

Nexus Award for the JHU Collaborative Behavioral, Social and Systems Science Data Projects

Sponsored by the ICTR Behavioral, Social and Systems Science Translational Research Community

- Deadline:** March 1, 2021
- Eligible:** All JHU faculty; post-doctoral fellows and graduate/undergraduate students with a JH faculty mentor; who have a JH, UMB or Morgan State collaborator
- Budget:** Up to \$8,000
- Grant Period:** Twelve-month project. Awardee must receive funds by June 30, 2021. An optional second year will be considered for qualifying projects.
- Application:** Accepted beginning Jan. 27, 2021

NEXUS GRANT PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The ICTR is has established three Translational Research Communities at JHU:

1. Drugs/Biologics/Vaccines/Devices
2. Biomarkers and Diagnostic Testing
3. Behavioral, Social and Systems Science

All three communities are supporting pilot Nexus grants which are designed to accelerate research by providing rapid, targeted funding to address critical gaps in clinical and translational research, be it taking a clinical observation into the lab, testing a technology or intervention in the clinical setting, or using funding to obtain data required to apply for a translationally focused R01.

The focus of this NEXUS award will be to support research investigators interested in working with institutional, operational or research teams to analyze existing data sets, that can be used to explore issues of health equity (specifically with respect to race, ethnicity, language or insurance type/income). Such data sets may not have been used for such explorations previously. The goal is to facilitate research investigator collaboration on priority questions to promote a learning and improving health system. Partnerships may be within the Johns Hopkins System, or with Johns Hopkins' ICTR partners at the University of Maryland or Morgan State University (note Morgan State partners cannot be remunerated until year 2, and only for qualifying studies).

Examples of possible partnerships within Johns Hopkins include:

- Office of Diversity, Inclusion and Health Equity (ODIHE) (Contact Sherita Golden at sahill@jhmi.edu)
 - ODIHE race and ethnicity data research group
 - ODIHE gender data research group
 - REaL and SOGI data collection, validation, and reporting for research

- Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) Committee on data collection, implementation, and usage in the health system
- Use of area deprivation index (ADI) and geocoding within health system population analyses
- Natural language processing for core data extraction

JHU faculty are responsible for identifying a collaborator with an existing data set from any of the institutions described above, by the time that their proposal is submitted. Grant applications lacking the appropriate partnerships will not be reviewed.

PROGRAM DETAILS

Eligibility

- Eligible submissions must be translational projects with clear endpoints and a realistic timeline for completion within a 12-month project period. .
- Any faculty member, post-doctoral fellow, graduate or undergraduate student with a faculty mentor at Johns Hopkins University partnered with a collaborator who is affiliated with a data processing unit or data holding entity at Johns Hopkins, University of Maryland, or Morgan State University.
- If awarded, the start date of the 12 -month grant period will be approximately 30 days post the Nexus submission deadline, after all applicable institutional (e.g. Data Use Agreement) and external regulatory requirements (i.e., [NCATS](#)) have been satisfied.
- **All first-year funds must be paid out by ICTR by June 30, 2021.**

Conflicts of Interest

At the time of application, before funds are awarded, and throughout the project period, it is the responsibility of the awardee 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 ICTR and to each investigator's institutional office responsible for managing conflicts of interest (i.e. the [Office of Policy Coordination at Johns Hopkins](#)). 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 responsible institutional entity. Failure of any member of the study team to disclose all such conflicts could result in the termination of this award and the disallowance of all study costs. Applicants should refer to their institutional conflict of interest policies for more information about what constitutes a conflict and associated reporting responsibilities.

Funding Restrictions, Terms and Conditions

- Requests must be no more than \$8,000 in direct costs. **Requests exceeding \$8,000 will not be reviewed.**
- All funding must be accepted and spent by the awardee before June 30, 2021. There can be no extensions of this time frame for award payout. However, projects that show suitable progress may be eligible to compete for additional funding during the second year.
- Indirect costs should not be included in the budget.
- Grants can be used to support work conducted by either researchers at Johns Hopkins or their collaborators at UMB. Partners at Morgan State can only be offered funding during the second year, for projects that are awarded a second year of (additional) grant support.
- Nexus funds may be used to support the salaries of any faculty, postdoctoral fellows, or

other staff working on the awarded project; as well as stipends paid to undergraduate or graduate students at Johns Hopkins.

- Pending approval by Nexus leadership, funds may be used for travel that is essential to the project.
- Nexus funds **may not** be used to purchase **capital** equipment defined as “an article of nonexpendable, tangible property having a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost of \$5,000 or more per unit.”
- All changes to the original research plan or budget must be submitted **BEFORE IMPLEMENTATION** to the Research Navigators for review and final approval by the NEXUS Executive Committee. Funding may be withdrawn if the project no longer meets the criteria for this award.
- All funded PIs will be required to submit a written progress report 6 months after the funding period starts and either a final close-out report or product at the termination of this grant. They will also be responsible for publicly presenting their research findings in a forum to be organized by NEXUS leadership.
- If awarded, failure to comply with terms and conditions of the Nexus program may result in termination of funding.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Grant applications will be accepted beginning on January 27, 2021. All applications must be submitted through the Nexus Grant Program ICTR Connection Request form, located on the ICTR website: <https://ictrweb.johnshopkins.edu/ictr/connection/>.

The grant application includes the following **seven mandatory components**:

- Abstract (1-page limit)
- Research Plan (5 -page limit) which includes: what question within areas of health equity, including race, ethnicity, language and income will be addressed; the identities of the collaborating investigator(s) associated with the data processing unit or data holding entity, as well as all other personnel and their respective roles in this project; the proposed project timeline; and a plan for deliverables.

Note: Instruments or data dictionaries submitted as part of the research plan should be included as an Appendix to this section and will not count toward the total plan page limit.

- Reference list of up to 30 references.*
- An itemized budget, with line item detail to the \$1000 level, which contains the budget requirements for scope of work (direct costs only) and **must be created using the Microsoft Excel template provided in the application.***
- Biographical sketch (NIH-format) for the JHU PI* (or student+faculty mentor pair)
- Biographical sketch (NIH-format) for the collaborating investigator who is the data holder*
- Other Support (PI), and if applicable, a list of other funding sources that will be used to cover other costs associated with this project.*
- A letter of support from the named collaborating investigator who is the data holder*

* This component is not included in the total plan page limit

All application materials including the study budget should be compiled into a single Adobe pdf, in the order specified above, and uploaded into the online application interface. The non-pdf'ed Excel template containing the study budget must also be uploaded as a separate document into the online application.

REVIEW PROCESS

Review Criteria

Priority for funding will be given to projects that demonstrate how the results will lead to direct translation or future grant funding (R01 or similar). Applications demonstrating **new** collaborative partnerships will be given preference. In addition, standard NIH review criteria will be used in scoring all applications:

- 1) Significance
- 2) Benefit to the Research Community
- 3) Scientific Merit
- 4) Feasibility of Timeline and Data Accessibility
- 5) Research Team
- 6) Translational Potential

Only complete applications received by the deadline will be considered. The review process will be conducted as follows:

Administrative Triage: The ICTR Navigators will first review applications for compliance with budgetary, content, eligibility, and other submission guidelines as described in this document. **Incomplete or noncompliant applications will be returned without scientific review.**

Review Process: TRC Co-Leaders Felicia Hill-Briggs and Jill Marsteller will recruit appropriate reviewers and assign applications for review. Each application will then be subsequently assessed by a minimum of 2 reviewers who may be internal or external to the institution. If external to JHU, applicants may be asked by TRC Administration to initiate a non-disclosure agreement in order to protect intellectual property. All reviewers will be asked to disclose any relationships to the grant applicant. If not conflicted, they will then be asked to provide written feedback addressing the merits of the application based on the six criteria listed above and scored accordingly. Top scoring applications will be further reviewed by the TRC co-leaders and up to 3 awards will be made. Reviewer comments will be provided to funded applicants, but reviewer identities will be kept confidential. Although feedback will be provided, decisions of the reviewers and TRC co-Leaders are final.

Notification: All applicants will be notified of funding decisions approximately 4-6 weeks after the submission deadline. Award letters will explain the terms of the award, as well as descriptive information about regulatory approvals, agreements and other aspects of project start-up that should be completed immediately.

Questions about the application process should be directed to the ICTR Navigators who can be reached by email at: ICTRnexus@jhmi.edu