

Leveraging a CTSA Pilot Model to Launch an Institutional Pilot Program

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Maximizing pilot program impact through centralized administration

Why pilots matter

Pilot programs are a vital engine for innovation. They give researchers a chance to test new ideas, collect preliminary data, and build the foundation for larger, externally-funded studies.

The challenge

While their value is clear, pilot programs are not always easy to manage. Administration can be fragmented, funding opportunities may not be fully leveraged, and tracking outcomes across programs is often inconsistent.

Our approach:

To address these challenges, the Clinical and Translational Science Institute (CTSI) partnered with the Dean's Office and Institutional Research Centers to launch a centralized Institutional Pilot Program.

The Centralized Pilot Program:

- Builds on the proven CTSI pilot model,
- Streamlines administrative processes,
- Expands co-funding opportunities,
- Strengthens ROI tracking, and
- Connects with Element E Program to support a pipeline of future research initiatives.

Pilot program design and implementation approach

**ROBUST
MODEL
FOUNDATION**

We built the program on CTSI's proven pilot model, which is designed to be clear, adaptable, and impactful.

**STAKEHOLDER
ENGAGEMENT
THROUGHOUT**

We worked closely with leaders from the Dean's Office and research centers to make sure the program fits institutional priorities.

**STREAMLINED
ADMINISTRATIVE
INFRASTRUCTURE**

We standardized the application process with a single template and created an online system so researchers can apply to multiple centers at once.

**CENTER
AUTONOMY
MAINTAINED**

Each center still decides how much to fund, how to review proposals, and which projects to support.

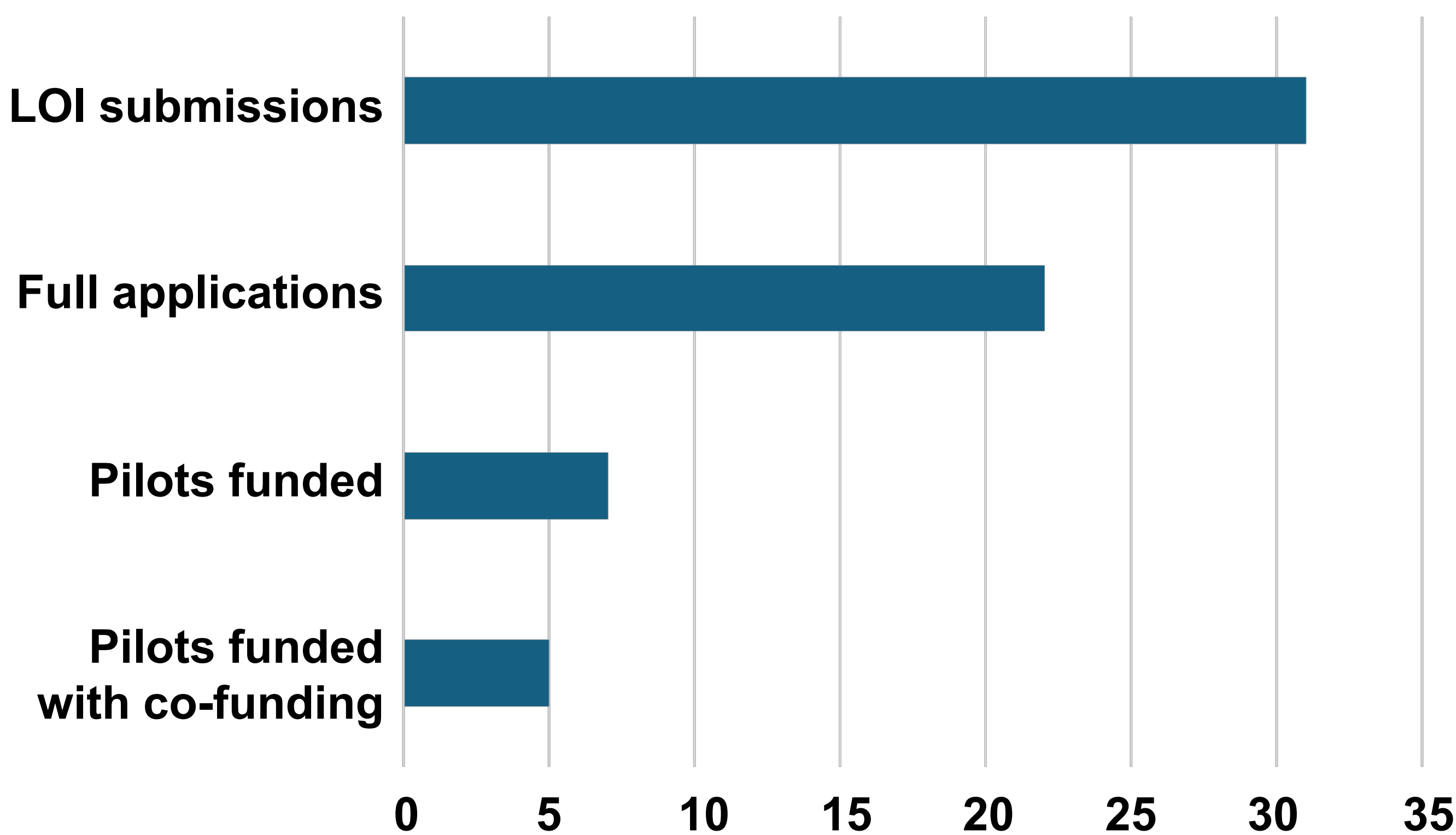
More funding, less burden, clearer impact. The results:

2025 Spring Common Deadline – center participation

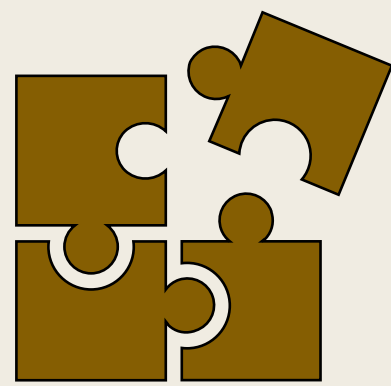
- Center for Artificial Intelligence Research
- Center for Health System Sciences
- Center for Prevention Science in Child and Family Health
- Center for Vaccines at the Extremes of Aging
- Clinical and Translational Science Institute

Total investment from centers: \$280,000

2025 Spring Common Deadline – application metrics



THE TAKEAWAY



The Institutional Pilot Program, modeled after the CTSI Pilot framework, has successfully **centralized** pilot funding administration while preserving center autonomy. By enabling **co-funding** opportunities and integrating **ROI tracking**, the program not only supports early-stage research but also strengthens the pipeline for future Element E projects. This strategic alignment ensures that pilot funding continues to serve as a catalyst for impactful, translational research.