

## Center for Transformative Stroke Care Request for Applications for Pilot Awards

### PURPOSE

The Center for Transformative Stroke Care (CTSC) promotes stroke research to transform stroke care across the continuum with the aLHS approach. We enthusiastically support our investigators' productivity as we blur boundaries and support our mission to expand and synergize translational stroke research and to address stroke disparities and inequities, with the goal to improve stroke care access and outcomes for all.

Pilot Applications should be related to topics of interest to the mission of the Center and will help jump start new areas or technologies for stroke research as well as to foster new or current collaborative efforts that will improve stroke care. The funding can also be used to:

- Gather preliminary data to support the hypothesis for a new project.
- Leverage secondary administrative claims and EHR data to generate real-world evidence on practice variation, policy impacts, healthcare costs, treatment, accessibility, and patient outcomes.
- Advance translational stroke research toward clinical application (e.g. first-in-human studies).
- Identify and develop novel approaches to correct barriers to health disparities in stroke patients.
- Integrate telehealth into research protocols for outcome assessment or intervention delivery.
- Innovate stroke care delivery models in rural hospitals, clinics, or communities.
- Conduct early-stage testing and development of new care delivery models.
- Investigate stroke prevention at both primary and secondary care levels.

### ELIGIBILITY

These awards are open to all neuroscience investigators across Wake Forest University School of Medicine and the Advocate Health Enterprise, including all Atrium Health southeast region locations, Advocate, and Aurora hospitals in the Midwest. Collaborative projects across the Enterprise are encouraged. Wake Forest University faculty and all CTSI affiliated institutions with a Wake Forest co-investigator are also invited to apply. The application's PI does not have to be a member of CTSC, but if the application is funded, the PI is expected to become a member of the Center and contribute to its mission.

### KEY DATES

Date	Detail
10/14/25, 5:00 pm ET	Full Application Deadline
11/11/25	Selection of Awardees
01/05/26	Project Start Date
01/04/27	Project End Date

### FUNDING

The CTSC will fund up to **\$25,000** in direct costs per project to be spent within a 12-month period. Up to three (3) projects will be funded. See section on Budget Guidelines for more details on allowable and non-allowable budget items. Full Applications are due October 14, 2025 (see below).

### APPLICATION PROCEDURE

**Deadline: 10/14/2025, 5:00PM ET**

Investigators invited to apply by submitting their application through the [ePilot electronic submission system](#). Application instructions are included in the ePilot system and summarized below.

#### Format Specifications

- Arial font and no smaller than 11 point
- Margins at least 0.5 inches (sides, top, and bottom)
- Single-spaced lines
- All uploaded documents must be in PDF format

#### Submission/Applicant Information

- Project Title
- Submitting Investigator, Co-Investigator(s), and other Key Personnel information

## **Abstract** (300 words max)

## **Research Plan** (6 pages max)

- Specific Aims
- Research Strategy:
  - Significance – Explain how the project addresses an important problem, how it will improve scientific knowledge, technical capability and/or clinical practice.
  - Innovation – Explain how this project uses novel concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation or interventions.
  - Approach – Describe the overall strategy for this project. This should include a feasible project plan that can be completed within a year. Consideration of expected outcomes, potential pitfalls, and alternative strategies should be included.
  - Projected Timeline including next steps (e.g., submission of extramural applications) (examples can be found in [Appendix I](#))

## **References** (no page limit)

### **Information Regarding Human Subjects**

Address the following if the project **involves human subjects**.

- Provide a document addressing the Protection of Human Subjects, if applicable. (2-page max)
- IRB Approval Status (please note: IRB approval is not required for full application submission, however **a delay in IRB approval does not alter the project end date**)

### **Information Regarding Live Vertebrates**

- IACUC Approval Status (please note: IACUC approval is not required for full application submission, however **a delay in IACUC approval does not alter the project end date**)

### **Budget and Justification (budget template plus 1-page justification)**

- Complete the [budget template form](#) provided along with a brief justification for the funds requested for this RFA. Please include explanation of other resources that may be leveraged to support the project.
- Sub-awards to other institutions to carry out work on a project are not allowed.

### **NIH-style biographical sketch for all Key Personnel (new style)**

#### **Appendix information is limited to:**

- A Summary Statement from the previous grant submission justifying the need for additional experiments.
- Reviewer Comments from the previous manuscript submission justifying the need for additional experiments to secure a high visibility publication.

## **BUDGET GUIDELINES**

The budget period is for 12 months ending no later than 01/04/2027. Up to \$25,000 in direct costs may be requested.

Grant funds may be budgeted for:

- Salary support for the PI or faculty collaborators (using NIH salary cap)
- Research support personnel (including undergraduate and graduate students)
- Travel necessary to perform the research
- Small equipment, research supplies and core lab costs, or
- Other purposes deemed necessary for the successful execution of the proposed project

Grant funds may **not** be budgeted for:

- Office supplies or communication costs, including printing
- Meals or travel, including to conferences, except as required to collect data
- Professional education or training
- Computers or audiovisual equipment, unless fully justified as a need for the research
- Manuscript preparation and submission, or Indirect costs

Awarded funds must be used to conduct the work proposed. All direct charges to this award must adhere to federal regulations and requirements regarding the use of CTSC funds. The CTSC reserves the right to revoke funding in the event it is determined that funds were not spent in accordance with the approved protocol. The general criteria for determining allowable direct costs on federally sponsored projects is set forth in 2 CFR Part 200: Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (The Uniform Guidance).

### **MULTIPLE SUBMISSIONS**

The PI must identify whether the application is submitted to CTSI or other Wake Forest School of Medicine Centers for consideration of funding.

### **REVIEW CRITERIA AND PROCESS**

CTSC proposals are competitive and peer reviewed. Proposals will be evaluated by CTSC Pilot Fund Committee members based on NIH review criteria and scoring. Final award approval will be at the recommendation of CTSC Pilot Fund Committee.

Funding decisions will be made based on the reviews of an evaluation of the projects' connection with the goals of the CTSC. Any IACUC and/or IRB protocols must be approved prior to funding of the approved pilot.

#### **Reviewers will score applications from 1 to 9 based on:**

1. Significance of the problem to be addressed;
2. Innovation in the proposed solutions;
3. Strength and breadth of the investigative team;
4. Methodological rigor and feasibility with clear milestones;
5. Likelihood the innovation will be broadly applicable and have impact on translational research, and;
6. A reporting plan regardless of whether the study yields positive or negative results;
7. Other elements to be considered in the review include: the likelihood that the investment will lead to external funding or a licensable innovation, early-career faculty involvement, research team composition, inclusion of women and minorities as potential participants.

### **PROGRAM EXPECTATIONS**

If any significant issues arise, the study team will be required to work with the CTSC to define an intervention strategy for the study to be successfully completed (or in rare cases, terminated).

#### **Specific Deliverables Include:**

- Disclosure of implementation/dissemination results and efforts to seek extramural funding beyond the pilot grant and subsequent notification of any funds obtained and/or related publications or significant collaborations from the project for a minimum of 4 years.

### **OTHER GUIDELINES**

1. Prior to receiving funds, research involving human subjects must have appropriate approvals from the IRB. Either an IRB approval letter or an IRB response to a "Determination Whether Research or Similar Activities Require IRB Approval" must be submitted to the CTSC prior to funds being released. Human subjects must be reviewed in accordance with the institution's general assurances and HIPAA. All key personnel must have certification of training in the protection of human subjects prior to the start of the grant period.
2. Prior to receiving funds, research involving live vertebrates must have appropriate approvals from IACUC. Either an IACUC approval letter or documentation on why activity does not require IACUC approval must be submitted to the CTSC prior to funds being released.
3. CTSC staff will work closely with funded teams throughout the grant period to monitor progress and, when necessary, provide assistance. A final progress report will be required. We expect PIs to report over the lifetime of the work the outcomes achieved due to the pilot award, e.g., subsequent external funding, publications, presentations and patents.
4. All publications that are the direct result of this funding must reference: "Research reported in this publication was supported by the Center for Transformative Stroke Care at Wake Forest University School of Medicine." Publications must also be registered in PubMed Central.

5. Any awardee who leaves his or her position should contact the CTSC to discuss future plans for the project.

### **GRANT ADMINISTRATION**

The Principal Investigator is responsible for the administration of grant funds. Projects will be for a 12-month period of time.

### **CONTACTS**

Questions about your research project should be directed to Cheryl Bushnell, MD, MHS ([cheryl.bushnell@advocatehealth.org](mailto:cheryl.bushnell@advocatehealth.org)) or Alyson Caruso ([alyson.caruso@advocatehealth.org](mailto:alyson.caruso@advocatehealth.org)). Questions about the ePilot electronic submission system should be directed to Katelyn Still at [Katelyn.Still@Advocatehealth.org](mailto:Katelyn.Still@Advocatehealth.org).

## APPENDIX I

Below are examples to show different methods to provide study milestones, outcomes, and timeline. However, these formats are not required.

### Example 1:

- **Milestone 1 (0-1.5 months):** Milestone 1 Details **Outcome:** Outcome 1 Details
- **Milestone 2 (1.5- 4 months):** Milestone 2 Details **Outcome:** Outcome 2 Details
- ...

### Example 2:

Timeline and Milestones				
Quarters	1	2	3	4
Activity/Aim/Milestone 1	X	X	X	
Activity/Aim/Milestone 2	X	X		
Activity/Aim/Milestone 3		X	X	X