2025 CCTSI Pilot Grant Program Overview

Natalie Julie Serkova, Ph.D.
CCTSI Pilot Grant Program Director

Matt Hickey, Ph.D
CSU Pilot Grant Program Director

Christopher Baker, MD
CMH-Pilot Grant Program Director

Kristen House
CCTSI Pilot Grant Program Administrator

CCTSI Funding Opportunities

CCTSI awards $2.8 million/year in pilot grants, microgrants, and pre-doctoral and post-doctoral research scholar awards

$835K in 2025 for CCTSI Pilot Grants

Funding Sources

- National Center for Advancing Translational Science (NCATS)
- University of Colorado School of Medicine Dean's Office
- Children's Hospital Colorado Research Institute
- Traystman' Fund

https://cctsi.cuanschutz.edu/funding

CCTSI-Pilot Grant Categories

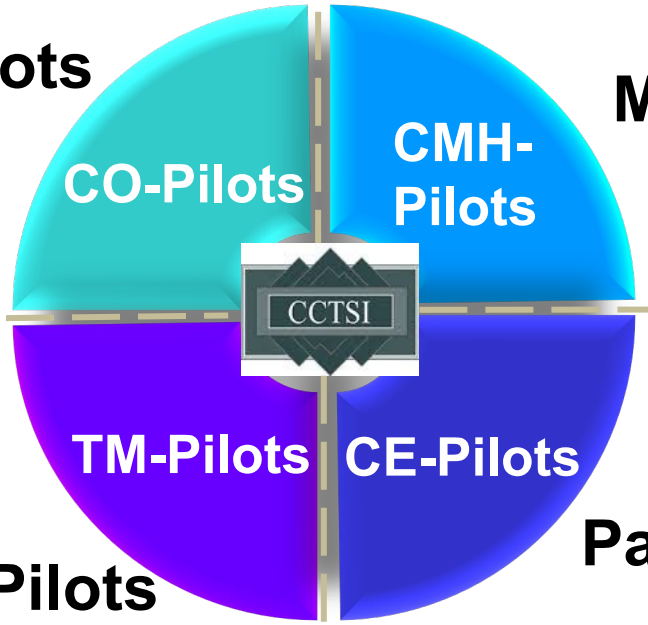
Colorado Pilots (CO-Pilots)
Child and Maternity Health (CMH)
Community Engagement (CE)
Translational Methods (TM)

Early Career Diversity CO-Pilots

Mentored CO-Pilots

Junior CO-Pilots

CU-CSU CO-Pilots



Mentored CMH-Pilots

Junior CMH-Pilots

General TM-Pilots

CSU Investigators TM-Pilots

Biostatistics/Bioinformatics TM-Pilots

Joint Project CE-Pilots

Partnership Development CE-Pilots

CCTSI Pilot Grant Award Eligibility

- CCTSI Members
- Faculty at CCTSI Partner Institutions

Graduate, undergraduate, postdoctoral students, fellows and PRAs are encouraged to participate in Non-Key Roles.

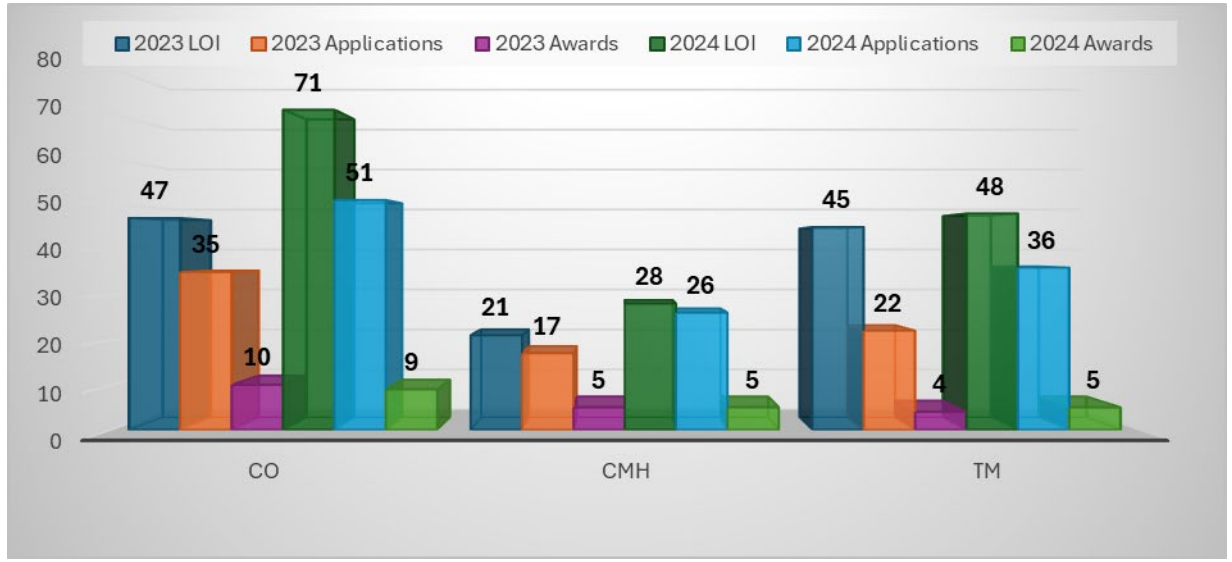
Underrepresented, female, and minority researchers are particularly urged to apply, as the CCTSI intends to contribute to the creation of a research workforce that is representative of the U.S. population.

CU Anschutz Medical Campus
CU Boulder
CU Denver
Colorado State University
Denver Health
University of Colorado Hospital
Children's Hospital Colorado
National Jewish Hospital
VA Eastern CO Health Care System
Kaiser Permanente Colorado

https://cctsi.cuanschutz.edu/aboutus/affiliated-institutions

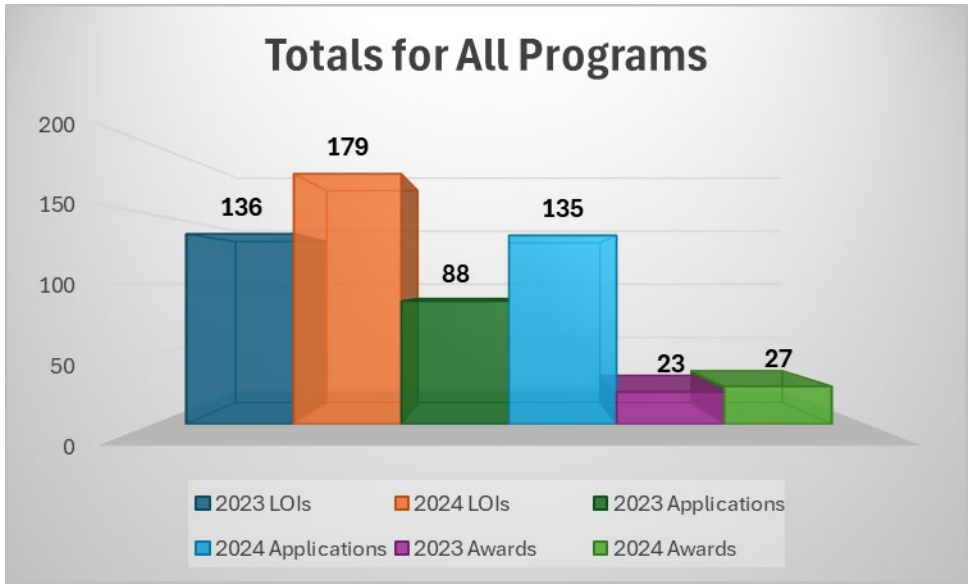
https://cctsi.cuanschutz.edu/funding/membership

History of Applicants



Demographics (2022 – 2024)

CU-AMC	CU-Boulder	CU-Downtown	CSU	CHCO	NJH	DVAMC	DHHA
64%	4%	2%	17%	5%	3%	3%	1%



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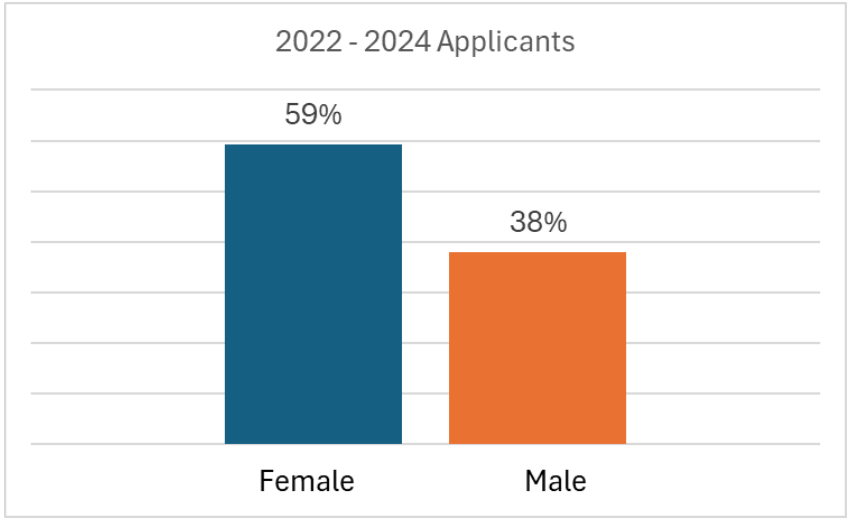


Exclusions/ Restrictions

1. An individual may apply in a Key Role on only one application between the CO-/ CMH-/ CE-Pilots. This restriction is not applicable to the TM-Pilots, nor to Non-Key Roles.
2. Key Role individuals on a no-cost extension (NCE) Pilot award are not allowed to apply for the new cycle.
3. Applications proposing to continue the work of a previously funded CCTSI Pilot Grant Project are not allowed.
4. CCTSI Pilot Grant Awards may not be used to support research conducted outside of the United States. However, proposals that use data or samples collected at international sites through other means may be considered for funding if the portion of the work conducted locally occurs at CCTSI Affiliate Institutions.
5. The CTS-Pilot Program **is not designed to** fund "translational research projects" (which are only focused on crossing a particular step of the translational process for a particular target or disease) that do not also address to some extent a generalizable translational roadblock in **translational science.**

What is new in 2025 Pilot Grant Cycle?

- We are in the new NCATS UM1 Cycle (2023-2029)
- Under the new NCATS guidelines, a pilot project should address overcoming a barrier or roadblock in **translational science** as well as a research question
- No-cost extensions will not be allowed for the 2025 award cycle (all projects must be completed by 7/31/2026)

2025 Pilot Grant Cycle Timeline

	CO-Pilots	CMH-Pilots	TM-Pilots
RFA Announcement	11/4/2024	11/4/2024	11/11/2024
Informational Call #1	11/13/2024	11/13/2024	11/18/2024
Letter of Intent Due	**12/9/2024**	**12/9/2024**	**12/16/2024**
Informational Call #2	12/18/2024	12/18/2024	01/06/2025
Application Due Date	01/13/2025	01/13/2025	01/21/2025
2024 Award Cycle	**08/01/2025 – 07/31/2026**		

Colorado
(CO-Pilot) Grant Program

To encourage cross-disciplinary and collaborative research in clinical and translational medicine focused on improving human health

Basic research at the cellular and molecular level, pre-clinical research in animal models, clinical research in humans, outcomes, and health services research

Program Directors

Natalie Serkova, PhD

Matt Hickey, PhD

Award Categories

- Early-Stage Investigator Diversity Award
- Mentored Faculty
- Junior Faculty
- CSU/ CU Collaboration

Colorado (CO-Pilot) Grant Program

Amount: $40K (Mentored/ Junior/ Early Career Diversity)
$50K (CSU/CU Collaboration)

Duration: 1 year

Major goals

- Support junior faculty/ early-stage investigators in their efforts to become an independent PI
- Facilitate developing preliminary data on hypothesis–driven projects to help securing future federal funds
- Foster new collaborations among established CSU/ CU investigators

Colorado (CO-Pilot) Grant Program

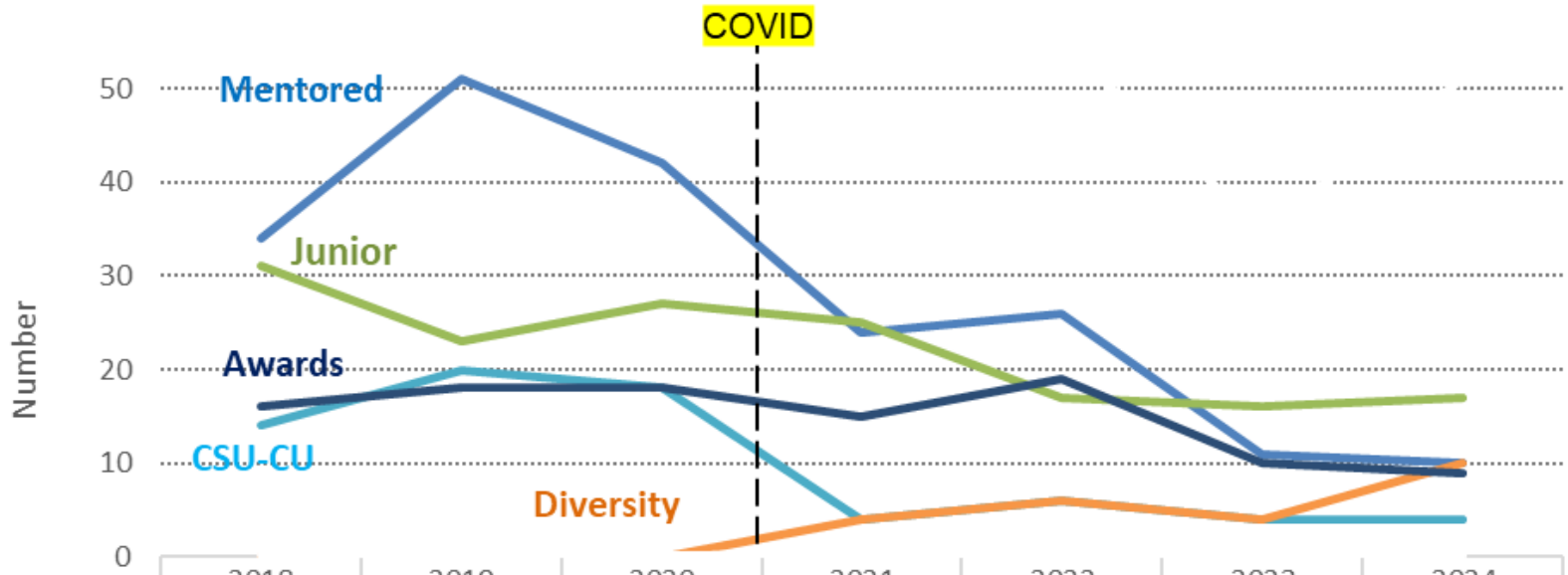
CCTSI Pilot Grant Program: PI Eligibility by Academic Rank

These are typical rank eligibility listings for applicants from CCTSI Affiliated Institutions. If you have eligibility questions for atypical ranks, please contact the appropriate Pilot Program office.

✔ = Eligible	Professor [3]	Associate Professor[3]	Assistant Professor [1,3]	Assistant Professor [2,3]	Instructor/ Senior Instructor[3,4]	Post-Doctoral Fellow/ Residents
Colorado Pilot Program (CO-Pilot)						
Mentored				✔	✔	✔
Junior			✔	✔	✔	
Early-Investigator Diversity			✔	✔	✔	
Collaboration CSU-CU	✔	✔	✔			
Child & Maternal Health Pilot Program (CMH-Pilot)						
Mentored				✔	✔	✔
Junior			✔	✔	✔	
Translational Methods Pilot Program (TM-Pilot)						
All	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	
Community Engagement Pilot Program (CE-Pilot)						
Joint Pilot Projects	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	
Partnership Develop. Projects	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	

[1] Later Career Assistant Professors (4-7 years of experience) typically have prior research funding
[2] Early Career Assistant Professors (1-3 years of experience) typically have had limited or no prior research funding
[3] Includes Research Scientist rank at Colorado State University
[4] Includes Research Associate

Applicants may submit more than one LOI, but only one Application!



	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Mentored	34	51	42	24	26	11	10
Junior	31	23	27	25	17	16	17
CSU-CU Collaboration	14	20	18	4	6	4	4
Diversity	0	0	0	4	6	4	10
Total Applications	79	94	87	57	55	35	51
Awards	16	18	18	15	19	10	9
Funding Rate	20%	19%	21%	26%	35%	29%	18%

Child and Maternal Health (CMH-Pilot) Grant Program

Cross-disciplinary and collaborative research focused on children of all ages as well as pregnant women and mothers of newborn and young infants that will ultimately improve child and maternal health

Basic research at the cellular and molecular level, pre-clinical research in animal models, clinical research in humans, outcomes, and health services research

Program Directors

Christopher Baker, MD

Award Categories

- Mentored Faculty
- Junior Faculty

Child and Maternal Health (CMH-Pilot) Grant Program

Amount: $40K
Duration: 1 year

Major goals

- Support junior faculty/ early-stage investigators in their efforts to become an independent PI
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Child and Maternal Health (CMH-Pilot) Grant Program

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Mentored				✔	✔	✔
Junior			✔	✔	✔	
Early-Investigator Diversity			✔	✔	✔	
Collaboration CSU-CU	✔	✔	✔			
Child & Maternal Health Pilot Program (CMH-Pilot)						
Mentored				✔	✔	✔
Junior			✔	✔	✔	
Translational Methods Pilot Program (TM-Pilot)						
All	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	
Community Engagement Pilot Program (CE-Pilot)						
Joint Pilot Projects	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	
Partnership Develop. Projects	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	

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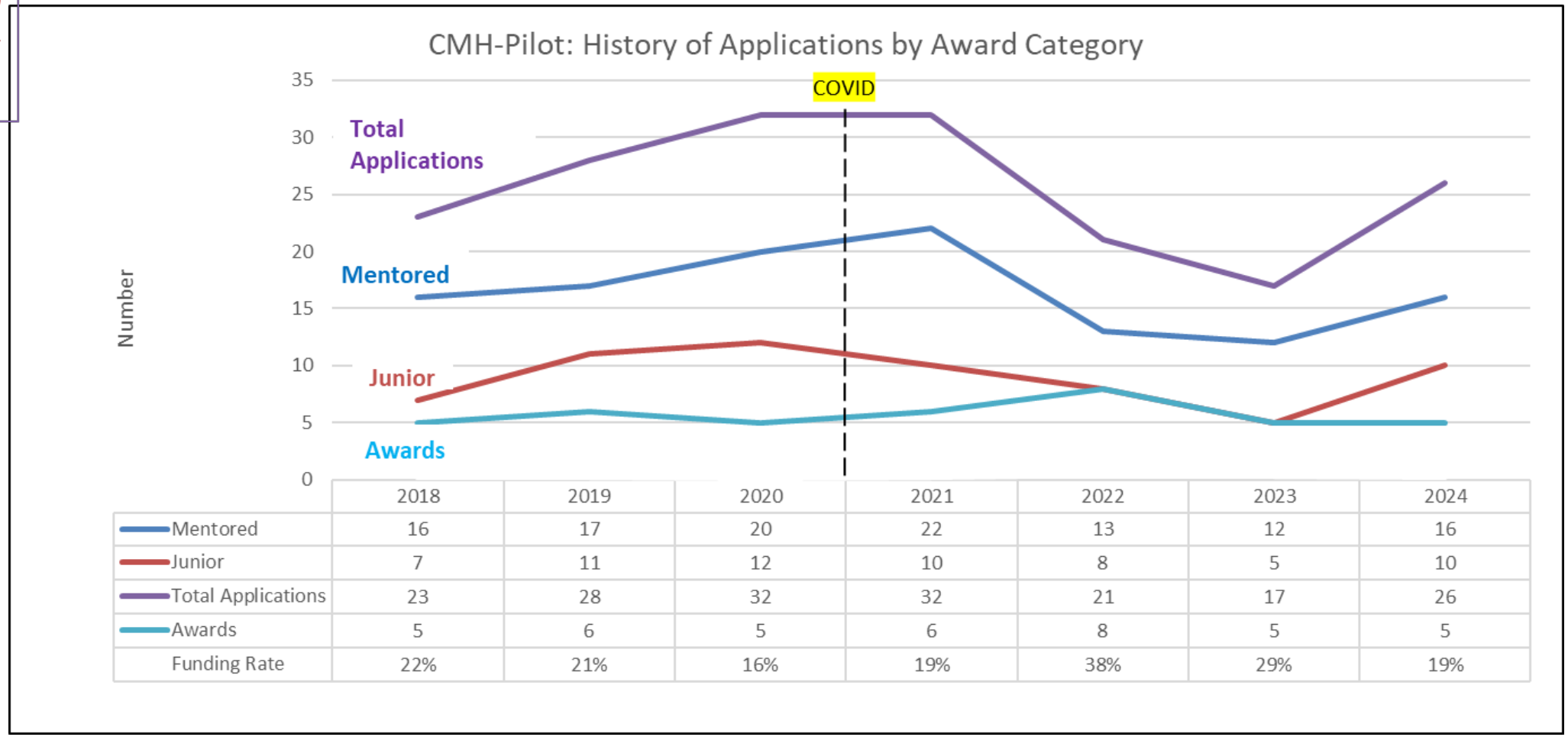


	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Mentored	16	17	20	22	13	12	16
Junior	7	11	12	10	8	5	10
Total Applications	23	28	32	32	21	17	26
Awards	5	6	5	6	8	5	5
Funding Rate	22%	21%	16%	19%	38%	29%	19%

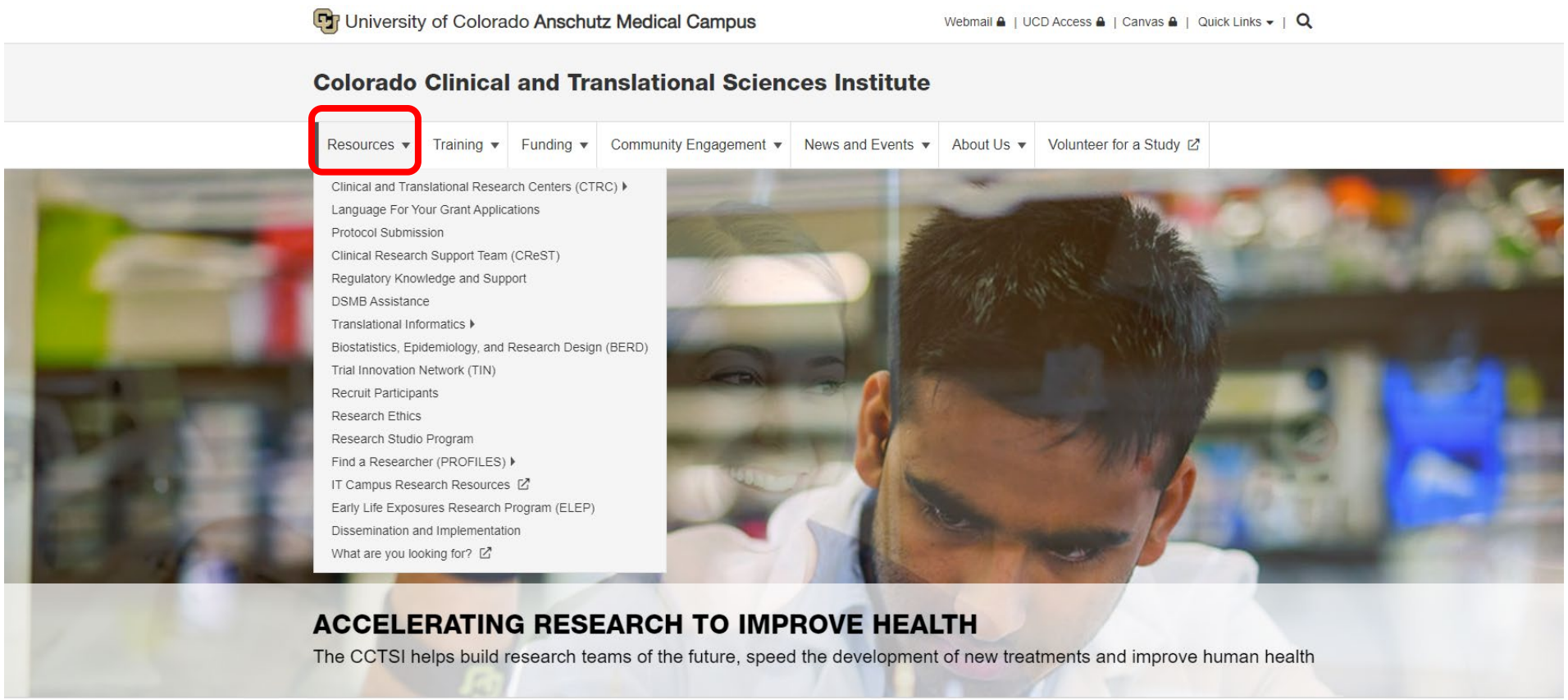
Review Criteria

CO-Pilot and CMH-Pilot

CCTSI Review Panels will use the NIH 9-point scoring system and rate based on following criteria:

a. **Innovation** in research hypotheses, approaches, and techniques.
b. **Approach/Scientific Merit** based on rigor, transparency and one-year feasibility of the proposed study design.
c. **Principal Investigators'** research qualification and collaborative potential of the team and mentors
d. **Significance** to the CCTSI Vision to "Accelerate and catalyze the translation of innovative science into improved health and patient care."
e. **Translational Science Roadblock:** does the Pilot proposal address a translational science roadblock that could be generalizable to other research studies?
f. **Career Development Plan** for Mentored pilot applications only
g. **Environment** and institutional support to the PI and the proposal
*h. **Health Equity and Diversity (Non-Scoring Criteria)***

Tips for Success



Colorado Clinical and Translational Sciences Institute (CCTSI)
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO **DENVER | ANSCHUTZ MEDICAL CAMPUS**

https://cctsi.cuanschutz.edu/resources

Colorado Clinical and Translational Sciences Institute (CCTSI)

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Regulatory Knowledge and Support

The Regulatory Knowledge and Support Core (RKSC) of the CCTSI provides a support structure to deal with the complexities of research regulatory compliance.

Research Ethics

This free consultative service is sponsored by the CCTSI and is available to all biomedical and behavioral researchers at CU Anschutz, as well as its institutional partners and clinical affiliates, who seek advice about ethically complex aspects of their research.

Trial Innovation Network

The Trial Innovation Network is a new collaborative initiative within the CTSA Program and is composed of three key organizational partners – the CTSA Program Hubs, the Trial Innovation Centers (TICs) and the Recruitment Innovation Center (RIC).

Clinical Research Support Team

Provides a pool of experienced study coordinators and regulatory staff to assist with clinical research study start-up, implementation and closeout.

Biostatistics, Epidemiology and Research Design (BERD)

Providing statistical collaboration and resources to CCTSI investigators and trainees. We facilitate clinical and translational research through statistical consultation, improved statistical literacy, through seminars and short courses, and advanced tools

Recruit Participants

Access the many resources necessary for successful recruitment of participants for clinical research studies. Learn how to develop and implement a well-planned strategy.

Funding

Each year, the CCTSI awards more than $2 million in pilot grants, microgrants and pre-doctoral and post-doctoral research scholar awards

Language for Grant Applications

CCTSI resources and other support details for your grant applications.

Protocol Submission

The Research Submission Portal process will ensure that your human subject research is ready for IRB submission.

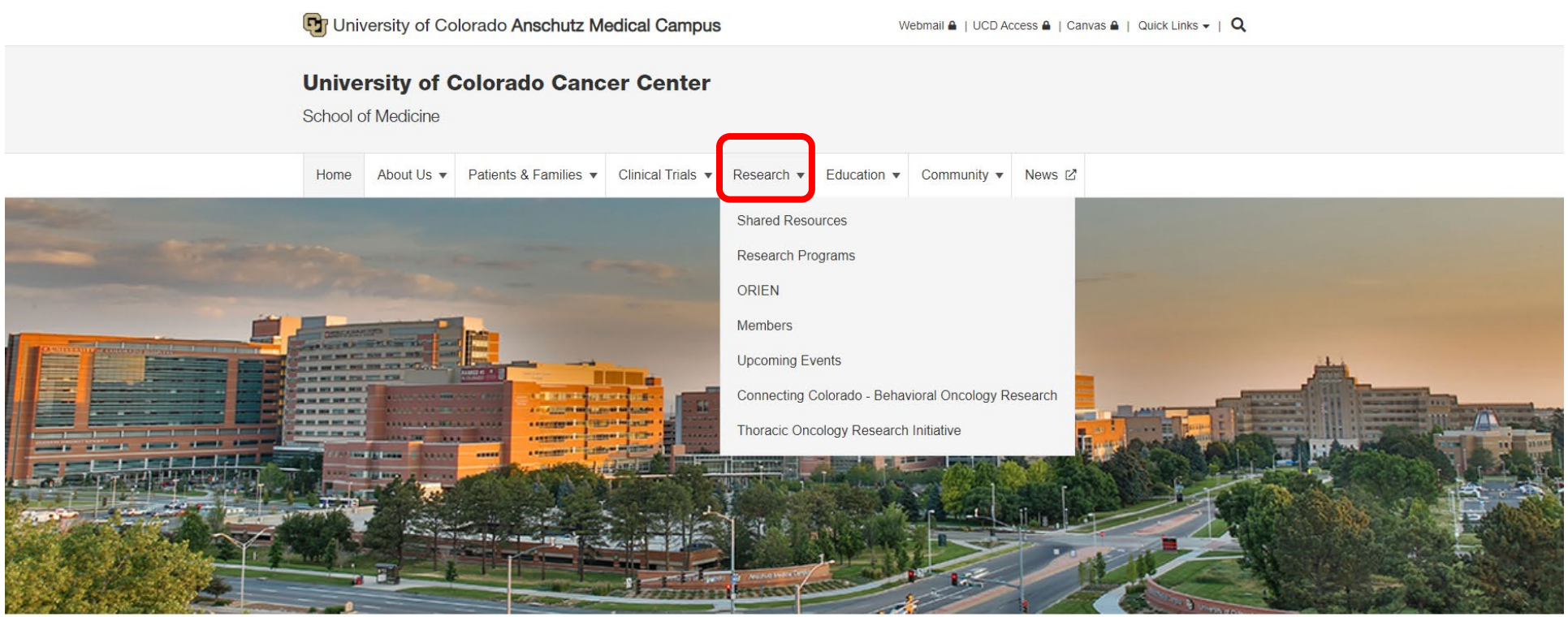
Find a Researcher

The Colorado PROFILES search engine and social networking platform for biomedical researchers provides tools to help investigators and students find experts, potential collaborators or mentors.

[CTRC Pricing](#)

[CCTSI Research Studio Program](#)

[Colorado PROFILES](#)



The CU Cancer Center supports a variety of state-of-the-art technological shared resources – *their incorporation into **CO/CMH/TM-Pilot** proposals is encouraged!*

Animal Imaging – Biostatistics and Bioinformatics – Cell Technologies – Drug Discovery and Development – Flow Cytometry – Functional Genomics – Genomics – Human Immune Monitoring – Mass Spectrometry – Population Health – Structural Biology – Pathology

https://medschool.cuanschutz.edu/colorado-cancer-center#CUMain

University of Colorado **Anschutz Medical Campus**

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Research Core Labs

One of the defining features of a top-tier research university is the availability of core facilities that provide a spectrum of contemporary analytic tools that can be shared across the campus. Ideally these cores provide both technical and consultative services at modest cost and, as a result, elevate the quality of the overall research enterprise. It is appropriate that the core landscape evolves as new technologies emerge and others become obsolete.

Below is a list to the current operational research cores supported by the School of Medicine and the research leadership on the Anschutz Medical Campus.

Search our Core Labs

Keyword or Phrase

e.g., biomarker, data analysis, flow cytometry, genetic screen, proteomics

https://researchcores.cuanschutz.edu/

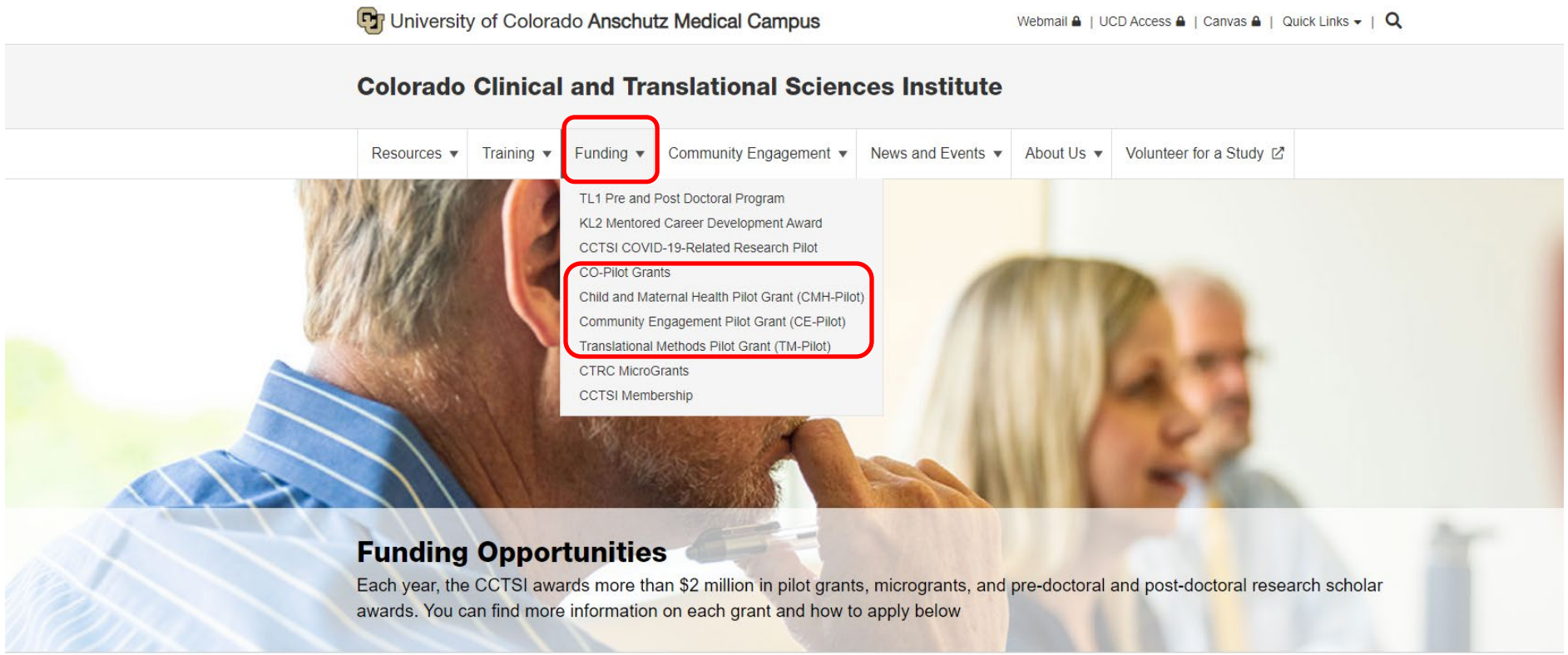
CCTSI

Application Process

Kristen House
CCTSI Pilot Program Administrator

How to Apply

REDCap



https://cctsi.cuanschutz.edu/funding

CCTSI

2025 Key Dates

RFA Posted
November 4, 2024

Intent to Apply Due
December 9, 2024 at 5:00 pm MT

Informational Call #1
November 13, 2024 from 11am-12pm via Zoom

Informational Call #2
December 18, 2024 from 3-4pm via Zoom

Application Deadline
January 13, 2025 at 5:00 pm MT

Scientific Merit Review
April 2025

Notice of Award
May/June 2025

Start of Award
August 1, 2025

Award Expiration Date
July 31, 2026

Early-Stage Investigator Diversity Award - $40,000

Mentored - $40,000

Junior - $40,000

CSU/CU Collaboration - $50,000

Request for Applications (RFA)

The RFA describes eligibility, award categories and application requirements.

PDF **2025 CCTSI CO-Pilot Grant CTS Program RFA** (pdf)
307 KB

CO-Pilot Intent to Apply Form
Deadline: December 9, 2024 at 5:00 PM MT

Information & Resources

https://cctsi.cuanschutz.edu/funding/copilot

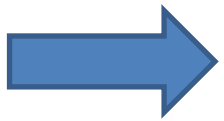
https://cctsi.cuanschutz.edu/funding/cmh

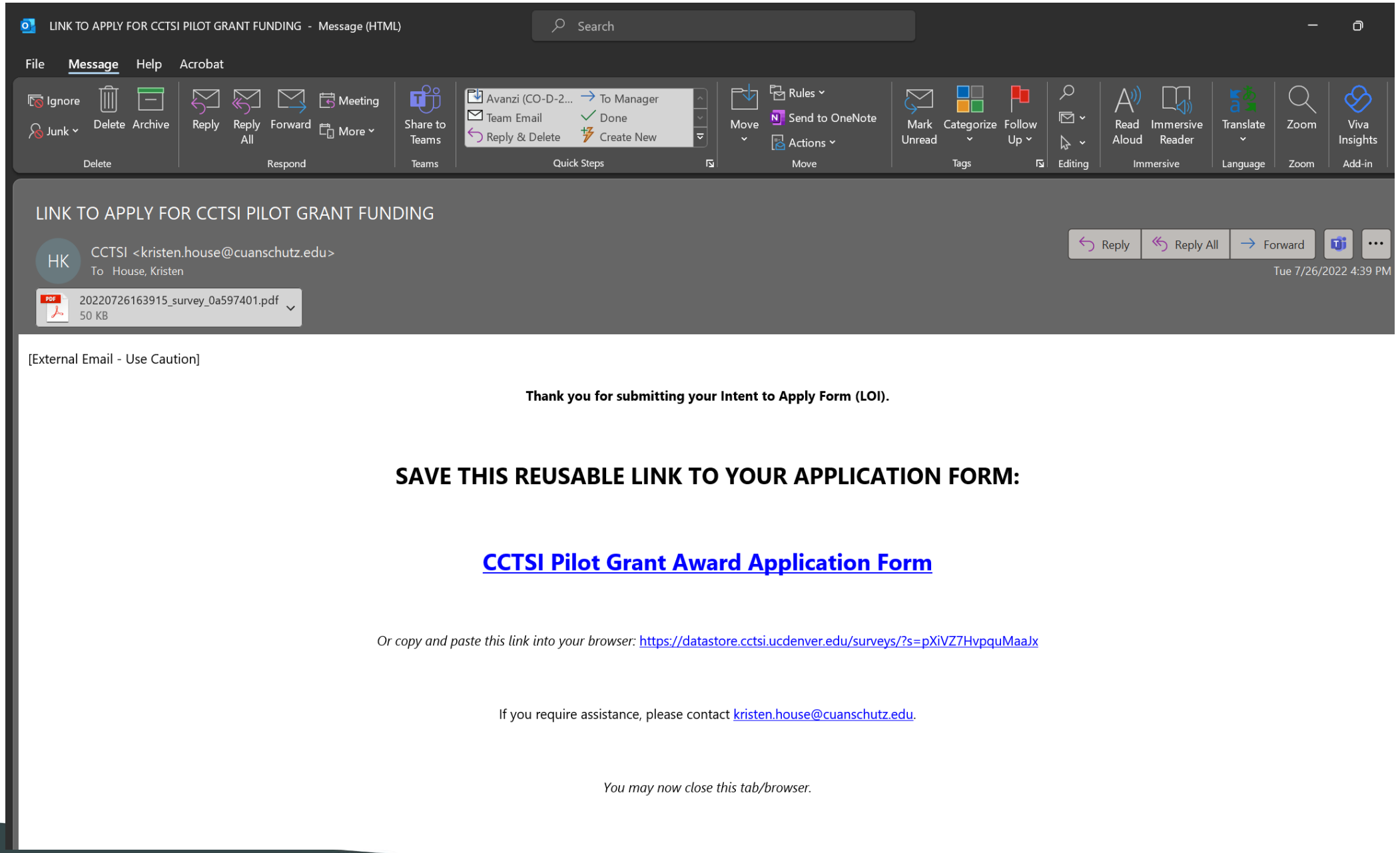
PDF **Translational Science Examples** (pdf)
Download (122 KB)

XLSX **CCTSI Pilot Grant Applicant Checklist** (xlsx)
Download (19 KB)

2025 Required Budget Template (xlsx)

Save this email!





Applicants should customize these Categories

CCTSI Pilot Grant Award Budget

Budget and Active Award Period: August 1, 2025 to July 31, 2026

CATEGORY & ITEM(S)	*Indicate Budget for Each Location*					Total Amount
	CU AMC	CSU	CU Boulder	CHCO	Other Institution (Specify Location)	
Key Personnel Salary & Fringe Benefits						$ -
Other Personnel						$ -
Fee for Service (including Core Services)						$ -
Supplies						$ -
Equipment						$ -
Animals						$ -
Participant Incentives						$ -
Meetings & Travel (Costs are permitted for attendance at one scientific conference)						$ -
	$ -	$ -	$ -		$ -	

TOTAL AWARD BUDGET $ -

Unallowable expenses

- indirect costs
- international entities
- publication costs
- equipment ≥$5,000
- computers
- telecommunications
- food
- furniture
- administrative support
- non-project specific office expenses
- Professional dues/fees/membership
- training costs

Budget Template (Excel) and (PDF)

APPLICATION CHECKLIST

This checklist is for informational purposes only. All applicants must comply with the requirements of the official Request for Funding Appliactions (RFA) posted on the CCTSI website.

Intent to Apply Form (LOI)

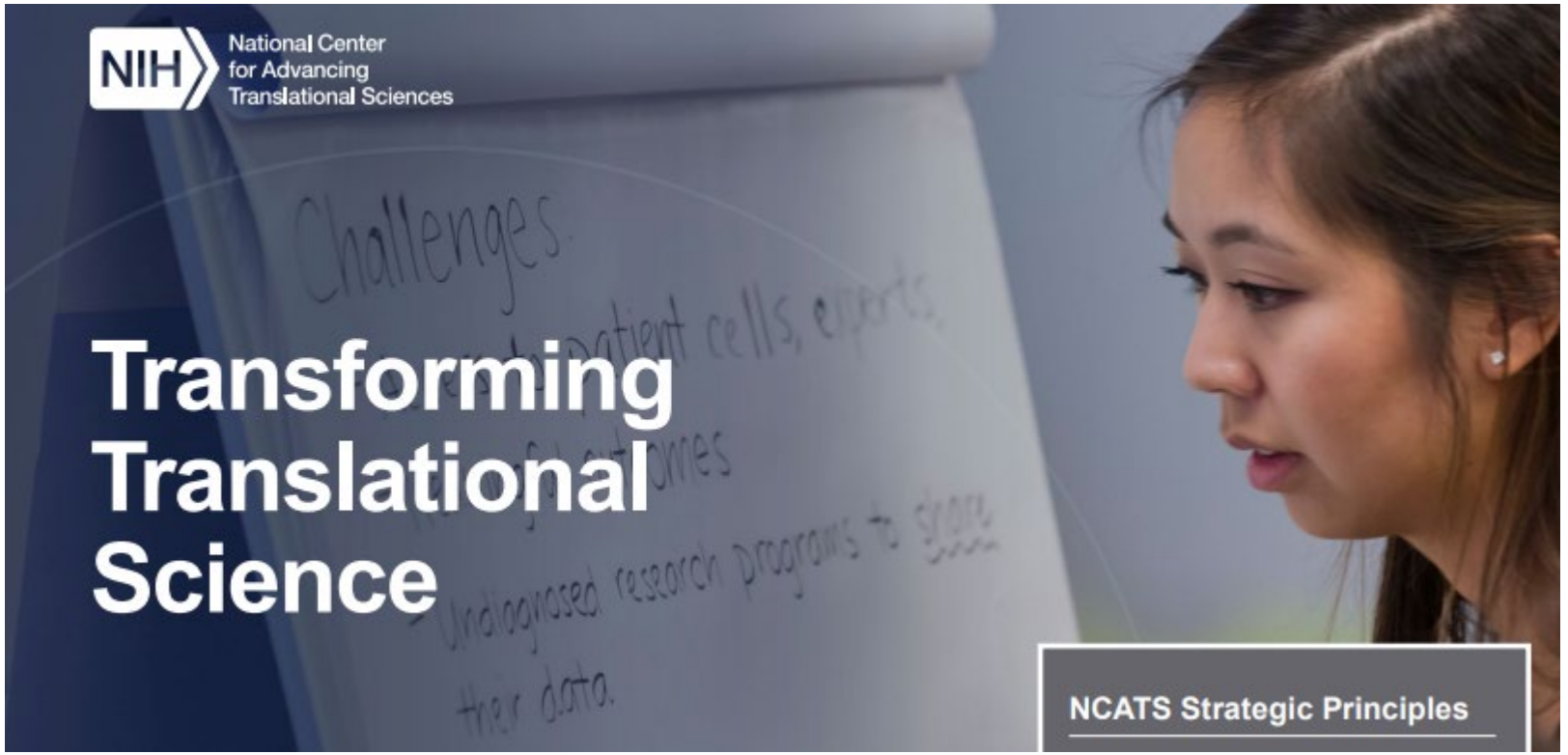
		All Applicants	Mentored	Junior	CU-CSU Award	TM-Pilot	CSU Faculty
1	Select CCTSI Pilot Grant Program	Required					
2	Select Pilot Award Category	Required					
3	Certify this project meets RFA Eligiblity & Exlcusion critera	Required					
4	Does this study involve collaboration with non-CCTSI Affiliated Institution(s)?	Required					
5	Are any investigators involved with this project associated with Colorado State University?	Required					
6	Project Title	Required					
7	Translational Science Roadblock	Required					
8	Contact Information: Principal Investigator	Required					
9	Contact Information: Co-Principal Investigator				Required	Optional	
10	Contact Information: Co-Investigator(s)	If Applicable					
11	Contact Information: Primary Mentor (or two Co-Mentors)		Required				
12	Contact Information: Requested Reviewer(s)	Optional					
13	Research Topics (Used to pair applications with reviewers)	Optional					

Application Checklist (Excel)

Application Form

		All Applicants	Mentored	Junior	CU-CSU Award	TM-Pilot	CSU Faculty
1	Confirm all contact information from LOI is accurate. Combine all documentation required in the RFA and combine into a single PDF to upload with you online Application Form. Refer to RFA for specific formating guidelines.	Required					
2	**Project Overview (2-3 sentences)** List all investigator names, titles, institutions before the Project Overview	Required					
3	**Abstract (strict 250 word limit)**	Required					
4	**Specific Aims**, including a Translational Science Roadblock	Required					
5	**Background, Significance and Innovation**, including the description of the translational science roadblock	Required					
6	**Approach**, including Experimental Design, Translational Science Roadblock, Data and Statistical Analysis, Feasibility, Shared Resources, Timeline	Required					
7	**References (no page limit)**	Required					
8	**Multiple PI Plan (1 page limit)**				Required	Optional	
9	**Mentor Letter of Support (no page limit)** If there are two co-Mentors, a combined letter or two separate letters will be accepted as a single PDF.		Required				
10	**Career Development Plan (1 page)**		Required				
11	**Letters of Support (no page limit)** May include department chairs, consultants, foundations, commercial sources, manufacturers, etc.	Optional					
12	**Budget (1 page limit, vertical alignment only)** Please use the CCTSI Budget Template (available on the CCTSI website)	Required					
13	**Budget Justification**	Required					
14	**Biosketches (no page limit)**	Required					
15	**CSU OSP Proposal Transmission Letter (no page limit)** Contact Jessica Hunter (jessica.hunter@colostate.edu) for details.				Required		Required
16	**Cost Share Budget (1 page limit)** Applications may include collaboration with non-CCTSI Affiliated organizations. Refer to RFA for specific instructions.	See RFA, Check with Kristen House					
17	**Other: Institutional Prior Approval (no page limit)** Applicants based at CCTSI Affiliated Institutions are strongly encouraged to work with the sponsored programs office at their institution to meet all pre-application requirements specific to their organization, including applications for federal and non-federal (internally funded) seed grant programs	Check with institution					

Application Checklist (Excel)



Whereas “translational research” focuses on crossing a particular step of the translational process for a particular target or disease, translational science is focused on the general case that applies to any/multiple targets or diseases.

A key tenet of translational science is to understand common causes of inefficiency and failure to complete translational research projects in a timely fashion, which may present a common barrier across various research targets, diseases, and therapeutic areas.

CCTSI

Examples of Translational Science Roadblocks

In the application, the PI must state clearly what is your "translational science roadblock" that you will be addressing in your proposal:

- improved study design by improving rigor and transparency in major generalizable areas of translational discovery
- technical execution of complex mechanistic studies in humans or animal models
- challenges to data acquisition, integrity and analysis
- translational barrier from animal models to human trials; or between adult and pediatric patient populations
- timely participant recruitment and retention
- enhanced recruitments and engagement of underserved populations

Translation Science Examples (PDF)

- Discovering new therapeutic targets and molecular pathways which play crucial roles across carious therapeutic areas
- Developing or testing models that better predict a person's response to treatment
- Using novel methods to translate findings from the laboratory, clinic, or community into treatments and interventions
- Developing data acquisition methods or post-processing that will facilitate use of complex technologies and datasets in clinical research
- Novel use of informatics or big data to answer important clinical questions
- Developing or testing novel methods in early stage (Phase 1-2) clinical trials to make the trial more efficient
- Developing or testing novel methods, processes or study designs to address health disparities
- Enhancing the design and conduct of clinical trials so the results more accurately reflect the patient population generally affected by a disease (to enhance clinical relevance)
- Developing and testing new tools for engagement of underserved populations
- Developing or testing processes to improve enrollment of diverse populations in a hypothesis-driven research pilot study
- Validating natural animal models of human disease in companion animals

How to Address Translational Science Roadblocks?

Some Examples of Translational Science Pilot Focus

Establishing Molecular Mechanisms of Polymorphism of Cytochrome P450: This study will be performed in vitro using Tg and KO epithelial and hepatic cells using novel immunosuppressive drug (CU AMC Drug Discovery Core). CYP450 polymorphism is a very generalized problem, and its understanding will help to establish pharmacokinetic properties of over 75% of existing therapeutic agents (CSU Drug Discovery Core). The pilot addresses the barrier of rigor and transparency in major generalizable areas of translational discovery.

Advanced Bulimia Treatment in Adolescent Girls: Efforts will be made to enroll young female participants from diverse geo-economic and racial background to address eating and behavioral disorders. fMRI at a 3 Tesla MRI (CU AMC Brain Imaging Core) will provide pharmacodynamics readouts. Addresses enhanced recruitments and engagement of underserved populations

Some Examples of Translational Science Pilot Focus

Validating Natural Animal Translational Disease Models: Many diseases of dogs, cats, horses and other animals are more similar to diseases in people than induced diseases in traditional rodent models. For example, osteosarcoma in dogs is genetically similar to the same tumor in people and responds to similar therapies. Idiopathic epilepsy in dogs has many symptoms that mimic childhood epilepsies. Accordingly, validating the molecular, diagnostic, and therapeutic features of these diseases in veterinary clinical trials (so called "T0.5") is a mechanism for improving translational science, addressing translational barrier from animal models to human trials.

Retrospective Analysis on Multi-Institutional CU-CSU Omics Data: These pilots could leverage the pilot to address the issue of performing team science across institutions and data harmonization and transfer between institutions, etc. Address challenges in data acquisition, integrity and analysis

CCTSI Pilot Grant Contacts

https://cctsi.cuanschutz.edu/funding

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Jessica Hunter

CSU Pilot Program Administrator

jessica.hunter@colostate.edu

Nikki Leonardo

CU Boulder Pilot Program Administrator

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Dr. Natalie Serkova

CO/TM-Pilot Program Director

natlie.serkova@cuanschutz.edu

Dr. Christopher Baker

CMH-Pilot Director

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Dr. Matt Hickey

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