ICTR Clinical &Translational Science (CTS) Concept Request for Proposals

Key Dates and Info	
Funding	• Up to $125,000 per year (direct costs only) • 2-3 years in length
Concept Proposal Requirements	• Focus on CTS rather than basic discovery research • Address a translational research question in a particular disease or intervention development/dissemination context **AND** provide generalizable CTS innovations or insights that can be applied to other translational research projects, thereby increasing the overall efficiency or effectiveness of translation.
Concept Proposal Due **(required)**	On or before Thursday January 15, 2026, 11pm CT Submit via email to info@ictr.wisc.edu
Proposal Review Period	January-February 2026
Full Project Proposal Due **(by invitation)**	May 2026
Project Period	Projected: July 1, 2027 to June 30, 2030
Contact	info@ictr.wisc.edu
More Information	This Request for Proposals is related to Element E of the National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences Clinical and Translational Science Award, PAR-24-272: https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PAR-24-272.html

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

ICTR programs have a long history of fostering clinical and translational research (CTR). These programs center around building capacity in translational science by supporting the next generation of biomedical, social, and behavioral scientists; providing investigators and clinicians with critical resources including consultations, technology, and data science; and creating novel solutions to disseminate innovations that improve healthcare practice. ICTR is committed to supporting innovations that turn CTR observations into health solutions through translational science.

A key tenet of Translational Science (TS) is to understand and address common causes of inefficiency and failure in CTR projects. To translate science into practice or policy more effectively, we must address: 1) the pace of development and availability of treatments; 2) enable more individuals and communities to contribute to and benefit from translational science; and 3) identify and address inefficiencies in translation that slow and even stop CTR efforts. Many of these causes are the same across targets, diseases, and therapeutic areas; therefore, advances in TS will increase efficiency and effectiveness of translational research to enhance health, lengthen life, and reduce the burdens of illness and disability.

Translational research seeks to turn biomedical research discoveries into health solutions through the application of TS. These solutions include efficacious diagnostics, treatments, and interventions. Resources related to TS principles and practices are available from the National Institutes of Health, National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences (ncats.nih.gov):

- About Translational Science | NCATS
  https://ncats.nih.gov/about/about-translational-science
- Translational Science Spectrum | NCATS
  https://ncats.nih.gov/about/about-translational-science/spectrum
- Translational Science Principles | NCATS
  https://ncats.nih.gov/about/about-translational-science/principles
- Biomedical Translation | NCATS YouTube
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TnHLo-hCssg (a short video)
- NIH VideoCast - NCATS at 10: Improving Health for All Through Translational Science
  https://videocast.nih.gov/watch=44278 (a long video)
- Introduction to Translational Science | Coursera
  https://www.coursera.org/learn/intro-translational-science#modules (a learning course)

ICTR will be applying for renewal of the UW Clinical and Translational Sciences Award (CTSA) in September 2026 for the funding period of July 1, 2027-June 30, 2034. The CTSA includes Element E: Clinical and Translational Science (CTS) Research Program. Element E will support multiple (e.g., 2-3) research projects that address a significant challenge in CTS. Research projects should not only address a translational research question in a particular disease or intervention development/dissemination context, but they should also address a current challenge in CTS and highlight innovations, solutions, or insights that can be generalized and applied to other translational research projects, thereby increasing the overall efficiency or effectiveness of translation.

This mechanism is not intended to support projects that focus on basic discovery research.

Projects must be focused on translational science – the generation of generalizable innovations that are applicable to a broad range of diseases and conditions and address translational barriers. Examples of such barriers include (in no particular order):

- Lack of patient/community engagement in the development and implementation of health
- interventions
- Ineffective clinical trial recruitment
- Failure/inability to retain participants
- Lack of novel clinical trial design (e.g. adaptive designs)
- Lack of novel endpoints for clinical studies/trials (e.g. behavioral endpoints)
- Complexity of study protocols
- Complexity in management of multi-site studies
- Clinical trials not completed on time or budget
- Translation of evidence-based interventions between populations (e.g. adult to pediatric)
- Lack of rigor, transparency, and reproducibility (e.g. clinical to real-world settings)
- Lack of data interoperability and transparency
- Challenges to data acquisition, integrity, and analysis
- Failure to utilize existing data for research (e.g. electronic health records, national cohorts)
- Challenges in testing new therapeutic modalities and drug repurposing
- Failure to correctly predict drug toxicology or efficacy
- Failure to technically execute complex mechanistic studies
- Lack of access to biospecimens
- Lack of common solutions across research on a range of diseases and conditions
- Lack of incentivization for collaboration
- Lack of training research teams
- Lengthy regulatory approval processes (e.g. participant consent content/process)
- Failure to disseminate evidence-based interventions, health practice or policy updates
- Failure to implement evidence-based interventions, health practice or policy update

ICTR invites UW–Madison faculty from its partner schools and colleges to serve as Contact PI and submit an innovative CTS Concept Proposal for inclusion in and funding by the CTSA Element E. The Contact PI will be expected to:

1) Provide rationale as to how the Concept Proposal will provide generalizable innovations or insights that increase the overall efficiency or effectiveness of translation.
2) Address a significant challenge in CTS.
3) Tailor the research activities to address local (e.g., SMPH and UW Health) priorities and impact health outcomes in Wisconsin.
4) Contribute significant effort to lead the project and identify team members as application partners, collaborators, organizations, communities, and others with role justifications.
5) Partner with ICTR Research Resource and Service leads to develop this time-sensitive proposal.
6) Integrate team science and dissemination and implementation (D&I) approaches with novel trial design in this project.
7) If advanced to the next phase, you will work with ICTR to develop the project for the NCATS application, including specific aims, significance, and a detailed approach to address the aims and the study proposed. This project may not be less than $125,000 direct costs per year for a suggested period of 2-3 years in length and may not exceed 7 years. This project must be described in detail in approximately 10 pages.

CONCEPT PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

A Concept Proposal must be submitted via email (see the Key Dates and Info Table on Page 1). Once the Concept Proposal is received, the applicant will receive an e-mail acknowledgment.

After Concept Proposals are received and reviewed, Contact PIs will be notified of their status via email and invited to discuss next steps and timeline with ICTR Leadership.

Concept Proposal Format: PDF, single spaced, 0.50" minimum margins, Arial 11-point font

Required Information (a through f), in this order:

Cover (1 page)

a) Title of proposed CTS research project

b) For Contact PI
- Name
- Title
- UW–Madison School and Department
- Campus mailing address
- Telephone number
- Campus email address

c) A list of anticipated co-investigators, other key contributors, collaborators, organizations, community partners, consultants, and/or invested groups including a brief description of how they will be involved in this research.

Proposal (2 pages)

d) A summary of the CTS Concept Proposal. Must provide enough detail to evaluate relevance to Element E, including:
- specific aims
- general research design
- conceptual frameworks
- methods

e) One paragraph summarizing the proposed research potential to:
- Address a translational research question in a particular disease or intervention development/dissemination context, including generalizable CTS innovations or insights that can be applied to other transitional research projects **AND**
- Provide solutions to common challenges in the translation of innovations into practice or policy

f) One paragraph summarizing the potential of the Concept Proposal to impact human health outcomes across a wide range of challenges, communities, populations, and geographic access relevant to Wisconsin.

CONCEPT PROPOSAL REVIEW

All submitted Concept Proposals will be reviewed by ICTR staff for alignment with CTS principles and potential impact to human health in Wisconsin. Investigators may be invited to discuss their proposal with ICTR as a part of this submission and review process. Proposals selected for full submission will be determined by February 2026, with full submission due in May 2026. More information about the full submission will be provided to those selected for that phase of the application process.