



CENTER FOR CLINICAL AND TRANSLATIONAL SCIENCE

January 11, 2021

UMCCTS PILOT PROJECT PROGRAM (PPP) 2021 - 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 human 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.

The UMCCTS and Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI) are announcing the next funding round for the Pilot Project Program (PPP). Individual project awards (**up to \$50,000 for 1 year**) 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

The intent of the funding is to speed up the rate of progress to move a research project, clinical finding or other discovery into a broader network of activities, while maximizing the breadth of *transdisciplinary* skills applied to the research question. 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.

Thank you for your interest in Clinical and Translational Science. We look forward to your ideas.

ELIGIBILITY

The Principal Investigator must be a UMMS Worcester faculty member. You are welcome to have external or internal collaborators, but this is not a requirement. Collaborations with other UMass campus, Baystate, and/or WPI faculty are encouraged. New this year -- up to 2 awards will be made to projects representing collaborations between UMMS and WPI investigators. For projects involving collaborations with other campuses or WPI, 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, reagent costs, and small equipment. PI support up to 10% is allowed. Indirect costs are not allowed.

DEFINITIONS OF CLINICAL AND TRANSLATIONAL RESEARCH

NIH defines *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: Friday, February 12, 2021

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 an attachment (Word or PDF) to: ccts@umassmed.edu on or before Friday, February 12, 2021 by 5:00 PM (Eastern).

Full proposals will be due on Wednesday, March 31, 2021 for those selected finalists.

APPLICATION TIMELINE

Request for Letters of Intent Announced	Monday, January 11, 2021
Letters of Intent Due	Friday, February 12, 2021
Letters of Intent Finalists Notified	Week of March 1, 2021
Full Proposals Due	Wednesday, March 31, 2021
Project Start Date	Monday, May 3, 2021

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

- UMMS Data Lake
- REDCap (Research Electronic Data Capture)
- 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