

# KANSAS CITY AREA LIFE SCIENCES INSTITUTE

## BLUE KC OUTCOMES RESEARCH GRANTS (Issue Date 11 September 2017)

### Request for Proposals

#### APPLICATION DEADLINES

1. Letter of Intent is due by 5:00 pm on 9 October 2017.
2. Full application must be received by 5:00 pm on 17 November 2017.  
Applications received after 5:00 pm will not be accepted.
3. Funded awards begin 1 May 2018.

The Kansas City Area Life Sciences Institute (KCALS I) is pleased to issue a Request for Proposal (RFP) for the Blue KC Outcomes Research Grants to be submitted to KCALS I for funding consideration. Background, Purpose, Eligibility, Scope, Review Criteria, Application Procedures, Review Process, and Submission Instructions are provided below.

#### BACKGROUND

KCALS I is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit public charity organization which serves as the coordinating body for the Kansas City region's life science research initiatives by functioning as a facilitator, matchmaker, and potential funder of collaborative research initiatives and assisting in the commercialization of resulting intellectual property. KCALS I supports the ten key stakeholder institutions listed below and other life sciences stakeholders in the region:

- Children's Mercy
- MRIGlobal
- Saint Luke's Health System
- Kansas City University
- Kansas State University
- Truman Medical Centers
- University of Kansas
- University of Kansas Medical Center
- University of Missouri
- University of Missouri - Kansas City

#### PURPOSE

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas City (Blue KC) seeks to support applied outcomes research efforts that significantly impact the delivery of healthcare in its designated territory of operations. Its approach for achieving this goal is to support outcomes research grants awarded to participating physicians that improve the efficient delivery of quality healthcare to large numbers of plan participants. Proposals are invited for multidisciplinary outcomes research grants consistent with the scope of this specific RFP. Award amounts will be determined based on the individual proposals and will not exceed a maximum of \$50,000 for one year. Awards are intended to exploit

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investigator and facility strengths leading to highly competitive proposals directed toward future external funding. The number of awards will be subject to available Blue KC funds.

### **ELIGIBILITY**

All providers/researchers in the Blue KC service area are eligible to submit proposals in response to this RFP. The physicians, hospitals and other providers participating in the study must be participating network providers with Blue KC. Proposals that leverage multiple providers or impact large patient populations relevant to many Blue KC members are preferred for this funding program, but not an absolute requirement. Awards will be made only to those designated as a tax exempt 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization. In the case where multiple organizations are involved (e.g., a research organization assisted by a financial organization partner which is a 501(c)(3)), a lead institution must be identified. At time of proposal, all investigators or representatives of the 501(c)(3) organization acting as a financial partner, must fully disclose any conflict of interest with Blue KC or KCALSI.

As a condition of eligibility, an organization, including but not limited to any of its partners, affiliates, subsidiaries, investigators, or representatives (collectively, "Organization"), agrees that if it is selected for a Blue KC Outcomes Research Grant that Blue KC will have an exclusive right of first refusal to purchase any intellectual property created by Organization in utilization of or arising from the Blue KC Outcomes Research Grant.

### **SCOPE**

***Blue KC Outcomes Research Grant proposals must be applied research projects that improve not only the quality of the healthcare process but focus on outcomes, reduce healthcare costs, improve effectiveness, efficiency or efficacy of some aspect of the healthcare process, and/or improve access to healthcare.***

Basic research projects will not be accepted. Blue KC has identified Value Based Care as its priority area. The following examples represent areas of interest within a Value Based Care context:

- Evaluation/assessment of healthcare practice models that utilize quality, cost-effective approaches that demonstrate high clinical value for patients and value for payers.
- Studies that evaluate different models for implementing and assessing the effectiveness of the "Patient Centered Medical Home" or other practice models providing comprehensive primary care and coordinated care.
- Studies that evaluate clinical outcomes from Population Health Management strategies. Such strategies involve the organization and management of the healthcare delivery system to make it more clinically effective, cost effective, and safer. Studies may include but are not limited to hospital/hospital system clinical integration models (vertical or horizontal), transitions in care models, care management, care coordination and behavioral health.

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- Studies improving quality and patient safety in hospital settings, with specific focus on prevention of readmissions, hospital acquired infections, and early elective newborn deliveries.
- Evaluation/assessment of innovative and/or effective chronic condition management models in the areas of Diabetes, Metabolic Syndrome, Coronary Artery Disease, etc.
- Studies that evaluate cost, quality and optimal clinical outcomes by using evidence based guidelines, clinical pathways, or care pathways for oncology, musculoskeletal or gastrointestinal conditions.
- Studies employing mobile health strategies to engage patients or as a tool in effecting targeted clinical outcomes, e.g., chronic condition management. Studies designed to evaluate the overall value and impact of patient targeted drug prescribing and management via targeted pharmaceutical interventions and outcomes. Note: Pharmaceutical clinical trials are excluded from funding areas.

Proposals consistent with these thematic areas are encouraged.

**REVIEW CRITERIA**

- A. Proposals must address important and relevant question(s) related to the **SCOPE** of this RFP listed herein.
- B. Studies will be expected to produce results that address clinical issues pertinent to Blue KC patient populations, potentially impact a larger population beyond the research proposal, and yield actionable interventions that support their mission.
- C. Proposals should describe how the proposed grant support will facilitate the development and submission of a proposal(s) seeking external funding from government and/or private agencies. The long-term expectations regarding the institutions extended research programs and potential for expanded research in related areas of research should also be articulated.
- D. Merit review criteria are essentially the same as those used by federal granting agencies such as NIH and NSF. Criteria include scientific and technical significance, innovation, approach, and likelihood of success of achieving external funding.
- E. Qualifications and research experience of the Principal Investigator, Co-Principal Investigators and collaborating investigators are important considerations.
- F. Proposals must present a realistic assessment of the scope of work proposed for the one-year period of funding.
- G. Appropriateness of the proposed budget.
- H. Research publication plan.
- I. Potential of research to generate new innovations and quality of commercialization plan.
- J. Overall scale of the entire research project.

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Upon receipt, proposals will undergo an administrative review to ensure compliance with submission requirements and that appropriate institutional signatures and assurances were obtained. Proposals will be evaluated for scientific and technical merit and assigned NIH-type priority scores. Upon receipt of peer review scores, KCALSI will rank the proposals and make a funding recommendation for consideration by the Blue KC Health Policy and Quality Committee (HPQC). Final award decisions will be made based on priority scores, recommendations, and available funds.

**APPLICATION PROCEDURES**

A. An **original** one-page letter of intent should be submitted to the office of Dr. Keith Gary, Vice President, KCALSI, by **9 October 2017 before 5:00 pm**. Letters of intent must include the following:

1) The project director's name, title, organization, address, phone number, fax number, and email address.

2) A summary of your project (not to exceed 1 page) including the following information:

- a. Brief review of the literature
- b. Problem statement and root cause analysis of the problem
- c. Project description
- d. Project deliverables and associated implementation plan
- e. Success measures
- f. Relevance to Blue KC and potential for impact on a larger population beyond the research proposal
- g. Funding estimate including indirect expenses
- h. Project timeline
- i. Potential for new innovations

3) Tax Identification Number, IRS letter verifying 501(c)(3) status, audited financial statement, and list of Board of Director members.

4) Disclosure statement of any conflict of interest for each investigator or 501(c)(3) institution acting as a financial partner.

Letters of intent either must bear **original signatures** of all collaborating investigators or be accompanied by appropriate commitment letters bearing **original signatures**. PDF files containing documents bearing original signatures are allowable. **Fax copies will not be accepted.** Full proposal will be invited following the review of LOIs received.

B. Full proposals must be submitted to Dr. Keith Gary, Vice President, KCALSI by **17 November 2017 before 5:00 p.m.** **Applications received after 5:00 pm will not be accepted.**

C. Full proposals should use the latest version of PHS 398 forms available electronically at <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/phs398/phs398.html>. Institutional

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administrative review and approval of applications by all applicable stakeholder institutions must be completed prior to submission. Hard copy with signed approval from the lead institution's signatory official must be submitted to KCALSI prior to the stated deadline for full consideration.

- D. Strict compliance to the following criteria is necessary in preparing the proposal:
- a. The Face Page should identify only the lead institution and Principal Investigator in addition to other required information about the lead institution. In the rare event that Blue KC chooses to consider a second year of funding, "Competitive Renewal" should be indicated on the face page.
  - b. The Description, Performance Sites, and Key Personnel should clearly detail collaborating investigators and institutions.
  - c. The Detailed Budget for Initial Budget Period Page must be used and should reflect the following:
    - i. Requests may be up to \$50,000 for one year.
    - ii. Salary and fringe benefits may be requested and must be in accord with set institutional guidelines.
    - iii. Indirect cost rates may not exceed 10%. Indirect costs must be included within the \$50,000 limit.
    - iv. Equipment requests may not exceed 20% of the total funding request. Equipment is defined as tangible personal property (including information technology systems) having a useful life of more than one year and a per-unit acquisition cost over \$5,000.
    - v. The budget and budget justification should only represent funds requested of Blue KC.
  - d. Separate budget justification page must follow the budget page and detail the rationale for all budget requests. Supply items should be summarized within major categories (e.g., photographic, tissue culture, etc.).
  - e. DO NOT INCLUDE the Budget for Entire Proposed Period of Support Page.
  - f. The NIH biographical sketch form 398/2590, (also found at <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/phs398/biosketch.pdf>) must be used for each investigator and must not exceed three pages for each investigator. The Principal Investigator's Biographical Sketch Format Pages must be first followed alphabetically (last name) by all other investigators. The biosketches must be provided as an appendix.
  - g. The Resources Format Page must detail resources that are to be used at the collaborating institutions toward completion of the project. Use additional pages as necessary.
  - h. DO NOT INCLUDE the Checklist Form Page and Personal Data Form Page

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- i. The Research Plan must be no more than 10 single-spaced pages at 12 pt Arial or Times New Roman font with one inch margins throughout. Full proposals must be organized as follows:

**Problem:**

Provide a brief description of the problem addressed in the proposed project, why it is important, and the research project that will be undertaken.

**Project:**

- i. Objectives and Activities – State the project’s principal objectives and explain what activities will help accomplish these objectives. Include the research hypothesis. NOTE: In the rare event that Blue KC chooses to consider a second year of project funding, the competitive renewal should include a project progress report, justification for additional period of funding, and specific project deliverables.
- ii. Significance – Detail how this project will support Blue KC’s mission as described in the **SCOPE** section above and anticipated positive impact it will have for Blue KC constituents (members, providers and employers). Also describe to what extent any special needs, high risk or minority populations will be impacted.
- iii. Deliverables and Outcomes – Describe the inclusion criteria and exclusion criteria for research subjects. Describe the project’s deliverables and expected outcomes. Define outcomes measures, and any applicable benchmarks or comparative measures. Describe pre- and post-intervention measures, and explain how control groups, subpopulations or cohorts will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the research interventions.
- iv. Research Method – Describe the project’s sources of data, data collection methods, and analysis.
- v. Staffing & Resources – Identify the principal project staff, key partners and collaborators (if any) necessary to achieve the project’s objectives. Also describe other resources such as in-kind services applicable to your project.
- vi. Funding Sources and Budget – Provide an outline of estimated funding and a detailed budget for the project. Describe all funding contributions and/or requests. Provide details for indirect expenses. Note: Funding for indirect expenses is limited to 10%.
- vii. Communications – Describe the communications plan. Describe special audiences (e.g., state policy-makers, hospital CEOs, medical organizations, and the public) you will need to reach to achieve your project’s objectives; messages you plan to deliver; and how you will deliver these messages.
- viii. Timeline – Provide an estimated timeline for the project’s major milestones, including communications activities.

Appendices must include the following:

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- i. A lay executive summary of the proposal. The lay summary should be succinct, not exceeding one page in length at 12 pt Arial or Times New Roman font with one-inch margins throughout.
  - ii. Signed letters of commitment, **with original signatures**, from each Co-Principal Investigator and collaborative research investigator named in the budget must be provided as an appendix. **Signatures obtained on the original letter of intent cannot be substituted for this requirement.**
  - iii. Proposed plan for publishing study results
  - iv. Potential for new innovations resulting from the project, intellectual property management/ownership, and pathways for commercialization
- E. IRB approval is not required unless the proposal is funded. Funds will not be released until a final IRB approval is received by KCALSI.
- F. The budget and budget justification should clearly delineate which costs will be incurred at each institution. One option is to submit a combined budget along with sub-budgets for each institution. Another option is to subcontract with collaborating institutions and provide the supporting budget form.

### **REVIEW PROCESS**

Proposals will undergo an initial administrative review by KCALSI staff to assure compliance with submission requirements detailed in the RFP. Proposals will then be evaluated for scientific and technical merit by peer review and assigned NIH-type priority scores (see <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/peer/peer.htm>).

Applicants may submit up to three names of peers whom they wish not to review their application. This is to avoid selection of someone with whom the applicant(s) does not wish to share the proposal or whom they feel will not provide an objective review. KCALSI will not select these persons when contacting potential reviewers to develop an appropriate peer review group.

Upon receipt of peer review scores, KCALSI will rank the proposals and make a funding recommendation for consideration by the Blue KC Senior Medical Director, Blue KC Quality Management and the Health Policy and Quality Committee. Individuals will be excluded from review and discussion of proposals in which they have a real or apparent conflict of interest.

In addition to the regular progress reports to KCALSI, the principal investigators may be invited to present the project and outcomes to Blue KC at the conclusion of the grant.

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**SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS**

1) Submit an electronic version in editable PDF format (not imaged) of the **full** application to:

Keith Gary, PhD  
Vice President  
Kansas City Area Life Sciences Institute  
30 W. Pershing Rd., Suite 210  
Kansas City, MO 64108  
Phone: 816-753-7700  
Fax: 816-753-7715

2) Copy Sharon Newman ([snewman@kclifesciences.org](mailto:snewman@kclifesciences.org)) on the electronic submission.