



FRONTIERS
CLINICAL & TRANSLATIONAL
SCIENCE INSTITUTE
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS



Saint Luke's



KANSAS STATE
UNIVERSITY

2027 Frontiers Implementation Science Pilot Program

About Frontiers

Frontiers Clinical and Translational Science Institute (Frontiers) is a regional collaborative research enterprise offering unique strengths to increase and improve clinical and translational science in the region involving academic institutions, healthcare systems, and community partners. Frontiers fosters an increasingly collaborative culture and environment to promote Clinical and Translational Science (CTS) in our community, combining extensive resources and facilities contributed by each institution to create a catalyst for developing a highly competent workforce and infrastructure to further expand CTS efforts.

The **Implementation Science (IS) Pilot Program** is a collaboration with Frontiers Implementation and Measurement for Program Assessment, Change and Translation (IMPACT) team. The IS Pilot Program's goal is to support implementation science studies that address barriers to the adoption, adaptation, integration and/or sustainability of evidence-based guidelines, interventions, tools, policies or other innovations. This funding opportunity is designed to support implementation science that addresses questions on how to move proven approaches into practice across a variety of settings. **We expect these projects to generate preliminary data that investigators will use for subsequent extramural funding applications.**

Awarding Institute	Frontiers Clinical and Translational Science Institute
Federal Prime Sponsor	National Institutes of Health / National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences Award number UM1TR006618.
Key Dates	Online System Opens and RFA Release: October 12, 2026 IRDP Interest Deadline: December 7, 2026 at 9 AM CT IMPACT Consults scheduled: Dec 7- Feb. 1 st 2027 Full Application Deadline: March 5, 2027, 11:59 PM CT Merit Review Completion: April 1, 2027 Funding Selection Notifications: April 2027 Earliest Project Start Date: July 1, 2027, pending Frontiers receipt of the new UM1 Notice of Award for 2027-28 fiscal year. <i>*Note: The IS Pilot Award 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 \$25,000 can be requested
Maximum Award Period	Note: Funding is contingent on Frontiers receiving the new UM1 Notice of Award. July 1, 2027, through June 30, 2028. All funds must be spent by June 30, 2028 - carry over and no-cost extensions are not allowed.
Number of awards	One (1) award
Review Criteria	Invited full applications will be reviewed using a process based on the NIH-Simplified Peer Review Framework and other stated review criteria.
Contact Information	Maggie Padek Kalman, MPH, MSW, Director of Evaluation and Implementation Science, mpadekkalman@kumc.edu

Introduction

The National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences' (NCATS) mission is to turn biomedical research discoveries into health solutions, including diagnostics, treatments, and interventions, through the application of translational science. Their vision is “**More treatments for all people more quickly**”. The NCATS Clinical and Translational Science Award (CTSA) Program, supports translational research and science through fostering collaborations among academic institutions that will improve the efficiency, quality and impact of the process for improving human health.

Translational Science Requirement

Pilot projects are **required** to focus on translational science, i.e., [understanding a scientific or operational principle](#) underlying a step of the translational process with the goal of developing generalizable principles to accelerate translational research. ***Applicants are required to address at least one of the principles but should include all relevant principles.***

Implementation Science

Projects must propose innovative research to understand the implementation context, enhance implementation measures and methods, and improve the implementation process.

Examples of relevant Implementation Science studies that may be supported:

- Testing or tailoring of dissemination and implementation strategies to enhance adoption of evidence-based interventions
- Examining the scale-up, sustainability, or spread of effective interventions
- Improving methods or measures for implementation outcomes
- Development or refinement of implementation tools (e.g., decision-support, audit-and-feedback reports, workflow integration aids)
- Qualitative or mixed-methods studies to identify barriers and facilitators to implementation
- Adaptation of evidence-based interventions for new populations, settings, or delivery models
- Studies designed to de-implement or reduce the use of practices that lack evidence, were adopted prematurely, provide minimal benefit, or are potentially harmful or wasteful

Eligibility

This competition is open to principal investigators (PIs) at any partner or collaborator institution who are eligible to receive investigator-initiated federal funding at their respective institutions.

- Children's Mercy
- Kansas City University
- Kansas State University
- Saint Luke's, BJC Health West Region
- University of Kansas/Medical Center/Health System
- University of Missouri-Kansas City

Early to mid-career PIs are encouraged to apply. Established PIs may apply but should demonstrate that the pilot project explores a substantially new direction beyond their current work and has strong potential to lead to future larger funding.

PIs can apply for more than one of Frontiers pilot funding mechanisms annually but will only be allowed to accept one award. Applicants may serve as PI on only one award 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 PI eligibility should be addressed to individual institutional grants management offices before Letter of Intent submission.

Required Consultation: Implementation and Measurement for Program Assessment, Change, and

Translation (IMPACT) team.

Investigators must schedule a consultation with the IMPACT Team before submitting a full application. Investigators must complete the Implementation Research Development Plan (IRDP) before the consultation. We will provide IRDP guidance after you complete the interest form below. Investigators must submit their interest by December 7th to ensure sufficient time for consultations. We will schedule consultations on a rolling basis as interest is submitted. To submit interest, [please complete the first part of the application here](#) to alert our IMPACT team.

The goal of these consultations is to ensure applicants use appropriate methodologies within the implementation science scope and to guide application development to support high-quality proposals.

INSTRUCTIONS:

- 1) Complete the [Frontiers Pilot Funding Form here](#) to indicate your interest.
- 2) Once the form is submitted, the IMPACT team will be notified and will reach out to schedule the consultation with you. Consultations are scheduled on a rolling basis. The earlier you submit your request, the more flexibility you have in scheduling. We will not accept interest after December 7th, 2026.
- 3) 24 hours prior to the consultation, you must submit no more than a 1-page document outlining your research plan (guidance will be provided upon initial interest form completion).
- 4) Once you have met with the IMPACT team to discuss, you will receive a link for final application submission. Final applications are due March 5th, 2027. Refer to the RFA document for full application guidance.

Application Requirements

The following documents are required and must be uploaded as one PDF, in the order below, with the following naming convention: LastName_FirstInitial – IS Pilot

1. **Research Plan. See details below.**
2. **[Budget and Budget Justification](#), using the required template.**
3. **[NIH Biographical Sketch Common Form](#) for all Key Personnel**
4. **[Institutional Letter of Support](#) from department or division chair, using the required template.**

Research Plan should include the following sections and should not exceed five (5) pages. [Research Plan Template.](#)

- a. Lay Language Summary: Public relevance, target population, recruitment strategy, dissemination to key stakeholders. ($\leq$ 250 words; not included in Research Strategy page limits)
- b. Specific Aims (1 page)
- c. Research Plan (5 pages, excluding references). See Review Criteria below for additional details.
 - Significance, Innovation (Importance of Research)
 - Approach (Rigor and Feasibility)
 - Investigator, Environment (Expertise and Resources)
- d. Project Specific Resources (1 page). Describe existing and anticipated resources directly relevant to the proposed study. Specifically include [Frontiers Resources and Services](#) that will be used. *Not included in the 5-page limit.*
- e. Study Timeline. [Template provided here](#), but any format is accepted. (1 page)
- f. For Human Subject Studies: [Complete the Planned Enrollment Table using this template.](#)
- g. References (no page limit)

[Applications must be aligned with NIH's Unified Strategy.](#)

Budget guidance: Applicants may request up to \$25,000. All funds must be spent by June 30, 2028 – carry over and no-cost extensions are not allowed. **Contact Jen Whitaker**, jwhitaker5@kumc.edu, for institutional guidance regarding indirect costs. [Applicants must use these forms.](#)

The award may be used to fund up to \$10,000 of the PI's salary, including fringe. Applicants are encouraged to include and compensate a relevant community or patient representative as a team member who can make

substantive contributions to project design or implementation. Only essential Key Personnel and staff salary should be included in the budget. Other Key Personnel (e.g., faculty co-investigators) may be included with zero compensation, with a rationale as to their role included in the budget justification.

Equipment may not exceed 10% of the total budget.

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, unless justified for the study outcomes)
- Travel that is not directly related to the conduct of research
- Other items typically supported by Facilities and Administration costs

NIH Biographical Sketch Common Form: Include for all Key Personnel.

Institutional Letter of Commitment: PIs must have written commitment from their department chair, or equivalent, of **a minimum of 20% of the PI's 1.0 FTE** to conduct the proposed research. [Institutional Letter of Commitment Form](#).

Notice of Proprietary Information

Applicants are discouraged from submitting information considered proprietary unless it is deemed essential for proper evaluation of the application. Applications containing information that constitutes trade secrets, that is financial or commercial, or that is confidential or privileged should identify the content by marking those paragraphs or lines with an asterisk (*). All reviewers sign a Confidentiality Agreement.

Merit Review: Applications will be reviewed and scored using a process based on the new [NIH Simplified Peer Review Framework](#) as described below. Applications that do not follow the requirements as detailed in this RFA and applications that are submitted late will be administratively withdrawn.

Factor 1: Importance of the Research (Significance, Innovation), scored 1-9

Significance

- Evaluate the importance of the proposed research in the context of current scientific challenges and opportunities, either for advancing knowledge within the field, or more broadly. Assess whether the application addresses an important gap in knowledge in the field, would solve a critical problem, or create a valuable conceptual or technical advance.
- Evaluate the rationale for undertaking the study, the rigor of the scientific background for the work (e.g., prior literature and/or preliminary data) and whether the scientific background justifies the proposed study.

Innovation

- Evaluate the extent to which innovation influences the importance of undertaking the proposed research. Note that while technical or conceptual innovation can influence the importance of the proposed research, a project that is not applying novel concepts or approaches may be of critical importance for the field.
- Evaluate whether the proposed work applies novel concepts, methods or technologies or uses existing concepts, methods, technologies in novel ways, to enhance the overall impact of the project.

Factor 2: Rigor and Feasibility (Approach), scored 1-9

Approach

- Evaluate the scientific quality of the proposed work. Evaluate the likelihood that compelling, reproducible findings will result (rigor) and assess whether the proposed studies can be done well and within the timeframes proposed (feasibility).

Rigor

- Evaluate the potential to produce unbiased, reproducible, robust data.

- Evaluate the rigor of experimental design and whether appropriate controls are in place.
- Evaluate whether the sample size is sufficient and well-justified.
- Assess the quality of the plans for analysis, interpretation, and reporting of results.
- Evaluate whether the investigators presented adequate plans to address relevant biological variables, such as sex or age, in the design, analysis, and reporting.
- For applications involving human subjects or vertebrate animals, also evaluate:
- the rigor of the intervention or study manipulation (if applicable to the study design).
 - o Whether outcome variables are justified.
 - o Whether the results will be generalizable or, in the case of a rare disease/special group, relevant to the particular subgroup.
 - o Whether the sample is appropriate and sufficiently varied to address the proposed question(s).
- For applications involving human subjects, including clinical trials, assess the adequacy of inclusion plans as appropriate for the scientific goals of the research. Considerations of appropriateness may include disease/condition/behavior incidence, prevalence, or population burden, population representation, and/or current state of the science.

Feasibility

- Evaluate whether the proposed approach is sound and achievable, including plans to address problems or new challenges that emerge in the work. For proposed studies in which feasibility may be less certain, evaluate whether the uncertainty is balanced by the potential for major advances.
- For applications involving human subjects, including clinical trials, evaluate the adequacy and feasibility of the plan to recruit and retain an appropriate population of participants. Additionally, evaluate the likelihood of successfully achieving the proposed enrollment based on age, racial, ethnic, and sex categories.
- For clinical trial applications, evaluate whether the study timeline and milestones are feasible.

Factor 3: Expertise and Resources (Investigator, Environment), to be evaluated as either sufficient for the proposed research or not (in which case reviewers must provide an explanation)

Investigator(s)

- Evaluate whether the investigator(s) have demonstrated background, training, and expertise, as appropriate for their career stage, to conduct the proposed work. For Multiple Principal Investigator (MPI) applications, assess the quality of the leadership plan to facilitate coordination and collaboration.

Environment

- Evaluate whether the institutional resources are appropriate to ensure the successful execution of the proposed work.

Overall Impact, scored 1-9

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.

Potential of pilot 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 and an impactful publication.

Funding Selections and Notice of Award: *Release of funding is dependent on receipt of the new UM1 Notice of Award.* Selections for Intent to Fund are anticipated in April 2027. Selected applications will be submitted to the NCATS for Prior Approval, when applicable. NCATS approval must be received before release of funds and any public announcements.

Meetings

All recipients of pilot awards are required to meet with the Communications Coordinator within four weeks following notification of Intent to Fund. A story will be prepared about awards prior to the issuance of official Notice of Awards.

Awardees will be required to meet with the Director of Evaluation and Implementation Science and the

Administrative Director, who handles financial aspects, two times during the funded project to ensure the study is progressing and funds are being expended. These individuals are available to assist throughout the project period.

Dissemination: Presentations and Publications

Awardees will be required to present their awarded projects to Frontiers Advisory Groups during the funding year and at the completion of the project.

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. Details of all published manuscripts, meeting abstracts and grant awards that result from data obtained from pilot grants should be included in the mid- and final progress 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 also disseminate findings to participants and community groups as appropriate. Frontiers will highlight projects at the Annual Research Symposium, where awardees will be asked to present.

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

[Find Additional Resources and Frequently Asked Questions here.](#)