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Office of Discovery and Translation (ODAT)
2020 Targeted Request for Applications
Innovations to Address COVID-19-related Healthcare Impacts

Overview

The Office of Discovery and Translation (ODAT) provides early-stage funding to support the translation of research discoveries into innovative products and services that positively impact human health.

This Request for Applications (RFA) is intended to identify and fund early-stage projects in which the primary goal is to develop solutions that address direct or indirect healthcare impacts created or exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Innovations supported through this RFA aim to address the current crisis or to prevent, mitigate and respond to future disease outbreaks. The objective of funding is to establish the scientific and technical merit, feasibility, and translational potential of the solution in development.

Responsive applications must include the following elements:

- Purpose must be to develop a novel solution to address healthcare problems created or exacerbated due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
    - Examples of projects may include, but are not limited to the following:
        - Novel approaches for patient monitoring, management and care delivery, particularly for in home or non-hospital environments
        - Innovations that mitigate risk for healthcare professionals or at-risk populations
        - Tools for dissemination of public health information, caregiver and patient education, crisis communication
        - Approaches to address shortages of critical healthcare equipment and medical supplies required for emergency care
        - Innovations that minimize the transmission and spread of disease
        - Innovations that aim to reduce the burden on the healthcare system for non-COVID related conditions (e.g., reduce emergency room visits for non-COVID conditions)
    - Examples of eligible types of solutions include, but are not limited to:
        - Wearable technology
        - Remote monitoring devices
        - Service models
        - Digital health tools
- Project must be at the stage of solution definition or testing (prototype development, proof of concept testing, preclinical development, etc.)
- Proposed work must be focused on solution development towards sustainable patient use.
- Projects must have a high expectation for successful completion of milestones within the established funding period.

Priority will be given to projects focused on developing novel innovations that will lead to new products

April 2020

and services that are not already commercially available. This program is not intended to support the study of new uses for already available technologies or products, unless these new uses require development-based activities and/or testing to support the novel use.

Projects will be evaluated primarily based on potential for impact, readiness of the project to advance to the next stage of translation from the proposed activity, strength of the investigative team and any partners and potential for translation towards sustainable patient use.

Project Funding

Awards will range from $15,000 to $50,000 in total direct costs and will be determined on a project by project basis. Our goal is to fund as many projects as possible with the funding we have available for this Targeted RFA, so please request only the amount that is needed to advance development. Use of funding for salary support will be limited to key personnel required to execute activities described in the work plan.

Funding will be awarded with the expectation the grantee(s) adhere to the stated work plan. Deviation from the stated work plan without prior approval may result in a revocation of project funding.

Projects successfully meeting project milestones, and that demonstrate continued advancement towards translation, may be eligible to apply for additional funding through other ODAT funding programs to further advance research and development efforts. The purpose of additional funding is to advance the project toward sustainable patient use.

Note: Projects that require prior approval of COVID-19-related research through the Medical School, must receive approval before funding will be issued. For projects requiring regulatory approvals (e.g. IACUC, IRB, FDA), it is expected that all regulatory documents will be submitted to the appropriate regulatory authority within one month of award notification. Delays in regulatory approvals may result in revocation of project funding.

Eligibility

- U.S. citizens, permanent residents, and non-permanent residents are eligible.
- Eligibility includes principal investigators (PIs) with a faculty appointment at the University of Minnesota at the time of grant submission, and affiliated faculty at the VA, HCMC, Regions Hospital, and the Children's Hospitals of Minnesota. University of Minnesota researchers interested in applying who do not meet these criteria are encouraged to contact Brittni Peterson at bmpete@umn.edu to assess eligibility. Faculty members holding adjunct appointments are ineligible.
- An applicant may apply for only one award on which he/she would be a PI. There is no limitation to the number of projects on which a faculty member would participate as a co-investigator or collaborator.

Application Process

Key Dates

LOI submissions due date	Accepted on continuous basis until June 15, 2020
Invitations to submit full proposals issued	Typically 1 week following LOI submission
Full proposal due date	Individual deadlines based on LOI submission and review (~4 weeks after notification of proposal invitation)
Review period	Ongoing
Awards announced	Ongoing
Anticipated award start date	Ongoing

Project submissions will be reviewed on a continuous basis until funding is expended or until June 15, 2020 (whichever comes first). LOIs will be screened for eligibility and reviewed by the ODAT Program Committee. Applicants will be notified of the review decision within 1 week of LOI submission; applicants invited to submit a full proposal will be notified of their individual proposal application deadline.

***Please note that both the Letter of Intent and Full Proposal will be submitted using an online form by accessing the link identified below. If you have questions about this process or eligibility, please contact Brittni Peterson (bmpete@umn.edu).*

Step 1 – Letter of Intent (LOI) submission

Submission of a brief letter of intent (LOI) is required. The purpose of the LOI is to confirm applicant eligibility, ensure that the project fits with the purpose of this funding mechanism, and enable the identification of reviewers with applicable expertise.

Mandatory letters of intent (LOIs) must be submitted in an online form (see link below). The information required in the LOI includes:

1. Project title
2. PI(s) name(s) and contact information
3. Co-investigator(s) name(s)
4. What is the specific unmet healthcare need (either directly or indirectly related to the COVID-19 pandemic) and why are current approaches inadequate?
5. Brief description of the future innovation in development and how it will address the unmet need
6. Brief summary of the project based on its current status
7. Brief high-level overview of specific work to be supported with ODAT funding (up to $50,000 direct for up to one year)
8. Whether the project has been disclosed to the UMN Technology Commercialization office and status of the intellectual property (if applicable, this is not a requirement for application)

LOIs must be submitted through the following link:
https://redcap.ahc.umn.edu/surveys/?s=TPRX799NDR
 *You may save and return to complete your submissions at any time using the code provided when the "Save and Return Later" option is selected. To return to the form re-click the link identified above.

Step 2 – Proposal submission (by invitation only)

Details about the full proposal content and submission process will be provided to those individuals invited to submit proposals. Given the urgent nature of addressing COVID-19-related healthcare impacts and unique circumstances of potential applicants, the submission process and contents for this particular RFA cycle may be flexible. In brief, the following information is typically required in full proposals:

1. Executive summary
2. Proposed product or solution
3. Previous Work
4. Work plan
5. Collaborations and other support
6. Intellectual property (if applicable)
7. Technology marketing and licensing (if applicable)
8. Strategic partnerships (if applicable)
9. Team roles and responsibilities

10. Project timeline
11. Budget overview
12. Biosketches
13. Letters of collaboration

Proposal Review Process

1. Full proposals will undergo review for scientific merit and translational potential of the project. Full proposal review may include review by external experts operating under a confidentiality agreement.
2. Applicants may be asked to address issues raised in the proposal review prior to a funding decision being made.
3. Applicants selected for funding may be asked to make appropriate revisions to their work plan reflecting feedback from reviewers.

Proposal Evaluation Considerations

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

1. *Medical/Healthcare need:* Does the proposed innovation meet a specific need in line with the purpose of this funding opportunity?
2. *Impact:* Does the proposed innovation have the potential to improve outcomes, reduce complications of care or improve quality of life or quality of care for patients and healthcare professionals facing issues either directly or indirectly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic? Is there a meaningful need for funding and impact of award on translational potential?
3. *Feasibility:* Are the overall strategy, methodology, and analysis well-reasoned and appropriate to accomplish the goals of the project?
4. *Expertise:* Will the scientific environment in which the work will be done contribute to the probability of success? Does the PI or investigative team have the necessary expertise to conduct the proposed work?
5. *Scientific quality:* Does the project have its origins in innovative, high-quality research conducted by the PI(s)?

Funding Period Expectations

Grantees will agree to periodic check-ins with ODAT following initiation of the award. The purpose will be to monitor progress on the project, and make any mid-course corrections that reflect unexpected results or the need to modify the experimental design. Advancement of the projects toward product development will be tracked following the conclusion of funding.

Program Contact Information

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