Advance RI-CTR Health Research Core
Call for Applications (2026-2027)

Award Types:

- Pilot Projects
- Developmental Projects
- Mentored Scholar Advancement

Submission Deadlines:

- Preliminary Applications: October 9th
- Full Proposal Invites: October 19th
- Full Proposals: December 14th

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Overview

Advance RI-CTR

The overall goal of Advance RI-CTR is the acceleration of innovative research to improve health in Rhode Island (RI) and beyond. Our mission is to enhance an ecosystem of clinical and translational research, synergistic collaboration, and community engagement that supports the development and education of the clinical and translational CTR workforce, accelerates health discoveries, and translates them into solutions that are responsive to the health needs of all Rhode Island communities.

Advance RI-CTR Health Research Core

The HR Core's mission is to provide the infrastructure for clinical and translational research (CTR) that will be needed to address the unmet health needs of the population of Rhode Island (RI). Partnerships from different departments or institutions are encouraged. Trans-institutional collaborations among investigators at Brown University, University of Rhode Island, and/or Rhode Island healthcare institutions are highly encouraged.

Application Information

- Submission Platform: UFunds Portal
    - Don't have a Brown email address? Reach out to advanceri@brown.edu no later than **September 25th** for access.
    - Informational Webinar: **Friday September 18th at 11:30** (register here) and available post-session on the Advance RI-CTR YouTube Channel

Relevant Definitions

For the purpose of this Program, the following terms used throughout the RFA are defined below:

1) *Early Stage:* Assistant Professor or below
2) *New Investigator:* Never had an independent multi-year extramural award (e.g. R01, VA MERIT, DOW NIH, or similar awards)
3) *Clinical Fellow:* defined as a post-residency clinical trainee receiving advanced training in a clinical specialty
4) *Established Investigator:* An investigator who does not meet the criteria outlined above for a new investigator; someone who has received an R01 grant or equivalent NIH award as Program Director/Principal Investigator
5) *Clinical research:* comprises research with human subjects that is:
    - Patient-oriented research. Research conducted with human subjects (or on material of human origin such as tissues, specimens, and cognitive phenomena) for which an investigator directly interacts with human subjects. Excluded from this definition are in vitro studies that utilize human tissues that cannot be linked to a living individual
    - Epidemiological and behavioral studies
    - Outcomes research and health services research
6) *Translational research:* aims to convert basic research advances to applications in humans and/or research aimed at the adoption of best practices in community health care.
7) *Community Engaged Research:* the process of working collaboratively with and through groups of people affiliated by geographic proximity, special interest, or similar situations to address issues affecting the well-being of those people.

Award Information, Categories & Eligibility Requirements

General Eligibility Requirements for <u>All Award Types</u>

1. All PIs (Contact or MPI):
    a. Must possess health-professional or research doctoral degree(s)
    b. Hold a faculty appointment at Brown University or the University of Rhode Island at the time the award commences (except clinical fellows).
    c. Are required to be affiliated with an Advance RI-CTR partner health care system (Brown University Health, Care New England, VA Providence), Brown University or the University of Rhode Island.
2. No concurrent funding from a COBRE project or another IDeA mechanism of support at the same time as Advance RI-CTR Project funding.
3. No significant scientific or budgetary overlap with another funded project
4. Meet all other eligibility requirements for the Category they are applying to (see below).

Award Types:

Pilot Project Awards

<u>Award Type Information:</u>

- *Award Amount*: Up to $100K
- *Award Duration*: 12 months
- *Number of Awards*: Minimum of 4 awards funded per year
- *Target Audience*:

        - Early-stage faculty (Assistant Professor or below) who have not been awarded (a) major extramural grant (e.g., an R01), or (b) clinical fellows expecting to complete clinical training in 1–2 years.
        - MPIs may be of junior or senior status but must meet all other eligibility criteria.
        - Senior faculty who are transitioning to a new area of clinical or translational research may also apply.
    - Early-stage and new investigators OR clinical fellows with a research mentor required.
    - *Expected Outcome*: K-series or career development-oriented RPG applications.

Mentor Requirement Information:

- Early-Stage faculty or clinical fellows leading a PP must have at least 1 research mentor.
    - Mentors must have a research mentoring record and expertise in the research area.
    - Mentors will be expected to complete the research mentor training offered by the PD Core.

Developmental Project Awards

Award Type Information:

- *Award Amount*: Up to $100K/year ($200K total)
- *Award Duration*: 24 months
- *Number of Awards*: Minimum of 2 projects funded per year
- *Target Audience*: Independent Investigators (early-career to established)
- *Expected Outcome*: Project developed into full investigator-initiated grant (e.g., NIH R01)

Additional Eligibility Information

- MPIs may be of junior or senior status but must meet all other eligibility criteria
- Clinical fellows are not eligible.

Mentor Requirement Information:

- Mentors are not required

Mentored Scholar Advancement Awards

Award Type Information:

- *Award Amount*:
    - Support protected time for research development - Up to 25% FTE (max $40,000 per year) for scholar
    - Up to 5% FTE (up to $10,000) for Mentor
    - Note: Funding is for protected time, not research project funding.
- *Award Duration*: 12 months
- *Target Audience*: Early-stage and new investigators (Assistant Professor or below) or Clinical Fellows plus experienced mentor
- *Expected Outcome*: K-series or small/developmental research project grant applications

Additional Eligibility Information:

- Early-stage and new investigators (Assistant Professor or below) or Clinical Fellows
- Experienced mentor

Mentor Requirement Information:

- An experienced mentor is required for this award:
    - Mentors must have a research mentoring record and expertise in the research area.
    - Mentors will be expected to complete the research mentor training offered by the PD Core.

Required Consultations:

All applicants must schedule a consultation with the Advance RI-CTR Core(s), Research Design, Compliance, and Data management (RDCD), and, if the project involves community engagement, the Community Engagement and Outreach (CEO). Applicants should review available services on the Advance RI-CTR website and submit service requests.

Other services Available:
Community Engaged Practice Based Research Network (CEPBRN): is a resource available for pilot projects. Contact the Community Engagement and Outreach Core Project Manager, Tammy Thorson, at tammy_thorson@brown.edu.

Application Instructions

To apply for an Advance RI-CTR Health Research award, investigators must first submit a Preliminary Application to Advance RI-CTR. Selected applicants will then be invited to submit full proposals.

Preliminary Application Submission Instructions

Prospective applicants must submit a Preliminary Application through the **UFunds Portal** no later than October 9, 2026 at 5pm ET.
Applicants will be notified on or around October 19th if they are invited to submit a full proposal.

The Preliminary Application must include the following:

1. Contact and academic information
2. Award category
3. Structured one-page overview of research aims, significance, and approach.
4. References.
5. NIH-formatted biosketch for each investigator and, if applicable, mentor.

Criteria for Review: See Review Process and Selection Criteria section below.

Full Proposal Submission Instructions

DUE DATE: December 14, 2026 at 5pm ET.

Complete applications must include the following sections. Please be sure to consult your institutional research office for internal requirements related to the submission.

Proposal Format
Applications should follow an abbreviated NIH format with minor modifications. This application requires the use of the most recent version of the PHS 398 Forms.

- *Font*: Arial, Helvetica, Palatino Linotype or Georgia typeface and a font size of 11 points or larger must be used. A Symbol font may be used to insert Greek letters or special characters; the font size requirement still applies. A smaller font size may be used for figures, graphs, diagrams, charts, tables, figure legends, and footnotes, but this type must follow the font typeface requirement and be readily legible.

- *Margins*: Margins should be 0.5 inch.

Proposal Content for All Awards:

- *Face Page*: (PHS 398 Form Page 1) (one per institution included in the application)
    - The Face Page should include Contact PI name, academic title, institution, address, title of project, and the name of the institutional grant management official. (Note: This form does not need to be signed by an institutional official at the time of submission.
- *Project Summary, NIH Page 2*: (PHS 398 Form Page 2)
    - Project Summary: should be a succinct and accurate description of the proposed work. State the application's broad, long-term objectives and specific aims, making reference to the health relatedness of the project. Concisely describe the research design and methods for achieving the stated goals. The summary should be informative to other people working in the same or related fields and, insofar as possible, understandable to a scientifically or technically literate reader. Avoid describing past accomplishments and the use of first person.
    - Relevance: Describe the relevance of this research to health. Be succinct and use plain language that can be understood by a general, lay audience.
    - Project/Performance Site Primary Location: Include the information pertinent to the contact PI's home institution.
    - Additional Project/Performance Site Location*:* Include the information pertaining to any additional performance sites. If more than two performance sites will be used, list additional sites on the PHS 398 Project/Performance Site Format Page.
    - Senior/ Key Personnel*:* Include the Contact PI, and multi-PI's (if Category 2). All Senior/ Key Personnel must include a biosketch in the application.
    - Other Significant Contributors: Mentors should be included in this section (unless they are also a multi-PI). Please include mentor biosketches in the application.
- *Budget: (PHS 398 Form Page 4)*
    - The anticipated budget period is 3/1/27 to 2/29/28 for 12-month awards and for the first year of 24-month awards.
    - A separate budget must be submitted for each institution requesting support. Together, the budgets must total no more than total allowable direct costs based on the selected category of funding. Funding will cover direct costs only.
    - All PIs must devote some effort.
        - Mentored Scholar awards *only* provide protected time for the scholar and mentor; no other items may be included in the budget.
        - Cost Share: Investigators providing effort without salary support are considered cost shared and must obtain a letter from an authorized organizational official (e.g., Director of Sponsored Projects Office) approving the cost share. Please refer to the Letters of Support section below.
    - The below guidelines should be used to complete the PHS 398 budget form for each institution involved:
        - Personnel: Indicate the investigator's name on the "PD/PI" line, number of calendar months dedicated to the proposed research, institutional base salary, requested salary, and associated fringe benefits. Investigators not receiving salary support should still be listed in the budget with effort indicated. Please note: Funds cannot be used for graduate student or postdoctoral stipends; however, salary is allowable.
        - Consultant Costs: If consultant costs are budgeted, include the consultant's rate and total costs.
        - Equipment: (durable items valued at $5,000+) are not allowed for this award.

        - Supplies: Allowable supply costs include computer software necessary for the project, laboratory supplies and services, animal and per diem housing expenses, publication costs, and participant stipends. General office supplies are not allowed for this award.
        - Travel*:* Up to $2,000 can be budgeted for travel related to research performance or dissemination of results.
        - Inpatient Care Costs: Indicate costs related to proposed research, if any.
        - Outpatient Care Costs: Indicate costs related to proposed research, if any.
        - Other Expenses: List any other costs itemized by category, if any.
        - *Consortium/Contractual Costs*: Include consortium or contractual costs required to accomplish the proposed research, if any.
        - Salary support for mentors is not allowable under the Pilot Project or Developmental Award Projects, unless the mentor is a Multi-PI project and in a faculty-track deemed allowable for support, as outlined above.
- *Budget Justification*: (PHS 398 Continuation Format Page)
    - Separate justifications must be submitted for each institution requesting support.
    - Provide clear, succinct justification for each requested budget item for each institution requesting support.
    - Provide detailed justifications for all items requested in the budget(s).
- *Biographical Sketch*: (Biographical Sketch Format Page):
    - Biographical sketches are required for all PI(s), Mentor (s) and Key Personnel.
    - An NIH-formatted biosketch using SciENcv is required for each investigator and mentor. If you do not have an eRA Commons username, you must obtain one to include in the biosketch.
- *Resources*: (PHS 398 Resources Format page)
    - Describe space, equipment, and other facilities available for the applicants to accomplish this research project.
    - The Resources Format page must be completed for each Performance Site listed on PHS 398 Form Page 2.
- *Research Plan* (6-page maximum; 1-page for Specific Aims, 5-pages for the remaining sections): (PHS 398 Continuation Format Page)
    - The format of the Research Plan should follow the outline below. Begin each section of the Research Plan with a section header (e.g., Specific Aims, Significance, etc.).:
        - Specific aims: Describe the goals and objectives of the research project (up to 1 page). Note: This needs to be the first page of your research plan.
        - Significance: Include overall significance of the project, including the previous research in the area and relevance to health in Rhode Island (up to 0.5 page).
        - Innovation: Describe both the conceptual and technical innovation of the proposed project (up to 0.5 page).
        - Approach: Describe the experimental design and methods, including an appropriate analysis plan, preliminary data* and research plan, including expected results, alternative approaches, and analysis plan. Include discussion of scientific rigor and biological variables and the statistical analysis plan. *Present preliminary data if available Up to 0.5 page of the 3.5-page approach should focus on detailing the statistical analysis plan for the proposed project.
        - Timeline: Include approximate completion dates for the defined specific aims and “next steps” (publications, presentations, grant proposals, etc.) (up to 0.5 page).
- *Lay Summary*: (250 word maximum):
    - Advance RI-CTR will be utilizing a community member reviewer in our review process (where appropriate). This reviewer will be selected from our Community Engagement Core’s Community Advisory & Action Board (CAAB). To facilitate this portion of the review, we ask that

each applicant submit a lay summary of no more than 250 words. The lay summary should include a summary of the proposed project and the impact on the community. The amount of impact (e.g., none, some significant) should be included as well. The community reviewer will be engaged to provide insight into how the research will impact the community and the feasibility of the project within the community.

- *References*
    - Provide a bibliography of any references cited in the Research Plan.
- *Multiple PD/PI Leadership Plan (0.5 page maximum): (PHS 398 Continuation Format Page)*
    - A multi-PI plan must be included; it should describe the role of each of the PIs. Investigators may find it helpful to consider the following elements in their plan for collaboration and include those that are relevant to their proposed project. Please see the NIH page on Multi-PI Plans for more information and examples.
- *Future Funding Plans:* (500-word maximum, submitted in UFunds)
    - Describe plans to submit applications for future funding.
- *Letters of Support:* (required)
    - Letter of Intent (LOI): If the Contact PI or a Multi-PI is not employed by Brown University, a signed Letter of Intent (LOI) from the Contact PI and/or Multi-PI's office of research administration must be included. If the Contact PI/Multi-PI is not receiving salary support, the LOI(s) must explicitly approve of the cost share and list the dollar amount of the cost share.
    - *Department Chair(s)*: Letter(s) from the Department Chair(s) and/or supervisor(s) for each investigator documenting the Investigator name and title along with availability of protected time for research must be included. If a Brown University PI is not requesting salary support, the letter must explicitly approve cost share and list the dollar amount of the cost share.
    - *Mentor(s)*: Letter(s) from the mentor(s) agreeing to advise on the conduct of the proposed research and describing plans for mentoring the junior investigator(s) must be included with the application. The mentors' letter should outline a mentorship plan demonstrating mentors' commitment, assessment of the applicant, research proposal and training plan that is aligned with the proposed work. The mentorship plan should also include the frequency and method (e.g.: virtual, in-person meetings, email, etc.) of mentor-mentee communication and check-ins to ensure timely completion of the project and any relevant training.
- *Regulatory Information:*
    - Be sure to address the **Human Subjects, Vertebrate Animals, and Biosafety/Safety Agents** sections as described below. Projects must also conform to all relevant NIH policies on the inclusion of women, minorities, and children in study populations.
- *Regulatory Applications and Approvals:*
    - Please submit a PDF upload detailing the current status of all regulatory approvals that will be needed for this project and/or upload documents. This includes all initial IRB or IACUC approval(s), as well as any IRB Authorization Agreement (alliance agreements between two institutions with IRBs when work is of a collaborative nature) needed to be implemented and their status. The NIH prefers that regulatory titles match project application titles. If your project application and regulatory title are different, a letter from the PI of the regulatory protocol will be required stating that the regulatory protocol covers the project proposed in the pilot application. This upload should include:
    - For IRB
        - The title of the IRB protocol(s), the PI(s) of the protocols, the institution approving the protocol, and the approval status (approved, pending review, date submitted, etc.), and information on whether this project will require an IAA with any institution for research purposes. Please include what institution(s), and submission status(es) and/or approval letters.

        - IAAs: If any projects have an IRB approval through a healthcare institution or the University of Rhode Island AND have a Brown-employed individual on the project, an IAA will be required as well. This holds true even if the Brown-based individual will not be engaged in the human subjects' portion of the research.
    - For IACUC
        - The title of the IACUC protocol(s), the PI(s) of the protocols, the initiation approving the protocol, and the approval status (approved, pending review, date submitted, etc.).
        - Information on whether this project will require any congruency agreements with any institution for research purposes. Please include what institution(s), and submission status(es) and/or approval letters.
    - Please note: Selected projects may not begin until they have been approved by the IACUC and/or IRB, as applicable. All regulatory approvals and related training are required to be kept up to date throughout the project performance period.
- *Human Subjects and Clinical Trial Information*
    - The Advance RI-CTR Human Subjects and Clinical Trial Information Form must be completed for ALL projects.
    - Non-Human Subjects projects are required to complete the Advance RI-CTR Human Subjects and Clinical Trial Information Form, items i.- iii. Human Subjects projects must include:
        - The Advance RI-CTR Human Subjects and Clinical Trial Information Form and associated Study Record. Complete the form using the built-in instructions.
        - The Advance RI-CTR Enrollment Report form following NIH instructions.
    - To determine whether human subjects are involved, complete the "Am I doing Human Subjects Research?" NIH Decision Tool and the Clinical Trials NIH Decision Tool.
- *Vertebrate Animals Section*
    - Refer to Vertebrate Animals NIH Instructions and the Worksheet for Applications Involving Animals. If vertebrate animals are involved, address each point below. Provide a concise, complete description of the animals and proposed procedures. While additional details may be included in the Research Plan, the responses to the four required points must be cohesive and include sufficient detail.
    - If all or part of the proposed research involving vertebrate animals will take place at alternate sites (such as project/performance or collaborating site(s)), identify those sites and describe the activities at those locations.
    - Although no specific page limitation applies to this section, be succinct. Failure to address the following points will result in the application being designated as incomplete and will be grounds for NIGMS to defer approval of the application. The points are as follows:
        - *Description of Procedures*: Provide a concise description of the proposed procedures to be used that involve vertebrate animals in the work outlined in the "Research Plan" attachment. Identify the species, strains, ages, sex, and total numbers of animals by species, to be used in the proposed work. If dogs or cats are proposed, provide the source of the animals.
        - *Justifications:* Provide justification that the species are appropriate for the proposed research. Explain why the research goals cannot be accomplished using an alternative model (e.g. computational, human, invertebrate, in vitro).
        - *Minimization of Pain and Distress*: Describe the interventions including analgesia, anesthesia, sedation, palliative care and humane endpoints that will be used to minimize discomfort, distress, pain, and injury.
        - *Method of Euthanasia*: Provide a justification for methods of euthanasia that are consistent with the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) Guidelines for the Euthanasia of Animals. If answer is "No" to the question "Is method consistent with

AVMA guidelines?", describe the method and provide scientific justification in the text field provided.
        - Do not use the vertebrate animal section to circumvent the page limits of the Research Plan.
- *Biosafety/Select Agents*
    - Refer to Select Agents NIH Instructions. Indicate Institutional Safety Committee approvals.
- *Service Core Usage Response*
    - Response to Consults: Applicants who consulted with any of the Advance RI-CTR Service Cores should include a short statement (500 words or less) detailing their response to CTR Service Provider suggestions. Please include what recommendation(s) you incorporated into your project. Additionally, if applicable, please detail reasons why you chose not to incorporate certain recommendations.
    - Plans for Service Usage: Please explain what service(s) you plan to use during your award period from either Advance RI-CTR or other RI IDeA Programs.
        - All Advance RI-CTR awardees will have access to 20 free hours per year of consultation services with the RDCD and/or CEO Cores during their award.
        - Advance RI-CTR will also provide vouchers up to $5,000 for the use of COBRE services, technologies or infrastructure components. Awardees will be asked to specify on the application whether they would like to use a COBRE service.
- *Summary Statement Response (if applicable)*
    - Applicants who are re-submitting a proposal for a prior Advance RI-CTR Pilot Project Program award must provide a one-page response (maximum) to the summary statement they received. Please detail how you addressed previous concerns in your application.

NOTE: Applications with missing components will be considered incomplete and withdrawn without review.

Review Criteria:

Preliminary Applications

- Responsiveness to eligibility requirements and program goals
- Special considerations
- Feasibility of the proposed research

Full Application Review

Reviewers of the full applications will include the Health Research Core Review Committee and others who have content area or methods expertise relevant to the individual proposals. For community-engaged projects, reviewers will be made up of members of the Advance RI-CTR CEO Core Community Advisory & Action Board (CAAB) and, if needed, outside community reviewers.
All applications will be reviewed using the following criteria:

- Scientific Review
    - Responsiveness to the RFA, including the relevance to RI health priorities and the clinical or translational nature of the research.
    - Scientific impact and soundness of the experimental design, including feasibility and plans for data analysis.
    - Technical and conceptual innovation.
    - Training and expertise of the (Multi-) PI's and their ability to perform the proposed research.
    - Scientific and mentoring expertise of the mentor(s) (as applicable)

    - Efforts to engage community, the PBRN, or other partners.
    - Plans for the protection of human subjects, data and safety monitoring and plans for vertebrate animals and biohazards (as applicable)
    - Project environment, including facilities and adequacy of the patient population (as applicable)
    - Reasonable and justified budget that is appropriate for the proposed research.
    - Likelihood that the project will lead to external funding.
- Community Reviews (as applicable)
    - Overall impact on the community
    - Appropriateness
    - Feasibility of approach
    - Community interest in participation
    - Proposed steps to meaningfully involve the community.

Specific Review criteria for project types:

- *Developmental Project Awards*
    - Likelihood of leading to an NIH R01-equivalent research project grant
    - Preliminary Data
- *Mentored Scholar Advancement Awards*
    - Institutional support
    - Well-developed career/mentoring plan outlined in the mentors' letter of support.

Special Considerations

While the proposals with the highest scientific impact will be prioritized, special consideration will be given to fund projects that incorporate the following:

- Incorporate Community Engagement
- Interdisciplinary and inter-institutional collaboration (including the PBRN)
- Institutional and investigator balance
- Employ robust use of Advance RI-CTR Service Cores and/or CEPBRN
- Are clinician-scientists defined as investigators with professional degrees who have training in clinical care and who are engaged in biomedical research
- Adherence to research priorities of the current administration
- Pursue research that addresses the health goals and priorities set forth by the Rhode Island Department of Health's Strategic Framework. Priority areas (in no particular order) include, but are not limited to:
    - Access to healthcare services especially among underserved populations
    - Mental health in adults and youth - including prevention, services, programs, community resources and related stigma
    - Food access and nutrition
    - Chronic illnesses (e.g., diabetes, heart disease, asthma, cancer)
    - Substance use disorder
    - Obesity
    - Health of mothers and their children
    - General community well-being, health awareness and improvement of community health resources

Final award is dependent upon final review and approval by the Advance RI-CTR External Advisory Committee and by NIGMS (if the proposal receives NIH funds).

Additional Important Information

Funding

There is no pre-award spending allowable for Advance RI-CTR projects. While the award period is anticipated to start no sooner than March 1st, 2027, the exact Notice of Award/ start date of funding is contingent upon all approvals being completed including (institutional, regulatory, External Advisory Committee and/or NIGMS approval (as applicable). Based on funding availability and internal and external approval timelines, some projects may not begin until Fall 2027

Progress reports will be collected throughout the project to ensure that the project is making adequate progress. For multi-year projects, Year 2 funding is dependent on adequate progress being made in Year 1. Depending on the availability of funding, selected projects may be offered the opportunity to apply for additional funding and/or time for their project.

Funding Period Extensions and Additional Funds

Awardees should be aware No Cost Extensions will only be given in exceptional circumstances. Any request for a No Cost Extension will also need to be submitted at least 90 days prior to the end of the award period to be eligible for consideration.

Additional guidance for preparing a Preliminary Application is available on our website:

- 8 Elements of a Successful Preliminary Application
- Tips for Preparing Your Preliminary Application
- Examples of Successful Preliminary Applications (Please note: These are examples only, and are not intended to serve as templates)

Dates and Deadlines

September 25th: Last day to schedule calls with leadership (optional)
October 9th: Preliminary Applications due
October 19th: Selected applicants invited to submit a Full Proposal
December 14th: Full Proposals due
February 1st: Notification of Projects Recommended for Funding
February 19th: JIT Materials Due
Varied dates: Pilot funding may begin

Questions

Please email Emily Mercer with any questions about the Health Research Core awards or review process.

Institutional Research Office Contacts

- Brown University:
  - Overall
  - BioMed
  - School of Public Health
- Brown University Health
- Care New England
- Providence VA
- University of Rhode Island