



**Johns Hopkins Clinical Research Network  
Research Accelerator and Mentorship Program (RAMP)  
Request for Applications (RFA) for Inter-Institutional Research Studies**

**I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION**

The Johns Hopkins Clinical Research Network (JHCRN) - Research Accelerator and Mentorship Program (RAMP) promotes the development of sustainable partnerships between academic and community-based researchers. Proposals are sought to promote research collaborations across the JHCRN that are focused on clinical and community-based research, practice-based research, and/or health services research proposals.

The goals of RAMP are to accomplish the following:

- Provide funding to create, expand, and sustain bi-directional research collaborations using the JHCRN.
  - **The JHCRN Affiliate sites include, Anne Arundel Medical Center, Greater Baltimore Medical Center, Inova Health System, Peninsula Regional Medical Center, Reading Health System and all Johns Hopkins Medicine institutions.**
- To encourage participation of new and/or inexperienced investigators from both JHMI and the JHCRN affiliate site(s).

Both JHMI and JHCRN affiliate site researchers are eligible to apply. To receive funding, projects must involve collaboration with one or more JHCRN affiliate site. Eligible investigators must have the skills, and knowledge necessary to carry out the proposed research.

**II. ELIGIBILITY**

The primary aims of this program are to stimulate long-term research collaborations and mentor inexperienced investigators across the JHCRN sites; to this point eligibility criteria include:

- Principal Investigator (PI) and Co-investigator(s) - A JHMI PI must identify co-investigator(s) from one or more of the JHCRN affiliate sites. An affiliate site investigator can function as a PI, but is required to identify a JHMI co-investigator.
  - ***For a JHMI PI - collaborating with another Johns Hopkins institution does not constitute an affiliate site.***
- Any staff from the JHMI and JHCRN affiliate sites with the necessary skills and knowledge to conduct research and function as an investigator is eligible to apply. For new investigators, a research mentor must be identified.

- Undergraduates, graduate students, and postdoctoral fellows are not eligible to apply as Principal or Co-Investigators for RAMP grants but can be incorporated as team members into any proposal.
- Community and academic collaborators share in a) the design, b) implementation, c) evaluation, d) budget development, e) resource allocation, and f) governance of all mutually-pursued projects. It should be clear that all investigators have a substantial level of intellectual input into the proposed project.
- Community and academic collaborators are involved in interpretation and dissemination of research project findings and are recognized as co-authors and/or presenters of a) policy position papers, b) peer-review journal articles, and c) poster sessions or oral presentations for professional meetings.
- Eligible submissions cannot exceed 12 months from the project start date. If awarded, the start date of the 12-month grant will be provided in the award notification letter.
- All proposals that involve human participants must be approved by an IRB to receive RAMP funding. While advance approval by these bodies is not a prerequisite for submission of a RAMP application, investigators should be aware of the impact of these and other necessary administrative or regulatory reviews on project timeline and feasibility.

### III. **POTENTIAL RESEARCH TOPICS**

This list of topics is by no means all-inclusive and serves as a resource to investigators.

#### Healthcare Delivery & Payment Models

- Delivery Models: Accountable care organizations, community health, medical home
- Care Coordination: Collaboration, teamwork, organizational culture, staff models

#### Disease Prevention & Patient Management

- Health Maintenance: Disease prevention, health promotion
- Disease Management: Acute, chronic, end-of-life care
- Specific Illness: Cancer, cardiovascular, endocrinology, etc.
- Public Health: Epidemiology, health-policy management

#### Outcomes & Evaluations

- Health Outcomes: Specific cohorts, disparities
- Safety: Patient, provider, institution
- Assessment: Quantitative, qualitative, analytic

#### Technology & Informatics

- Health IT: Electronic health records, decision support tools, data registries, social media
- Medical Technology: Diagnostic, therapeutic, comparative effectiveness

#### IV. FUNDING AMOUNTS AND REQUIREMENTS

There is a total of \$50,000 available for funding. One to three applications will be funded. Requests must be no more than \$50,000 in direct costs. Requests exceeding \$50,000 will not be reviewed. Investigators providing resource sharing and/or grant matching funds from secondary sources will be given higher priority.

Funding requests that are significantly lower than the \$50,000 ceiling (e.g., \$5,000-\$10,000) are strongly encouraged. More modest requests are welcome as this enables funding of more studies. However, budget estimates must be realistic and proportionate to the scope of the project.

Budgets should include direct costs only; no indirect costs are allowed. Budgets should be generated through a collaborative process and avoid duplication of costs. While an even distribution of funds to each partner is not required, research teams should aim to create a budget that ensures equitable fund allocation. Budgets are to be submitted using the NIH PHS 398 form page 4 <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/phs398/phs398.html>. All line items that exceed \$1,000 require a detail cost justification.

Funds may be used for salary support (up to 10% of the NIH salary cap) as well as for stipends paid to undergraduate or graduate students. Funds may also be used for travel essential to the conduct of research, but not for travel to established meetings or conferences.

JHCRN leadership may revise the award amount should the applicant incorporate into their submitted budget allocations of funds for activities or expenditures that are not permitted or if reviewers feel that the amount requested is more than is needed to complete the project.

Awards will be funded for 12 months. Up to one no-cost extension may be granted with proper documentation and notification provided to the JHCRN Steering Committee. Notification must occur no later than one-month prior to the funding deadline.

All funded PIs, or their designee, must present to the JHCRN Investigator Committee within 6-weeks of award. Additionally, quarterly progress reports are to be submitted to the JHCRN Investigator Committee. A presentation on final results will be required at an annual meeting of JHCRN Investigator Committee. **Failure to participate in the quarterly reporting by PIs or designee will result in termination of funding.**

All of the research teams receiving RAMP funds will have a lead JHCRN Network Coordinator (NC) assigned to facilitate conduct of the project across the JHCRN sites. The research team will be provided the name and contact information for the assigned NC with their letter of award.

Any substantive changes to the original research plan or budget must be submitted **BEFORE IMPLEMENTATION** to the lead JHCRN Network Coordinator for review and final approval by the JHCRN Steering Committee, and may result in withdrawal of funding if the project no longer meets RAMP criteria or does not receive the appropriate approvals.

#### V. APPLICATION PROCESS

Letters of Intent (LOI) are required by December 1, 2016. Submit the LOI to [lynne.armiger@jhmi.edu](mailto:lynne.armiger@jhmi.edu).

The LOI should include the project title, names of the participating organizations, if already identified; the name and contact information of the PI and co-investigator(s), and one paragraph describing the proposed study. The LOI should state whether the potential applicant requires assistance in identifying a partner for the project. Applicants are encouraged to contact Dr. Adrian Dobs ([adobs@jhu.edu](mailto:adobs@jhu.edu)) or Dr. John Niederhuber ([john.niederhuber@inova.org](mailto:john.niederhuber@inova.org)) for questions or assistance in identifying a collaborating investigator at another site.

RAMP grant proposals will be accepted annually, with **submission deadlines on January 15**. University-wide web and email announcements will be sent at least twice during the application period. In addition, solicitation will be displayed on the ICTR web site, <http://ictr.johnshopkins.edu>, and sent upon posting to individuals who opt in for ICTR updates via email or news feed. Any changes or alterations to the program and/or the RFA will also be broadcast through these methods.

Grant announcements at the affiliate sites will be coordinated at the individual site level by the network coordinator and affiliate site leadership.

Grants must be submitted through the RAMP ICTR Connection Request form, available at <https://ictrweb.johnshopkins.edu/ictr/?ApplyRAMP>. A JHED-ID is required to submit an application; contact a JHCRN Network Coordinator if assistance is needed in obtaining a JHED-ID. If there are difficulties with the appropriate credentials for submitting online, please contact a site NC (contact information page 8). Supplemental materials described below may be uploaded through the application using an Adobe PDF file.

### **Conflicts of Interest**

At the time of application, before funds are awarded, and throughout the project period, it is the responsibility of the awardees and all members of the study team to report any financial or fiduciary interests that might appear to present a conflict of interest. These interests must be reported to the JHCRN and the University Office of Policy Coordination. The presence of a conflict of interest does not disqualify investigators from receiving this award, but will require the review and management of this conflict by the Committee on Outside Interests. The failure of any member of the study team to disclose all outside interests could result in the termination of this award and the disallowance of all study costs.

More information about the University's Conflict of Interest Policy, including examples of what constitutes an outside interest, may be found at the Office of Policy Coordination website ([http://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/Research/OPC/Outside\\_Interests/](http://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/Research/OPC/Outside_Interests/)).

Researchers funded at JHCRN affiliate sites are responsible for following their local institution's conflict of interest policies and procedures.

## **VI. RESEARCH PLAN REQUIREMENTS**

### **Presentation and Formatting:**

The research plan must be no longer than five single-spaced pages (including figures) in a font no smaller than 11 points, with margins of at least 0.5 inches on all sides. The name of the PI should appear

in the top right-hand corner of each page. Page numbers should appear on the bottom right-hand corner of each page.

**Materials required to be submitted via the online application include:**

- **Summary/Abstract:** Briefly describe the project focus, its significance, expected outcomes, your partnership, proposed next steps and plans for sustainability and dissemination.
- A biographical sketch (NIH-format) for the PI and Co-Investigator(s) <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/424>
- A brief identification and biographical description of all study team personnel (4-page limit total).
- A Letter of Support (LOS) is required from each JHCRN site involved in the proposal. The site NC facilitates obtaining the LOS from the appropriate site leader(s).
- A comprehensive, itemized budget (items >\$1,000 require detailed justification). The budget should also include an explanation of other funding sources that will be used to cover costs not covered by RAMP. Budgets must be submitted utilizing the NIH PHS 398 form - <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/phs398/phs398.html>
  - \*If the budget includes a subcontract, the total requested for the subcontract must be listed in the overall project budget.
- Research plan (5-page limit, content and format described below in “Research Plan Requirements”)
- Reference list of up to 30 references – not included in the 5-page limit (optional)

***The Research Plan must include the following components:***

- **Background (including Preliminary Results, if available), and Significance:** Significance should address the potential impact of the project on the condition or topic and its potential to change a related policy, system, and/or condition.
- **Specific Aims:** Establish the overall purpose of the study and define the specific study objectives. It Address the community and academic partnership, including details on diversity of experience, unique qualifications and resources available that will enable successful conduct of the proposed project.
- **Research Design:** Method description should be sufficiently detailed to convince reviewers of feasibility and validity. Details should focus on the novel aspects of the project rather than published or standard techniques. Statistical approaches to data analysis should be outlined where applicable.
- **Anticipated Problems and Quality Compliance:** Any anticipated experimental or interpretive problems should be addressed, with alternative approaches described when possible. Risks and drawbacks of this approach should be addressed through a data safety monitoring plan, which

addresses quality control/quality assurance (QC/QA) monitoring, especially if human subjects are involved.

The following sections **are not** included in the 5-page limit, but are required be included in the proposal:

- **Project Timeline:** This summary may be presented as a chart, a paragraph, or incorporated throughout the experimental design. Milestones should highlight specific goals to be attained and, when appropriate, hypotheses to be tested. A milestone and project schedule guideline, as well as a readiness checklist are available on the RAMP application website.

## **VII. REVIEW CRITERIA**

All eligible proposals received on time will be reviewed by a committee that includes JHCRN leadership representatives and content and technical experts, as appropriate.

**Applications will be evaluated and scored using the following five criteria:**

1. Scientific Approach: Rigor and technical merit
2. Investigator Collaboration: Quality and feasibility of community and academic partner involvement and mentorship
3. Significance: Impact on health knowledge, practice, outcome or policy
4. Sustainability: Likelihood that the project will promote meaningful, continued collaboration between community-based and academic investigators
5. Feasibility of project completion within a 12-month period
6. Budget: Cost effectiveness and availability of support/matching funds

Applications will undergo an administrative review by an assigned JHCRN Network Coordinator. The purpose of the review is to ensure compliance with submission requirements as described in this document including, content, budgetary, and eligibility specifications. Additionally, feasibility to conduct the study through the JHCRN mechanism will be assessed. **Incomplete or noncompliant applications will be returned without scientific review.**

## **VIII. FUNDING DECISIONS**

Based on review committee scoring, funding decisions will be finalized by March 01, 2017 and all applicants will be notified of the RAMP review committee's funding decision. **The start and end date of the 12-month grant will be included in the notification of the funding decision.**

## **IX. INFORMATION SESSION WEBINAR**

An information session webinar will be held October 31, 2016 from 3:00 – 4:00 p.m. Representatives from the JHCRN will provide an overview of the JHCRN structure. Application requirements, particularly focusing on the requirement for collaborating co-investigators will be reviewed. There will be an opportunity for questions and answers following the brief presentation. University-wide web and email announcements will be sent regarding registration information.

**X. RFA TIMELINE**

RFA Release: October 1, 2016  
LOI Submission: December 1, 2016  
**Proposal Deadline: January 15, 2017**  
Funding Decisions: March 1, 2017

Questions about the JHCRN-RAMP Application should be directed to Lynne Armiger, MSN, CRNP, JHCRN Network Coordinator at [lynne.armiger@jhmi.edu](mailto:lynne.armiger@jhmi.edu).

Questions about the scientific scope should be directed to Adrian Dobs, M.D., M.H.S., Director, JHCRN, at [adobs@jhmi.edu](mailto:adobs@jhmi.edu).

**JHCRN Network Coordinators** – All are available for detailed discussions about the JHCRN and their respective institutions

**Anne Arundel Medical Center, Annapolis, MD**

Melissa Gerstenhaber, RNC, MAS, MSN, CCRP

[mgerste1@jhmi.edu](mailto:mgerste1@jhmi.edu)

**Greater Baltimore Medical Center, Towson, MD**

Cynthia MacInnis, BS, CCRP

[cmacinn1@jhmi.edu](mailto:cmacinn1@jhmi.edu)

**Inova Health System, Falls Church, VA**

Sandra J. Schaefer, BSN, RN, OCN

[sschaef5@jhmi.edu](mailto:sschaef5@jhmi.edu)

**Johns Hopkins Medicine - CAPRES**

Jackie Lobien, BSN

[jlobien1@jhmi.edu](mailto:jlobien1@jhmi.edu)

**Johns Hopkins Medicine – All Children’s**

Frances Hamblin, RN, BSN, CPHON, CCRP

[frances.hamblin@jhmi.edu](mailto:frances.hamblin@jhmi.edu)

**Peninsula Regional Medical Center, Salisbury, MD**

Lynne Armiger, MSN, CRNP, ANP-C

[lynne.armiger@jhmi.edu](mailto:lynne.armiger@jhmi.edu)

**Reading Health System, Reading, PA**

Elizabeth Hollinger, RN, BSN

[elizabeth.hollinger@readinghealth.org](mailto:elizabeth.hollinger@readinghealth.org)