RAMP: Research design Analysis Methods Program
Request for Methodology Challenge Applications

Key Dates
Release/Posted Date: February 1, 2016
Application Submission/Receipt Date: April 1, 2016
Peer Review Dates: April 2016
Earliest Anticipated Start Date: May 1, 2016

Executive Summary Announcement
This request solicits study grant applications to address broadly generalizable and important biostatistical, epidemiological, and research design (BERD)-related problems in clinical and translational research. Teams consisting of BERD investigators and their clinical and translational scientist collaborators are invited to apply. The winning award will receive one year of dedicated salary support and statistical or other programming resources which will catalyze the needed methodological advance, strengthen the clinical and translational research itself, and help establish long-term collaborative partnerships and scientific teams.

The Research design Analysis Methods Program (RAMP), part of the Northwestern University Clinical and Translational Sciences Institute (NUCATS), will commit approximately $38,000 to fund this award. It is expected that one application will be awarded this year.

Detailed Information

Objective. RAMP solicits teams of BERD investigators and their CTS collaborators to submit proposals to address broadly generalizable and important biostatistical, epidemiological, and research design (BERD)-related problems in clinical and translational research. Emphasis will be placed on those applications that either develop or use innovative methods that are likely to be generalizable and have widespread impact.

Examples of Potential Applications. The following examples illustrate some potential areas of interest, but are not meant to exclude other priority areas.

- Optimizing electronic health records for research
- Methods to synthesize clinical trial data across trials
- Innovations to improve linkage and inter-operability of data systems (e.g. connecting patient study data and electronic health records)
- Methods to monitor and improve delivery of evidence-based interventions

Funds Available and Reporting Requirements. RAMP will commit funds (approximately $38,000) to provide protected time for the BERD investigator to dedicate to this research. RAMP may in addition provide statistical analyst support for one year to assist with programming or database development.
The project will receive oversight from RAMP’s Co-Directors. The BERD investigator will be required to submit a 1-2 page progress report at 6 months and 12 months, as well as brief (one paragraph) monthly summary progress reports. Satisfactory progress on steps towards publications and dissemination and if applicable, a research grant, is expected for funds to be continued. Dissemination plans should be developed in concert with RAMP Co-Directors, NUCATS, and Galter Library.

Eligible Applicants. All Northwestern faculty with the skills, knowledge, and resources necessary to carry out the proposed research are invited to respond to this request for applications. New and early career investigators (see definitions http://grants.nih.gov/grants/new_investigators/#definition) are encouraged to apply. Undergraduate, masters, and doctoral students are not eligible for this competitive funding. Faculty may apply to use the funds to support post-doctoral trainees. Only one application will be accepted from each Principal Investigator for a single due date.

Eligible Institutions. Only applicants from Northwestern will be considered.

Allowable Expenses. In addition to salary and fringe, all budget items on a proposal must be justified as supporting the methods development and/or their use in translational research.

Content and Form of Application Submission. All proposals must be submitted through NITRO-Competitions at https://grants.nubic.northwestern.edu/.

Submission, Review, and Award Dates. Proposals must be sent no later than 5:00pm (CT) on Friday, April 1st, 2016. Late or incomplete proposals will not be accepted. It is anticipated that reviews will occur soon afterwards by external reviewers who have no conflicts of interest. It is anticipated that the funding announcement will be made during the month of April 2016 with earliest anticipated start date of proposed research project on May 1, 2016.

Application and Review Criteria. The application will follow the standard sections for an NIH R03 application (http://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/r03.htm) and be limited to one page of Specific Aims plus a Research Strategy section, which can be no longer than 6 pages. Review criteria will parallel that of NIH’s and include the study’s: 1) significance 2) investigator 3) innovation 4) approach 5) environment and 6) overall impact. Additional review criteria include: relevance of the proposed project to clinical and translational science, potential for immediate results, and likelihood of broad impact and uptake in a field of clinical or translational science. It is recommended that an applicant’s proposals include explicit plans for disseminating or using the proposed methods in translational research.

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