

# Environmental Health Signature Program and Superfund Research Center Pilot Project Award

## REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

Issue Date: May 21, 2021

Application Due Date: September 16, 2021

### Introduction

The Superfund Research and Training Center and the Environmental Health Signature Program (EHSP) are offering pilot awards, in conjunction with the UNM Clinical and Translational Science Center (CTSC), in support of their mission to advance clinical and translational investigation into environmental public health needs. As such, we are soliciting applications from all HSC faculty members (junior to senior investigators). Pilot projects should exemplify the EHSP mission on regionally relevant environmental public health issues that address the overall health needs of unique Southwestern communities. Priority will be given to those proposals most aligned with the Superfund Research Center's mission for research on the health effects of metals and metal mixtures, with an emphasis on health disparities in affected tribal communities and the CTSC's mission of developing clinical and translational research to promote and support "bench to bedside to community and practice and back" scientific inquiries.

All applicants are encouraged to discuss their proposal with either Matt Campen (EHSP Director; [mcampen@salud.unm.edu](mailto:mcampen@salud.unm.edu); 925-7778) or Johnnye Lewis (Superfund Director; [jlewis@cybermesa.com](mailto:jlewis@cybermesa.com); 272-4853) before submission to ensure that research aligns with the pilot funding objectives and funding sources.

The purpose of this RFA is to support pilot projects that utilize the EHSP and CTSC infrastructure to **produce preliminary data for competitive NIH grant proposals** in clinical and translational research. Projects must be of high methodological quality and must demonstrate feasible and generalizable solutions to translational research problems. All awards are dependent upon the availability of CTSA funds.

As part of our CTSC award, the NIH has identified the need to speed the movement of clinical research findings into the everyday practice of health care delivery. To support this initiative, we will award several grants ranging from \$10,000-\$25,000 to be spent between December 1, 2021 through November 30, 2022.

Translation is the process of turning observations in the laboratory, clinic and community into interventions that improve the health of individuals and the public — from diagnostics and therapeutics to medical procedures and behavioral changes.

Translational Science is the field of investigation focused on understanding the scientific and operational principles underlying each step of the translational process. NIH is committed to increasing awareness and understanding of translational science through the development, demonstration, and dissemination of educational and training resources to stakeholder communities. The [translational science spectrum](#) represents each stage of research along the path from the biological basis of health and disease to interventions that improve the health of individuals and the public. Stages include Basic

Research, Pre-Clinical Research, Clinical Research, Clinical Implementation and Public Health. The spectrum is not linear or unidirectional; each stage builds upon and informs the others. At all stages of the spectrum, NIH develops new approaches, demonstrates their usefulness and disseminates the findings. Patient involvement is a critical feature of all stages in translation. **Basic research performed on human samples linked to identifiers and/or outcomes counts as translational research. Purely non-human animal research does not qualify for as translational research for funding under this program.**

## Definitions

- NIH Definition of [Clinical Research](#): Research with human subjects that is:
  - 1) 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. It includes:
    - (a) mechanisms of human disease
    - (b) therapeutic interventions
    - (c) clinical trials
    - (d) development of new technologies*Excluded from this definition are in vitro studies that utilize human tissues that cannot be linked to a living individual.*
  - 2) Epidemiological and behavioral studies
  - 3) Outcomes research and health services research
- NIH Definition of [Clinical Trial](#): A research study in which one or more human subjects are prospectively assigned to one or more interventions (which may include placebo or other control) to evaluate the effects of those interventions on health-related biomedical or behavioral outcomes.
- NIH Definition of [Human Subjects Research](#): According to 45 CFR 46 Link to Non-U.S. Government Site - Click for Disclaimer, a human subject is "a living individual about whom an investigator (whether professional or student) conducting research:
  - Obtains information or biospecimens through intervention or interaction with the individual, and uses, studies, or analyzes the information or biospecimens; or
  - Obtains, uses, studies, analyzes, or generates identifiable private information or identifiable biospecimens.
- NIH Definition of [special populations](#): Groups who have traditionally been underrepresented in health research or excluded altogether For example, pediatric populations, older adults, people with disabilities and/or rare disorders, underrepresented racial/ethnic and/or sexual and gender minorities, rural populations or populations with low socio-economic status.

## Application Deadline, Notice of Awards and Funding Cycle

**Application Release Date:** May 21, 2021

**IRB Submission Deadline:** July 23, 2021

**Application Deadline:** September 17, 2021 5:00 pm

**IRB Approval Deadline for NIH Review:** September 17, 2021

**Notice of Intent to Fund/Decline:** October 11, 2021

**Earliest Notice of Award:** November 12, 2021

**Funding Cycle:** December 1, 2021 through November 30, 2022

## Eligibility and Project Requirements

- Principal Investigators for these pilot awards *must* have primary appointment as UNM HSC faculty (junior or senior investigators). Any other investigator who cannot submit the grants emanating from this pilot award through the UNM HSC is not eligible to receive this award.
- All investigators selected to receive funding and their team members are encouraged to complete the CTSC GCP Training Course within 6 months of receiving award.
- All investigators selected to receive funding will be expected to submit progress reports on go/no-go milestones monthly to ensure continued funding.
- All investigators selected to receive funding will be expected to submit a Final Progress Report at the end of the funded project and an additional report one year later, detailing progress to date, expenditures, and all submitted publications and grant applications (pending or funded) relating to the pilot project.
- Should investigators receive NIH funding during the Pilot period of performance, the investigator must ensure there is no budgetary overlap.
- Funds may not be used to provide interim support for active projects or to extend previously conducted work.

**Please note:** *All funds not spent by the end date of the Pilot Project Award (November 30, 2022) will be returned to the CTSC and NIH. No extensions will be granted. Applicants are eligible for no more than a total of two CTSC pilot awards, after which they need to demonstrate that they have received a score for an extramural grant submission before they will be considered for another CTSC pilot award.*

## Presentations and Publications

- Awardees are expected to publish their findings in scholarly peer-reviewed journals and present their research at professional meetings.
- All publications, grants, and presentations resulting from research funded by the CTSC or using CTSC resources should cite the CTSC as a contributing source of support and indicate the CTSC's citation as follows: "This project was supported by the National Center for Research Resources and the National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences for the National Institutes of Health through Grant Number UL1TR001449, The University of New Mexico Clinical and Translational Science Center."

- Investigators are responsible for submitting any peer-reviewed journal articles resulting from research funded by this award to PubMed Central, the NIH digital archive of biomedical and life sciences journal literature. This will generate not only a PubMed number but a PMCID number, as well. See <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-12-160.html>.

## Evaluation Criteria

Successful projects will exemplify the CTSC mission of developing clinical and translational research. Applications should be well written, precise, and succinct. Applications will be subject to both scientific and programmatic review and will receive scientific review by the CTSC Review Committee. The following criteria will be used in evaluating these proposals:

1. Overall Impact
2. Significance
3. Innovation
4. Approach (*should include evaluation of approaches to articulated research barriers, and demonstration of feasible and generalizable translational research solutions, team science and interdisciplinary collaboration*).
5. Investigator (including an evaluation of the status of prior pilot funding awards and the outcomes from those studies)
6. Environment
7. Probability that this project will lead to extramural funding
8. Utilization of CTSC resources

Additional review considerations will include:

9. Alignment with CTSC programmatic goals
10. Integration of special populations
11. “Go/No Go” Milestones (suggested by the investigator and/or established by the review committee)
12. Budgetary Considerations
13. Regulatory Approvals
14. Letters of Support and Commitment

**Scoring:** To emphasize the importance of extramural grant submission and attainment deriving from these pilot awards, each of the first 8 items above will be scored on a 1-9 scale (where 1 is best), and composite scores will then be weighted so that the final overall impact score is determined as follows:

- Innovation: 10%
- Significance: 10%
- Approach, Environment, and Investigator: 30%
- Plan for and probability of extramural funding: 30%
- Utilization of CTSC Resources: 20%

## Budget Guidelines

Utilization of CTSC Core services is strongly encouraged and will be a review consideration. It is important that you schedule a meeting with the CTSC Research Concierge at [HSC-CTSCResearchConcierge@salud.unm.edu](mailto:HSC-CTSCResearchConcierge@salud.unm.edu). This consultation step is required for planning purposes and to ensure effective use of CTSC Core services utilization for your research proposal.

Responsible budgeting is critical for the 12-month project and it is common to overestimate what you can accomplish in that limited time frame. Your proposed budget will be reviewed and potentially revised based on Peer Review and Core management feedback. If successfully funded, reallocation of the budget is strongly discouraged. However, consideration will be made for reallocation of funds within CTSC Cores if justified. Prior approval is necessary.

CTSC resources included in the budget will be covered using a non-refundable voucher program. These funds may not be reallocated to other expenses after the grant has been awarded. ***Rationale for not using CTSC Core services needs to be specifically justified.***

Details of services offered by each Core can be found at each of the following links:

- **Participant Clinical Interactions (PCI)**: Offers clinical research support staff, recruitment assistance, clinic space, bionutrition, as well as consultation on protocol development and implementation.
- **Biomedical Informatics**: Offers clinical data warehouse mining, “honest broker” services for access to data from multiple sources, and web-based electronic data capture and survey tools via REDCap.
- **Biostatistics**: The CTSC Biostatistics, Epidemiology and Research Design Support (BERD) Core is designed to provide HSC investigators with expert early consultation and service on all aspects of study design, biostatistics, and basic data management for effective clinical and translational studies. The Core provides easily accessible consultation and services, user-friendly courses for researchers at all levels, and novel tools and methods intended to solve problems and address barriers to the conduct of clinical and translational research. Please note that this service does NOT include data collection, data entry, and similar services that are the responsibility of your team.
- **Community Engagement and Research (CERC)**: provides grant application development, community engagement and outreach, study coordination and project implementation, qualitative interviewing and focus group facilitation, data management, and qualitative analysis for investigators
- **Translational Technologies**
  - **Translational Technologies Laboratory**: Offers state-of-the-art equipment, technical assistance, consultation on protocol and assay development for any CTSC partner institution.
  - **Clinical Laboratory**: Develop and carry out research related sample analysis for bulk standard immunodiagnostic and chemical assays, as well as sample processing for any CTSC partner institution.

- [Center for Molecular Discovery](#): Expertise with multiplexed, high throughput flow cytometry for drug discovery.
- [Human Imaging \(Mind Research Network\)](#): Focus on human imaging providing MRI, MEG, and EEG services.
- [UNM Human Imaging Core](#): Focus on human imaging and providing MRI services.
- [Animal MRI Core \(Brain and Behavioral Health Institute\)](#): Provides structural and functional MRI in animal models with a 7T 37 cm bore MR scanner. Combined PET/MRI imaging is now also available. Please contact Dr. Surojit Paul ([SPaul@salud.unm.edu](mailto:SPaul@salud.unm.edu)) for current rates
- [KUSAIR \(Keck-UNM Small Animal Imaging Facility\)](#): Provides high quality and customer specific functional imaging services on small animal research.

Costs *not* covered under these awards:

- faculty salaries
- postdoctoral salaries
- non-HSC staff salaries
- graduate student support (stipends, tuition, etc.)
- administrative or office supply costs (office supplies, paper, ink, telephone, etc.)
- meals or hospitality (i.e., no food, beverages, or alcohol)
- travel (per diem, hotel, rental car, mileage, flights, etc.)
- equipment >\$5,000 (items <\$5,000 are at the discretion of the committee and can be removed from the budget)
- computers, laptops, tablets
- monetary incentives to clinics or providers (e.g. recruitment bonus)
- other items typically supported by indirect costs (publication costs, printing/duplication costs)

## IRB Guidelines

CTSA is required to obtain prior approval of all pilot projects from NIH prior to funding. Because of this, all pilot submissions will be required to submit one of the below IRB letters with their submission. Applications without IRB submission prior to July 23, 2021 will be administratively disqualified. This provides HRPO with efficient time to review all submissions prior to the application deadline. Projects that do not have IRB determination by September 17, 2021 will not be considered for funding.

- IRB Letter with Determination of Non-Human Subjects Research
- IRB Letter with Approval of Exemption #1-9 Human Subjects Research
- IRB Letter with Approval of No More Than Minimal Risk Human Subjects Research
- IRB Letter with Approval of Greater than Minimal Risk Human Subjects Research

The following applies to each project.

- Each pilot submission must have its own standalone IRB protocol.
- Amendments or a sub-study/ancillary study to an existing IRB-approved parent protocol are not allowed.
- Pilot application title must match IRB protocol title and be reflected on the approval letter.
- Principal Investigator of the pilot application must match the Principal Investigator on the IRB protocol and be reflected on the approval letter.
- IRB modifications to the approved pilot protocol are not permitted after NIH approval. Every effort should be made to execute the protocol as approved by the IRB, Pilot Review Committee, and NIH.

All projects involving human subjects are strongly encouraged to meet with the CTSA's Regulatory Affairs Specialist, Rebecca Brito (RBrito@salud.unm.edu; 505-272-9542) for consultation and planning purposes.

### Clinical Trial:

All studies meeting the NIH definition of a Clinical Trial must be registered on ClinicalTrials.gov and have an NCT number assigned to the study. Investigators should make sure the consent has the required language for Clinical Trial registration as it appears in the HRPO consent template. Investigators should register their protocol on CT.gov after receiving IRB approval. Registration is an NIH requirement prior to enrollment of the first participant. To have an account created, contact the UNM CT.gov administrator, Rebecca Brito ([RBrito@salud.unm.edu](mailto:RBrito@salud.unm.edu)).

## How to Apply

1. Log on to the CTSC Funding Opportunities website, the application works best in Google Chrome or Firefox, Accessible from this webpage Under "Pilot Award Application":  
<http://hsc.unm.edu/research/ctsc/pilot-funding/current-opportunities/index.html>
2. If you are accessing the application off campus, you must have VPN access
3. Click on the "Submit your application for a Pilot Award online" Link
4. Log In with your HSC Net Id and Password (same as your HSC workstation)
5. Once you are logged in, click on the Start New Pilot Application Button
6. Complete all application sections – a. through f. as listed below
7. Upload the required documents where advised – document descriptions listed in the "What to Upload" section below
  - a. **General Information**
    - i. Title of Pilot Project
    - ii. RFA
    - iii. Animal Research Determination
    - iv. Human Subjects Research Determination
    - v. Clinical Trial Determination
    - vi. Upload all Human Subjects Research Files

- vii. Enter Planned Enrollment
- b. Key Personnel/Biosketches**
  - i. Add Key Personnel
  - ii. Upload Biosketch documents – Use the downloadable template provided on the webpage
- c. Requested Services**
  - i. Select CTSC Services – Sort Services by selecting the specific department or by searching in the search box provided. Select services by dragging and dropping the service below the teal box – you will then be able to edit the Quantity of each selected item.
- d. Budget Summary**
  - i. Review selected CTSC services
  - ii. Add Non CTSC Services
  - iii. Add Non-CTSC Personnel Salaries
  - iv. Add Shared Facility Services
  - v. Provide Budget Justification
- e. Additional Information**
  - i. Upload Summary
  - ii. Upload Research Plan – 5 page limit (use the downloadable template at the top of the pilot application web page)
    - 1. specific aims
    - 2. background and significance
    - 3. preliminary studies
    - 4. research design and methods
    - 5. bibliography and references cited (not included in the 5 page limit)
  - iii. Upload Letters of Support(Suggested/Optional)
  - iv. Describe Plan to Obtain Extramural Funding
  - v. Describe how project meets the definition of Translational Research
  - vi. Explain how proposal may be Generalizable
- f. Go/No Go Milestones**
  - i. Two standard milestones are tracked, Funds Spent and Patient Enrollment. Please add two to three more Go/No Go milestones that can be used to track progress over the pilot award year. The CTSC Sage team will review milestones monthly for progress. Milestones should be quantifiable and realistic. Failure to reach stated milestones may result in reduction of award.

## What to Upload

Emphasis on concise communication of the relevant information will help to demonstrate effective proposal writing and communication skills, and the likelihood of success in developing the full, competitive proposals to follow these pilots. Uploaded documents must adhere to the following formatting specifications:

- 11-point Arial font
- Single-spaced
- ½” margins on all sides
- 8 ½” x 11” (i.e., standard size) paper



- Number all pages
- Headers identifying the Principal Investigator
- Footers identifying the document and page number (IRB-approval, consent, Biosketch, etc.)

Attach the following documents as individual PDF files using the following naming convention:

**UNM\_PILastNameFirstInitial\_ProtocolShortTitle\_Document\_YYYYMMDD.pdf**

(e.g. UNM\_AndersonC\_PediatricAsthma\_Biosketch\_20170821.pdf) No longer than 50 characters. Templates for some of these forms can be found within the CTSC Camino Pilot Application database once you have logged in and a new pilot project has been initiated.

### The following document is required for All Pilot Project Submissions:

1. **Human Subjects Research Study Document** – download from inside the application database – this will be submitted to NIH for review

### The following documents are required, along with the one above, if the pilot is Minimal Risk Human Subjects Research or has an Exemption determination:

2. **Summary** - Provide a brief (< 500 words) summary of the specific aspects of the proposed study that will be supported and include a line item budget for each aspect (list supplies, services, and personnel costs)
3. **Research Plan** - Research Plan – 5 page limit
  1. specific aims
  2. background and significance
  3. preliminary studies
  4. research design and methods
  5. bibliography and references cited (not included in the 5 page limit)
4. **Letters of Support**
5. **IRB Approval Letter** - If Human Subjects research
6. **IRB Exemption Determination** – if exempt from federal regulations
7. **NIH Biosketch** – For the investigator, co-investigators and key personnel
8. **Human Subjects Training** - Certification that the PI, Co-I and key Personnel have education in protection of human subjects
9. **Protocol** - IRB approved pilot protocol
10. **Consent, Assent, Parental Permission, Waiver of Consent** – IRB approved consent documents
11. **Inclusion of Individuals Across the Lifespan** - Individuals of all ages are expected to be included in clinical research unless there are scientific or ethical reasons not to include them.
12. **Inclusion of Women and Minorities** - Describe the rationale for selection of sex/gender, racial, and ethnic group members in terms of the scientific objectives and proposed study design.

- 13. Recruitment and Retention Plan** - Describe both planned recruitment activities as well as proposed engagement strategies for retention.
- 14. Study Timeline** - Provide a description or diagram describing the study timeline. The timeline should be general (e.g., "one year after notice of award"), and should not include specific dates
- 15. Protection of Human Subjects** – Use Template in Application

**The following documents are required, along with 1-15 above, if the pilot is Greater than Minimal Risk Human Subjects Research OR Meets NIH Definition of a Clinical Trial:**

- 16. Data and Safety Monitoring Plan (DSMP)** - The overall framework for safety monitoring and what information will be monitored
- 17. Overall Structure of the Study Team** - Provide a brief overview of the organizational/administrative structure and function of the study team, particularly the administrative sites, data coordinating sites, enrollment/participating sites, and any separate laboratory or testing centers
- 18. Statistical Design and Power** - Specify the number of subjects you expect to enroll, the expected effect size, the power, and the statistical methods you will use
- 19. Dissemination Plan** - Explain briefly your plan for the dissemination of NIH-funded clinical trial information and address how the expectations of the policy will be met
- 20. IND, IDE** - Documentation that an Investigational New Drug (IND) or Investigational Device Exemption(IDE) has been obtained, or letter from the FDA that the study is IND-exempt or the IDE has been waived
- 21. Product Info** - Product information such as the clinical investigator brochure, package insert, or description of the device

Once you have reviewed the application for completeness, submit it to the CTSC for Review by clicking the Submit button at the bottom of the page. The CTSC will offer a basic administrative review to those who have their applications submitted at least one week in advance of the due date. Please contact Christina Anderson ([ChAnderson@salud.unm.edu](mailto:ChAnderson@salud.unm.edu)) to let her know you would like your pilot reviewed. On your Camino Home Page, you will be able to see the status of your Pilot Application

- a. Draft
- b. Submitted
- c. Under Review
- d. Administratively Denied
- e. Pilot Funding Denied
- f. Pilot Funding Awarded

All applications are due **by 5:00 pm on the due date**, which can be found at the top of this RFA. Applications that are late or do not adhere to the above instructions may be administratively denied and not reviewed for funding. Please call or email Christina Anderson ([ChAnderson@salud.unm.edu](mailto:ChAnderson@salud.unm.edu); 505-272-0195) with any questions about this RFA or the application process.