

**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 JHCRN Affiliate sites include: Anne Arundel Medical Center (AAMC), Inova Health System, Peninsula Regional Medical Center (PRMC), Tower Health System (Formerly Reading Health System (THS), and Allegheny Health Network (AHN). Applicants requiring assistance in identifying a collaborating partner for their project are encouraged to contact Dr. Adrian Dobs (adobs@jhu.edu) or Dr. John Niederhuber (john.niederhuber@inova.org).

The goals of RAMP are to:

- Provide funding to create, expand, and sustain bi-directional research between academic and community-based researchers and clinicians using the JHCRN.
- Mentor inexperienced investigators across the JHCRN sites.
- Implement the JHCRN infrastructure to support investigators in the conduct of the research projects.

II. ELIGIBILITY

The RAMP eligibility criteria include:

- Principal Investigator (PI) – Any faculty member at JHMI or JHCRN affiliate site investigator is eligible to apply for a RAMP grant.
- A JHMI PI must identify co-investigator(s) from one or more of the JHCRN affiliate sites. An affiliate site PI is required to identify a JHMI co-investigator.
 - ***JHMI PI - collaborating with another Johns Hopkins institution does not constitute an affiliate site and therefore does not meet eligibility requirements.***
- Junior faculty in all schools are encouraged to apply and will receive extra consideration.
- 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.

- 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.
- Additional preference is given to projects that are likely to (a) produce written products (e.g., needs assessment report, evaluation report, presentations, manuscripts) or web-based products; (b) submit fundable applications for extramural funding; and/or (c) have a significant beneficial long-term impact on an important health issue.

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, medical home
- Care Coordination: Community health workers, transitions of care

Disease Prevention & Patient Management

- Health Maintenance: Disease prevention, health promotion
- Disease Management: Acute, chronic, palliative care, end-of-life care
- Specific Illnesses: Cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, obesity
- 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

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, written 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 site(s). 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 NC 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, 2017. Submit the LOI to 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.

RAMP grant proposals will be accepted annually. The **submission deadline is January 19, 2018.** 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 NC 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 (Research Plan Requirements) 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/).

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 LOS should be obtained from a member of the affiliate site leadership; not from the affiliate site Co-Investigator(s). At the request of the PI, an affiliate site NC is available to assist in obtaining the necessary LOS. JHMI PI's **do not** need to provide a LOS from their respective division or department.

- 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 Components”)
- Reference list of up to 30 references – not included in the 5-page limit (optional)

The Research Plan Components:

- **Background (including Preliminary Results, if available), and Significance:** Applicants should describe their current work and demonstrate how grant funding would be used to build on previous efforts. 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:** Applicants should establish the overall purpose of the study and define the specific study objectives; demonstrate how they will develop and maintain partnerships with the JHCRN affiliate investigators/institutions, including how partner roles and responsibilities will be defined; provide 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 section **is 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.
- **Sustainability:** Applicants should present a realistic plan for sustaining and expanding research activities after conclusion of support from RAMP.

VII. REVIEW CRITERIA

All eligible proposals received on time will be initially undergo an administrative review by the JHCRN NC's. 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.**

All proposals meeting the administrative review requirements will move on to scientific review, which involves JHCRN scientific and administrative leaders, as well as 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: Likelihood of project completion within a 12-month period
6. Budget: Cost effectiveness and availability of support or matching funds

VIII. FUNDING DECISIONS

Based on review committee scoring, funding decisions will be announced by March 01, 2018 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 Thursday, October 30, 2017 from 3:00 to 4:00.

Join from PC, Mac, Linux, iOS or Android: <https://zoom.us/j/292548530>

Or Telephone: Dial (for higher quality, dial a number based on your current location)

US: +1 646 558 8656 or +1 669 900 6833

Meeting ID: 292 548 530

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 2, 2017
LOI Submission: December 1, 2017
Proposal Deadline: January 19, 2018
Funding Decisions: March 1, 2018

Questions about the JHCRN-RAMP Application should be directed to Lynne Armiger, MSN, CRNP; JHCRN Network Coordinator at 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.

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

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