

## **BOOST AND PROPEL**

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

#### **General Questions:**

##### **When is the BOOST/PROPEL application accepted?**

An RFA for BOOST and PROPEL applications will be announced on the ICTR website quarterly. Please check the ICTR website for submission deadlines.

##### **What is the difference between BOOST and PROPEL awards?**

**BOOST** awards are for junior investigators, first-time R01 awardees, K awardees, and KL2 scholars to generate pilot data for a larger grant submission or to supplement research funds for the K project.

**PROPEL** awards are intended for established investigators who are performing early stage clinical trials, deep phenotyping studies, or studies that address Maryland health priorities. Propel can augment resources of a funded project or provide resources for small pilot and feasibility studies.

##### **Who May Apply?**

Any faculty member at the Johns Hopkins University is eligible to apply. Researchers with advanced degrees (PhD, MD, or equivalent) and are in an Assistant Professor or above position can apply for funding.

Undergraduates, graduate students, and postdoctoral fellows are not eligible to apply as Principal or Co-Investigators but can be incorporated as team members into any proposal.

##### **How does BOOST/PROPEL Differ from Other Traditional Funding Programs?**

BOOST and PROPEL awards are clinical research grants that award Clinical Research Unit (CRU) resources such as research space, specialized research nursing, imaging assistance (i.e. DXA, CV core), and research nutrition resources to ICTR investigators, based on merit and willingness to be actively monitored by the Translational Research Evaluation Committee (TREC) for study-specific milestones.

##### **What type of funded projects are eligible for BOOST and PROPEL awards?**

1. Projects must be clinical research projects performed in at least one ICTR Clinical Research Unit (Johns Hopkins Outpatient CRU (Carnegie 3), Johns Hopkins Bayview CRU (301 Building), Johns Hopkins Pediatric CRU).
2. Priority will be given to federally funded projects (NIH, FDA, DoD, PCORI etc.).

3. Pilot projects and feasibility studies are eligible. Milestone achievement is of heightened importance with pilot awards for continued funding.
4. Investigator initiated projects that have industry support for drugs or devices are eligible. A detail project budget is required and will be used to determine the eligibility of investigator-initiated, industry-sponsored projects.

### **What is a Maryland health priority?**

These are health issues that have been prioritized because of the burden of disease experienced in Maryland. These include **but are not limited to** addiction, tobacco abuse, diabetes, cancer, obesity, child health, infant mortality, HIV, health disparities, kidney disease and cardiovascular disease. There is space on the BOOST and PROPEL application where investigators can justify why their project addresses a Maryland Health Priority. This justification will be taken into account in the review process.

### **What is deep phenotyping?**

The precise and comprehensive analysis of phenotypic abnormalities in which the individual components of the phenotype are observed and described. There is space on the BOOST and PROPEL application where investigators can justify why their project represents deep phenotyping. This justification will be taken into account in the review process.

### **What is considered diverse populations?**

For the BOOST and PROPEL grants, diverse populations are considered:

1) Pediatrics, 2) Geriatrics, 3) Underserved Minorities, 4) Genetics/Rare Diseases, and 5) Acute Care/Traumatic Injury. Consultation is available to investigators with population liaisons who can facilitate connection with diverse communities and collaborators to enhance their research programs. There is space on the BOOST and PROPEL application where investigators can justify why their project recruits diverse or special populations. This justification will be taken into account in the review process.

### **Can I apply for BOOST/PROPEL if I have an existing study?**

Yes. Existing studies that started after May 2018 are eligible to apply for BOOST/PROPEL.

## **Application Process:**

### **Where do I send my application?**

Applications must be submitted through ICTR Connection Request, located on the ICTR website at <https://ictrweb.johnshopkins.edu/ictr/connection/>.

**An IRB application must have already been submitted and ICTR-CRU selected as a research site (by completing eIRB application, Section 9, question 9 and Section 10).**

**What are the required application components?**

The BOOST and PROPEL submission is comprised of the application components described below. These documents may be in Microsoft Excel, Adobe PDF or Word format. Questions about the application process should be directed to **Shernice Madison** at [smadison@jhu.edu](mailto:smadison@jhu.edu) or [crus@jhmi.edu](mailto:crus@jhmi.edu).

**Materials required to be submitted via ICTR Connection Request include:**

- **Instructions** (BOOST and PROPEL Checklist, Milestone Project Instructions, CRU price lists) This document is for informational purposes ONLY.
- **Study Schedule** (Please complete the table listing each visit on your study and resources required).
- **Project Milestones** (There are two required milestones prescribed by the ICTR, 1) study start up and 2) full study enrollment. The applicant is required to select at least two additional milestones).
- **Abstract (250 words)**
- **Research Plan** (5 page limit, Times New Roman font 12, 1 inch margins) must include:
  - Hypothesis
  - Specific Aims
  - Background and Significance
  - Preliminary Data (if any)
  - Research Design/methods
  - Statistical Design/Analysis
  - Data and Safety Monitoring Plan (DSMP)
- **Reference List** of up to 30 references
- **Biographical Sketch Information** (NIH format 5 page limit)
- **Award Budget/Itemized Budget** (pilot awards exempted)
- **Summary Statement from Peer Review** (if applicable)
- **eIRB Documents** (Consent Form/Assent Form, eIRB Application, FDA Documents)

**Can a PI Submit more than one application?**

A PI may submit multiple applications but the projects cannot be related. We seek to offer funding opportunities to as many investigators as possible. As such, multiple awards to one investigator is less likely.

### **What is the Review Process?**

**Administrative Triage.** The Administrative Team will review applications for compliance with budgetary, content, eligibility, and other submission guidelines.

**Peer Review.** The Translational Research Evaluation Committee (TREC) will review all proposals. A multidisciplinary review will be conducted by one member each of the Leadership, Regulatory, Biostatistical, Community and Administrative Teams, and two scientific content reviewers according to the evaluation criteria listed below.

### **How will my application be evaluated for funding? Are there standard criteria for evaluation?**

The TREC Committee will review all proposals. Multidisciplinary review will be conducted by one member each of the Leadership, Regulatory, Biostatistical, Community and Administrative Teams, and two scientific content reviewers. Applications are scored based on scientific merit, novelty, appropriateness of design, project feasibility and need for CRU resources to efficiently and safely conduct study.

**Scoring System and Criteria.** The maximum possible points allowed for each category are listed, with the **maximum cumulative being 45 points**: 1) Scientific merit, novelty, and impact (10 points), 2) Appropriateness of design, project feasibility (10 points), 3) Need for CRU resources to efficiently and safely conduct study (5 points), 4) Junior investigator (e.g., assistant professor, K awardee) (5 points), 5) Joint project between JH and Hub partner (5 points) 6) Diverse research population (5 points) 7) Research area: Maryland health priority, early stage clinical trial or deep phenotyping study (5 points).

### **Why are Project Milestones and Schedules Necessary?**

BOOST and PROPEL awards are designed to accelerate meritorious protocols to produce efficient, high quality, safe and disseminatable research. Therefore, milestone development and monitoring help accomplish the overall goal of the program. Project milestones and schedules are needed in order assess the feasibility of project completion within the funding period. For this reason, it is important to be meticulous when developing milestones and project schedules. Additionally, a well-constructed project schedule allows the PI and study team to monitor progress and make adjustments in response to obstacles. It can also be used to accurately estimate the amount of resources required to complete the project at any point in the project.

## **Funding Questions:**

### **What is the funding amount for award?**

Awards are in the form of CRU resources not dollars. Funding will be determined by the CRU resources required to perform the protocol.

### **Once my application has been approved for funding, what's next?**

You will receive a letter from the TREC that describes the outcome of the review including the CRU resources awarded.

If you are **approved** for funding, you will receive:

1. Letter of Agreement. The PI must:
  - Agree to have prescribed study milestones monitored
  - Adhere to reporting requirements
  - Understand that failure to meet milestone objectives or reporting requirements may result in termination of support.
2. Resources: In addition to CRU resources that are requested, the TREC may suggest that the PI or study team access other ICTR resources to help successfully complete the project, including but not limited to, special populations consultation, nutrition consultation, recruitment consultation, navigator consultation or biostatistical consultation.
3. An Award letter enumerating CRU resources awarded will be sent to the PI. (Renewal of resources will be determined annually).

If you are **not approved**, the protocol has been determined to have a serious design flaw or insufficient material to judge it fairly. An investigator may apply again in future award rounds.

### **Who do I contact if I have any questions?**

For questions (see FAQ) and more information, please contact **Shernice Madison** at [smadison@jhu.edu](mailto:smadison@jhu.edu) or [crus@jhmi.edu](mailto:crus@jhmi.edu).