



## CENTER FOR CLINICAL AND TRANSLATIONAL SCIENCE

### UMCCTS SPARK Program

The UMass Center for Clinical and Translational Science (**UMCCTS**) **SPARK (Small Pilot and Research Knowledge) Program** provides support for hypothesis-driven clinical and translational research, by providing access to the Clinical Research Center and other UMCCTS cores. The UMCCTS's priorities are to support studies focused on developing new clinical care and research methodologies to generate preliminary data for external grant submissions, and to support early stage investigators and trainees.

UMCCTS Resource Requests may be submitted to support hypothesis-driven clinical and translational research projects that have application to human health by providing access to UMCCTS-supported research cores, such as the Clinical Research Center, Conquering Diseases Biorepository, Research Informatics Core, Quantitative Methods Core, Investigational Pharmacy, Bioinformatics Core, and Small Molecule Screening Core.

#### Who is Eligible?

UMass Chan faculty are eligible for funding. Collaborations with external collaborators, including those from other UMass campuses, are encouraged. Only one PI may be designated on a request.

#### What are the Review Criteria?

**UMCCTS SPARK pilot studies must meet ALL of the following criteria:**

- Clinical and translational research: ties findings to diagnosis or treatment of human disease and/or improves health
- Hypothesis driven with a specific research question
- Pilot sized: smallest number of subjects or samples necessary to obtain preliminary data, with justification

#### **Scientific Review Criteria**

- How will the proposed study lead to work that may change paradigms, improve health care delivery, and/or enhance community or public health?
- Will the study advance the development of preliminary data for a significant external grant submission, e.g. NIH R01, P01, K23, R21, etc?
- Will the study promote the training/career of a young investigator, particularly those supported by UMCCTS K or T awards?

#### Allowable Resources

UMCCTS awards specific resources for research studies rather than transferring funds. The following resources may be requested:

#### **Allowable Resources:**

- UMCCTS Core services
- Biostatistical consultations
- Clinical lab services
- Clinical Research Center facilities and nursing care
- Participant recruitment support
- Clinical Research Center Support for K and T awardees
- Informatics, including bioinformatics and research informatics

### **Resources NOT Available Through UMCCTS Funding:**

- Animal purchase, housing and food
- Salary support. This includes physician fees, 3rd party examiners, and non-mandatory clinical fees
- PI and study team travel for meetings
- Expert speaker
- Publication fees
- Computer purchase (some examples include: iPads, laptops, desktop computers, servers, etc.)
- Professional development and training fees
- General lab supplies not specific to study or normally stored in lab; PI lab equipment upkeep
- Research supplies or analysis purchased from international companies. Shipping must originate from the United States
- Services previously rendered

### **Resources with Special Considerations:**

- Software – only allowed if specialized and project specific/core infrastructure enhancement related
- Travel – participant related and required for study conduct
- Food – related to subject participation
- Sample analyses conducted in UMass Chan research space - if the sample analysis is not performed at UMass Chan, the review committee will consider external analysis within the United States
- International studies/collaborations. We can only provide support for research conducted in the United States.

### **What Do I Need To Apply?**

Please email your application as a single document (Word or PDF) to: [ccts@umassmed.edu](mailto:ccts@umassmed.edu)

Applications are accepted on a rolling basis.

Applicants should include the following:

- Cover page with the name of the PI, other key personnel, contact information, title of project, and an executive summary that includes a clear and concise hypothesis/research question for this project and a brief scientific summary of the problem this study will address. (1 page)
- Research proposal – be sure to describe departmental support (funding or otherwise) and resource(s) that are requested (1 page)
- Budget (use PHS 398 form page 4 as a template, 1 page) and budget justification (1 page)
- Biosketch of PI (NIH format)

All applicants must be UMCCTS members. Membership is free, easy, and entails completion of an on-line membership form on the UMCCTS website at: <https://umassmed.edu/ccts/about/membership/>

### **Oversight and Review Criteria**

The SPARK program is overseen and administered by the UMCCTS Scientific Review Committee. The Review Committee will make funding decisions based upon the scientific merit and potential impact of the proposals.

### **Vouchers (Requests < \$2,000)**

Requests  $\leq$  \$2,000 qualify for administrative review. Vouchers have a total maximum award period of 6 months. Extensions will not be granted. A researcher is allowed 1 voucher request in a one year period. This time frame begins from the date of your last voucher approval. Each research project can only have 1 voucher. Since the time to approval is short, you should request a voucher only when you are ready to use the voucher. If no additional information is requested during the review, a funding decision will be emailed in 2-4 working days.

### **Expedited (Requests > \$2,000 but $\leq$ \$10,000)**

Requests > \$2,000 but  $\leq$  \$10,000 qualify for expedited review. Maximum award period of 6 months. Extensions will not be granted. A researcher is allowed 1 request in a one year period. This time frame begins from the date of your last approval. Each research project can only have 1 expedited award. Additional documents may be required based on resources requested. If no additional information is requested during the course of the review,

a funding decision will be emailed within 3 to 4 weeks.

### **Pre-Review Process**

Individuals interested in applying are encouraged to take advantage of the pre-review process, which is an evaluation performed by UMCCTS staff to determine an application's suitability for UMCCTS support. This review helps to refine the research proposal to a complete scientific package and permits the review committee to focus on the scientific merit of the study, therefore expediting the overall review process. Email Nate Hafer at [nathaniel.hafer@umassmed.edu](mailto:nathaniel.hafer@umassmed.edu) to schedule an appointment.

### **Partial List of CCTS Resources Available for 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)

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