



AHRQ and PCORI Learning Health Systems Mentored Career Development Program (K12) RFA-HS-17-012

**Technical Assistance Call
October 11, 2017 1pm EST**

Audio by phone:

1-877-668-4490 (toll free number, US/Canada) or

1-408-792-6300 (toll number, US/Canada)

Passcode: 715 622 456

Agenda

- WebEx management and logistics
- Staff introductions: AHRQ and PCORI
- Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA)
- Q & A – received prior today's call
- Q & A – open for participants to ask questions

Purpose of this FOA

- Invite applications for funding to support institutional career development awards designed to train clinician and research scientists to conduct patient centered outcomes research (PCOR) within learning health systems focused on generation, adoption, and application of evidence in order to improve the quality and safety of care.

FOA Specifications

- Up to 10 awards anticipated
- Total annual costs (direct and indirect combined) for an individual grant awarded under this FOA: $\leq \$800,000$ in any given year
- Receipt date: **January 24, 2018** by 5pm local time.

Q & A: Received to Date

Q & A

Q1: Is there a specific application form for this K12?

A: Follow the Training (T) Instructions in the SF424 (R&R) Application Guide. [See Part 2, Section IV Application and Submission Information, 2. Content and Form of Application Submission in the FOA.]

Q & A

Q2: May non-academic institutions, i.e., non-profit health systems, apply as the prime recipient?

A: Non-profit health systems are eligible to apply as the prime recipient. Also see NOT-HS-17-022: Notice of clarification on eligibility for RFA-HS-17-012 published on September 26, 2017.

Q & A

Q3: It is clear that health systems can collaborate with academic institutions. Is it acceptable if more than one academic institution could collaborate?

A: Yes. The applicant institution can propose to collaborate with multiple academic institutions.

Q & A

Q4: Is it a requirement for a health system to partner with an academic institution considering the statement from the RFA: “Similarly, non-academic health systems may apply but would be expected to partner with an academic institution in providing formal, educational training needs”?

A: Applicants must demonstrate their capacity to fulfill the formal training and education requirements listed in the funding announcement. AHRQ suggests but does not require partnerships with institutions such as academic institutions in order to accomplish the required training and education.

Q & A

Q5: Since this is a RFA and a Special Emphasis Panel (SEP) will be convened to review the applications, what are the specific review criteria for this LHS FOA given that it is a collaboration between AHRQ and PCORI?

A: Applications will be evaluated for scientific and technical merit by an appropriate peer review group convened in accordance with standard AHRQ peer review procedures that are described in 42 CFR Part 67, Subpart A.

Please see review criteria as well as information relevant to the review criteria described in the FOA.

Q & A

Q6: Historically AHRQ did not accept the MPD/MPI. But this RFA said a MPD/MPI model is allowed. Can you confirm?

A: A MPD/MPI plan is acceptable for this FOA. Please also review AHRQ's MPD/MPI policy: NOT-HS-17-008 published on September 21, 2016. The MPD/MPI model does not replace, but rather supplement the single PD/PI model. The goal is to encourage collaboration among equals when that is the most appropriate way to address a scientific problem. For example, the first PD/PI listed must be affiliated with the institution submitting the application and will serve as the contact PD/PI.

Scholar related Q & A

Q7: Given that a scholar's appointment is 2-3 years, would a 1-year training acceptable for scholars at the last year of a 5-year program? Is a 50% level of effort acceptable for, e.g., surgical specialists in this LHS K12 program?

A: Each scholar must be appointed for a minimum of two and a maximum of three years. Scholars are not allowed to reduce their level of effort below 75% over the course of the award.

Scholar related Q & A

Q8: Does a scholar need to have a faculty appointment? For example, can an employee in a health system be eligible for a scholar?

A: At the time of placement on the grant, candidate/scholar must have a full-time appointment at their respective institution. A health system employee can be eligible for a scholar if he/she fulfills the eligibility of a scholar and complies with all other scholar requirements specified in the FOA.

Scholar related Q & A

Q9-1: Does the statement about no more than 50% scholars come from the applicant institution or system mean that up to 50% can come from the clinical systems associated with the applicant academic institution and the rest from the other systems?

A: It is encouraged that there is a balanced number of appointments with no more than half of the scholars originating from the applicant institution.

Q9-2: Can scholars maintain their primary clinical or research appointment at their home (non-prime) institution and participate?

A: Yes, they can but must comply with scholar's level of effort commitment and other requirements described in the FOA.

Scholar related Q & A

**Q10: Does the applicant institution have to employ the scholars?
How do we distribute the support (\$) to scholars if they are not
employed by the applicant institution?**

A: In the FOA, it states that a candidate must have a full-time appointment at their respective institution. Since this program encourages inter-institutional collaboration, the applicant can submit applications with subaward/consortium agreements that will distribute the scholar's salary and R&D costs. There is also a section about consortium in the SF424 form guide.

Q & A

Q11: Is there a salary support for non-PD/PI, non-mentor faculty in the K12 program?

A: No, there is not a provision of salary support for non-PD/PI, non-mentor faculty.

Q & A

Q12: What is the learning collaborative infrastructure? It is unclear for us as to how we should respond this component in our application.

A: This will be facilitated by AHRQ in collaboration with PCORI. The main purpose is for collaboration, information sharing, and learning. All awardees will be required to participate in the learning collaborative which includes attending a monthly web-based meeting and an annual in-person meeting.

Additional Q & A: Open to Participants

Additional Q & A

Q13: Can AHRQ comment on how the Learning Collaborative across the funded Centers of Excellence (COEs) will be developed and whether there will be opportunities for organizations not directly affiliated with the K12 COEs to participate in the learning collaborative? For instance, medical specialty societies, professional associations, or funded research networks?

A: The Learning Collaborative will be facilitated by AHRQ in collaboration with PCORI and will be further developed together with the K12 LHS Centers of Excellence. The main purpose is for collaboration, information sharing, and learning. All awardees will be required to participate in the Learning Collaborative which includes attending a monthly web-based meeting and an annual in-person meeting.

The awarded K12 COEs, including the applicant institution and their collaborative partners, will be the participants for the Learning Collaborative. Organizations not directly affiliated with the K12 COEs will not participate in the learning collaborative.

Additional Q & A

Q14: Do scholars also need to attend the Learning collaborative meetings or just the MPI/MPDs?

A: Participation in the Learning Collaborative by scholars is not required. However, based on topics being discussed participation may be beneficial. Each awardee must plan and budget up to four team members (PDs/PIs and mentors, not scholars) to travel to the DC area annually for an annual in-person meeting.

Additional Q & A

Q15: The proposal states the plan should guarantee existence of an adequate group of highly qualified potential candidates available to embark...? What is meant by this? Do we submit names and bios for people here we would enroll if awarded?

A: In the RFA, applicants are asked to describe the pool of candidates and plans to recruit candidates and explain how these plans will be implemented. Inclusion of potential candidates' names and bios are not required but applicants can provide such information complying with the instructions provided in the SF 424 application guide, e.g., format and page limit, if applicable.

Additional Q & A

Q16: Should all scholars be drawn from the applicant organizations?

A: The applicant institution is the institution submitting the application. There can only be one applicant institution. No more than 50% of scholars can be recruited from the applicant institution.

Additional Q & A

Q17: Does 50% of scholars coming from outside mean--recruiting half the scholars nationally or is it that 50% come from each partner: health system and academic partner?

A: Scholars can be recruited either nationally or from each partner but scholars must fulfill the 75% level of effort commitment and comply with other scholar requirements specified in the RFA.

Additional Q & A

Q18: With a multi-institution proposal, can 50% of the scholars at institution A come from institution B? Do these cross-institution scholars count as external scholars?

A: There can only be one applicant institution, which is the institution submitting the application. 50% or more of the scholars are expected to come from institutions other than the applicant institution.

Additional Q & A

Q19: Is formal training, eg in a Master's program, allowed and encouraged?

A: It is allowed if the proposed formal training is part of or integrated in an existing degree granting program that a scholar matriculates.

Q20: Does AHRQ expect scholars to acquire an additional degree or certificate as part of their training?

A: No.

Q21: Is there an expected minimal number of Scholar slots per year?

A: No.

Additional Q & A

Q22: Are Scholars expected to become independent researchers after training or is a career in, for example, Quality Improvement without doing independent research acceptable ?

A: The purpose of this K12 training program is to train clinical and research scientists to have the skills to support and lead efforts to apply PCOR methods and conduct patient-centered outcomes research in a learning health system and to facilitate rapid implementation of evidence that will improve quality of care and patient outcomes.

Additional Q & A

Q23: Is there a minimum number of mentors required?

A: Each scholar can have more than one mentor. However, each scholar appointed to the program must have a primary mentor and the total number of mentors requesting salary support annually cannot exceed the total number of scholars appointed to the grant annually.

Additional Q & A

Q24: Should mentors all have primary appointments at one of the applicant institutions or should they be recruited more broadly?

A: The applicants should demonstrate that the proposed mentors fulfill the requirements specified in the RFA.

Additional Q & A

Q25: Is the purpose of the \$5,000 available to the mentors for salary support/stipends for the mentors or for other functions? Travel of the mentor? Supplies the mentor may need to spend? Etc?

A: Total salary and fringe benefit support for mentoring cannot exceed \$5,000 direct costs yearly per mentor. The travel budget for attending the annual program directors meeting for this K12 program should be included separately in the travel category. Travel expenses for mentors other than the LHS K12 annual program directors meeting are not allowed.

Additional Q & A

Q26: Is it possible to split mentorship support across 2 co-mentors ? If an institution decided to have 2 co-mentors for each trainee, can the stipend of \$5K be split across the two?

A: The stipend can be split across two mentors.

Additional Q & A

Q27: Should the Recruitment and Retention Plan to Enhance Diversity be included in the 25 page program plan or is this a separate attachment?

A: It is expected to be part of the “program plan” under the “training program section” of the PHS398 form. Please review carefully and follow the Training (T) instructions provided in the Training SF424 application guide.

Additional Q & A

Q28: What types of materials can go in the Appendix? For example, can we include forms, etc., evaluation tools, if they are already created?

A: Follow Training (T) instructions for the Appendix as described in the SF424 (R&R) Application Guide. Do not use the Appendix to circumvent page limits.

Additional Q & A

Q29: The criteria point pasted below is listed under two subheads under Section IV Training Program - Program Plan: subhead **Program Admin** (p16) and subhead **Proposed Training** (p17). Which subhead would you prefer inclusion? Criteria: "Institutions with existing career development programs must explain what distinguishes this program from the others, how their programs will synergize with one another, if applicable, and make it clear that the pool of faculty, potential scholars, and resources are robust enough to support additional programs."

A: The applicant must make this determination. The main intent is for applicants who have any existing career development programs to explain what distinguishes this LHS K12 program from the others.

Additional Q & A

Q30: What rules regarding letters of support are there given the limitations on attachments?

A: Please follow the instructions provided in the SF 424 application guide.

Additional Q & A

Q31: Are any other expenses allowable on the grant? e.g. speakers, marketing and recruitment, etc.

A: Allowable costs can be found in Part 2, Section II in the FOA, for example, personnel costs, scholar costs, other program related expenses, and indirect costs.

Additional Q & A

Q32: Is it possible to shift dollars across years of the program or is there an annual limit as well as the overall limit of 800K?

A: No. The total annual costs (direct and indirect combined) for an individual award is not to exceed \$800,000 in any given year.

Additional Q & A

Q33: Please clarify how indirects will be calculated both for prime award and subaward(s). Will carry forward be allowed?

A: Indirect costs are reimbursed at 8% of modified total direct costs. Please see Part 2, Section II, other award budget information about further description for indirect costs. Carry forward must receive AHRQ prior approval.

Additional Q & A

Q34: What is the "applicant institution" for a multi-institution proposal? Is that the primary institution, or is the full set of institutions designated as the "applicant institution"?

A: The applicant institution is the institution submitting the grant application.

Additional Q & A

Q35: What constitutes two separate institutions. For example if our university has an arrangement with a children's hospital and faculty have common appointments - are they in fact two different organizations?

A: The university and the children's hospital are considered two different institutions.

Additional Q & A

Q36-1: What is the intent of the statement "The benefit of funding multiple institutions is to broaden the pool of expertise...?"

A: The intent is to encourage inter-institutional collaboration between academic institutions and health systems.

Q36-2: Should all source institutions be named in the application?

A: Yes.

Additional Q & A

Q37: Can institutions submit more than one application?

A: Yes.

Additional Q & A

Q38: What relationship is expected from PCORNet institutions

A: Please see text in RFA concerning PCORnet.

Q39: Can you explicate beyond the RFA on your expectations with regard to PCORNet

A: No.

Additional Q & A

Q40: Should the nature or specifics of the research project developed with LHS partners be described in the application, or will the project be formulated in the course of the program?

A: Applicants may describe the nature or specifics of the research project developed with LHS partners if the nature of specific projects is known. Alternatively, applicants may provide in general terms the proposed research projects or topics that can be conducted with the applicant's LHS partners.

Thank you!

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- This presentation will be posted on the ARHQ training web page (www.ahrq.gov/training) approximately 1 week from today.
- Receipt date: **January 24, 2018** by 5:00 pm.