

**GEORGETOWN-HOWARD UNIVERSITIES CENTER FOR CLINICAL AND
TRANSLATIONAL SCIENCE**
GHUCCTS

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

Clinical and Translational Research and Science Pilot Awards

Fiscal Year 2026

KEY DATES

Milestone	Date
RFA Released	October 6, 2026
Letter of Intent (LOI) Due	October 28, 2026
LOI Decisions Communicated	November 11, 2026
Full Application Due	December 14, 2026
Review Period	December 16, 2026–January 8, 2027
Award Notifications	January 15, 2027
Earliest Anticipated Project Start Date	January 22, 2027

1. Program Overview and Announcement

The Georgetown-Howard Universities Center for Clinical and Translational Science (GHUCCTS) invites applications for its Pilot Program, supported by our UM1 award from the National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences (NCATS). We welcome Clinical and Translational Research (CTR) projects, including studies focused on a specific disease, population, or clinical setting, that incorporate Clinical and Translational Science (CTS) principles into their design and conduct.

The program supports innovative, short-term projects that advance research toward improved individual and community health while generating insights into how translation can be improved. Applicants should identify a translational challenge and explain how their approach could inform research beyond the immediate study.

Over 15 years and more than 65 funded projects, our Pilot Program has supported groundbreaking inter-institutional collaborations, early-stage investigator development, and research that has gone on to receive extramural funding from NIH, PCORI, the VA, and private foundations. The Pilot Program builds on these achievements with strengthened infrastructure, expanded mentorship, and an emphasis on integrating CTS principles into research.

How CTR and CTS Work Together

CTR advances discoveries toward improvements in health, often within a specific disease, population, or setting. CTS develops and studies ways to improve the translational process itself. This program welcomes CTR that incorporates CTS principles and examines a translational challenge within the proposed research. Applicants should describe the potential for the resulting methods, approaches, or lessons to benefit other studies or settings.

2. Funding Priorities

The GHUCCTS Pilot Program will prioritize projects aligned with NCATS and GHUCCTS programmatic priorities. Proposals should identify a translational challenge, describe how CTS principles will guide the work, and explain the potential broader relevance of the approach or lessons learned.

Priority domains include but are not limited to:

NCATS Translational Science Priorities

- Development, evaluation, or adaptation of approaches, tools, or resources to address obstacles to translation, including those encountered within disease-focused research or training.
- Innovative approaches to a translational challenge with potential application to other studies, populations, or settings.
- Biostatistics, epidemiology, and research design (BERD) or AI/ML research.
- Feasibility/proof-of-concept studies that incorporate CTS principles and lay the groundwork for future CTR or CTS projects.
- Analysis of real-world data, including clinical datasets and digital health data, to develop evidence, biomarkers, or processes while examining approaches that may inform other translational studies.

GHUCCTS Local Priority Domains

Applications are especially encouraged in the following GHUCCTS priority domains:

- **D&I research that examines the uptake, adoption, or scale-up of evidence-based interventions into practice or policy.**
- **Innovative use of AI/ML, informatics, or computational approaches to address translational challenges.**
- **Research to address a translational challenge that is co-developed with communities, patient advisory boards, or practice-based research networks (PBRNs).**

Please reach out to the contacts in Section 12 if you require additional information or guidance on these priorities.

3. Award Information

Award Type	Description & Amount
CTR/CTS Pilot Award	Up to \$40,000 direct costs 12-month duration <i>Four awards are anticipated per year</i>

No-Cost Extensions: Due to CTSA funding restrictions, no-cost extensions cannot be approved.

4. Eligibility

All full-time faculty at GHUCCTS partner institutions are eligible to apply:

- Howard University (HU)
- Georgetown University (GU)
- MedStar Health Research Institute (MHRI)
- DC Veterans Affairs Medical Center (DC VAMC)
- Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL)

Community partners, including investigators from our two allied Practice-Based Research Networks (PBRNs) and local health departments, may apply in partnership with a full-time faculty investigator from a GHUCCTS institution. Each application must identify a Contact PI responsible for coordinating and submitting the application.

5. Application Process

Step 1: Review Links to Relevant Background Materials on CTS/CTR

Prospective applicants are encouraged to review the NCATS Translational Science Principles and consider how to incorporate them into their research. Examples include addressing unmet needs, working across disciplines, engaging patients and communities as partners, improving research efficiency, and developing solutions relevant to other studies. Applicants should explain how selected principles will be put into practice and how the project will examine the identified translational challenge. Resources: <https://ncats.nih.gov/about/about-translational-science/principles> and <https://ncats.nih.gov/about/about-translational-science/spectrum>

Step 2: Letter of Intent (LOI) — Due October 28, 2026

LOIs are limited to 2 pages and must include the following:

- Title and names of all investigators
- Description of draft objectives/aims
- Brief summary of innovation and approach
- Brief description of the translational challenge, the CTS principles incorporated, and how the approach or lessons learned could inform other studies or settings
- Explanation of project feasibility within the \$40,000 budget and 12-month timeline
- Note of support from the PI's Department Chair or Dean confirming protected time and acknowledging the project's fit with the program's translational goals

Applicants are strongly encouraged to consult with GHUCCTS Element/Module Leads — including a consultation with the D&I team — before submitting their LOI. GHUCCTS navigators are available to facilitate these introductions. (See section 6 for emails and links)

LOIs will be reviewed for responsiveness to the RFA, integration of CTS principles, potential translational contribution, and feasibility by the Pilot Module Co-Leads and a subcommittee of the Scientific Review Group. Disease-specific CTR proposals are welcome when they address these elements. Investigators with successful LOIs will be invited to submit a full application.

Step 3: Full Application — Due December 14, 2026 -- Full applications consist of a Specific Aims page plus a 4-page narrative (not counting abstract, lay summary, references, biosketches, budget, or attachments). IRB or IACUC submission is required within one month of award notification.

Required application components:

- Abstract (250-word limit): Must be written for a lay audience. Avoid or define all technical terms. Address relevance to public/community health.
- Specific Aims page (1-page, NIH format)
- Narrative (4-page limit): Consecutively numbered pages; PI name at top of each page; single-spaced; 11-point font minimum; 0.5-inch margins. Include Background and Translational Impact, Preliminary Studies, and Design and Methods. Within the narrative, devote ¼ to ½ page to the translational challenge, how CTS principles are incorporated and assessed, and the potential relevance of the approach or lessons to other studies or settings. Human Subjects considerations are not subject to the page limit.
- Biosketches: Current NIH biosketch for all investigators
- Budget: Use NIH budget page (PHS 398 Form Page 4). A separate budget and subcontract are required for each participating institution.
- Budget Justification: Include roles and responsibilities of all personnel and justification for non-personnel costs.
- Departmental and GHUCCTS Executive Approval Form
- IRB/IACUC submission confirmation or documentation of exemption is required within one month of award notification.
- D&I Consultation confirmation.

Allowable and Unallowable Costs

Allowable: Laboratory supplies, participant costs, consultants, research support personnel (salary/wages and fringe benefits), use of institutional/core and GHUCCTS services, travel necessary to perform research.

Unallowable: PI salary support or salary for faculty collaborators, durable equipment >\$5,000/unit, office supplies, meals or conference travel, publication or presentation costs, professional education or training, indirect costs/F&A.

6. GHUCCTS Resources for Proposal Development

GHUCCTS offers free consultation services to support proposal development. Utilization of these services is viewed favorably by the review committee. Available resources include:

- D&I Consultation (required for all applicants) – Dr. Hannah Arem at Hannah.Arem@medstar.net
- Biostatistics and Research Design: [Link to form](#)
- Data Science: Dr. Peter McGarvey at pbm9@georgetown.edu from GU; Dr. Talitha Washington at talitha.washington@howard.edu from HU; and Dr. Nawar Shara at nawar.shara@medstar.net from MHRI
- Clinical Research Units (HU & GU): Terry Jeffs at jeffsm@georgetown.edu from GU; and Cheri Frey at cheri.frey@Howard.edu from HU
- Community Engagement Services: Florencia Gonzalez at florencia.gonzalez@howard.edu
- Recruitment and Participant Engagement: Dr. Finie Richardson at fkhunter@howard.edu
- GHUCCTS Navigators (to connect with Module/Element Leads and resources): Wendy Enriquez at Wendy.K.Enriquez@medstar.net

For a full list of GHUCCTS Programs & Resources, visit the GHUCCTS website or contact the Pilot Program Administrator; Angel Nkwain contact at Angel.Nkwain@howard.edu.

7. Departmental and Institutional Approvals

Before submitting, the PI (and any Co-PIs) must obtain approval from their Department Chair or Division Chief and from the GHUCCTS Executive at their institution. A form is provided in the application packet.

Institution	GHUCCTS Executive Contact
Howard University	Dr. Marjorie C. Gondré-Lewis — mgondre-lewis@howard.edu
Georgetown University	Dr. Jason Umans — jgu@georgetown.edu
DC VA Medical Center	Dr. Samir S. Patel — samir.patel@va.gov
MedStar Health	Dr. Neil Weissman — Neil.J.Weissman@Medstar.net
ORNL	Dr. Anuj Kapadia — KapadiaAJ@ORNL.gov

Note: All pilot studies conducted at the DC VAMC also require approval by the DC VAMC Research & Development (R&D) Committee.

8. Review Criteria and Process

Applications will undergo NIH-patterned peer review by a standing Scientific Review Group, including representatives from all GHUCCTS partner institutions and schools of Nursing, Health, and Dentistry. Each application will be reviewed by 3–4 reviewers (including one community representative). Scores are based on the following criteria:

Criterion	Description
Integration of CTS Principles	Does the project meaningfully incorporate CTS principles to examine a translational challenge? Is there a plausible path for the approach or lessons learned to inform other studies or settings?
Significance	Does the project address an important translational question? Will it move the field forward?
Innovation	Does the project offer novel approaches, methods, or applications?
Approach	Will the methods achieve the proposed aims within 12 months and \$40,000?
D&I Plan	Is there a clear, realistic plan to disseminate findings to academic and community audiences?
Use of GHUCCTS Resources	Does the proposal leverage GHUCCTS resources, modules, and infrastructure?
Future Extramural Potential	Does the project provide a clear pathway toward future NIH or other extramural funding?

9. Regulatory Requirements

GHUCCTS is funded through a CTSA grant from NCATS. **NCATS policy requires review and approval of all GHUCCTS pilot grants involving human subjects research prior to fund disbursement.** If your proposal involves human subjects:

- NCATS review will occur concurrently with IRB review; however, final NCATS approval is contingent on IRB approval.
- NCATS review typically takes about 30 days; IRB or IACUC submission is required within one month of award notification.

10. Expectations for Funded Projects

All awardees will be required to:

- Draft specific monthly milestones toward project aims, subject to review and approval by a subcommittee of the Scientific Review Group.
- Submit quarterly progress reports and participate in bimonthly oversight reviews.
- Present results to GHUCCTS Community Advisory Board (CAB), Partner Advisory Board (PAB), and at annual hub-wide research symposia.
- Develop a "Translational Story" describing the research, how CTS principles informed the work, and lessons that may benefit other studies, for use in GHUCCTS training and sharing with academic and community partners.
- For projects involving Early-Stage Investigators (ESIs): include a mentoring plan with milestones for applying CTS principles and continued GHUCCTS engagement.

11. How to Apply

Applications must be submitted online through the GHUCCTS REDCap portal. Applications not compliant with these guidelines will not be considered for review.

Letter of Intent (LOI): <https://www.cccb.howard.edu/redcap/surveys/?s=CRF7MK4JHKEDDPM>

LOI Due: October 28, 2026

Application Portal: [Preview of Full Application](#); **Selected LOIs** will be invited to complete the full application

Full Application Due: December 14, 2026

Applications **MUST** use the templates provided in the portal (NIH budget page PHS 398 Form Page 4 and Budget Justification template). Copies can be downloaded through the application portal.

12. Questions and Contact

For questions about GHUCCTS resources, proposal development, or application submission:

GHUCCTS Pilot Program Administrator: Angel Nkwain — Angel.Nkwain@Howard.edu

Community Engagement: Florencia.Gonzalez@Howard.edu

Pilot Module Co-Leads: Dr. Marjorie Gondré-Lewis (mgondre-lewis@howard.edu) and Dr. Jason Umans (jgu@georgetown.edu)

GHUCCTS is committed to advancing translational science for the benefit of all communities.

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