Pediatrics in Pulmonary and Sleep Medicine, Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine, Co-Director, *E-TRAIN T32 Program, NUCATS;*

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Re: Request for Applications, *Enhancing TRanslational science to Accelerate Impact of New innovations (E-TRAIN) (T32) Program*

Program Announcement: Northwestern University Clinical and Translational Sciences Institute (NUCATS) is pleased to announce a Request for Applications for the *E-TRAIN T32 Program.*

The program prepares scholars to develop strategies that translate and implement their discoveries to improve human health. This innovative 2-year T32 postdoctoral training program will catalyze the careers of postdoctoral scientists, expanding their domain expertise through mentored research with increasing independence while developing foundational skills in cross-disciplinary team science. E-TRAIN emphasizes expanding access to treatments for more people, more quickly, by reducing barriers in clinical and translational science. Trainees will learn to drive rapid, scalable, and sustainable translation from laboratory to clinical and community settings, with a strong focus on the foundations of implementation science and the design and conduct of research that improves human health. This innovative program is funded through the Clinical and Translational Science Award (CTSA) program, supported by the National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences.

Program Elements: E-TRAIN provides interdisciplinary co-mentoring; comprehensive training across the translational science spectrum and implementation science; independent didactic activities; scientific communication skills to support research development; and wellness and resilience support.

Eligibility: We welcome applications from individuals with broad scientific and personal backgrounds. Requirements are a graduate degree (MD or PhD) awarded no earlier than two years prior to the appointment date, and a commitment to fully participate in program activities, including seminars and active engagement with implementation science co-mentors.

Mentor Requirements: As with all T32 programs at Northwestern University, primary mentors must have current mentor certification (available through NUCATS or the Provost's office). If applicant mentors have not yet completed this training, they can begin it on the earliest available dates after the application is submitted. All appointees and mentors are expected to participate fully in the program activities, including regular seminars and active engagement with implementation science co-mentors.

Key dates and deadlines:

- **Applications Due:** May 1st, 2026
- **Earliest appointment date:** August 1st, 2026

Contact Information: For information, eligibility determinations, or assistance with finding mentors, please contact Priya Tripathi at priya.tripathi@northwestern.edu and Adam White at adam-white@northwestern.edu. Please refer to the RFA beginning on the next page or visit the NUCATS website for additional information.

Enhancing TRanslational science to Accelerate Impact of New innovations (E-TRAIN)

Program Information and Proposal Instructions for 2026-2027

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I.   Introduction

Enhancing TRanslational science to Accelerate Impact of New innovations (E-TRAIN) is an important focus of the Northwestern University Clinical and Translational Sciences Institute (NUCATS).

E-TRAIN is a National Center for Advancing Translational Science (NCATS)-funded training program that seeks to prepare postdoctoral trainees for research careers through mentored research while they develop strategies to anticipate and overcome scientific and operational barriers that impede translation from design through implementation of novel approaches to diagnosis, monitoring, and treatment of human disease. The program's goal is to prepare early postdoctoral trainees to become leaders in clinical and translational science.

II.   Overview

"Translation" involves converting scientific discoveries and research findings into practical medical applications. This includes transforming insights from basic laboratory research into clinical trials and treatments that clinicians can use with patients. "Implementation" is the process of integrating proven, evidence-based interventions into real-world healthcare settings. This entails designing effective treatments, programs, and practices that reliably work for all individuals receiving care in hospitals, clinics, and communities, while addressing barriers such as cost, training, workflow, and access. Together, in context, translation and implementation constitute the complete journey from discovery to impact: turning research breakthroughs into tangible health improvements.

The E-TRAIN program trains postdoctoral fellows in a creative, multidisciplinary environment, enabling investigators to apply translational scientific approaches to health problems. This dynamic program fosters interactions between mentors and trainees across disciplines, encouraging creative thinking and novel approaches to translational science.

The program will focus on foundational skills such as team science, process and operational improvement, and effective communication to the full breadth of stakeholders. A key methodological emphasis is the infusion of implementation science into all stages of translational research.

The program will provide support for a **minimum of two years**. Training must include both mentored research and plans for other career development activities (see below).

Individuals funded by this mechanism will receive assistance in applying for other fellowship awards or independent grants during the period of this award. All trainees supported by the program are encouraged to prepare an F or K-series grant prior to the end of their appointment and are expected to submit a first-author manuscript from their funded project.

Postdoctoral fellows in the program will prepare an individualized, goal-oriented career development plan and participate in an integrated didactic and mentored research program.

III.   Eligibility

The program accepts applicants pursuing careers in clinical and translational science.

The award is open to individuals who are beginning their postdoctoral research (no more than 2 years of experience following the date of their terminal degree). Applications will be accepted from:

1. PhD students, or postdoctoral trainee who completed a PhD within the prior two years, with broad scientific backgrounds applicable to human health,
2. Fourth-year MD students who seek research experience prior to commencing graduate medical education (residency), and
3. MD resident physicians who seek research experience after their first or second year of graduate medical education

Applicants who are interested in completing their research at a non-NU institution but are able to participate in career development activities at Northwestern should contact Priya Tripathi at priya.tripathi@northwestern.edu and Adam White at adam-white@northwestern.edu.

Northwestern University and the E-TRAIN program are committed to advancing health for all people and communities. Applications are encouraged from candidates with backgrounds in heterogeneous scientific disciplines.

IV.   Stipulations and Provisions of the Award

An outline of requirements are listed below, and detailed information can be found on our website:

1. Complete the online application through
   https://competitions.fsm.northwestern.edu/grants/T32_2026_2027
   a. Provide a **Research Statement**
   b. Provide **3 Letters of Support**
   c. Provide a **Curriculum Vitae**
   d. Provide a **Professional Development Statement** describing how this program will benefit your career development.

Standard NIH NRSA T32 and F-series award eligibility requirements apply.

Awardees will receive salary support, including the prevailing NRSA stipend, health insurance, tuition support, travel expenses, and programmatic support in the areas of qualitative methods, mentor matching, team science training, Responsible Conduct of Research training, grant-writing workshops, and access to the Center for Community Health.

All trainees are expected to participate in professional development programs, including attending a two-hour seminar monthly. Trainees will periodically be asked to complete required pre-readings and/or watch didactic videos to prepare for upcoming seminars. Trainees and mentors must also complete and provide prompt responses to programmatic evaluation and career development plan documents and activities. Trainees must comply with data requests while funded and with annual update requests for 15 years post-funding for NIH reporting.

Mentors must complete mentor training if they have not already done so. Mentors are also required to participate in career development activities and evaluations, provide annual updates as requested, and procure funding for trainees' research-related expenses.

Process-related questions can be directed to Adam White at adam-white@northwestern.edu.

Internal or external applicants with questions related to selection of mentors or co-mentors and/or potential candidate eligibility or qualification can be directed to Dr. Susanna McColley at smccolley@luriechildrens.org and Dr. Jacqueline Gollan, j-gollan@northwestern.edu.

V.   Useful Links

- NIH Biosketch Format: https://grants.nih.gov/grants/forms/biosketch.htm

- National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences (NCATS): https://ncats.nih.gov/

- Northwestern University Institutional Review Board: https://irb.northwestern.edu/

- NUCATS Website: https://www.nucats.northwestern.edu/

- NUCATS T32 Website: https://www.nucats.northwestern.edu/training/nih-funding-opportunities/t32/index.html

- Current T32 Trainees: https://www.nucats.northwestern.edu/training/nih-funding-opportunities/t32/current-fellows.html

- Previous TL1 Trainees: https://www.nucats.northwestern.edu/training/nih-funding-opportunities/t32/past-fellows.html