



FRONTIERS
CLINICAL & TRANSLATIONAL
SCIENCE INSTITUTE
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS



Saint Luke's



**Kansas City
University**

**KANSAS STATE
UNIVERSITY**

Frontiers Clinical and Translational Science Institute

Frontiers CTSI K12 Career Development Program Start Date: July 1, 2027

Request for Applications

*Supporting the next generation of independent
clinical and translational science investigators.*

Key Dates	Program Snapshot
Letter of Intent Due: 10/14/26 by 5:00 PM	• Up to 75% protected effort
Invitation to Submit Full Application: 11/09/26	• Salary support up to \$120,000/year
Full Application Due: 12/09/26 by 5:00 PM	• Research support up to \$25,000/year
Review Period: January–February 2027	• Travel support up to \$2,000/year
Award Notification: March 2027	• Mentorship, leadership, and grantsmanship training
Earliest Start Date: July 1, 2027	

Questions?

Contact: Holly Zink, PhD

Email: hzink2@kumc.edu

Website: <https://frontiersctsi.org/>

Submit Your Letter of Intent here:

<https://redcap.kumc.edu/surveys/?s=XDHAW3HLTK43KYT7>



Overview Information

Program Title

K12 Mentored Research Career Development Award in Clinical and Translational Science (July 2027)

Funding Source

This program is supported by the National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences of the National Institutes of Health. Since receiving its initial Clinical and Translational Science Award in 2011, the University of Kansas has secured successive CTSA renewals, extending program support through June 2034.

The success of the K12 Program requires strong institutional commitment. Participating departments and institutions are expected to ensure protected time consistent with program requirements; provide salary support beyond the NIH contribution, as needed; support access to necessary facilities, space, and resources; and, in some cases, contribute to research or training costs not covered by K12 funds. Departments may be contacted after the review process to assess interest and capacity to support top-ranked candidates through an institutional funding mechanism.

Financial support is contingent upon the availability of NIH funds. In select cases, highly meritorious applicants may be considered for an institutionally funded K12 appointment, supported in partnership with the applicant's department through institutional resources. Institutionally funded scholars participate fully in all K12 Program components and receive the same programmatic experience as NIH-funded scholars; however, salary, research, and travel support are provided by the department rather than NIH funds.

The Frontiers K12 Mentored Research Career Development Program is aligned with the mission of the National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences (NCATS; <https://ncats.nih.gov/about/ncats-overview/strategic-plan>) and the broader priorities of the National Institutes of Health (NIH; <https://www.nih.gov/about-nih/nih-director/statements/advancing-nih-mission-through-unified-strategy>) to develop a highly skilled, interdisciplinary workforce capable of advancing clinical and translational science.

Key Dates

Letter of Intent (LOI) Due Date:	Wednesday, October 14, 2026, by 5:00 PM Central Time
Invitation to Submit Full Application:	Friday, November 6, 2026, by 5:00 PM Central Time
Full Application Due Date:	Wednesday, December 9, 2026, by 5:00 PM Central Time
Scientific Review Period:	January–February 2027
Award Notification:	Mid-March 2027
Earliest Start Date:	Thursday, July 1, 2027

Program Benefits & Support

The Frontiers CTSI K12 Program provides financial, research, travel, training, and career development support to help scholars transition to independent careers in clinical and translational science. All support is contingent upon the availability of funds and continued satisfactory progress in the program. K12 scholars may receive the following support:

Salary Support. Scholars may receive salary support of up to \$120,000 per year, exclusive of fringe benefits, for up to 75% protected effort, or 9 person-months, dedicated to K12-supported research and career development activities. The remaining 25% effort may be allocated to clinical, teaching, or administrative responsibilities. Institutional or departmental support is required to cover salary above the K12 contribution and to ensure full salary coverage consistent with institutional policies. Total compensation must not exceed the legislatively mandated NIH salary cap.

In limited circumstances, and consistent with NIH policy, reduced effort of no less than 50% may be permitted for individuals in certain clinical specialties, such as surgical disciplines. Any reduction in effort requires prior approval by program leadership and must be fully justified and documented.

Research Support. Scholars may receive up to \$25,000 per year in research development funds to support their approved mentored research project. Allowable expenses may include research supplies, data acquisition and analysis, biostatistical or methodological support, participant recruitment, study-related expenses, publication, and dissemination costs. Research funds must be used only for activities directly related to the scholar's approved research and career development plan. Equipment purchases must be justified and aligned with project needs.

Travel Support. Scholars may receive up to \$2,000 per year in travel support for research dissemination and professional development. Allowable travel may include attendance at the Association for Clinical and Translational Science Annual Meeting, discipline-specific scientific conferences, workshops, or training programs relevant to the scholar's research and career development. All travel must be pre-approved and aligned with program objectives.

Mentorship Support. K12 applicants are responsible for identifying and assembling their mentorship team. Most scholars have a team of two to three mentors who provide complementary expertise in the scholar's research area, career development, methods, clinical or translational focus, and, when appropriate, community or practice-based translation. The primary mentor must be located at a Frontiers partner institution: the University of Kansas, Children's Mercy, the University of Missouri–Kansas City, or Kansas State University. Applicants who need assistance identifying potential mentors are encouraged to contact program leadership. If selected, the scholar's primary mentor must complete training through the Center for the Improvement of Mentored Experiences in Research (CIMER) or an equivalent evidence-informed mentoring program within the first year of the scholar's appointment. A selection of local CIMER training dates will be provided to support completion of this requirement.

Scholars may also receive up to \$500 per year to support engagement of a community mentor who provides applied, real-world expertise that complements academic mentorship and strengthens translation into community, clinical, or practice settings. Community mentors are expected to participate in an initial virtual meeting with the scholar, Program Manager, and Program Director; review the scholar's Individual Development Plan quarterly; provide timely feedback; and review and sign the Mentoring Compact. Community mentors receive \$500 in compensation after completion of required mentoring activities.

Training and Coursework Support. Scholars have access to didactic and experiential training opportunities at Frontiers partner institutions, including the Master of Science in Clinical Research program, workshops, symposia, and specialized training in entrepreneurship, implementation science, biostatistics, informatics, team science, scientific communication, leadership, and project management. Tuition and fees may be supported, in whole or in part, through K12 funds or institutional resources, as appropriate and consistent with program policies. Training plans are individualized based on each scholar's prior experience, research goals, and career development needs. Required courses include: Grant Writing (PRVM 872), Scientific Writing (PRVM 873), and Responsible Conduct of Research (PRVM 853).

Leadership, Team Science, and Professional Development. K12 scholars receive leadership and professional development training designed to strengthen their effectiveness as independent investigators, collaborators, and research team leaders. Training includes strengths-based leadership development through CliftonStrengths®, management skill development, team science, collaboration planning, and project management to support effective interdisciplinary research.

Grantsmanship, Scientific Communication, and Emerging Methods. K12 scholars receive structured support in grantsmanship, scientific communication, and emerging areas of translational science. Training includes grant writing, manuscript development, scientific communication, and exposure to emerging methods such as artificial intelligence and machine learning. Scholars also have access to Frontiers CTSI resources, including biomedical writing support to strengthen grant applications, manuscripts, abstracts, presentations, and other scholarly products.

Who Should Apply

Applicants must meet all eligibility requirements at the time of K12 appointment. To be eligible, applicants must:

- Meet NIH citizenship or permanent residency requirements for Kirschstein-NRSA-supported programs according to [NOT-OD-25-126](#), “By the time of award, the individual must be a citizen or a non-citizen national of the United States or have been lawfully admitted for permanent residence (i.e., possess a currently valid Permanent Resident Card USCIS Form I-551, or other legal verification of such status).”
- Commit at least 75% protected effort to K12-supported research and career development activities. In limited cases, applicants in certain clinical specialties may request reduced effort of no less than 50%, with justification and program approval.
- At the time of award activation, applicants must hold a primary full-time appointment, or equivalent, at an eligible Frontiers CTSI partner institution.
 - Eligible institutions are: University of Kansas, including the Kansas City Medical Center, Lawrence, Edwards, Salina, and Wichita campuses, or the University of Kansas Health System; Kansas State University; University of Missouri–Kansas City; or Children’s Mercy. Individuals whose primary appointment is at Kansas City University or Saint Luke’s BJC Health West Region are not eligible to apply for NIH K12 funding through this program.
 - The applicant must provide confirmation of the faculty appointment at the full application stage, including a letter from the Department Chair confirming the applicant will hold a faculty appointment, or equivalent eligible appointment, effective no later than July 1, 2027. A faculty

appointment is not required at the Letter of Intent stage. Have an appointment that is not contingent upon receipt of the K12 award.

- The applicant's primary mentor must also hold an appointment at one of the eligible Frontiers CTSI partner institutions listed above. Mentors with primary appointments at Kansas City University or Saint Luke's BJC Health West Region may not serve as primary mentors. Co-mentors and collaborators may come from other institutions when appropriate to support the proposed research and career development plan.
- Demonstrate commitment to an independent research career in clinical and translational science and propose a mentored research and career development plan appropriate to their career stage.

Applicants are **not eligible** if they have already achieved research independence. This includes individuals who have: 1) Served, or are currently serving, as PI or Multiple PI on an NIH research project grant, such as an Ro1, Po1, P50, or equivalent non-NIH award. 2) Previously received, or currently hold, an individual NIH career development award, such as a Ko1, Ko7, Ko8, K22, K23, K25, K76, K99/R00, or equivalent award from another agency. Or, 3) Demonstrated research independence through substantial, sustained external funding as PI. Applicants who have received smaller exploratory grants, such as Ro3 or R21 awards, or who have participated in institutional training or career development programs, such as TL1, KL2, or other K12 programs, may remain eligible if they have not achieved independent funding status.

How to Apply

The K12 application process includes two stages: **(1) Competitive Letter of Intent** and **(2) Full Application by Invitation Only**. Submission of a competitive LOI is required to be considered for a full application invitation.

Competitive Letter of Intent

Applicants must submit the following materials electronically through the public REDCap link:

<https://redcap.kumc.edu/surveys/?s=XDHAW3HLTK43KYT7>.

Component	Page Limit	Required Content / Instructions
Applicant Information	N/A	Complete the applicant information form in REDCap.
Research Project Title, Abstract, and Research Area	N/A	Provide the proposed project title, brief abstract, and research area using the required REDCap fields.
Applicant Self-Acknowledgment / Permission to Submit	N/A	Complete the required acknowledgment in REDCap confirming permission to submit the LOI.
Letter of Intent	2 pages	Provide a brief overview of: 1) translational science career goals; 2) preliminary research direction; and 3) initial mentorship and training plan.
Applicant NIH Biosketch	N/A	Submit the NIH Biographical Sketch Common Form generated from SciENcv.
Primary Mentor NIH Biosketch	N/A	Submit the NIH Biographical Sketch Common Form for the proposed primary mentor, generated from SciENcv.

Full Application

Access examples of successfully awarded K-grants in the Frontiers Grant Library! You can browse the [Grant Library Index](#) before [requesting access through REDCap](#).

Only applicants invited after LOI review may submit a full application.

Component	Page Limit	Required Content / Instructions
Applicant Information	N/A	Complete the applicant information form in REDCap. Invited applicants will receive a unique REDCap survey link by email and must use that link to submit all required full application materials.
Applicant NIH Biosketch	N/A	Submit the NIH Biographical Sketch Common Form generated from SciENcv. If the applicant is selected for an award, the biosketch will be submitted to NIH and must conform to the current NIH standard.
Training and Mentorship Plan	3 pages	Present a cohesive plan that aligns the applicant's background, training needs, research project, mentorship team, and career goals. The plan must include: 1) Career Development Narrative: summarize career trajectory, prior research experience, key accomplishments, and evidence of potential to become an independent investigator. 2) Long-Term Career Goals: provide a brief 1–2 sentence description of the applicant's long-term research program and career objectives. 3) Training Needs, Goals, and Activities: identify key training gaps and, for each gap, describe the specific knowledge or skill need, corresponding training goal, planned activities such as coursework, workshops, or mentored experiences, alignment with the research project, and role of the mentorship team. 4) Visual Representation: include a visual, such as a Venn diagram, showing current expertise and areas to be developed. 5) Timeline and Path to Independence: describe the plan for transitioning to independent funding, including the type of grant to be pursued, projected submission timeline, typically within Year 2, and how the K12 experience will strengthen competitiveness. 6) Mentorship and Oversight Plan: describe mentor roles and expertise, meeting frequency and structure, progress monitoring, and mechanisms for adjusting the plan as needed.
Training Activities Table	1 page	Provide a structured timeline of proposed training activities using the required template. The table should show how planned coursework, workshops, mentoring, research milestones, grant preparation, and professional development activities align with the applicant's training goals and award timeline.
Research Strategy, including Specific Aims	3 pages	Use NIH-style formatting. The Research Strategy must include: 1) Specific Aims: up to 1 page, clearly stating research objectives, hypotheses, and expected outcomes. The proposed work must be feasible within a two-year timeframe. 2) Significance: describe the importance of the problem and how the proposed work will advance clinical and translational science.

		3) Innovation: highlight novel concepts, approaches, methodologies, or applications. 4) Approach: describe the overall strategy, study design, methods, analyses, potential challenges, and alternative approaches. 5) Literature Cited: include references; literature cited does not count toward the page limit.
Mentor NIH Biosketches	N/A	Submit NIH biosketches for all primary and secondary mentors using the NIH Biographical Sketch Common Form generated from SciENcv.
Mentor Letters	2 pages each	Submit a letter from each mentor. Each letter must address: the applicant's potential for independence; alignment of the research and training plan; the mentor's specific role on the team; commitment to providing time, guidance, and resources; and willingness to participate in program activities, such as mentor training, meetings, and mock reviews.
Department Chair Letter	2 pages	Submit a letter from the Department Chair confirming: commitment to 75% protected effort, or approved exception; a non-contingent faculty appointment; availability of institutional resources to support the applicant; and long-term commitment to the applicant's career development.

Formatting and Submission Requirements

All LOI and full application materials must follow the requirements below.

Requirement	Instructions
Submission Platform	All materials must be submitted electronically through REDCap.
Formatting	Use standard NIH formatting, including minimum 11-point font, standard margins of at least 0.5 inches, and clear section headings that correspond to required components.
Completeness	Applicants are responsible for ensuring that all required components are submitted by the stated deadline.
Compliance	Incomplete, late, or non-compliant applications may be returned without review.
Submission Timing	Applicants are encouraged to begin the submission process early to allow time to address technical issues.
Program Support	Program staff are available to answer questions about submission procedures.

Review & Selection Process

Applications submitted to the Frontiers CTSI K12 Program will undergo a rigorous, multi-stage review process modeled on NIH peer-review principles. The process is designed to evaluate scientific merit, career development potential, mentorship quality, institutional support, and alignment with program priorities.

Applications will be evaluated using core criteria adapted from NIH career development award review standards. Reviewers will assess each criterion independently and consider the overall strength of the application. Applications will be scored using an internal rubric aligned with NIH review principles. Reviewers will provide written critiques identifying strengths and weaknesses for each core review criterion. Each application will also

receive an overall impact score reflecting the likelihood that the K12 Program will successfully prepare the applicant for an independent research career in clinical and translational science. The scoring process is designed to prioritize applicants with strong potential for research independence, high-quality mentorship, a feasible and rigorous research plan, clear career development goals, and alignment with translational science objectives.

Review Criterion	What Reviewers Will Assess
Candidate	The applicant's potential to develop into an independent clinical and translational scientist, including academic and research background, prior productivity, commitment to a translational research career, and readiness for mentored career development.
Career Development Plan	The quality, feasibility, and appropriateness of the proposed career development plan, including alignment with career goals, proposed training activities, milestones, timelines, and preparation for research independence.
Research Plan	The scientific merit, rigor, translational relevance, and feasibility of the proposed research within the two-year appointment period. Reviewers will also assess whether the project provides a strong foundation for future independent funding and aligns with the applicant's career development goals.
Mentorship	The qualifications, expertise, funding, and mentorship record of the primary mentor and mentorship team. Reviewers will assess the strength of the mentorship plan, including mentor roles, meeting structure, communication, oversight, and alignment with the applicant's needs.
Environment and Institutional Commitment	The extent to which the institutional environment supports the applicant's development, including access to resources, research infrastructure, protected time, and evidence of long-term institutional commitment to the applicant's success.

Applications will be reviewed by a multidisciplinary panel of experts in clinical and translational science. The review process will follow a study section model. Following peer review, applications will undergo programmatic review by K12 Program leadership. Final funding decisions are made by K12 Program leadership in consultation with Frontiers CTSI leadership. All selections are contingent upon the availability of funds and institutional approval.

Questions?

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