



2024 Biostatistics, Epidemiology, and Research Design Trailblazer Award Program

About Frontiers

The Frontiers Clinical and Translational Science Institute (CTSI) is a regional initiative involving academic institutions, healthcare systems, and community organizations that address the clinical and translational research needs of Kansas and western Missouri. Frontiers supports high quality clinical and translational science innovation in research methods and training and career development of investigators committed to improving health and achieving health equity across the lifespan, with a focus on underserved and excluded populations.

The **Biostatistics, Epidemiology, and Research Design (BERD) Trailblazer Award** provides grant funding to support statistical, epidemiological, and data science investigations toward novel methods development that will improve clinical and translational research (CTR) inferences. BERD Trailblazer Awards support research projects for methods development for CTR.

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| Awarding Institute | Frontiers: Clinical and Translational Science Institute |
| Federal Prime Sponsor | National Institutes of Health (NIH) / National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences (NCATS); Award number UL1TR002366. |
| Key Dates | Online System Opens & RFA Release: December 11, 2023 Application Deadline: March 4, 2024, 11:59 pm CT Merit Review Completion: late March 2024 Funding Decision Notifications: mid-April 2024 Award Announcement: May 2024 NCATS Prior Approval Materials for Notification Only: May-June 2024 Earliest Project Start Date: July 1, 2024, pending Frontiers Notice of Award for 2024-25 funding year. <i>*Note: The BERD Program reserves the right to extend submission deadlines to better meet Frontiers' needs; all changes will be communicated in advance.</i> |
| Award Amount | Up to \$20,000 in direct costs can be requested. |
| Maximum Award Period | July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025 |
| Number of awards | Up to 2 awards |
| Review Criteria | Applications will be reviewed using NIH-style review process and other stated review criteria. |
| Contact Information | Megan Tremblay, BERD Navigator, mtremblay@kumc.edu |

Research Focus Areas

Frontiers BERD Trailblazer Awards support projects that address methodologies or analyses useful to the study of all diseases, and include academic disciplines such as biostatistics, epidemiology, bioinformatics, data science, and other quantitative areas that impact clinical and translational science.

General Application Requirements

- Frontiers CTSI membership is required for submitting applications. [Become a member](#) and learn about member benefits.
- It is expected that research supported by the pilot awards will result in one or more publications in a peer-reviewed journal and will provide critical preliminary data to support extramural grant applications.
- Applications should use Arial 11 font, 0.5-inch margins. Applications must be uploaded as a single PDF. Required naming convention of Application packet: *PILastNameFirstInitial_BERD*

Applications must be submitted [online here](#).

Eligibility

This competition is open to principal investigators who are eligible to receive federal funding and employed by any Frontiers partner institution:

- University of Kansas Medical Center (all campuses)
- University of Kansas
- University of Kansas Health System
- University of Missouri-Kansas City
- Kansas City University
- Children's Mercy Kansas City
- St. Luke's Health System
- Kansas State University

Principal Investigators can apply for more than one funding mechanism but will only be awarded one award annually. Applicants may serve as PI on only one application but may be included as collaborators on any number of applications.

Volunteer faculty, residents, fellows, or graduate students are generally not eligible to serve as principal investigators. United States citizens, non-citizen nationals, or those who have legal admission as a permanent resident are eligible. However, any questions regarding eligibility should be addressed to individual institutional grants management offices before application submission.

Research Plan: should include the following sections and should not exceed four (4) pages. Download the Research Template [here](#).

- a. Specific Aims (1 page maximum)
- b. Research Strategy (3 pages maximum, excluding references)
 - Background
 - Significance
 - Innovation
 - Approach
- c. References (only include crucial references; no page limit, not included in the 4-page limit)

Budget: Applicants may request up to \$20,000; lesser amounts are acceptable and encouraged especially if the BERD Trailblazer Award can be used to match or leverage additional resources. Budget may be used to support Principal Investigator, Co-Investigator, and other appropriate personnel salaries necessary to complete the project. Required Budget forms can be found [here](#).

Applications should describe projects that will be completed within Frontiers Year funding cycle (ends June 30, 2025). All funding decisions and actual start dates for Trailblazer Awards are contingent on receipt of the NCATS Notice of Award for Year 4. All funds must be spent by June 30, 2025; carryover and extensions are not allowed.

The following costs are not covered by these awards:

- Non-Frontiers institution staff salaries (with the exception of required consultants, if justified)
- Administrative or office costs (e.g., office supplies, telephone, etc.)
- Meals or hospitality (e.g., food, beverages or alcohol)
- Travel that is not directly related to the conduct of research
- Other items typically supported by Facilities and Administration costs

Indirect costs are allowable with the exception of awards to the University of Kansas Medical Center.

NIH Biographical Sketch: Include for all Key Personnel. Must use the current NIH format. Template, instructions, and samples found [online here](#).

Non-Human Subjects Research and Non-Animal Studies Applications ONLY

This mechanism is intended for methodological or quantitative analysis development only. Documentation for designation as 'Not Human Subjects Research' is required with full application submission from the appropriate IRB-governing body. The official IRB correspondence of submission and/or approval should be uploaded as one pdf document. Similarly, animal studies requiring IACUC approval are not eligible to apply for this mechanism.

Applications must be submitted [online here](#).

Notice of Proprietary Information: Applicants are discouraged from submitting information considered proprietary unless it is deemed essential for proper evaluation of the full application. Applications containing information that constitutes trade secrets, that is financial or commercial, or that is confidential or privileged, should identify the pages that contain this information by marking those paragraphs or lines with an asterisk (*) at the beginning of the paragraph.

Merit Review

Applications will be reviewed and scored using review criteria similar to that for NIH reviews by at least two reviewers. Applicants will receive a summary statement describing strengths and weaknesses of the application. The review criteria described above will be considered in the review process. The review criteria described below will be considered in the review process.

- **Significance**

Does the project address an important problem or a critical barrier to progress in the field? Is the prior research that serves as the key support for the proposed project rigorous? If the aims of the project are achieved, how will scientific knowledge, technical capability, and/or clinical practice be improved? How will successful completion of the aims change the concepts, methods, technologies, treatments, services, or preventative interventions that drive this field?

- **Investigator**

Is the PI well suited to the project? If early-stage investigators or those in the early stages of independent careers, do they have appropriate experience and training? If established, have they demonstrated an ongoing record of accomplishments that have advanced their field(s)? Does the team include appropriate involvement of community members?

- **Innovation**

To what extent are innovative methods evident, such as experimental approaches to identify best practices in translational research; workforce education and training; and stakeholder outreach?

- **Potential of award to result in future funding and publication**

Is there evidence that successful completion of the pilot will competitively position the PI for an NIH award? For an impactful publication?

- **Overall Impact**

Overall Impact is the synthesis/integration of the review criteria as well as the relevance of the budget (and budget justification) for the project to exert a sustained, powerful influence on the research field(s) involved.

Funding Decision and Notice of Award: Funding decisions are anticipated in mid-April 2024. Successful applications will be submitted to the NCATS for the require Prior Approval Notification. Release of funding is dependent on receipt of the Notice of Award for Frontiers CTSI for the FY24 funding year, which is anticipated by July 01, 2024.

Post Award Requirements for Award Recipients: All awardees and their project teams are required to complete the Frontiers Training Center anti-racism and anti-bias training (or equivalent) within first 6 months of notice of award and include evidence of completion in the mid-term report.

Funded awardees are required to partner with the IAMI Navigator, who will provide project management support, including the development and execution of project plans, submission of materials to Frontiers for review and approval by NCATS (if required). All recipients of IAMI Awards are required to meet with the Communications Coordinator within four weeks following notification of intent to fund applications. A story will be prepared about your application prior to the issuance of your official Notice of Award. All awardees are required to provide mid-term and final progress reports. Details of all published manuscripts, meeting abstracts, and grant applications that result from data obtained from pilot grants should be included in the reports. Report templates will be provided. Awardees will be sent an annual survey for up to 5 years asking about the impact of their work.

It is essential that study outcomes are disseminated – to both the scientific and lay communities; therefore, Frontiers expects that awardees will publish the findings of their research to scientific venues, including peer-reviewed journals, and will disseminate to community groups as appropriate. We will highlight projects at the Frontiers Annual Research Symposium, where you will be required to present. You will receive information about the meeting well in advance for your planning purposes. You may be asked to present your work at additional venues and meetings.

All publications and presentations must acknowledge NIH grant support arising from any research project that used Frontiers resources. [Learn how to cite Frontiers here](#)