

# Clinical and Translational COVID-19 Rapid Science Grants Program

## *Application Instructions*

### **Goals and Background: COVID-19 Rapid Science Grants**

Considering the emergence and spread of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) in the United States and abroad, the DE-CTR ACCEL Program is accepting proposals to conduct COVID-19 specific clinical and translational research that can be conducted immediately.

If you are a scientist at an ACCEL institution and are currently working on a COVID-19 related project and in need of funding, we invite you to apply for a one of three types of Rapid Science Grants.

Guidelines for each of these three funding mechanisms can be found below.

### **1. QUICK STEP RAPID SCIENCE GRANT: ONE-STEP FUNDING:**

This grant mechanism is designed for immediate/short-term projects using existing data sets. We are targeting projects of up to \$10K in D/C which would begin immediately following required approvals and be completed in 3 months.

- a. Submission of a **two-page concept paper** is required outlining the research study aims, the significance of the study, the study team, the funding needed and timeline.
  - i. Page 1- Title, budget and justification, timeline and study team
  - ii. Page 2- Specific Aims and Strategy
- b. Paper submissions will be on a rolling basis **beginning on May 1, 2020**. Papers should be in Arial 11 font and submitted in pdf format to Karen Hough at [khough@udel.edu](mailto:khough@udel.edu)
- c. Funding decisions will be made within 2 business days.
- d. Quick Step proposal submissions will be given priority as these address time sensitive issues and are short term in nature. Funding for this mechanism is available until all funds are awarded.

### **2. TWO-STEP RAPID SCIENCE GRANTS:**

**Proposal submissions for Two-Step grants can fall into one of two categories, either short term or longer term.**

- a. **SHORT-TERM TWO-STEP GRANTS:** These projects will involve short term research that may need active data collection and **may request up to \$40K in D/C**. These projects would start immediately following required approvals and be completed no later than 6 months from approval date.
- b. **LONG-TERM TWO-STEP GRANTS:** ACCEL invites submissions for longer-term research projects in the amount **of up to \$80K in D/C** that would start July 1, 2020 following required approvals and continue through June 30, 2021 with a focus on short or long-term consequences of COVID-19.

## **SUBMISSION FOR TWO-STEP PROPOSALS IS A TWO PART PROCESS:**

- **PART 1:** We invite investigators to first submit a **one-page concept paper** outlining the research study aims, the significance of the study, the study team, the funding needed, and timeline.
  - One-page concept papers will be reviewed on a rolling basis beginning on May 1, 2020. Concept papers must be submitted in Arial 11 pdf format to [khough@udel.edu](mailto:khough@udel.edu).
- **PART 2:** If the Executive Committee determines the proposed project to be meritorious, we will then request submission of a full proposal through the website using <https://www.de-ctr.org/funding-opportunities/rapidgrants>. All investigators on the proposal must register for or have a user account on the website.

The full proposal format (11 point, Arial) is like that for an NIH R03 proposal, except in terms of the length of the research description section. You are strongly encouraged to work with your institutional Research Administrator to assure all required documents are submitted with your application. The proposal need not be routed through the institutional research offices for institutional signatures (unless required), but upon submission may be forwarded to the PI's appropriate institutional office for budget and effort verification. Proposals should be submitted using PHS 398 forms. Instructions can be found [here](#).

Full proposals should include the following sections:

- A. NIH face page ([download here](#))
- B. NIH Page 2&3: Summary, Relevance, Project/Performance Sites, Senior/Key Personnel ([download here](#))
- C. Budget using NIH forms Page 4, including budget justification on Page 5 ([download here](#))
- D. Biographical Sketch(es) of PI and Key Personnel including the primary mentor (if needed), other members of the mentoring team (if needed), and collaborators who would play a significant role in accomplishing the goals of the proposal (use this new [form](#))
- E. Research Strategy (see below—using NIH continuation forms ([download here](#)))
- F. Success from Prior Awards: PIs who have led a project supported by CTR, INBRE, COBRE or DHSA grants should include a short section (1 page maximum) outlining the progress on that prior work, including their success in leveraging that research into independent external support and explaining why further support is necessary. Use NIH continuation forms—([download here](#))
- G. PHS Human Subjects and Clinical Trials Information form ( [here](#)) and planned enrollment forms ( [here](#)) if applicable.
- H. Vertebrate animals justification and protection ( [download here](#)) if applicable
- I. A letter of Support from the PI's Department Head/Chair
- J. If the project is led by a new investigator (see NIH definition [here](#)), the application must include a letter of support from the primary mentor detailing previous experience, the candidate's potential, the existing mentoring or working relationship (if any), and specifics as to how the mentor will interact with the candidate during the funding period (see mentoring agreement [here](#) )
- K. Completion of Community Engagement [form](#)

### **Research Strategy**

The Research Strategy part of the proposal (section E above) should describe the (1) Specific Aims of the work, (2) Significance, (3) Innovation, and (4) Approach. Together, these should be no more than four pages in length - one page for Aims, three pages for Strategy. Within the Approach section, a statistical analysis subsection is required. If applicable, within the Approach section applicants should also discuss the potential for community engagement. Information about the ACCEL Cores can be found on the ACCEL website. [www.de-ctr.org](http://www.de-ctr.org)

### **IRB/IACUC Approval**

Human subjects Institutional Review Board (IRB) or Vertebrate animal IACUC approval is not required at the time of rapid science project submission. However, if applicable, such approval is required before the selected rapid science projects are sent to the NIH for federal approval. If a project is selected for funding by the ACCEL External Advisory Committee but does not have IRB/IACUC approval, funding of the proposal may be deferred.

### **Credentialing**

Investigators who will be doing work at hospitals may need to obtain credentials. Such investigators are encouraged to begin that process well in advance of the start date of the grant as the process can take several months.

### **Eligibility to apply for a Rapid Science Grant**

You must be:

- An investigator from one of the ACCEL partner institutions (University of Delaware, Nemours, ChristianaCare, Delaware State University and the Medical University of South Carolina)
- Hold a faculty appointment or equivalent at the time the rapid science award commences
- Not concurrently have research funding from other IDEa Program award mechanisms (e.g. INBRE, COBRE)
- Have a project that could help with the COVID-19 pandemic within the next six to twelve months

### **Timeline**

Rapid Science Grants open at 12:00 Pacific Time on Friday, April 24, 2020. We will begin reviewing submissions May 1 and continue reviews on a rolling basis until all funds are awarded.

### **Budget**

We require that a Rapid Science Grant be used solely to expedite strong clinical and translational COVID-19-related science. Funding can be utilized across the three funding mechanisms- **QUICK STEP GRANTS, SHORT-TERM TWO-STEP or LONG-TERM TWO STEP GRANTS**. Funding can be used to hire technical staff, procure specialized equipment, purchase data sets, hire a specialized technician, support clinical research coordinators, postdoctoral fellows, or graduate students, as well as appropriate amounts for supplies, travel, etc. While not required, PIs are discouraged from requesting salary for this work, instead providing it as an institutional commitment. Whether salary is charged to the grant or not, the anticipated effort should be indicated in the budget. PIs should work with institutional ACCEL research officers prior to submission:

**Christiana Care:** [Mia Papas](#)

**Delaware State University:** [Sangeeta Gupta](#)

**Medical University of South Carolina:** [Carrie Hackett](#)

**Nemours:** [Denise AxSmith](#)

**University of Delaware:** Tiffine CanneLongo

**Evaluation**

Each ACCEL Rapid Science Proposal will be evaluated by the ACCEL Executive Committee.

For Quick Step submissions (type 1) **two-page concept papers** will be evaluated based on impact and significance to the COVID-19 pandemic with a rapid 2 business day decision. Funding will follow after securing required approvals.

For both categories of Two-Step submissions (type 2a and 2b) **one-page concept papers** will be evaluated based on impact and significance to the COVID-19 pandemic with a rapid 2 business day decision. Meritorious projects will then be invited to submit a full proposal. Full proposals will be evaluated based on scientific merit as is done in NIH study sections. Proposals will be given five scores based on significance, investigators, innovation, approach, and environment, and an overall impact score to reflect the assessment of the likelihood for the project to exert a sustained, powerful influence on the research field(s) involved, as well as its chance of being developed into a full NIH proposal with a high likelihood of success. Scores are on a 1 (exceptional) through 9 (poor) scale, following the standard NIH guidelines for reviews of individual (R-type) research grants.

Final funding will follow after securing required approvals.

**Expectations**

Awardees are required to:

- 1) Use the grant to work on COVID-19 related science.
- 2) Attend annual ACCEL research conferences and to present their work at the annual (national or regional) NIH IDeA Conference.
- 3) Cite the ACCEL grant (NIH U54 GM104941) on all publications.
- 4) Award recipients must keep ACCEL profiles up to date (at least twice per year) and respond to ACCEL surveys. Progress reporting will be required at the halfway mark of the project and at completion of the project.

**Please note: The ACCEL Program realizes that these are exceptional times and investigators may need either equipment or additional data sets to complete their proposed research project which may not be fiscally feasible within the funding guidelines listed above of \$10K, \$40K or \$80K. If you fall into this category, please contact Dr. Stuart Binder-Macleod at [sbinder@udel.edu](mailto:sbinder@udel.edu) to discuss your project and budget needs. Equipment costs can be encumbered prior to July 1, 2020.**

**Contacts**

For questions about the ACCEL Rapid Science Grant Program and the three funding mechanisms within this program or the review process contact: Karen Hough, Program Concierge at [khough@udel.edu](mailto:khough@udel.edu)