

Arkansas Children’s Research Institute  
**Funding Opportunity: ACRI/ABI Team Science  
 Research Grant Awards**



**Program Overview**

<p><b>Program Purpose</b></p>	<p>This grant mechanism is designed to catalyze and support interdisciplinary collaborations in life course research. The program aims to foster innovative translational research focused on understanding and improving various aspects of human development and aging across the entire lifespan. Projects may consider biological, psychological, social, and/or environmental factors that influence an individual across the lifespan. By promoting internal and external collaborations, the program seeks to enhance the quality of research outcomes and facilitate the acquisition of extramural funding for continued research endeavors. In keeping with this aim, the expectation is that this award will result in an application through ACRI for extramural funding.</p>
<p><b>Eligibility Requirements</b></p>	<p><u>Collaborative Team:</u>          The collaborative team must include at least one PI with an extramural funding history. It is expected that applications will be multi-PI submissions linking two or more PIs. New collaborations are encouraged, but previous collaborations between team members will not be disqualifying. The team should have members both from ACRI and collaborative partners (regional and/or statewide).</p> <p><u>Contact Principal Investigator:</u>          The collaborative team must be led by a single <u>Contact PI</u> (the person who will receive and respond to communications from the ACRI leadership and administrative team). An ACRI-based PI should function in this role. If more than one PI is from ACRI, one should be selected to serve in this role. Multiple <u>Contact</u> PIs are not allowed.</p> <p>To be eligible as the Contact PI, the person</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• must have an academic faculty appointment in the UAMS College of Medicine, Pharmacy, Public Health, Nursing, or Allied Health Professions;</li> <li>• must be an ACRI investigator;</li> <li>• <i>must not</i> be listed as PI or MPI on a competing application for this award. Being listed as Senior/Key Personnel on a competing application is permissible.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Priorities</b></p>	<p>Priority will be given to applications that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• leverage current research programs and resources to rapidly develop a competitive extramural funding application focused on life course research.</li> <li>• include a collaborative team proposing innovative research approaches with high potential for future ACRI extramural funding.</li> <li>• demonstrate feasibility for completion within one year.</li> </ul>

## Key Dates

Letter of Intent Due Date	October 13, 2023
Application Due Date	November 17, 2023
Award Date	January 6, 2024

## Award Information

Funds Available and Anticipated Number of Awards	Support of this program is enabled by funds available to ACRI through the Arkansas Biosciences Institute (ABI). Final funding decisions are contingent upon the institutional availability of funds to support the program.
Award Budget	\$100,000 total. In addition, awardees will be eligible for ACRI project management and grant writing support to facilitate an extramural application.
Award Project Period	Up to 12 months. It is expected that submissions are for proposals that can feasibly be accomplished in one year.

## Scope

The funded research will facilitate collaborations across disciplines to directly support the ACRI strategic plan of life course research development. The aim is to advance life course research by ACRI researchers in collaboration with colleagues at partnering institutions regionally or statewide.

Life course research is concerned with understanding how early development/experiences, life events, and ongoing circumstances influence an individual's life and health trajectory, opportunities, and outcomes. An interdisciplinary approach, with varied concepts, methods, and theories from differing fields, helps in comprehensively understanding the complex factors affecting an individual across the lifespan. Applications should address significant translational science problems involving life course issues. Projects may consider biological, psychological, social, and/or environmental factors that influence an individual's health trajectory and lifespan.

Applications will be evaluated on the attributes of the proposed team, the potential impact on ACRI's Strategic Plan goals, the scientific merit of the proposed work, and the potential to rapidly develop a competitive extramural funding application in life course research.

**The proposed project must be of sufficient scientific rigor to support the development of a larger, extramural grant application (for example, NIH's R01 funding mechanism). Specific plans for pursuing extramural funding must be included in the submission, including the grant mechanism(s) that will be pursued and the timeline for submission.**

If funded, the collaborative team will be eligible for ACRI project management and grant writing support to facilitate an extramural application.

## Review Criteria and Process for Prioritization for Funding

The awardee(s) will be selected through a competitive peer-review process consisting of individuals from AC, ACRI, UAMS, and other institutions as required to ensure that appropriate scientific expertise is present for all applications. The NIH scoring system for R-series awards will be used in addition to the criteria described in this RFA. Each grant application will receive an overall priority score and be ranked accordingly. Final funding decisions will be made by the ACRI President who will consider the scientific merit and value of a given application to the research. The feasibility of completing the project in one year will be closely evaluated and taken into consideration when a final funding decision is made.

## Letter of Intent

An LOI is due no later than 5 p.m. on October 13. The LOI must be submitted to Karla Whiffen (WhiffenKM@archchildrens.org) via email.

The LOI should include the following components:

1. Contact Principal Investigator: Name/Title/Contact Information
2. Multiple PIs: Name/Title/Organization
3. Senior/Key Personnel: Name/Title/Organization
4. Project Title
5. One-page project description
6. Description of the new collaboration
7. A history of the collaborative team's (all PIs and Senior/Key Personnel) ABI funding (if applicable). List the source (grant or recruitment funds), date, and amount awarded as well as any output that resulted from those funds (publications, extramural awards, etc.).
8. Two (2) recommended reviewers based on ACRI's Conflict of Interest criteria:
  - a. The reviewer is not named on the application in any role
  - b. The reviewer has no direct or indirect financial interest in the proposal
  - c. The reviewer has not mentored any of the PIs of the Collaborative Team
  - d. The reviewer is not providing a letter of support for the application
  - e. The reviewer has not served as a member of an advisory board/scholarly oversight committee for any of the PIs during the past 12 months
  - f. The reviewer is not listed as a Contact PI, MPI, Other Senior/Key Personnel, or collaborator for a competing application for this award

Upon review of the submitted LOIs, selected applicants will be contacted and invited to apply with a full submission.

Each Contact PI may only submit one Letter of Intent.

## Application Package

[Attachment 1](#) provides a complete listing of the required forms and instructions for preparing the required documents.

## Application Review and Selection Process

The awardee(s) will be selected through a competitive peer-review process. Final funding decisions will be made by the ACRI President who will consider the scientific merit and value of a given application to the strategic mission of AC and ACRI as it regards expanding the translational potential of pediatric research into lifelong health.

## Award Notification

Applicants will receive a copy of reviewer comments related to their proposal. Notifications of funding will be made by the ACRI President via a letter to the Contact PI. ACRI will facilitate the establishment of an account and provide oversight for all post-award functions.

## Reporting Requirements

A progress report is due from the Contact PI upon the completion of the award. Failure to submit a report or respond to additional requests for reporting will jeopardize future funding.

## Application Submission Contact Information

Karla Whiffen, ACRI Grant Development Specialist

Telephone: 501-364-2712

Email: [WhiffenKM@archchildrens.org](mailto:WhiffenKM@archchildrens.org)

## **Attachment 1 – Application Materials & Research Strategy Requirements**

On or before 5 pm on the deadline date, an applicant must upload a PDF copy of their application to the Proposal Management System: <https://apps.uams.edu/ClinicalTranslationalScienceAward/Account/Login.aspx>.

Forms will be provided at the time of invitation to submit a full application and are available on the ACRI website: <https://www.archildrens.org/research/resources-for-researchers>.

### **Application Materials**

Use at least one-half inch margins (top, bottom, left, and right) for all pages. For font, use an Arial typeface, a black font color, and a font size of 11 points or larger. Use no less than a single space for line spacing. Do not include headers, footers, or page numbers. Captions on tables or figures must be no smaller than Arial 8-point font. Tables and figures must be legible when the page is viewed at 100%.

The final application must include the following items in order:

1. ACRI Intramural Funding Application Form
2. ACRI Intramural Research & Related Budget Form
3. ACRI Intramural Budget Justification Form
4. Project Summary/Abstract (limit: 30 lines of text)  
State the application's broad, long-term objectives, making clear how it will support the development of ACRI life course research. Briefly describe the research design and methods for achieving the stated goals. Be sure that the project summary reflects the key focus of the proposed project.
5. Specific Aims (1 page)
6. Research Strategy (6 pages, excluding reference citations)  
The research strategy should include the following sections:

#### *A. Significance*

- Explain the importance of the problem or critical barrier to progress in the field that the proposed project addresses.
- Explain how the proposed project will improve scientific knowledge, technical capacity, and/or clinical practice to enhance lifelong health.
- Describe how the concepts, methods, technologies, treatments, services, or preventative interventions that drive this field will be changed once the proposed aims are achieved.

#### *B. Innovation*

- Explain how the application challenges and seeks to shift current research or clinical practice paradigms.
- Describe any novel theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation or interventions to be developed or used, and any advantage over existing methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions.
- Explain any refinements, improvements, or new applications of theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions.

#### *C. Approach*

- Describe the overall strategy, methodology, and analyses to be used to accomplish the specific aims of the project. Include how data will be collected, analyzed, and interpreted as well as any resource sharing plans as appropriate.
- If the project is in the early stages of development, describe any strategy to establish feasibility, and address the management of any high-risk aspects of the proposed work.
- A clear statistical analysis plan must be presented. While a power analysis is not specifically required, a presentation of the effect size(s) that can be ascertained with the proposed sample size should be included.
- Point out any procedures, situations, or materials that may be hazardous to personnel and precautions to be exercised.
- If research on Human Embryonic Stem Cells (hESCs) is proposed, but an approved cell line from the NIH hESC Registry cannot be identified, provide a strong justification for why an appropriate cell line cannot be chosen from the Registry at this time.
- Discuss potential problems/pitfalls, proposed solutions/alternative strategies, and benchmarks for success anticipated to achieve the aims.

7. Future Directions (1 page)
  - Describe how the completion of the project will support the expansion of ACRI life course research
  - Describe the next set of investigations that are expected to emerge from the project
  - Describe detailed plans to obtain future extramural ACRI funding, including grant mechanism and timeline for submission.
8. NIH Biographical Sketch for the Contact PI and Other Senior/Key Personnel  
Section A of the biographical sketches should detail the expertise of the team member relative to the proposed project and the role they will serve in its execution. Use the current NIH forms for the biographical sketches.
9. Facilities and Resources  
Describe how the scientific environment in which the research will be done contributes to the probability of success (e.g., institutional support, physical resources, and intellectual rapport). Describe the leverage of any ACRI cores or resources. In describing the scientific environment in which the work will be done, discuss ways that the proposed studies will benefit from unique features of the scientific environment or from unique subject populations or how studies will employ useful collaborative arrangements.
10. Multiple PI Leadership Plan (1 page)  
The governance and organizational structure of the leadership team and the research project should be described, including communication plans, processes for making decisions on scientific direction, and procedures for resolving conflicts. The roles and administrative, technical, and scientific responsibilities for the project or program should be delineated for the PD/Pis and other collaborators.
11. Plan for Enhancing Diverse Perspectives (PEDP) (1 page)  
The PEDP is a summary of strategies to advance the scientific and technical merit of the proposed project through inclusivity. It is expected to show how enhancing diverse perspectives is supported throughout the application and how these strategies strengthen the scientific and technical merit of the project. Key elements to be included in the PEDP include:
  - Summary of strategies (and their rationales) that advance the scientific and technical merit through expanded inclusivity.
  - Timeline and milestones for the PEDP.
  - Approaches to assessing progress toward meeting the PEDP-defined goals.
12. Letters of Support  
Non-key personnel collaborators, vendors, and core laboratories (if applicable) must provide letters of support. The Chair of Section/Department must confirm that investigators have dedicated time to execute the project.

### Application Checklist

✓	Item	Notes
	ACRI Intramural Funding Application Form	Form will be provided if invited to submit a full application
	ACRI Intramural Research & Related Budget Form	Form will be provided if invited to submit a full application
	ACRI Intramural Budget Justification Form	Form will be provided if invited to submit a full application
	Project Summary/Abstract	Limit: 30 lines of text
	Specific Aims	Limit: 1 page
	Research Strategy	Limit: 6 pages
	Future Direction	Limit: 1 page
	Biosketches	Limit: 5 pages each
	Other Support (PIs Only)	No page limit
	Facilities and Resources	No page limit
	MPI Plan	Limit: 1 page
	PEDP	Limit: 1 page
	Letters of Support	No page limit

## **Attachment 2 – Approved and Not Approved Expenses**

This attachment provides guidance regarding expenses that this program will or will not cover. The list is not all-inclusive; please contact Anne McMains ([McMainsAM@archildrens.org](mailto:McMainsAM@archildrens.org)) with any questions.

### **Approved Expenses**

- Computer/software (with clear justification they are needed for the proposed research)
- Equipment
- Office supplies (research-related only)
- Publication costs of publishers
- Supplies for research project (actual research costs)
- Travel
- Personnel costs for investigators
- Personnel costs for other research staff (research assistants, coordinators, lab techs, etc.)

### **Not Approved Expenses**

- Any expense not directly related to research activity
- Any personal professional fee
- Board exam fees
- Board review courses
- DEA #
- Lab coats
- Indirect costs
- Medical licenses
- Membership dues to societies and professional organizations
- Periodicals
- Professional liability insurance
- Subscriptions
- Telephone and pager