Funding Opportunity: NCATS Announces Structural Change to CTSA Program and Releases New Clinical and Translational Science Hub Award Solicitation

Lewis-Burke Associates LLC – August 5, 2021

In response to stakeholder feedback on the National Center for Advancing Translation Sciences (NCATS) Clinical Translational Science Awards (CTSA) Program, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) has issued the first of an updated suite of funding opportunity announcements for these awards. The NCATS CTSA program is a collaborative research program designed to turn impactful and innovative observations in the laboratory, clinic, and community into interventions that can improve the health of the public. The NCATS CTSA Hub award, originally funded through the U54 mechanism as a single award, will now be divided into five separate funding opportunities, with the CTSA hub supported through the UM1 mechanism. The solicitation for the CTSA Hub award is now published (PAR-21-293) and NIH anticipates releasing related opportunities for other components of the program in the fall of 2021.

Changes to the CTSA program were all based on solicited feedback from a wide variety of stakeholders including but not limited to CTSA application peer reviewers, comments from a 2019 Request for Information (NOT-TR-19-027), and NCATS staff and leadership. In a Notice of Intent to Publish (NOT-TR-21-030) previewing these changes to the CTSA program, NIH emphasized that their intent in soliciting and implementing this feedback was to ensure the long-term stability and sustainability of the program and to reduce administrative burden on applicants.

In addition to the change in the funding mechanism, NIH announced several other changes to the CTSA program that will impact the project period, award calculations, and the career development and training portions of the award. Those changes include but are not limited to:

- **Project Period:** The shift of the CTSA Hub to a UM1 mechanism instead of the U54 mechanism will expand the project period from 5 to 7 years. The remaining funding opportunities for the additional components of the CTSA program will remain on a five-year project period.

- **Award Calculations:** The CTSA Hub (UM1) award calculation has been modified to be based on the five-year average of the direct costs in NIH funding of the applicant institution and the five-year average of total costs in NIH funding for any clinical research partners. The previous CTSA award budget was based on the total direct costs in NIH funding from the applicant institution and ALL partner institutions. NIH has stated that this change is not meant to decrease funding but to improve program sustainability and increase clinical capabilities. Significant changes in funding will be based on the partner institutions involved in the CTSA Hub award.

- **Career Development and Training:** The required career development component (KL2) will transition to a Clinical Scientist Institutional Career Development Program Award (K12). The optional training component (TL1) will now be issued as three separate optional funding opportunities that are listed below.
  - Ruth L. Kirschstein National Research Award (NRSA) Predoctoral Research Training Grants (T32)
Details on the changes listed above and additional changes can be found in the Notice of Intent to Publish (NOT-TR-21-030) and Funding Opportunity Announcement (PAR-21-293). NIH is also hosting a technical assistance webinar on Tuesday, September 28 at 1 pm ET for interested applicants; more information and registration instructions are available here.

CTSA Hub Funding Opportunity Information:

The first application due date for the CTSA Hub Funding Opportunity is January 26, 2022 with a letter of intent due 30 days prior to the application due date. The earliest start date is December 2022.

Award Information: The maximum project period is 7 years. Applicants can request funding based on the amount of NIH funding they receive using the formula provided in Section IV of the funding opportunity.

Applicant Information: Any public or private institution of higher education, non-profit research institution, for-profit business, or state or local government entity may apply for the CTSA Hub.

Sources and Additional Information:

- The funding opportunity for the CTSA Hubs can be found at https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PAR-21-293.html.
- The Notice of Intent to Publish a suite of updated funding opportunities for the NCATS CTSA Awards can be found at https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-TR-21-030.html.
- Information about the upcoming technical assistance webinar for the CTSA hubs can be found at https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-TR-21-031.html.