Children's Clinical Research Advisory Committee
(CCRAC)
Children's Health℠

Early Career Research Award
(Instructors and Assistant Professors)

Introduction

The advancement of medical knowledge through clinical research is a core mission of Children's Medical Center Dallas. In support of this mission, Children's Health will support research designed to improve the understanding, prevention, diagnosis, or treatment of childhood diseases. In particular, Children's Health seeks to provide initial funding for innovative research ideas from Investigators with high potential for sustainable extramural support in the future.

Funding will be awarded following a rigorous Peer Review process conducted by the Children's Clinical Research Advisory Committee (CCRAC). This process is intended to identify the most meritorious and innovative projects that support our aim of improving child health across a wide range of disciplines. Children's Health encourages applications from all areas of scientific and clinical inquiry.

Eligibility

Applicants applying under the **Early Career Research Award** category should be Instructors or Assistant Professors in the initial five years of their faculty appointment at the time of the application. Applicants should be committed to an academic research career and should be in the process of becoming independent. It is anticipated that this award will be the basis for future independent extramural support. Consequently, applicants who hold, or have previously held, an R01, or similar grant, are not eligible for this award. Investigators who have previously held independent extramural support should consider applying for one of the Senior Investigator awards (if they meet the eligibility criteria). Investigators with a current K08 grant are eligible to apply for this award.

Early Career applicants must be members in good standing of the Children's Health medical, dental, nursing, or other health professional staff. Individuals who are being recruited from other institutions are also eligible provided that at the time the funding becomes effective they are members of the faculty of UT Southwestern or the professional staff at Children's Health.

Amount: The Early Career awards are designed primarily as *seed money* for clinical or translational research studies. These awards are limited to two years of funding at a maximum level of $75,000 per year.

Applicants are permitted to re-submit a non-funded application one time. Resubmissions must go through the application process described below. There is no guarantee that those applicants who were invited to submit a full application in a previous year will be invited to submit a full application during this year's cycle. If an applicant is invited to submit a full application, the application must be clearly noted as re-submissions and must include a rebuttal of no more than two pages that addresses the critiques of the previous application. Please see re-submission section for additional information.

Investigators who are currently supported by CCRAC funding are not eligible for additional funding until the existing CCRAC funding expires.

Awardees will also be eligible for an extra (i.e., non-budgeted) $1,000 for travel related expenses. Travel must be related to the project and must be approved by the Medical Director of Research.

Criteria for Funding

The main criteria for funding will be scientific quality of the project and its sustainability through future extramural funding. The Research Advisory Committee (RAC) will consider each study proposal and its budget in comparison to the others on a cost benefit basis, weighing the scientific merit, potential impact, and likelihood for future funding against the overall cost of the project. While funding requests at all levels will be considered, preference will be given to those projects likely to produce the greatest benefit at the lowest relative cost.

Human Subjects, Animals, and Recombinant DNA

If the proposed research program involves humans as research subjects, the use of warm-blooded animals or experiments involving recombinant DNA techniques, the investigators will be expected to comply with the current guidelines of the Department of Health and Human Services concerning such matters. Evidence of compliance, as well as an approved protocol from the appropriate institutional review board (IRB) of the sponsoring institution (usually UT Southwestern), will be required before funding.

Note: pending protocol approval is acceptable, but IRB approval must be obtained within 90 days of award notification or the award will be forfeited.

Organization and Submission of Applications

Duration of Funding

The project time frame will be two years, with possible continuation upon submission of required reports (described below) and a competitive application justifying the extension.

Deadlines and Review Schedule for New Applications and Resubmissions

Applications will be reviewed on the schedule below:

1) Applicants submit a one-page abstract, a Bio sketch and provide a 7 minute "TED Talk" video. Videos can be no longer than 7 minutes and can include any modality (PowerPoint, animation, movies, etc.) though all content must be included in the video (i.e., the reviewers will not be expected to review material referenced or cited but not present in the video). Video presentations should have the following basic format (times indicated are estimates): Background and Significance (1-2 minutes); Statement of Hypothesis and Specific Aims (1-2 minutes); Study Design and Methods (2-3 minutes); Anticipated Outcomes, Potential Pitfalls (2-3 minutes). **Deadline is December 19, 2025.**

2) The abstract and video are reviewed by the RAC. Scoring is based on the applicant's academic record and the scientific merit and sustainability of the project. The applicants will be notified of the decision of the RAC by **January 16, 2026.**

3) Selected applications will be invited to present to a panel of accomplished investigators and other content experts who will judge presentations and provide specific critique and suggestions for the proposed study. The panel will provide feedback and 2-3 area of improvement. Panel presentations will be scheduled for **February 2026**.

4) Selected applicants will be invited to submit a full application. It is expected that the full application will incorporate or dispute the areas of improvement provided during the panel presentations. Invitations to submit a full application will be sent by **February 20, 2026.**

5) Full Applications are due **March 20, 2026**.

6) Final review completed in **May 2026.**

7) Funding will begin as early as **July 1, 2026.**

Address for Submission

Submit the following materials and files in PDF format electronically through the REDCap link below:

https://redcap.link/2026CCRAC

1) Bio sketch and abstract
2) Full Application (if selected as a finalist)

Submit video files (if invited) to Jeffrey Kahn, PhD, M.D., Children's Medical Center Medical Director for Research, jeffrey.kahn@utsouthwestern.edu and copy CCRAC@childrens.com

The deadline for all material is 5 PM on the dates listed above. Applications received after this deadline will not be considered.

Note: under extraordinary circumstances the deadline may be extended, but only with prior approval from the Medical Director for Research.

Organization of the Full Application

- **APPLICATIONS MUST BE SUBMITTED IN PDF FORMAT**
- **FILE NAMES SHOULD BE Last name_First name_Full_EarlyCareer_CCRAC_2026**

Formatting shall be single-spaced with 12-point Arial (or other equivalent Sans-serif font) and ½ inch margins. Page limits for each section are provided below. Failure to adhere to the Organization of the Application guidelines may result in the application being disqualified.

Completed Application Cover Sheet (see Attachment A)

One page: ***Cover letter and Prior Funding***
Please include the appropriate Cover Letter which corresponds to the specific grant award (i.e., Early Career Research Award). Provide information on prior CCRAC and CTSA funding, if applicable.

Page 1: ***Project Title and Credits***
Principal Investigator, Co-investigators, collaborators, Faculty Sponsor (if applicable), Department(s), Address and contact information, e-mail, phone and fax. Mentored investigators should list the names and titles of the mentoring team, including the biostatisticians (if applicable); IRB or IACUC status of proposed study. A pending status is acceptable, but the award will not be granted until approval is obtained.
Note: IRB approval must be obtained within 90 days of award notification, or the award will be forfeited.

Page 2: ***Abstract*** *(maximum 300 words).*

Page 3: ***Lay abstract*** (maximum 300 words written in language understandable by an educated, but non-medical reader).

Pages 4-10: ***NIH-style Biosketch***
Biosketch of applicant and, when pertinent, biosketch of the research mentor and appropriate mentoring team members (please note that the sponsor and the mentor may be two different individuals). Skip unused pages in assigning page numbers.

Page 11: ***Budget Summary***
Please provide budget justification with explicit detail regarding how cost estimates were developed. If requesting research coordinator support, please use an additional page to detail the amount and scope of the work you are requesting to be done by a research coordinator.
Note: Salary support for the PI is not permitted by this funding mechanism.

In preparing the required budget, the investigators should contact Research Finance at research.finance@childrens.com **at least** 10 business **days** prior to full written submission of the application to make sure that all estimated costs at Children's Healthcare correctly priced. Children's Health Research Administration has both Research Coordinators and Biostatisticians that are available for help in conducting research studies, though there is a charge for these services.

Inaccurately priced or unpriced budgets may negatively impact your review as costs are part of review considerations. If an outside vendor is being used for laboratory tests, this should be explicit within the budget.

PLEASE NOTE: There is ***no*** need to budget for indirect costs. The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center considers CCRAC grants from Children's Health as "gifts";

therefore, all budget items should be for **direct costs only**. As such, this application and budget are **not routed through UTSW SPA**.

Pages 12-17 (6 pages). ***Research Plan***

The research plan **must** include the following specific sections:

1. **Hypothesis (or Hypotheses) and Specific Aims**. (limited to 1 page)

2. **Career Development Plan**. Please include an outline of the mentoring environment, future goals and career path, and timeline for applying for extramural support.

3. **Background and Rationale**, providing sufficient and properly cited source documentation of previous research related to the proposed topic of study. (limited to 1 page)

4. **Study Design and Methods**, including a description of how the experimental approach relates to the aims, a discussion of how the data will be interpreted (including a detailed statistical analysis), an outline of the potential experimental problems and the solutions devised to overcome them, and a timetable for the performance of the studies.

   A statistician in Children's Research Administration is available to assist with methodological questions involving study design and analysis. If you need this assistance, please contact Rong Huang one month prior to the application deadline at rong.huang@childrens.com

Page 18. ***Justification***
Please explain 1) the clinical significance; 2) how these funds will enhance the likelihood of extramural funding and advance the applicant's career goals; and 3) how the CCRAC funding will assist the investigator in reaching a defined goal.

Page 19-20. ***Letters of Support***
For Early Career Awards, two letters of support are required:

- A letter from applicant's **Scientific Mentor** indicating: 1) he/she has evaluated and approved the final submission of the research proposal; 2) he/she will provide scientific oversight; 3) assurance of access to resources to conduct the research; 4) how the study will contribute to the applicant's professional goals; and 5) source for the applicant's salary support to conduct the project.
- A letter from the applicant's **Division Chief** confirming the eligibility of the applicant for this award (faculty member within the initial five years of appointment) and providing assurance that the applicant will have the necessary protected time to conduct the proposed research. The career goals and overall commitment by the Investigator to an academic career should be discussed.

  Note: If the Scientific Mentor and Division Chief are the same person, only one letter is required.

Pages 21-30. ***Bibliography and Additional Materials***
Please provide pertinent bibliography and additional materials to the grant (IRB approval, if available at the time of submission, additional letters from collaborators, etc.)

Please ensure that complete applications are no more than 30 pages. Applications larger than this may not be received and will be rejected. Applications being submitted for a second time are allowed two pages for a rebuttal of the critiques of the previous application and may be up to 32 pages in length.

Reporting

Investigators receiving awards will be required to submit a progress report at completion of the first 12 months and a final report at the completion of the award period. Continuation of the funding is contingent upon satisfactory completion of the report. If extensions are requested and approved, the reporting requirements as previously described still apply. The project template can be downloaded from the Research Administration web page on ChildNet (you must be logged into the Children's Health network to access the site).

Annual updates on publications and extramural funding resulting from a CCRAC award is required for 10 years from the end date of the award after the grant period. Annual reports will be due by January 31 of each year and updates for publications should be made through My Bio Link from PubMed at http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK53595/.

End of Year One report: The PI must submit a maximum of three pages containing a description of the progress made since the beginning of the award period. The investigator(s) should indicate how the progress relates to the specific aims of the proposal, detailing any unexpected problems that prevented completion of the aims in the period designated by the original proposal. The PI must also submit a detailed financial statement of expenditures with the progress report. Failure to do so will result in the progress report being returned as incomplete. Subsequent distributions will be withheld until a complete progress report is received and approved. Plans and an updated budget for the second year of funding should be included.

Final report: The PI must submit a maximum of three pages outlining the following: 1) the findings of the study as they relate to the original aims; 2) publications (submitted or in draft); 3) grant applications emanating from the work (copies of the manuscripts or applications should be included); and 4) a financial statement of expenditures.

Note: if there are remaining CCRAC funds available an applicant must submit a request to the Medical Director for Research for a no-cost extension, otherwise remaining funds must be transferred back to Children's Health, within 30 days. Failure to provide a complete final progress report, including a detailed financial statement of expenditures, will disqualify the PI from future awards.

Send reports via email and reprints as PDF documents to: jeffrey.kahn@utsouthwestern.edu and copy CCRAC@childrens.com. Reports are to be submitted in a timely manner. If this is not possible, a written request to extend the reporting deadline must be made. Otherwise, noncompliance may result in termination of the award.

No-Cost Extension/Re-budgeting

CCRAC Awards include a ***one-time provision*** for awardees to re-budget funds and/or extend the final budget period beyond the originally approved timeframe. All such requests must be made to the Medical Director for Research at least 90 days before the original award period ends.

1. No- Cost Extensions (NCE)

Awardees may extend the final budget period for one additional year when the following conditions are met:

- No additional funds are needed to complete the project.
- Additional time beyond the established expiration date is required to ensure adequate completion of the originally approved project.
- The NCE request is made **at least 90 days** prior to end of the original award period.
- The NCE request must be accompanied by the progress report.

2. Re-budgeting

Awardees are allowed a certain degree of latitude to re-budget within and between budget categories to meet unanticipated needs of the study. Most re-budgeting activity is within the awardees' authority. Exceptions include:

- New budgetary line item(s) not included in the projects originally approved scope.
  - If you anticipate a change in scope from the original project, please contact the Medical Director of Research for prior discussion and approval before previously unbudgeted funds are expended.
- Budgetary adjustments 25% or greater.
  - Anticipated changes of this magnitude must receive prior approval by Children's Health.
- Requests must be made at least 90 days prior to the end of the original award period.

The Research Advisory Committee or designee will evaluate all NCE and re-budgeting requests on a case-by-case basis.

Funded Projects

If your project is awarded CCRAC funds, and the expenses will not occur at Children's Health, the funds will likely require transfer to a UT Southwestern account. The investigator is responsible for the following steps to ensure that funding is appropriately transferred from Children's Health to UT Southwestern.

- Investigator should provide a copy of their project approval from CCRAC, project application and budget to the appropriate individual (i.e., Grants / Contracts Specialist) in their respective Division or the Department of Pediatrics.
- A Request for Transfer of Funds letter on UT Southwestern letterhead and project budget must be drafted and submitted to Research Finance at research.finance@childrens.com at Children's Health.

Once Children's Health receives the Request for Transfer of Funds letter and project budget, the award will be verified, and a check request will begin processing. Children's Health will transfer the appropriate funds to the address and contact listed on the Request for Transfer of Funds letter.

Re-Submissions

Applicants are permitted to re-submit a non-funded application one time. All re-submitted applications must be clearly noted as re-submissions and must include a rebuttal of no more than two pages that addresses the critiques of the previous application.

Applicants that submit an original application and a re-submission without success should be certain that any subsequent applications are significantly different. A slight variation of the research plan, study design or methods will not be acceptable. If the Medical Director for Research believes an application or variation of an application has been previously submitted over the allowable one time, the application in question will be reviewed by two CCRAC members. If the reviewers concur the application is technically a re-submission the application will be disqualified.

Acknowledgment

Specific instructions for acknowledgement will be provided in the notice of award letter and all publications resulting from this support must be acknowledged accordingly. The support should also be acknowledged by the grantee in all public communication of work resulting from the award, including scientific abstracts (where permitted), posters at scientific meetings, press releases or other media communications, and internet-based communications.

Change of Principal Investigator

Children's Clinical Research Advisory Committee must authorize any request for a change of Principal Investigator. Such a request must be submitted in writing and reasoned thoroughly. Biographical information on the new Principal Investigator must be sent to jeffrey.kahn@utsouthwestern.edu before the request can be approved.

Falsification of Scientific Data and Plagiarism

If an individual determines that falsification of scientific data and/or plagiarism has taken place concerning or related to work Children's Health has supported, Children's Clinical Research Advisory Committee must be notified promptly.

Malpractice Liability

It should be understood that Children's Health is not responsible for malpractice or claims of malpractice arising out of, or resulting from, the performance of the investigations carried out under the awards. Children's Health will not provide reimbursement for the cost of malpractice insurance.

Project Termination and Change of Institution

Terms for renewal and/or discontinuance of project are subject to the approval of Children's Clinical Research Advisory Committee. Unexpended funds at the end of the two year project period or unexpended funds from prematurely terminated projects must be transferred back to Children's Health, within 30 days, unless a project extension has been granted (please see Reporting section for additional information). CCRAC funds are not transferable to another project

or institution.

Other Requirements

By accepting CCRAC funding, each awardee will be expected to present their work in a research forum sponsored by Children's Health.

Attachment A

CHILDREN'S CLINICAL RESEARCH ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CCRAC)

Early Career Research Award Application Cover Sheet

DATE:

APPLICANT:

DIVISION:

STUDY TITLE:

VELOS#:

IRB#:

FACULTY
PARTICIPANT:

AMOUNT OF FUNDING REQUEST:

Year 1:

Year 2:

Total:

Is this application a re-submission?

Have you received prior CCRAC or CTSA funding? If yes, please provide details on the following page.

CCRAC and CTSA Funding

Please list all prior CCRAC & CTSA funding that you have been awarded:

Year of Award:
Total Amount of Funding Awarded:
Study Title:
Results / Status of Study:

Did the Funding for this study lead to additional extramural funding?
Publications?

Year of Award:
Amount of Award:
Study Title:
Results / Status of Study:

Did the Funding for this study lead to additional extramural funding?
Publications?

Year of Award:
Amount of Award:
Study Title:
Results / Status of Study:

Did the Funding for this study lead to additional extramural funding?
Publications?

(Add additional pages if needed)