



## Research Centers in Minority Institutions Translational Research Network

### **RTRN RESEARCH ENHANCEMENT AWARD**

RELEASE DATE: December 2, 2016

#### **OVERVIEW**

A strategic goal of the RCMI Translational Research Network (RTRN) is to improve minority health and to eliminate health disparities by fostering inter-institutional collaborations in clinical and translational science. This Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) solicits applications to enhance success of grant applications to the National Institutes of Health (NIH). RCMI faculty with already reviewed, either scored or unscored, but unfunded NIH R-, U-, SC-, P-, K- or DP-series grant applications, as well as D43 and D71 applications, are invited to request travel funds to meet with current or prospective collaborators and/or mentors from RCMI or non-RCMI grantee institutions to improve their A1 resubmissions.

#### **KEY POINTS**

1. An RCMI faculty member may submit only one application.
2. Awardees of the Research Enhancement Award FOA released on August 1, 2016 are not eligible.
3. RCMI faculty who currently serve as principal investigators of active NIH R01, R15, R35, R37, R56, P01, P20, P30, P50, P60, SC1, SC3, U01, U19, U54, DP1, DP2 (or similar) and/or K99R00 grants are eligible to apply.
4. The applicant must articulate how the proposed project falls within the scope of clinical and translational research or health disparities research.
5. The applicant must articulate how RTRN travel funds will address specific weaknesses in the summary statement of the reviewed and unfunded NIH R-, U-, SC-, P-, K- or DP-series, as well as D43 and D71, grant application, and how RTRN support will improve the A1 resubmission and increase competitiveness for grant success.
6. The application must be submitted by e-mail to [pbullard@hawaii.edu](mailto:pbullard@hawaii.edu) as a single pdf attachment, using the RTRN Research Enhancement Award Template, and must be received no later than **Monday, January 16, 2017 at 9:00 pm Eastern time**. Only electronic submissions will be considered.
7. The earliest award date is **March 1, 2017**. All travel must be completed before **June 30, 2017**.

#### **PURPOSE OF THE FOA**

The Research Enhancement Award is intended to provide travel funds for enhancing competitiveness and grant success of RCMI faculty, who have a reviewed, either scored or unscored, but unfunded or unpaid R-, U-, SC-, P- or K-series NIH application, for which a summary statement is available. For example, if the summary statement identifies weaknesses in the Investigator section, the applicant might identify and meet with a current or prospective collaborator and/or mentor at another RCMI or non-RCMI grantee institution. On the other hand, if weaknesses are found in the Approach section, the applicant might identify and meet with a prospective collaborator, who has complementary skills, at another RCMI or non-RCMI grantee institution. The expectation is that support from the Research Enhancement Award will be leveraged into competitive NIH A1 resubmissions within one year after receipt of RTRN funds. The intent of this program is to provide travel funds only for the RCMI applicant. A bidirectional exchange, involving travel of the collaborator, would require funds from the collaborating RCMI or non-RCMI grantee institution to support the travel of their faculty.

#### **APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS**

Eligibility: Any *faculty member* of the 18 RCMI grantee institutions, who has an unfunded or unpaid R-, U-, SC-, P- or K-series NIH application, which has already been reviewed and for which a summary statement is available, is invited to submit an application. An RCMI faculty member may submit only one application, but there are no restrictions on the number of applications from an RCMI grantee institution. An applicant must have an updated Profile on the RTRN website (<http://connect.rtrn.net/profilesweb/profiles.aspx>), and be a member of the Translational Research Cluster System (<http://www2.rtrn.net/programs/>). Current and past RTRN Small

Grants Program awardees may apply. RCMI faculty who currently serve as principal investigators of active NIH R01, R15, R35, R37, R56, P01, P20, P30, P50, P60, SC1, SC3, U01, U19, U54, DP1, DP2 (or similar) and/or K99R00 grants are eligible to apply. However, postdoctoral fellows and graduate students are ineligible.

Collaborators and Mentors: An applicant must designate a current or prospective collaborator and/or mentor from another RCMI or non-RCMI grantee institution, who he or she will visit using the RTRN Research Enhancement Award.

## **SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS**

Applicants must use the RTRN Research Enhancement Award Template. The names of the RCMI Principal Investigator or Program Director and the Responsible Institutional Official of the applicant institution must be provided on the face page. **The full RTRN Research Enhancement Award proposal is limited to two (2) pages.** The Specific Aims page is limited to one (1) page and should provide the research question, central hypothesis, overall objective, rationale, specific aims, and scientific impact. The Research Strategy component is also limited to one (1) page and **should discuss the rationale for requesting RTRN funds and how RTRN funds will result in a more competitive A1 resubmission. Please read the Review Criteria below for guidance on completing this section. Please read the Review Criteria below for guidance on completing this section.** The application should be typed single-spaced using 11-pt Arial on one side of the page. All tables, graphs, figures, diagrams, charts and other displays must be included within the two-page limit. The two-page application must include a timetable of when the A1 application will be submitted.

The following items are not counted in the two-page limit:

Summary Statement of the A0 application.

Biosketches and Other Support of the applicant, as well as current or prospective collaborator(s) and/or mentor(s).

Letters of Support from the applicant's current or prospective collaborator(s) and/or mentor(s), as well as from the RCMI or RCTR PI/PD.

Budget: A non-modular itemized budget, with justification, is required, using the designated pages in the Research Enhancement Award Template. Funds may be requested for only costs associated with travel to confer with the applicant's current or prospective collaborator(s) and/or mentor(s).

## **AWARD INFORMATION**

Funds Available: A \$10,000 allocation will fund four or more RTRN Research Enhancement Awards. Applicants may request up to \$2,500 for travel expenses only. Travel must be completed on or before June 30, 2017. **No provisions will be allowed for indirect costs or for carryover requests.**

Review: Members of the RTRN Protocol Review Subcommittee, and possibly RCMI Cluster Leaders, will serve as reviewers. In all cases, individuals with conflicts of interest will not be assigned as reviewers. The initial merit review of applications for support will be based on the following six criteria: collaborations and partnerships; significance; innovation; approach; investigators; and environment (Table 1). The reviewers will also assess the impact score and summary statement of the A0 submission and the overall likelihood that the Research Enhancement Award will be leveraged into a competitive and fundable A1 resubmission.

**Table 1. Review Criteria for Research Enhancement Award**

<b>Review Category</b>	<b>Review Criteria</b>
Collaborations and Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are current or prospective collaborators and/or mentors included from another RCMI or non-RCMI grantee institution?</li> <li>• How will the applicant's visit to the current or prospective collaborator and/or mentor result in strengthening the NIH A1 resubmission?</li> </ul>
Significance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the applicant's research address an important scientific question or health problem?</li> <li>• How will the applicant's visit to the current or prospective collaborator and/or mentor result in heightening the scientific rigor of the NIH A1 resubmission?</li> </ul>
Innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How will the applicant's visit to the current or prospective collaborator and/or mentor result in innovative concepts or technologies that address weaknesses identified in the A0 submission?</li> </ul>

Investigator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does the experience and training of the current or prospective collaborator and/or mentor offer added value or address weaknesses found in the summary statement?</li> <li>• Does the current or prospective collaborator and/or mentor possess appropriate and complementary qualifications and research experience?</li> </ul>
Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will the applicant's visit to the current or prospective collaborator and/or mentor result in improved study design and/or scientific rigor?</li> </ul>
Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will the applicant's visit to the current or prospective collaborator and/or mentor facilitate access to cores unavailable at the applicant's institution?</li> <li>• Will the applicant's visit to the current or prospective collaborator and/or mentor provide access to difficult to reach patient populations or unique research resources?</li> <li>• What evidence is provided for institutional support of the applicant, such as faculty-release time, salary support and/or matching funds for travel?</li> </ul>

## FUNDING PRIORITIES AND DECISIONS

Applications will be ranked according to impact scores. Funding decisions will be based on priority scores and the criteria shown below, with direct oversight from the Protocol Review Subcommittee and ratification by the RTRN Steering Committee, and final approval by NIMHD.

- Strong justification for travel funds
- Clear plan of deliverables from visit to prospective or established collaborator or mentor
- High-impact research question
- Highly innovative approach
- Strong publication record of applicant
- Clear timetable for NIH A1 resubmission
- High potential for success of A1 resubmission
- Institutional match to defray additional costs associated with travel

To more broadly promote translational science in different disciplines, awards will be distributed across the RTRN Clusters. For successful applicants, subcontracts will be made from the Morehouse School of Medicine to the awardee institutions. The expectation is that the travel awards will result in heightened competitiveness of the A1 resubmission.

## POST-AWARD REQUIREMENTS

Recipients of the Research Enhancement Award will be required to submit a written progress report of the A1 resubmission, along with the summary statement (if available), on or before June 30, 2017.

## INQUIRIES

We encourage inquiries concerning this FOA.

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