

Request for Applications (RFA) for Discovery Grants

PURPOSE

South Carolina Clinical & Translational Research Institute's (SCTR's) Pilot Project Program aims to facilitate new and innovative, scientifically meritorious, high-impact translational research projects with emphasis on diseases of significant prevalence in South Carolina and beyond.

KEY DATES

- RFA Release Date: Wednesday, November 13, 2019
- Pre-application Submission (REQUIRED): by 5PM EST on Friday, December 13*
- Full Application (by Invitation): by 5PM EST on Friday, February 21**
- Earliest Anticipated Project Start Date: April 1, 2020

* *Pre-applicants will be notified with the decisions whether to submit a Full Application or not.*

** *Request for **Required** Biostatistics Consultation for Full Applications should be done by 5PM EST on Friday, February 14, 2020 (preferably earlier).*

AWARD AMOUNT

Up to \$25,000 direct costs for a 12-month period from the date a Notice of Award is issued.

OVERVIEW

Discovery grants support translational research projects that involve basic research, clinical research and/or community/population health research approaches for the purposes of collecting critical preliminary data for submission of extramural grant applications and to publish, disseminate or implement research findings. **We place a premium on applications proposing interdisciplinary team science and new collaborations.** This grant opportunity requires an interdisciplinary team collaboration with at least one Co-Investigator/Collaborator from a different discipline. Existing investigator teams may submit new and innovative project ideas as long as the novelty of the proposed research direction is clearly distinguished from the principal investigator's (PI's) and research team's past and current research. Existing investigator teams also must meet the interdisciplinary requirement (i.e. should not be made of investigators who are working in the same lab such as an investigator and a post-doctoral fellow). Early Stage Investigators (ESIs) are encouraged to submit applications as PIs. Applications emanating from SCTR Scientific Retreat/s, patient-centered and community-engaged research, and those focused on dissemination and implementation science are strongly encouraged.

- **Application Submission Requirements:** Please read all instructions listed in this RFA before initiating an application. All application related materials must be submitted through InfoReady, SCTR's online application and review system.
- **SPARCRequest ID (SRID/Study ID) Requirement:** All SCTR funding opportunities are now required to have the SRIDs. This is to allow SCTR to link the funding applications to SCTR services and databases for tracking and reporting purposes to NIH. Before submitting an application via InfoReady, the PI of the application must obtain a SRID. However, application related materials should not be submitted via the SPARCRequest system.

PIs with an existing SRID that is directly related to the research proposed in the Discovery grant application must use that SRID on their InfoReady application. It is not necessary to create a new SRID. Instead the PI adds the funding opportunity to their existing SRID. Details are listed below. *However, please note that SPARCRequest system is undergoing some changes that may affect/change these steps slightly. If you need help, please contact Dayan Ranwala at ranwala@musc.edu long before the application due date.*

How to obtain a new SRID:

- Go to <https://sparc.musc.edu/> and log in with your MUSC net ID and password
- Select 'South Carolina Clinical and Translational Research Institute (SCTR)' from the menu on the left
- Select 'Funding Opportunities' from the drop-down menu (towards the middle of the page)
- Select 'SCTR Discovery Grants' from the Funding Opportunities page (towards the top of the page)
- Select 'Add' to put the service in your cart
- Choose 'Yes' when you receive the 'New or Existing' popup
- Select 'continue' (on your right)
- Log in with your MUSC net ID and password and then select 'New Research Study'
- Complete all of the starred (*) fields and then click 'Save'
 - Select 'Pending Funding' for the 'Proposal Funding Status' question
 - Select 'Internal Funded Pilot Project' for the 'Potential Funding Source'
 - Indicate as 'SCTR' for the 'Sponsor Name'
 - Select 'Yes' or 'No', as it is appropriate for your proposed research, to see details for the 'Publish Study in Epic' question. Then select 'Yes or No' from the drop down menu (on your right)
 - Add primary PI's name at the bottom of the page where it is required, and click 'Save'
- Review the information and then click 'Save and Continue' (bottom of the page, to your right)
- Complete the 'Estimated Start Date' and 'Estimated End Date' fields (For example: 4/1/2020 to 3/31/2021)
- Then click 'Save and continue' (at the bottom of the page, to your right).
- Steps 4 and 5 listed on top of the page are not required. Move directly to 'Step 6' by clicking the arrow.
- Review your request and click '**Submit Request**'. This step must be completed to add the funding opportunity and receive a confirmation with the SRID. The SRID will be listed on top of the page towards your right.
- You will receive an email from the SPARC system with the Study ID and SRID which are same except that the SRID may have few more numbers listed after the '-'. You do not need to include those extra numbers in the InfoReady application.

Adding a funding opportunity to an existing SRID:

- Go to <https://sparc.musc.edu/dashboard> and log in with your MUSC net ID and password
- Select the appropriate Protocol ID from the list on your dashboard
- Then click on 'Add/Modify Request' (middle of the page, towards your left)
- From the 'Browse Service Catalog' (menu on the left) select 'South Carolina Clinical and Translational Research Institute (SCTR)'
- Then select 'Funding Opportunities' from the drop-down menu (towards the middle of the page)
- Select 'SCTR Discovery Grants' from the Funding Opportunities page (towards the top of the page)
- Choose 'No' when you receive the 'New or Existing' popup.
- Click the 'Step 6' arrow on top of the page to review and submit the request.

- **‘Submit Request’.** This step must be completed to add the funding opportunity to the existing SRID.

- **Triage Triggers:** Applications not submitted via InfoReady, incomplete applications, applications with no interdisciplinary teams, and/or missing required components are considered not responsive to the RFA and will not be reviewed. There will be no exceptions.
- **Single SCTR Concurrent Award:** PI and/or Co-PI can have only one active award from SCTR at any given time (i.e., pilot project award, K-award or Community Engaged Scholars award). This restriction does not apply to SCTR Vouchers.
- **PIs and/or Co-PIs with Previous SCTR Funding:** PIs and/or Co-PIs who have been previously funded via a SCTR award (and the project is ended) must submit an updated progress report to the new pilot project’s Research Proposal. The report will be evaluated to determine the progress/stewardship of the previous SCTR award. Failure to do so will result in the application being triaged.
- **NIH Public Access Policy:** Award recipients agree to acknowledge SCTR funding support and comply with the NIH public access policy on publications resulting from the Discovery grant.
- **Acknowledgement of NIH/NCATS CTSA Grant Award to SCTR:** As per the NIH guidelines, recipients of SCTR funding awards, services and/or resources are required to acknowledge the SCTR grant number as listed below on research publications, press releases, requests for proposals, bid invitations, and other documents supported in whole or in part with NIH/SCTR funds. We suggest the following acknowledgment.

"This publication (or project) was supported by the South Carolina Clinical & Translational Research Institute with an academic home at the Medical University of South Carolina through CTSA NIH/NCATS grant number UL1 TR001450. The contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the NIH or NCATS."

The most important thing to remember is to cite the SCTR Grant Number UL1 TR001450.

ELIGIBILITY

- PIs must have a primary faculty appointment at MUSC (at the level of Assistant Professor or above).
- Faculty from other academic institutions are encouraged to partner with MUSC faculty on collaborative applications.
- Undergraduates, graduate students, clinical trainees, post-doctoral and clinical fellows, visiting faculty, and individuals with pending faculty appointments cannot serve as the PI, but may serve as a Co-Investigator (Co-I) provided they are not working directly under the PI or Co-PI (i.e. a new team should not be made of only investigators who are working in the same lab such as an investigator/PI and a post-doctoral fellow).

RESOURCES

Applicants are strongly encouraged to obtain SCTR consultations before submission to strengthen the research proposal. The table below lists free consultations available from SCTR. Please visit <http://sparc.musc.edu> to view consult descriptions and request those of interest. They are listed under the MUSC tab, and then under the SCTR tab on the left side of the screen.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Biostatistics, Design & Epidemiology ● SUCCESS Center: Grant Forms & Budget Services, Regulatory Services, Recruitment Services, Research Navigation Services and Special Populations Navigation ● Community Engagement & Research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Nexus Research Coordination and Management ● Self-service Research Data & Feasibility ● Mobile Health and TACHL Center ● Research Data Requests ● Biomedical Informatics Center ● Intellectual Property & Commercialization Resources
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Palmetto Profiles at <https://profiles.healthsciencessc.org/search/> is a resource for finding collaborators. NIH online training modules on rigor and reproducibility can be accessed at <https://www.nigms.nih.gov/training/pages/clearinghouse-for-training-modules-to-enhance-data-reproducibility.aspx>

APPLICATION FORMS AND DOCUMENTS

All required information and documents must be provided and the InfoReady application must be properly submitted to consider it for review.

Document Formatting

- Font Type and Size Arial, 11pt.
- Page Margins No less than 0.5" on all sides
- Document Type to Upload PDF
- Format As similar to the NIH format

PRE-APPLICATION

InfoReady Pre-application Form Link: <https://musc.infoready4.com/#competitionDetail/1794864>

The RFA and Pre-application form link (as an 'APPLY' button) are also listed in the SCTR Pilot Project Program webpage at <https://research.musc.edu/resources/sctr/programs/pilot-clinical-and-translational-studies/pilot-projects> as well as in the SPARC webpage at <https://sparc.musc.edu/>.

Required Documents/File Uploads for Pre-applications

- 1) Specific Aims Page (1-page limit)
 - State concisely the goals of the proposed research and summarize the expected outcome(s), including the impact that the results of the proposed research will exert on the research field(s) involved. List succinctly the specific objectives of the research proposed (e.g., to test a stated hypothesis, create a novel design, solve a specific problem, challenge an existing paradigm or clinical practice, address a critical barrier to progress in the field, or develop new technology), translational potential of the proposed research, and potential impact as applicable.
 - SCTR-specific instructions: Each team member's role, how the project will stimulate new and interdisciplinary collaborations that would otherwise might not have taken place, plans/potential to secure future extramural grant funding including funding agency and mechanism (R, P, U, or any other).
- 2) Literature Cited if applicable (does not count towards the page limits)
- 3) ESI PIs must include the following in their application (1-page limit)
 - Qualified senior co-investigator(s) as mentor(s) must be identified and include the mentor(s) name, biosketch and support letter(s)* on the application
 - Strong mentorship plan - include details of ESI/mentor interactions, frequency of meetings, timetable and plan for achieving research independence, additional resources etc.
 - Potential of the project to lead to independent funding with a plan to submit a K-series or R-series application

*The support letter(s) can be extra pages and will not be counted towards the page limit of the application.
- 4) Each Investigator's biosketch in the NIH biosketch format
 - A CV/resume is sufficient for any investigator who is non-academic or a community member.
 - Combine all the biosketches together as a single PDF file in the order of the project team members listed in the application form (PI's biosketch being the first) to upload

- If a consultant(s) is involved in the proposed project, please include the name(s) and her/his roles/duties in the research proposal. You do not have to include their information on the InfoReady application form or submit biosketches.
 - Detailed instructions on constructing the NIH biosketch can be accessed at [https://grants.nih.gov/grants/how-to-apply-application-guide/forms-e/general/q.240-r&r-seniorkey-person-profile-\(expanded\)-form.htm#Instructions](https://grants.nih.gov/grants/how-to-apply-application-guide/forms-e/general/q.240-r&r-seniorkey-person-profile-(expanded)-form.htm#Instructions)
- 5) PIs or Co-PIs who have been previously funded via a SCTR award (i.e., pilot project, KL2 award, Community Engaged Scholars) must also submit a brief Updated Progress Report.
- The updated progress report (2-3 pages maximum per project) will be evaluated to determine the progress/stewardship of the previous SCTR award.
 - Include the following information in the progress report:
 - Funded Project Title/s and each Project Begin/End Dates
 - SCTR Funding Mechanism (i.e., pilot, KL2, and/or Community Engaged Scholars award)
 - Brief Summary of each project including the specific aims, and findings/results of each specific aim, overall results and conclusions
 - Extramural Grant Funding Activities resulted from the SCTR award
Please use the subheadings as: Applied, Pending, Awarded etc., as appropriate, and include each grant information in the following order. Name of the funding agency, project title, form of funding (R01, R21 etc.), investigators/team members names, total award amount and duration, grant number – if funds are awarded.
 - Publications resulted
Please use the subheadings as: Published, Under review, Submitted etc., as appropriate, and include each publication information in the following order. Title of publication/s, Authors, Journal Name, Year, PMCID(s) (and/or NIHMS Manuscript IDs, PMIDs as applicable) and whether you have acknowledged SCTR support/SCTR Grant number/s in the publication.
 - If applicable, intellectual property rights such as record of invention disclosure to MUSC Foundation for Research Development, Patent and iEdison number etc.

FULL APPLICATION (for invited Pre-applicants)

Required Documents/File Uploads

- Investigators invited to submit a full application must obtain a biostatistical consultation before Friday, February 14, 2020 (preferably earlier). A consult may be requested using SPARCRequest.

Full applications will be pre-populated with the information that was submitted in the Pre-application. However, you can edit/update the information and documents as needed. In addition, you are required to provide all other information requested in the RFA and submit the application to be considered for funding.

- 1) Specific Aims Page (as mentioned above, will auto-populate, 1-page limit)
- 2) Research Proposal (Research Strategy, 4-page limit, required to upload)
- 3) Literature Cited as applicable (does not count towards the page limit, will auto-populate)
- 4) ESI PIs information (as mentioned above, will auto-populate, 1-page limit)
- 5) Biosketches (as mentioned above, will auto-populate)
- 6) PIs or Co-PIs who have been previously funded via a SCTR award must also submit an Updated Progress Report (as mentioned above, will auto-populate).
- 7) Budget and Justification: Required in the PHS 398 Form Page 4: Detailed Budget for Initial Budget Period listed at <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/phs398/phs398.pdf> (required to upload)
 - Allowable and unallowable costs are listed below.

- Each budget line item must be clearly justified.
- Combine the budget and justification pages and upload as a single PDF file

BUDGET AND ALLOWABLE COSTS

Allowable costs

- **Faculty Salary Support.** Faculty members' effort, related to the proposed pilot project, must be clearly listed in the budget. Support of faculty salary and fringe benefits is allowed up to 5% effort for each faculty member subject to the NIH salary cap. It should be noted that personnel salary requests and all other budget item requests should be clearly justified and appropriate to conduct the proposed research properly.
- **Effort Reporting.** SCTR Pilot Projects are funded by MUSC Institutional funds. For institutional compliance purposes, it is the PI's responsibility to make sure all faculty effort listed in the budget is in compliance with their institutional effort policy. Investigators are not required to accommodate their effort on the pilot project budget. However, they have to be in compliance with their respective institution's effort policy should they choose to charge the effort to other funding sources.
- **Other Personnel Support.** Salary and fringe benefits are allowed for technical support, such as: Research Fellows, Research Assistants/Coordinators, Research Nurses, etc.
- **Non-personnel Research Expenses.** Some allowable expenses are: supplies, equipment (under limited circumstances), animal purchase cost and care, study subject compensation, study subject transportation costs, in- and out-patient care costs, and statistical and computational services including personnel and computer time. All expenses must be directly related to the proposed research.
- **Subawards.** Please indicate potential subaward(s) to other institutions clearly on the budget. No signed documents from subaward institution(s) are needed at the time of application submission. The SCTR Finance Office can assist the PIs and their Business Managers to establish subawards once an application is approved for funding.

Unallowable Costs

- **Students.** SCTR pilot project funds cannot be used to cover student tuition, fees or health insurance costs, either directly or indirectly as a stipend. If an application proposes a student stipend as undergraduate or graduate student research assistant, funding support will be deemed inappropriate and not funded. If an application proposes a graduate student as a research assistant, you must provide a justification as to why a student is included in the proposed project and how work on this pilot project is related to the student's thesis/dissertation research project. Proposed student(s) – undergraduate and graduate – must be identified by first name and last name (i.e., TBD/TBN is not allowed).
- **Ancillary Personnel.** Salary support for ancillary personnel such as Mentors and Administrative Assistants is not allowed.
- **General office supplies and equipment, computers and laptops** (unless specifically requested and justified), membership dues and fees, travel costs to conferences/meetings, publication and subscription costs, mailing costs, and rent are not permitted.
- **Facilities & Administrative (Overhead/Indirect) Costs.** Facilities and administrative costs, also known as indirect/overhead costs, are not permitted.

BUSINESS MANAGER RESPONSIBILITIES

- The PI's Department/Division Business Manager is responsible for all human resources, subaward (if applicable), procurement and reconciliation activities, and providing proper finance reports as requested for the funded project account(s).

APPLICATION REVIEW PROCESS

A minimum of two SCTR Scientific Review Committee members and/or an approved ad hoc reviewer will review the Pre-applications. The Pre-applications will be reviewed only to decide whether the PI should be invited for a Full Application submission or not. The Full Applications will also be reviewed by a biostatistician. Review critiques of the Full Applications will be sent to the appropriate PIs.

Review Criteria for Scoring

- As similar to the standard NIH review criteria

Additional Review Criteria

- Potential for successful extramural grant applications that may be generated from the proposed research.

RESUBMISSION OF FULL APPLICATION

- Applicants will have the opportunity to submit only one revised Full application. We use the same guidelines as the NIH for resubmissions.
- Applicants who are resubmitting the original application are not required to submit another Pre-application. Instead they should submit the revised Full application addressing the prior review critique. However, those PIs should contact the SCTR Pilot Project Program Office (Dayan Ranwala at ranwala@musc.edu) to inform their intentions and to receive the Full Application submission link.
- The resubmission, similar to the NIH guidelines, should thoroughly address all prior SCTR Scientific Review Committee review critiques using up to 2 additional pages in the front of the application.
- The revisions to the body of the proposal should be highlighted throughout to facilitate the re-review process and facilitate assessment of responsiveness to the critiques.
- If a previously resubmitted application was not approved for funding and the applicant wants to continue to pursue funding of the research, they will be required to submit a Pre-application.

AWARD DETAILS

- Notice of Award (NOA) and funding cannot be released until all requested just-in-time (JIT) information and required regulatory documents have been approved and copies submitted to the SCTR Pilot Project Program during the JIT period.
- SCTR is funded through a cooperative agreement with the NIH. Therefore, the SCTR Pilot Project Program office will continue to follow longitudinal progress of the projects for up to 5 years from the project start date.