North Carolina TraCS Institute Pilot Grant Program
Health Research Stakeholder Engagement
$2K Pilot Voucher Guidelines

Purpose

The North Carolina Translational and Clinical Sciences Institute (NC TraCS) is the academic home of the National Institute of Health, Clinical and Translational Science Award (CTSA). NC TraCS provides vouchers in the amount of $2,000 to assist clinical and translational researchers in implementing a proposed study of moving a research project forward by providing rapid access to funds that will support almost any aspect of promising and innovative research.

Translational researchers who seek to employ community engagement strategies in their research may use these funds to compensate health research stakeholders for their time in collaborating on translational research studies. Investigators may utilize the funds to compensate health research stakeholders whom NC TraCS has prepared for research collaboration or other health research stakeholders whom they have identified. Voucher payments will be issued directly to the health research stakeholders.

With the goal of facilitating health research stakeholder contributions to the design, implementation, dissemination, and evaluation of translational research, health research stakeholders may be compensated for a variety of activities, including the provision of direct logistical research support, the development and dissemination of research materials, and the design of recruitment and retention strategies for populations underrepresented in health research.

Please note that PIs are not able to apply for a $2k health research stakeholder pilot voucher and the $2k pilot grant program for the same project at the same time.

Eligibility

Eligible to apply as principal investigators (PIs) are:

- UNC-CH faculty and post-doctoral fellows.
- Faculty members of external NC TraCS Institute-affiliated institutions.

Co-PIs are allowed, although one person must be identified as the main contact with primary responsibility for the research project and disposition of data obtained. SPA and EHRA non-faculty are not eligible to apply.

All PIs and Co-Investigators must be members of NC TraCS Institute - there is no fee to join – see tracs.unc.edu for instructions on how to become a member.

Funding

Each award will provide a $2,000 voucher for health research stakeholder compensation to collaborate in a research proposal. Investigators may request funds to support collaborations with health research stakeholders in proposal development, intervention tailoring and design, as well as post-award dissemination of results. Grant budgets are to cover expenditures for a 3-6 month period. No extensions beyond the 6 months will be considered. TraCS CARES staff will work closely with investigators throughout the grant period to monitor progress and, where necessary, provide mentoring. Completion of the evaluation questionnaire and participation in other evaluation activities is required. TraCS will expect the PI to report which and how health
research stakeholder recommendations are incorporated into the research plan and whether or not the 2k voucher contributed to new external funding.

Full protocol and IRB submission are not required for proposals that are for grant preparation and dissemination of results. Proof of IRB approval will be required for proposals for health research stakeholder engagement activities to be conducted while participants are actively enrolled.

**Review criteria**

A review committee will examine each proposal for health research stakeholder engagement significance, soundness of methods, translational attributes, and the potential for future external funding. If re-submitting a proposal previously submitted to NC TraCS, please provide a summary detailing amendments and improvements to the original proposal. Applicants are limited to one re-submission per proposal, unless the investigator has utilized TraCS resources to substantially amend and improve the proposal as certified by a TraCS Research Navigator.

**Application procedure**

Application deadlines are monthly. The application is available to complete online here. Notification of awards will be made generally within 5 weeks of the due date. Every applicant will be notified by email whether or not their application is selected for funding.

**Tips for writing a successful application**

1. A consultation with NC TraCS CARES to help you refine your Health Research Stakeholder Engagement $2K Pilot Voucher is strongly recommended by the pilot review committee. During this consultation, CARES staff can help facilitate conversations with proposed health research stakeholders to gauge the appropriateness of a proposal and budget. Questions concerning applications may be submitted by investigators via email to the NC TraCS Community Engagement Program at: cares.nctracs@unc.edu.

2. The “Research Methods” section (500 words) corresponds to the Approach section of an NIH application. Describe, with as much detail as necessary, how your proposed health research stakeholder engagement strategies will help you prepare grant applications or implement interventions. How will health research stakeholder engagement improve the application or project? The reviewers are drawn from a wide range of scientific disciplines. Therefore, avoid (or define) technical jargon or specialized abbreviations or acronyms. Pitch your narrative toward a more general audience than you might for an NIH Study Section.

3. Pay particular attention to the biostatistical aspects of your project, if statistical analysis is applicable – this is something that derails many applications. Describe and rationalize the number of subjects and the statistical analyses that you will apply to your data. If necessary, consult with the TraCS Biostatistics service.

4. Address timelines and feasibility. You may be confident that you can complete your work within six month, but the reviewers don’t know that. Address how long it will take to plan to implement your health research stakeholder engagement plan and follow up activities.

5. The maximum allowable voucher is $2,000, to be expended over a maximum of 6 months. If your health research stakeholder engagement plan requires more than this amount, describe a specific source for the extra funds.
6. Please remember that this is a Pilot award. It is very important to describe where this work is going. Assuming the work is successfully completed, what is the next step? An external grant application?