



AGENCY FOR HEALTHCARE RESEARCH AND QUALITY



AHRQ and PCORI Learning Health System Embedded Scientist Training and Research Center P30 Funding Opportunity (RFA-HS-23-001)

**Pre-Application Technical Assistance Webinar
January 30, 2023, 1 PM EST**

Agenda



- Staff introductions: AHRQ and PCORI
- Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)
- Q & A – received prior to today’s webinar
- Q & A – received in chat during today’s webinar

Introductions



Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ)

- **Office of Extramural Research, Education, and Priority Populations**
 - ▶ Francis Chesley, MD, Director
 - ▶ Division of Research Education
 - Mari Griffioen, PhD, RN, Staff Fellow
 - ▶ Division of Scientific Review
 - Xavier Bogle, PhD, Peer Review Contact
- **Office of Management Services**
 - ▶ Division of Grants Management
 - Carol Kauffman

Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI)

- **PCOR Infrastructure & Innovation**
 - ▶ Erin Holve, PhD, MPH, MPP, Chief Research Infrastructure Officer
 - ▶ Workforce Development Unit
 - Michelle Johnston-Fleece, MPH, Associate Director
 - Hannah Geils, MPH, Program Associate
- **Contract Management**
 - ▶ Mercedes Alexander, Senior Contract Administrator

Purpose of this NOFO



- Invite applications from qualified institutions to create Learning Health System Embedded Scientist Training and Research (LHS E-STaR) Centers to support the professional development of scientists to conduct research that accelerates progress towards an integrated learning health system.

Purpose of this NOFO



- To achieve this aim, the E-STaR Centers will build new models of learning health systems (LHS) infrastructure that:
 - ▶ Strengthens institutional research training in comparative effectiveness research (CER) and patient-centered outcomes research (PCOR); enhances diversity in the LHS research workforce.
 - ▶ Strengthens partnerships with community partners and health system and other stakeholders.
 - ▶ Conducts patient-centered clinical comparative effectiveness research projects to improve health system operations, quality, and health outcomes.

Key Dates & Award Information



- Key dates
 - ▶ Posted: 12/23/2022
 - ▶ Letter of intent: 2/10/2023 (optional and non-binding)
 - ▶ Application: **3/24/2023** (5:00 PM local time of applicant organization)
- Number of awards: Up to 10
- Award budget
 - ▶ Total annual costs (combined direct and indirect) for a project awarded under this NOFO will not exceed \$1 million in any given year and \$5 million for the entire project
- Award project period:
 - ▶ The scope of the proposed project should determine the project period.
 - ▶ The project period may not exceed five years.

Q & A

Received to date

Q & A

▶ Q1

- ▶ **The announcement states that this NOFO builds on lessons learned from the AHRQ/PCORI LHS K12 Program (RFA-HS-17-012), what is the importance of being a previous K12 awardee in competing for this opportunity?**

▶ A1

- *This funding opportunity is open to all eligible applicants and being a previous K12 awardee is not a requirement competing for this new funding opportunity.*

Q & A

▶ Q2

- ▶ **Will presence of trained/experienced and successful PCOR investigators be expected/required?**

▶ A2

- *The presence of trained/experienced and successful PCOR investigators in the centers is a requirement. Centers will be expected to prepare clinician and research scientists for independent research careers in PCOR/CER and equip them to advance the field through their training and scholarship as the next generation of Learning Health System Scientists and to support PCOR/CER and dissemination, implementation, and use of research findings.*
- *Please see the full list of program objectives under Section 1 in the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO).*

Q & A

▶ Q3

- ▶ **Given the reference to targeting clinicians/scientists pursuing “independent research careers,” should faculty pursuing operational leadership positions not be considered for project funds?**

▶ A3

- ▶ *LHS scientists pursuing operational leadership positions can be considered for project funds.*

Q & A

▶ Q4

- ▶ **Does the application require a specific project, or can it be driven by trainee topic interests?**

▶ A4

- *Applicants may suggest a specific project pipeline as a focus OR the focus may be agnostic where the topic is driven by the LHS scientists' interests.*
- *The application must include research projects designed with LHS partners and stakeholders and conducted within a health system. See full Scope of the Program in Part 2 Section 1 in the NOFO*

Q & A

▶ Q5

▶ **May a consortium of learning health system sites apply?**

▶ A5

▶ *If the applicant organization is a nonprofit with 501(c)(3) IRS Status (Other than Institutions of Higher Education), AND a substantial amount of work will be conducted by the applicant organization (the applicant organization cannot act as a means to pass-thru funds to consortium sites), then the organization is eligible to apply.*

Q & A

▶ **Q6**

- ▶ **On p. 10 letters of support are stated to be included in the overall research plan section, can you confirm these do not count toward 6-page limitation in this section?**

▶ **A6**

- ▶ *The letters of support do not count toward the 6-page limitation.*

Q & A

Received during chat

Q & A

- ▶ Q
 - ▶ **Are clinician working within LHS eligible to be trainees?**

- ▶ A
 - ▶ *Programs are expected to prepare clinicians and research scientists for independent research career in PCOR/CER.*

Q & A

▶ Q

- ▶ **This AHRQ/PCORI P30 LHS E-STaR program NOFO builds on lessons learned from the AHRQ/PCORI LHS K12 Program (<https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/rfa-files/RFA-HS-17-012.html>) to support the professional development of scientists to conduct research that accelerates progress toward an integrated learning health system. What are the lessons being referred to?**

▶ A

- ▶ *The lessons learned are the importance of didactic and experiential training tailored to the LHS scientist and the importance of system partners and community engagement*

Q & A

- ▶ Q
 - ▶ **Is there an expectation about the number of trainees a given center should support annually?**

- ▶ A
 - ▶ *No*

Q & A

- ▶ Q
 - ▶ **Is there a target career level for trainees, e.g., postdocs, early career investigators? (Since this funding addresses "lessons learned from the previous K12")**

- ▶ A
 - ▶ *No*

Q & A

▶ Q

- ▶ **Is it is expected that we generate NEW didactic training curricula for scientists? or can we link with existing institutional / partner training materials/ activities?**

▶ A

- ▶ *There is no expectation that applicants generate new didactic training curricula. Please refer to the NOFO objectives.*

Q & A

- ▶ **Q**
 - ▶ **Will AHRQ need to approve all projects proposed, similar to the current K12? In particular, for projects/scientists identified after the award is made.**

- ▶ **A**
 - ▶ *AHRQ will review and approve proposed embedded scientist projects.*

Q & A

- ▶ Q
 - ▶ **Does the grant have to cover salary for the scientist?**

- ▶ A
 - ▶ *The scientist salary may be covered by the grant or another mechanism at the institution.*

Q & A

- ▶ Q
 - ▶ **Can mentors' time be covered by the grant?**

- ▶ A
 - ▶ Yes

Q & A

▶ Q

▶ **Is there an optimum number of projects AHRQ/PCORI would like to see submitted in the application?**

▶ A

▶ *No*

Q & A

▶ Q

- ▶ **Is there a certain minimum time requirement for scientists to be in the program- one year for instance?**

▶ A

- ▶ *This will depend on the research project, but no more than 3 years.*

Q & A

- ▶ Q
 - ▶ **Can someone on a different training grant become a scientist in this program**

- ▶ A
 - ▶ Yes

Q & A

▶ Q

- ▶ **Should the application have a content/topic theme beyond learning health system training? e.g., specific clinical, operational or theoretical area to focus projects around?**

▶ A

- ▶ *Programs are expected to prepare clinician and research scientists for independent research careers in PCOR/CER and equip them to advance the field through their training and scholarship as the next generation of Learning Health System Scientists and to support PCOR/CER and dissemination, implementation, and use of research findings.*

Q & A

▶ Q

- ▶ **How does AHRQ/PCORI think about the term “health system?” Can this be as small as a clinical practice, a service line within a hospital, public health entity, and higher levels?**

▶ A

- ▶ *AHRQ defines a Learning Health System (LHS) as a health system in which internal data and experience are systematically integrated with external evidence, and that knowledge is put into practice.*
- ▶ *More information can be found at <https://www.ahrq.gov/learning-health-systems/index.html>*

Q & A

▶ Q

- ▶ **How do we propose future projects given the structures created?**

▶ A

- ▶ *We suggest developing an approach to respond to the funding announcement. We would be happy to give feedback of a 1-page project description.*

Q & A

▶ Q

- ▶ **Can an existing LHS be the applicant (via the leading institution; so, the institution is the applicant technically) or is the application itself not geared at the LHS but rather at an institution that seeks to create one?**

▶ A

- ▶ *The application is geared towards an LHS institution, not one that will create one.*

Q & A

▶ Q

- ▶ **Should all of the training/research be expected to be conducted within the primary health system applying or can there be collaborations with other health systems where research/training can be conducted?**

▶ A

- ▶ *We suggest developing an approach to respond to the funding announcement. We would be happy to give feedback of a 1-page project description.*

Q & A

▶ Q

- ▶ **Is there guidance regarding what proportion of the direct cost budget should be allocated toward trainee stipends/fringe vs. research projects vs. oversight/admin?**

▶ A

- ▶ *We suggest developing an approach to respond to the funding announcement. We would be happy to give feedback of a 1-page project description.*

Q & A

▶ Q

- ▶ Are prespecified projects to be included like some other P mechanisms?

▶ A

- ▶ *Applicants may suggest a specific project pipeline as a focus OR the focus may be agnostic where the topic is driven by the system and trainees' interests. The application must include research projects designed with LHS partners and stakeholders and conducted within a health system. See full Scope of the Program in Part 2 Section 1 in the NOFO.*

Q & A

▶ Q

- ▶ **As of Jan 25, 2023, the NIH requires a new Data Management and Sharing Plan, which is different than and in addition to the Resource Sharing Plan. Does this RFA require a Data Management and Sharing Plan that would be attached to the “Other Plans” section and not the Resource Sharing Plan section.**

▶ A

- ▶ *Follow the AHRQ Data Management Plan, details can be found in the NOFO.*

Q & A

▶ Q

- ▶ **There was a statement that this P30 is not a training mechanism, but the NOFO states that the P30 must have a training focus. Could you please reconcile the comment and the NOFO?”**

▶ A

- ▶ *The opportunity is funded under the P30 Research Program Projects and Centers grant mechanism, which supports Center Core grants intended to fund a multidisciplinary approach to shared resources and facilities for research and training by a number of investigators from different disciplines who focus on a common research problem.*

Q & A

▶ Q

▶ **How many projects should be described in the application?**

▶ A

▶ *We suggest developing an approach to respond to the funding announcement. We would be happy to give feedback of a 1-page project description.*

Q & A

▶ Q

- ▶ **Is the final career development goals for all trainees to be independent investigators, or in some cases can they be clinical operations health system leaders who serve as co-investigators on teams, but not PI or independent status?**

▶ A

- ▶ *Both outcomes would be acceptable.*

Q & A

▶ Q

- ▶ **Should embedded scientists be employed by partnering health systems? For clinician embedded trainee scientists, do they have to have clinical privileges at the partnering health systems?**

▶ A

- ▶ *We suggest developing an approach to respond to the funding announcement. We would be happy to give feedback of a 1-page project description.*

Q & A

▶ Q

- ▶ Is the \$100K for just one overall project, or several projects conducted by multiple scientists over the 5 years?

▶ A

- ▶ *The \$100K is total costs per project, direct and indirect cost.*

Q & A

- ▶ Q
 - ▶ Are there specific targets with respect to diversity of the scientists recruited via this funding opportunity?

- ▶ A
 - ▶ *No*

Q & A

▶ Q

- ▶ **Do you envision that the embedded scientists get most of their training during their embedded research experience or didactically through coursework?**

▶ A

- ▶ *Based on experience from other programs, embedded scientists benefit the most from their training when it includes didactic and experiential learning tailored to their individual needs.*

Q & A

▶ Q

- ▶ **There is language in the RFA for the data analysis core stating, "Organize the Research Strategy into sections on: Significance, Innovation and Approach." However, there are no subsequent details for what to include in that innovation section like there is for the significance and innovation. Can you provide that?**

▶ A

- ▶ *Organize the Research Strategy into sections on: Significance and Approach.*

Q & A

▶ **Q**

- ▶ **How does one reconcile research priorities and foci that come from the health system and other stakeholders with the statements in the FOA indicating that the work will focus on AHRQ and PCORI priorities?**

▶ **A**

- ▶ *The NOFO lists research priorities that are a focus for AHRQ and PCORI.*

Q & A

▶ Q

- ▶ **Are the Human Subjects and Inclusion Enrollment Tables required for each project listed in the Data and Research Analysis Core (i.e., Human Subjects section are not listed for the Admin Core, Research Education Core, or Overall Core)?**

▶ A

- ▶ *Review Part 2 in the NOFO about Protections for Human Subjects. You may also find further information on the AHRQ website <https://www.ahrq.gov/funding/policies/human-subjects/index.html>*

Q & A

▶ Q

▶ **What is the earliest anticipated start date for awards?**

▶ A

▶ *While the date may change, we anticipate the earliest start date to be September 2023.*

Q & A

- ▶ **Q**
 - ▶ **Will previous K12 holders be expected to include a progress report in the P30 application?**

- ▶ **A**
 - ▶ *No, this is a new application.*

Q & A

▶ Q

- ▶ **Can you speak to the expected relationship of the applicant with PCORnet?**

▶ A

- ▶ *Participating in PCORnet is not a requirement, however, you may find more information about PCORnet in Part 2 Section 1 in the NOFO.*

Q & A

▶ Q

- ▶ If MPIs are used, does each MPI require 20% effort or does the total effort per year have to equal at least 20%?

▶ A

- ▶ *A single PD/PI, or the multiple PD(s)/PI(s) combined, must devote at least 20% minimum full-time effort (i.e., at least 8 hours per week) in each given year of the project.*

Q & A

▶ Q

▶ **Do an initial set of scientists need to be specified by name in the application?**

▶ A

▶ *No*

Q & A

- ▶ **Q**
 - ▶ **Is there a requirement to recruit scientists outside of the applicant organization? In this case if the applicant organization is a large academic medical center.**

- ▶ **A**
 - ▶ **Yes**

Q & A

▶ Q

- ▶ For year 2-5 projects, what are the criteria we would use to select them?

▶ A

- ▶ *We suggest developing an approach to respond to the funding announcement. We would be happy to give feedback of a 1-page project description.*

Q & A

- ▶ **Q**
 - ▶ **Once these centers are funded, does AHRQ expect the centers to collaborate with one another? If so, is there a vision for this collaboration?**

- ▶ **A**
 - ▶ *No*

Q & A

▶ Q

- ▶ **Since this is a training grant, are the intended trainees clinicians or academic researchers or are both?**

▶ A

- ▶ *This funding opportunity is a center grant (P30) and programs are expected to prepare clinicians and research scientists for independent research career in PCOR/CER.*

Q & A

▶ Q

- ▶ **Are the scientists chosen for training expected to be involved in the proposed projects or can they undertake other projects? In other words, are the projects and embedded scientists connected...always?**

▶ A

- ▶ *We suggest developing an approach to respond to the funding announcement. We would be happy to give feedback of a 1-page project description*

Q & A

▶ Q

- ▶ **Are there any guidelines for mentors- in terms of effort?**

▶ A

- ▶ *We suggest developing an approach to respond to the funding announcement. We would be happy to give feedback of a 1-page project description*

Q & A

▶ Q

- ▶ This an AHRQ funded project, we do use the 40% IDC rate of PCORI and we do not use the PCORI salary cap of \$200,000. If not, then we use the institution's own research MTDC IDC rate and the current salary cap of \$212,100?

▶ A

- ▶ *The indirect cost rate to be applied will be in accordance with the applicant's most recent federally-negotiated indirect cost rate agreement. If the applicant does not currently have a federally-negotiated indirect cost rate agreement, then the 10% de minimis rate will apply.*
- ▶ *In accordance with <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-HS-23-005.html>, effective January 1, 2023, the current salary cap is Executive Level II of the Federal Executive Pay Scale, which is \$212,100.*

Q & A

▶ Q

- ▶ **Can the \$100,000 for research projects cover trainee salary aligned with effort contributed?**

▶ A

- ▶ *The salary may come from the funding opportunity or in-kind from the institution.*

Q & A

- ▶ **Q**
 - ▶ **Is there a soft deadline for sending you a one-page description and will you respond by email or phone?**

- ▶ **A**
 - ▶ *There is no deadline and we will respond by email.*

Q & A

▶ Q

- ▶ **Is a hospital and affiliated university together considered a learning health system, or is the hospital the learning health system and the academic medical center considered a partner as described in the NOFO?**

▶ A

- ▶ *Both arrangements described would be acceptable.*

Q & A

▶ Q

- ▶ **In which section or sections of the application is it most appropriate to attached a description of facilities and other resources that will be associated with the proposal?**

▶ A

- ▶ *The business/research office at your institution is a good resource in preparing the application.*

Q & A

- ▶ Q
 - ▶ **The RFA states that, "Research projects may be awarded to embedded scientists outside of the home institution"- so that is clear. May scientists funded under this mechanism come from the home institution?**

- ▶ A
 - ▶ Yes

Q & A

- ▶ Q
 - ▶ **Is there an expectation on the number of PCORI Methodology Standards to be incorporated in to the LHS training curriculum?**

- ▶ A
 - ▶ *No*

Q & A

- ▶ **Q**
 - ▶ **Can projects be of different length of years (e.g. 1 or 2 yrs.). But then the total amount for a project is still limit to a total of 100K or less?**

- ▶ **A**
 - ▶ **Yes**

Q & A

- ▶ Q
 - ▶ **Is there a suggested length for addressing Recruitment Plan to Enhance Diversity as part of the 12 pg. education core or can it be incorporated throughout?**

- ▶ A
 - ▶ *No*

Q & A



- ▶ **Questions and 1-page project description may be emailed to:**
 - ▶ pcortraining@ahrq.hhs.gov
 - ▶ trainingta@ahrq.hhs.gov

Additional Resources



- Slides will be posted to the AHRQ Notice of Funding Opportunities page
- AHRQ Research Priorities and Compliance Guidance
<https://www.ahrq.gov/funding/policies/nofoguidance/index.html>
- AHRQ Learning Health Systems
<https://www.ahrq.gov/learning-health-systems/index.html>
- Patient-Centered Outcomes Research (PCOR) at AHRQ <https://www.ahrq.gov/pcor/index.html>

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AHRQ State

Opioid Use Among Non-Elderly Adults, by Health Status

	2015-2016	2018-2019
Excellent	6.7%	3.9%
Very Good	10.6%	6.4%
Good	15.1%	10.7%
Fair	28.7%	21.5%
Poor	45.4%	36.8%

Regardless of health status, the average annual percentage of adults younger than 65 who had any use of opioids was lower in 2018-19 than in 2015-16

Source: <https://www.ahrq.gov/topics/elderly-elderly>

Access more on this topic in the associated [data visualization](#), plus additional AHRQ [data infographics](#).

Today's Headlines:

AHRQ in the Professional Literature

Medicaid and accelerated approval: spending on drugs with and without proven clinical benefits. Sachs RE, Jazowski SA, Gavrilc KA, et al. *J Health Polit Policy Law*. Epub 2022 Jul 14. Access the [abstract](#) on PubMed®.

Therapeutic hyperthermia is associated with improved survival in afebrile critically ill patients with sepsis: a pilot randomized trial. Drewry AM, Mohr NM, Abiordepey EA, et al. *Crit Care Med*. 2022 Jun;50(6):924-34. Epub 2022 Feb 7. Access the [abstract](#) on PubMed®.

Mental health emergency department visits by children before and during the COVID-19 pandemic. Shankar LG, Habich M, Rosenman M, et al. *Acad Pediatr*. 2022 Sep-Oct;22(7):1127-32. Epub 2022 Jun 3. Access the [abstract](#) on PubMed®.

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