



## CENTER FOR CLINICAL AND TRANSLATIONAL SCIENCE

January 22, 2024

### UMCCTS PILOT PROJECT PROGRAM (PPP) 2024 - REQUEST FOR LETTERS OF INTENT

#### INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

A major goal of the UMass Center for Clinical and Translational Science (UMCCTS) is to accelerate the translation of basic discoveries into practical, cost-effective solutions that improve individual well-being and community health. Building upon our strong reputation as a world-class research institution, producing noteworthy advances in clinical and basic research, the UMCCTS provides the infrastructure necessary to support outstanding clinical and translational investigators and their work.

Individual project awards (**\$25,000 to \$50,000 for 10 months**) will be made on a competitive basis to enable investigators to accelerate the translation of innovative discoveries into:

- New understanding and/or diagnosis of a disease process
- New devices, therapeutics, and vaccines for the treatment and/or prevention of disease
- New standards of care in the practice of community medicine
- New approaches to community-based research demonstrating true bi-directionality between community and academia
- New methodologies to leverage institutional strengths and new initiatives
- The pursuit of high-risk, high reward studies

Of note, **pilot projects must address scientific or operational barriers to effective and efficient translation, with the goal of developing generalizable principles to accelerate translational research. Strictly translational research projects, i.e., projects focused on crossing a particular step of the translational process for a particular target or disease, will not be considered responsive.** In addition, projects are intended to: (1) explore possible innovative new leads or new directions for established investigators; (2) stimulate investigators from other areas to lend their expertise in clinical and translational science; and (3) provide initial support to establish proof of concept. Projects must be feasible within the proposed *10-month* timeframe, have high methodological and scientific quality, and answer important scientific questions. Pilot project support is not intended for large projects by established investigators that would otherwise be submitted as separate research grant applications.

We are particularly interested in proposals which feature a clinical scientist working with a basic scientist, proposals with an emphasis on community-based research, and proposals that support the career development of new investigators.

#### ELIGIBILITY

The Principal Investigator must be a faculty member at a UMass or WPI campus. At least one PI/Co-PI must be from the UMass Chan Medical School. Cross campus and transdisciplinary collaborations between UMass faculty are encouraged, but not required. For projects involving collaborations with multiple campuses, the science and budget proposed for each campus should be equal.

All applicants must become members of the UMCCTS. Membership is easy and entails completion of a quick, [on-line membership form](#).

## ALLOWABLE USE OF FUNDS

PPP funding can support a full array of resources, including core user fees for services such as writing assistance in preparing an IRB application or biostatistics consults. Funds are typically used for student/postdoc support, reagents, supplies, and small equipment. PI support up to 10% is allowed. Indirect costs are not allowed.

## DEFINITIONS OF CLINICAL AND TRANSLATIONAL RESEARCH

NIH defines *Translational Science* as:

- The field that generates innovations that overcome longstanding bottlenecks and roadblocks to accelerate progress along the translational research pipeline. These include scientific, operational, financial and administrative innovations that transform the way that research is done.

*Clinical Research* as:

- Patient-oriented research. Research conducted with human subjects (or on material of human origin such as tissues, specimens and cognitive phenomena) for which an investigator (or colleague) directly interacts with human subjects. Patient-oriented research includes: (a) mechanisms of human disease, (b) therapeutic interventions, (c) clinical trials, or (d) development of new technologies.
- Epidemiological and behavioral studies
- Outcomes research and health services research

*Translational Research* as:

- The process of applying ideas, insights, and discoveries generated through basic scientific inquiry to the treatment or prevention of human disease.

## OVERSIGHT

The PPP is overseen and administered by the UMCCTS Scientific Review Committee. The Scientific Review Committee makes funding decisions based upon the scientific merits and potential impact of the proposals.

## CRITERIA FOR AWARDS

The evaluation criteria that are used to review proposals include the following:

- Intellectual Merit – projects that include all efforts to enhance the impact of scholarly endeavors on benefiting the human condition will be considered for funding
- Growth Opportunity – projects that demonstrate the opportunity to be leveraged to attract and secure outside funding from federal, state, industry, foundation and other sources will be considered for funding
- Use of Resources - Applicants will receive added consideration from the reviewers if they plan to use one or more of the research resources available through the UMCCTS and/or WPI

## APPLICATION AND REVIEW PROCESS

**Letters of Intent** - Due date: **Thursday, March 14, 2024**

**Describe in two (2) pages or less** the work that has motivated you to apply. Do not include a cover page. Include the following:

- Title of project
- Name, rank, affiliation, and email of contact PI and any other key personnel
- Background and significance of the project
- Specific Aims
- Preliminary data (if any)
- Project description/approach
- Future directions and specific funding plans

References are not required, but if included, do not count as part of the two page limit. Budgetary information is not required at the LOI stage.

Letters of Intent (LOI) will be reviewed by the UMCCTS Scientific Review Committee to determine which projects are significantly linked to the criteria listed above. Based on this review, the most promising projects will be selected for full proposal submission. Full proposals will be subject to a standard NIH-type study section assessment.

**Please email your Letter of Intent (2 pages or less) as a single attachment (Word or PDF) to: [ccts@umassmed.edu](mailto:ccts@umassmed.edu) on or before **Thursday, March 14, 2024 by 5:00 PM (Eastern)**.**

Full proposals will be due on Monday, June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2024 for those selected as finalists.

### **APPLICATION TIMELINE**

Request for Letters of Intent Announced	Monday, January 22, 2024
Letters of Intent Due	Thursday, March 14, 2024
Letters of Intent Finalists Notified	Week of April 1, 2024
Full Proposals Due	Monday, June 3, 2024
Project Start Date	July/August, 2024

### **PARTIAL LIST OF UMCCTS-SUPPORTED RESOURCES AVAILABLE FOR PPP APPLICANTS**

More information about these resources can be found at <http://www.umassmed.edu/ccts> or by contacting Nate Hafer at [nathaniel.hafer@umassmed.edu](mailto:nathaniel.hafer@umassmed.edu).

- Data Lake
- REDCap (Research Electronic Data Capture)
- Research Informatics Core
- Quantitative Methods Core
- Regulatory Consultation
- Clinical Research Center
- Investigational Drug Service (Pharmacy)
- Conquering Diseases Biorepository
- Conquering Diseases Volunteer Recruitment Core
- Community Engagement resources and consultation services
- Science Participation Research Center
- Small Molecule Screening Facility