

Processes and Methods Pilot Grant Program Step 1 Application Instructions Funding Period: 5/01/2024– 9/01/2024

Submissions accepted:	February 1 st , 2024, through March 22 nd , 2024
Application submission deadline:	March 22 nd , 2024
Notice of award:	Late April 2024
Step 1 funding period:	May 1 st , 2024, through September 1 st , 2024
Step 2 applications due:	September 4 th , 2024 (must be invited to apply)

For questions regarding these instructions, please visit the [Processes and Methods website](#) or contact [Venois Peebles](#).

- 1. Background:** The Center for Clinical and Translational Science and Training (CCTST) is supported by the NIH Clinical and Translational Science Award (CTSA) and institutional support from the University of Cincinnati (UC) and Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center (CCHMC). The mission of the CCTST is to stimulate research that has the potential to positively impact human health. The Processes and Methods pilot grant mechanism is designed to enable investigators at all levels to explore ways to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the processes and methods used in clinical and translational research.
- 2. Purpose of Processes and Methods (P&M) grants:** The purpose of this announcement is to solicit brief, 1-page proposals for processes and methods projects that can ultimately lead to larger, extramural research grants. This two-step pilot grant program is designed to support clinical research professionals as well as patient advocacy groups at a local, regional, or national level. Examples of previous awards have included funding for research designed to improve complex data acquisition and harmonization methods as well as innovative methods for improving recruitment of underrepresented minorities and vulnerable populations.

The P&M mechanism will provide up to \$40,000 in seed funds to conduct a study that will lead to a long-term (2 to 5 year) extramural research proposal focused on advancing specific processes and/or methods deemed important to clinical and translational research. Investigators awarded in Step 1 of this grant program will be invited to participate in Step 2 and given a four-month period to produce a more complete 6-page research proposal that will include an abstract, background, specific aims, significance and innovation, and approach sections (similar to an NIH R21 grant application), along with an estimated budget not to exceed \$40,000/year in direct costs. A separate RFA will be provided with further instructions to investigators who successfully complete Step 1 and are invited to apply for Step 2.

Note: Step 1 funding is meant to support the production of a 6-page proposal. If you are conducting experiments on human subjects or vertebrate animals during this phase, you will need to submit additional documentation to NCATS, which includes an IRB or IACUC approval letter, after you receive your award letter. You must receive approval from NCATS before you can access your funding. This paperwork takes time to approve and will likely cut into your funding period. The Step 1 funding period cannot be extended beyond the deadline. If you have questions about this, please contact [Venois Peebles](#).

While proposals from across the broad range of clinical research are encouraged, priority areas of methodological priorities of interest at the Cincinnati CTSA hub are as follows:

- 1) Improved mitigation of health disparities among traditionally underserved populations, including improved methods of dissemination and implementation among affected communities.
 - 2) Development and application of artificial intelligence and/or deep learning methods needed for decision making in clinical research, including mitigation of barriers and limitations related to improved biomedical treatments and response patterns.
 - 3) Methods and processes to improve translational research for chronic illnesses experienced by health care systems and institutions today.
 - 4) Development of tools and technologies to increase the efficiency of human subject research.
 - 5) Improved evidence in prevention research.
 - 6) Previously submitted proposals to the CCTST Processes and Methods Grants Program that received external reviews but were not funded in previous rounds may be re-submitted: use the one-page proposal format to outline how the revised full proposal will respond to the reviewer comments received in the previous cycle.
- 3. Eligibility:** Applications will be accepted from faculty or staff from all University of Cincinnati campuses, the Academic Health Center (CCHMC, UC, VA Medical Center), or any of the regional colleges including Xavier University, Mount Saint Joseph University, Northern Kentucky University, Thomas More College, and Miami University. **Fellows are not permitted to apply.** In addition, this program is open to members of the greater Cincinnati community, including non-profit and patient advocacy groups conducting clinical and translational research deemed applicable at the local, regional or national levels. Advanced degrees (MD, PhD, MD-PhD or equivalent) are not required for eligibility. Collaborative groups of investigators spanning multiple disciplines and programs are strongly encouraged to apply. Submissions from underrepresented and minority investigators are also encouraged.

Investigators who have received CCTST funding in the past 12 months are not eligible for Processes and Methods funding. There are some allowable exceptions to this rule. To learn if you qualify as an exception, please email [Venois Peebles](mailto:Venois.Peebles). In addition, while investigators are encouraged to apply for multiple CCTST grants, please be aware that the Processes and Methods grant cannot be held concurrently with any other CCTST grant. There are no exceptions to this rule.

Please note that if you leave your institution after notification of the award or during the funding period for Step 1 or Step 2, you will not be **allowed to transfer your award to another investigator**.

- 4. CCTST Membership:** All applicants for Processes and Methods pilot grant consideration *must* be CCTST members. CCTST membership is free and open to all. For more information about CCTST membership and our online membership registration form go to <http://cctst.uc.edu/user/register>.
- 5. Process:** Step 1 applicants must submit a 1-page preliminary proposal in the format described in number 8 of this RFA (see below) by **March 22nd, 2024**. Funding requests are limited to \$5,000 for this step. Applicants who previously received Step 1 funding, but were not selected for Step 2 funding, cannot receive Step 1 funding twice for the same project. Funds for the initial \$5,000 award may not be used to support faculty salaries or salaries of the investigators but can be used for support staff or other expenses related to the application. Awards made in Step 1 of this funding mechanism must be fully **utilized by September 1st, 2024**. THERE WILL BE NO CARRYOVER OF AWARDS BEYOND September 1st, 2024.
- 6. Application submission:** Applications must be submitted through the [CCTST Competition and Awards Program Site \(CCAPS\)](#). Log in using your UC ("6+2") or CCHMC username and password. If you do not have a UC or CCHMC username and password, please contact [Venois Peebles](mailto:Venois.Peebles) to obtain one.

7. **Signatures:** The signatures of all participating investigators and their respective division director(s), departmental chairperson(s), or organization leader(s) are required.
8. **Application forms and guidelines:** Applications must be assembled as a single PDF file and submitted through CCAPS before midnight of the application submission deadline date. The application forms and RFA announcement can be found on the [CCTST Processes and Methods Pilot Grant Program website](#) under the header “Submission.”

Composition of research proposal:

Step 1 proposals are limited to 2 pages (exclusive of the face page, biosketches, and checklist). Proposals longer than 2 pages will not be considered for funding. Listed below are the required components of a Step 1 proposal:

- a) A completed face page
- b) PI, co-PI, and Co-PI biosketches (if not available, a resume or CV can be submitted)
- c) A completed checklist
- d) **Page 1 of the proposal :**
 - i) Background and scientific merit of the research.
 - ii) Hypotheses or aims.
 - iii) Brief discussion of what procedures and strategies will be used to conduct the study and test the hypotheses
 - iv) Anticipated results and how the findings of this research will inform the broader landscape of clinical and translational research, locally and nationally.
 - v) How this award might position you to apply for additional extramural support in a related area.

Page 2 of the proposal

- i) List any prior CCTST funding for the past two years, resulting grant submissions, and outcomes. If no funding has been received, this should be explicitly stated.
- ii) Clear, itemized description of how the funds will be spent (\$5,000 maximum). We do not allow indirect costs.
- iii) Attestations that state:
 - 1) The current Processes and Methods proposal does not overlap with other CCTST funding for key personnel.
 - 2) You will notify CCTST of future grant applications (submitted, funding received, denied) and comply with CCTST queries and requests for information.
 - 3) Any publications deriving from this research will acknowledge the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Clinical and Translational Science Award (CTSA) program, grant **2UL1TR001425**.
 - 4) You are aware that you cannot transfer this grant and that you will notify the CCTST if you decide to leave your institution during the grant year.
- iv) References

Proposals must be submitted in single-spaced text, with one-half inch margins, and font no smaller than 11-point Arial or Helvetica typeface (preferred). Proposals that go over the page requirement, include additional elements, or are missing elements will not be reviewed.

Please note that additional support will be given to awardees for access to data management and biostatistical support through Research Central as needed and available. Care should be taken to include brief, but relevant, details on expected outcomes, potential algorithms, training needs, and programming software languages as well as the specific areas of science that can be improved with the proposed processes/methods. The research proposal must be submitted to the [CCTST Competition and Awards Program Site \(CCAPS\)](#) by **March 22nd, 2024**.

Review criteria and process: Applications will be evaluated based on the strengths and weaknesses of the proposal, fidelity with the RFA, scientific innovation, and potential impact of the work on improving the processes/methods within our scientific community. Proposals will be reviewed by a panel of active CCTST researchers.