



**NC TraCS Companion Grant Opportunity
Call for RC2 Ideas
Letter of Interest (LOI) Deadline: April 14, 2026**

Key Dates	
• Call for Ideas Release Date	January 26, 2026
• Letter of Interest (LOI) Due Date	April 14, 2026
• Review of LOIs & Selection	April 2026
• RC2 Proposal Development	May – August 2026
• RC2 Final Materials Due	August 31, 2026
• Anticipated RC2 Submission Deadline	September 28, 2026
• Anticipated RC2 Start	April 2028

I. Purpose

The North Carolina Translational and Clinical Sciences Institute (NC TraCS) is the academic home of the [UM1-funded National Institutes of Health Clinical and Translational Science Award \(CTSA\)](#) at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC-CH). NC TraCS is soliciting Letters of Intent (LOIs) for a competitive internal selection process to identify a high-impact project to be developed and submitted as its next **NIH RC2 Companion Grant**. This National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences (NCATS) RC2 opportunity ([PAR-25-156](#)) is intended to support innovative resources, activities, and expertise that enhance clinical and translational science (CTS). Project budgets are limited to \$500,000 per year in direct costs for up to 5 years (\$2.5M over the 5 years of the grant). TraCS will select the most meritorious LOI and provide intensive support to develop a full RC2 application for submission to the NIH for the **September 28, 2026**, deadline.

II. About the RC2 Companion Grant

Review the RC2 announcement ([PAR-25-156](#)) for additional details and a list of the types of studies that are not responsive.

Briefly, the High Impact Specialized Innovations Programs (SIPs), supported through this RC2 mechanism should:

- Address specific outcomes that promote and advance the [NCATS Strategic Plan](#) and address one or more of the [CTSA Program Goals](#).
- Accelerate the development of innovative resources, approaches, tools, solutions, therapies, diagnostics, devices and/or applications and help overcome roadblocks in CTS.
- Help catalyze CTS locally at UM1 hubs where no other existing project/resource is likely or able to do so.
- Generate results and resources that are expected to become integrated into the broader CTS community locally, regionally, and/or nationally.
- Have a plan for evaluation and sustainability of applicable research efforts and resources beyond the RC2 funding.

Example areas of CTS that could be supported include but are not limited to:

- Strategies and/or approaches for dissemination and implementation, rural health, clinical informatics, biostatistics, community outreach and engagement, regulatory science, and telehealth. Possible award



topics also include digital health, decentralized clinical trials, pragmatic trials, artificial intelligence/machine learning algorithms, point-of-care clinical decision support systems, data science and statistical methods, real-world data and real-world evidence, innovative clinical trial designs, genetics and genomics.

Examples of ongoing RC2s:

- *Center for Virtual Care Value and Excellence (ViVE)*: Virtual care (VC) programs expanded rapidly during the COVID-19 pandemic, yet their long-term sustainability remains uncertain due to challenges related to accessibility, integration into clinical workflows, limited availability of Real-World VC data, insufficient understanding of VC stakeholder needs, and the absence of consensus on evidence-based measures to inform VC service delivery and policy. This center aims to: build a sustainable VC research infrastructure that enables the use of Real-World VC data, convene stakeholders to develop and validate VC frameworks, identify key barriers and facilitators to effective implementation, and train the workforce to implement scalable and effective VC for all (see also [UNC Research story](#)).
- *Porcine Related approach to Multidisciplinary cOllaborative Translational Model Research (PROMOTER)*: Large animal models are critical for translating therapies to humans, yet well-characterized models for digestive diseases are lacking. This project aims to: develop comprehensive molecular profiles (transcriptional, immunologic, proteomic) of normal and injured/diseased porcine esophagus and to establish a multidisciplinary research center to share resources for promoting research and therapeutic drug and device development in esophageal diseases, as an initial platform for extension to other gastrointestinal and human diseases (see also [UNC Department of Medicine Digest](#), [NC TraCS Newsletter](#)).

III. Applicant Eligibility

Investigators must be able to serve as a Principal Investigator (PI) on an NIH RC2 award (see [PAR-25-156](#) for specific eligibility requirements). Teams of multiple PIs are encouraged, with the understanding that (i) a UNC-CH investigator must serve as the primary “Contact PI” (main point of contact between the research team and NC TraCS), (ii) any investigators from NC TraCS’ partner institutions who wish to co-lead must do so in partnership with a UNC-CH Contact PI, (iii) all PIs share equal responsibility for the conduct and direction of the project, and (iv) all co-PIs must individually fulfill the PI eligibility requirement described above.

IV. Letter of Interest Structure and Submission

Applicants are ***strongly encouraged*** to consult with TraCS staff prior to submitting a LOI by [submitting a request form](#) to Proposal Development, to ensure optimal responsiveness. Please indicate in the title of the request that it is for the ‘RC2 Call for Ideas.’

The LOI comprises the following:

1. **RC2 Proposal Idea**: Outline the proposed work in the form of a standard NIH-style Specific Aims page. (**1-page limit, single line spacing, Arial 11, and 0.5-inch margins all round**).



2. **Key Milestones:** Identify the key milestones to be achieved throughout the program period. Each milestone should include the goals and estimated timeline for completion, and their criteria for success. (*Online, 2500-character limit, ~400 words*).
3. **Collaboration with NC TraCS:** Identify how the RC2 may collaborate, support, and synergize with the [mission and aims of TraCS](#). Identify any NC [TraCS resources and services](#) that may be relevant to the proposal and provide a brief description of their potential role in the proposed work. (*Online, 2500-character limit, ~400 words*).
4. **RC2 Sustainability:** Briefly outline broadly how the program activities will be sustained through partnerships, collaborations, additional support, etc., after the RC2 ends. (*Online, 1500-character limit, ~250 words*).
5. **Research Team:** Describe the research team, highlighting the skills and experience that speak to the feasibility of the proposed work and what specific role each team member will play on the project. (*1-page limit, single line spacing, Arial 11, and 0.5-inch margins all round*).
6. **Biosketches:** Applicants must use the New [NIH Biosketch Common Form](#). Provide biosketches for anticipated key personnel. (*Combined into a single PDF, no page limit*).
7. **Budget:** Use [PHS 398 Form Page 5](#). The total project budget estimate, across all participating institutions, should not exceed \$500,000 per year in direct costs, excluding consortium/contractual F&A costs.

LOIs are to be submitted using the [NC TraCS online submission system](#) located under “NC TraCS Call for RC2 Ideas.” Applications are due by 5:00 p.m. on **April 14, 2026**.

V. RC2 Renewal Applications

Additional requirements apply to investigators seeking to compete for a renewal of their current RC2 and include the following:

1. **RC2 Aims:** Upload the originally submitted RC2 aims. (*1-page limit, PDF*)
2. **RC2 Progress and Accomplishments:** Describe the progress made towards achieving each of the specific aims, highlighting any key milestones, outcomes, or accomplishments. Identify and explain any delays or obstacles to the project’s aims and/or timeline and plans to address these challenges. (*2-page limit, single line spacing, Arial 11, and 0.5-inch margins all round*).
3. **RC2 Next Steps:** Describe the work to be completed over the remaining award period. (*1-page limit, single line spacing, Arial 11, and 0.5-inch margins all round*).
4. **RC2 Products:** Describe all outputs generated from the project thus far, including any publications and other products (e.g., datasets, software, protocols, materials). (*Single PDF, no page limit*).

VI. Review

It is the applicant’s responsibility to present the LOI components in a clear and logical fashion, to make a convincing case for the significance of the work, and to present the proposed project in sufficient detail so that an adequate evaluation can be made. After evaluation by NC TraCS leadership, applicants will be notified by email within ~4 weeks whether their LOI has been selected to move forward to be developed into a companion RC2 proposal.