NUCATS Voucher and Pilot Programs

The NUCATS voucher (tier 1) and pilot (tier 2) programs are a new funding mechanism designed to accelerate research by providing rapid, targeted funding to address small, but critical gaps in clinical and translational research work that is otherwise at present not funded by other sources.

Focus:
The funding is open to all eligible investigators, described below, but is particularly targeted at:
1. Junior faculty who have not yet established a significant funding base
2. Projects involving critical steps in the device and drug development pathway
3. Projects involving critical steps in dissemination and implementation in Community Settings
4. A need, while critical to translational science, is too small to be suitable for conventional research funding mechanisms (example, biostatistics support for the development of preliminary data)

Applicant Eligibility:
1. All applicants must be NUCATS members, AND one of the following:
   2a. Faculty in one of the NUCATS partner institutions (NU, NMHC, LCH, or RIC) engaged in research who is eligible to apply for follow-on external grant funding.
   2b. Other individuals such as community partners, students, trainees, post doctoral fellows, residents, and fellows who are collaborating with a NUCATS member who is a researcher described in 2a. may be a co-investigator, but not a PI.

Request Eligibility:
1. The request must be for clinical and translational research projects.
2. Gap addressed by the request should not be fundable through other sources available to the applicant.
3. The request should be hypothesis driven.
4. Specify the target date and source of subsequent extramural funding.

Request Deliverables:
1. Enough data to provide preliminary results or demonstrate feasibility for an important specific aim of a grant or other source of funding (pharma, foundation).
2. Has significant potential impact on human health in the near term.
3. 1-page report addressing the outcome of funding within the 30 days of the service being rendered. You will also be asked to report the outcome of pilot or voucher funding for NUCATS reporting purposes.
4. A signed statement of understanding that manuscripts or other project outputs that result from this or subsequent work enabled by this opportunity must cite the NUCATS grant.

Funding, Reviews and Timing:

*Two Tiers of funding will be available:*

**Tier 1. Voucher Program.**

a. Up to $2,500 will be awarded. The total amount that may be requested in a single application is $2,500 for all proposed activities. Investigators may submit more than one application during a given year for different projects. Requests for >$2,500 must be pre-approved by the NUCATS Director or Deputy Director.

b. The NUCATS Navigator team will conduct an administrative review.

c. Applications are accepted and reviewed on an ongoing basis.

d. Applicants will receive a response within two weeks of the submission of a complete application.

**Tier 2. Pilot Program.**

e. Up to $10,000 will be awarded, with exceptions considered in cases for which significant scientific opportunity can be demonstrated. Requests for >$10,000 must be pre-approved by the NUCATS Director or Deputy Director.

f. The NUCATS Navigator team will conduct an initial administrative review and NUCATS staff and faculty will conduct a second layer of review depending on domain of the request.

g. Applications will be accepted 2 times per year, June 15th and November 15th.

**Examples of Allowable Costs:**

Examples of Tier 1 Support (*Data analysis)*:

- Consultations by the Quantitative Methods Group (Epidemiology, Biostatistics, Bioinformatics) as part of grant preparations
- Regulatory support from NUCATS
- Computational Cluster CPU time to run specific analyses
- Participant recruitment
- Laboratory or hospital tests such as CBC’s
- Qualitative focus groups
- Bridges in funding will be considered on a case-by-case basis
- This is not an exhaustive list and examples outside the list above will be considered on a case-by-case basis

Examples of Tier 2 Support (*Pilot data)*:

- Any of the items listed above
- Analysis of samples by an NU (or affiliated U of C or UIC) core facility
  
https://www.facilities.research.northwestern.edu/browse-facilities/list
Examples of Non-Allowable Costs:
- Your own salary, or salary of anyone in your group
- Hiring a summer student, part-time FTE, etc.
- Laptop Computers
- Computer Disk Storage
- Travel to scientific meetings

Application Instructions:
1. Complete the appropriate application in NITRO Competitions
   a. Voucher: https://grants.nubic.northwestern.edu/competitions/NUCATS/nucatsvoucherpilot
   b. Pilot: https://grants.nubic.northwestern.edu/competitions/NUCATS/pilot_spring2015
2. Tier 1 requirements. In 500 words or less provide the significance, hypothesis, aims, analysis plan, impact and deliverables. Be sure to address lack of alternate funding and plans for future funding. You must describe your focus area.
   a. An additional cover sheet is required for the tier 1 (pilot) program application, please be sure to fill it out and submit in the NITRO Competitions application.
3. Tier 2 requirements. In 1000 words or less provide significance, hypothesis, aims, analysis plan, impact and deliverables. Be sure to address need, lack of alternate funding, and plans for future funding.
4. If you are utilizing an NU or affiliated core, you must include specific line-item estimates from the applicable cores and/or resources.
5. If your request includes PHI or research participants, please include the IRB number and approval information. IRB approval must be obtained prior to the release of funds.
6. If you are requesting services from Lurie Children’s Hospital, please contact the LCH Office of Research before submitting.

Contact Information:
Please direct questions about the pilot and voucher program to Abby Cosentino-Boehm at a-cosentino-boehm@northwestern.edu or 312-503-2306.