**Purpose:** The overall goal of our Scholar Program is to develop successful clinical translational research (CTR) investigators by providing them with the protected time and seed grant funding to develop competitive CTR R01, K, or equivalent funding within 3-4 years. The purpose of this targeted recruitment for a scholar is to identify and support an early career investigator to further development in the areas of bioinformatics or health informatics. Specific research areas of interest for the nominee may focus on Big Data, Machine Learning and Artificial Intelligence methodologies or applications that are imperative to bioinformatics or health informatics.

**SPECIAL CALL**

**REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS**

**Biomedical Informatics & Data Science Research**

**Scholar Award**

**Application Deadline:** June 20th, 2022, by 5 PM

The Great Plains IDeA-CTR Network is pleased to announce an opportunity for early career faculty with emerging expertise in Machine Learning, AI, Big Data, bioinformatics, or health informatics funding through an NIH/NIGMS grant. One successful nominee/applicant will receive salary support of up to 50% FTE (25% supported by NIGMS and 25% supported by the applicant’s institution, including fringe benefits consistent with the applicant’s institution). *Applications with an accompanying nomination letter are to be submitted by research leaders across participating institutions (e.g., department/division chairs, deans, research unit directors)*. The scholar will receive $25,000 annually to support preliminary research efforts or career development for up to four years, as well as access to resources of the Great Plains IDeA-CTR to support their research efforts. Earliest starting date will be July 1st, 2022.

To learn more about the GP IDeA-CTR please visit our [website](https://gpctr.unmc.edu/).

If you have any questions, contact Heather Braddock ([heather.braddock@unmc.edu](mailto:heather.braddock@unmc.edu) or 402.559.9870.

We recognize that many early-career investigators with relevant research interests may not have established expertise in biomedical informatics or the access to the clinical data that may be needed for this project. Through the GP-IDeA CTR Cores, we will help to facilitate collaborations for these needs, as necessary. The proposals will be judged based on the ability of the research project to impact science in this area and to improve the health of our Great Plains community.

**Interdisciplinary and collaborative approaches:** To increase the likelihood of a strong scientific proposal, nominees/applicants are encouraged to engage in new interdisciplinary or inter-institutional collaborations, and to develop links to other existing IDeA programs (INBRE and COBRE) in the participating Great Plains region. Applicants are encouraged (but not required) to consider recruitment of subjects or utilization of data from clinics or Practice-Based Research Networks (PRBN).

**Eligibility:**

* Full-time, early-career faculty or equivalent at participating institutions (see below), who have emerging expertise in the areas of bioinformatics / health informatics approaches, clinical research informatics, clinical decision support, population health informatics, and/or the intersection of informatics and health services research but have not received independent federal funding. Preference will be given to an individual at the rank of Assistant Professor (MD, PhD, or equivalent), although others (e.g., Instructors or Associate Professors) with appropriate qualifications are welcome to apply.
* Eligible to apply for NIH R or K awards or equivalent funding.
* Has an established focus of relevant clinical, clinical and/or translational research without previous NIH R01 or equivalent funding, is not on a currently mentored K award or a funded Center of Biomedical Research Excellence (COBRE) or IDeA Networks of Biomedical Research Excellence (INBRE). Current and former PD/PIs of a NIH Small Grant (R03), Exploratory/ Developmental Grant (R21), Dissertation Award (R36), or SBIR/STTR (R41, R42, R43, R44) remain eligible.
* **Note:** Nominee/applicant is not eligible if they have funding from any other IDeA program that will overlap at the time of this award.

**Participating Institutions and Contacts:**

* Boys Town Natl. Research Hospital (BTNRH) – Ryan McCreery ([ryan.mccreery@boystown.org](mailto:ryan.mccreery@boystown.org))
* Children’s Hospital and Medical Center (CHMC) – Ann Anderson Berry ([alanders@unmc.edu](mailto:alanders@unmc.edu))
* Creighton University (CU) – Joan Lappe ([joanlappe@creighton.edu](mailto:joanlappe@creighton.edu))
* Omaha VA Medical Center (O-VAMC) – Fred Hamel ([fghamel@unmc.edu](mailto:fghamel@unmc.edu))
* University of Nebraska at Kearney (UNK) – Kimberly Carlson ([carlsonka1@unk.edu](mailto:carlsonka1@unk.edu))
* University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) – David Hansen ([dhansen1@unl.edu](mailto:dhansen1@unl.edu))
* University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC) – Ted Mikuls ([tmikuls@unmc.edu](mailto:tmikuls@unmc.edu)) & Lani Zimmerman ([lzimmerm@unmc.edu](mailto:lzimmerm@unmc.edu))
* University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO) – Deepak Khazanchi ([khazanchi@unomaha.edu](mailto:khazanchi@unomaha.edu))

**Application Deadline:** Applications are due by 5pm on June 20th, 2022

**Earliest starting fund date:** July 1, 2022

Funding will be prioritized based on, 1) Scientific and technical merit of the proposed project as determined by scientific peer review, 2) Availability of funds, 3) Relevance of the proposed project to the Great Plains IDeA-CTR program priorities, and 4) NIGMS approval of the proposal.

**Funding:** We will award one nominee/applicant with salary support of up to 50% FTE (25% supported by NIGMS and 25% supported by the applicant’s institution, including fringe benefits consistent with the applicant’s institution) as well as up to $25,000 annually to support preliminary research efforts or professional development for up to four years.

**Application Requirements:** We anticipate thatthe nominee/applicant will work closely with the nominator and mentor(s) on the preparation of this application. Your institutional program leader is also available for consultation and should read your materials. See institutional representatives listed above.

1. The application is to be submitted on behalf of the scholar nominee/applicant by a research/ administrative leader (e.g., appropriate Division Chief, Department Chair and/or Dean). This letter will confirm that the nominee/applicant will have 50% or more protected time for research (with at least 25% FTE coming from their institution), if selected, throughout the training period (which will be re-assessed annually).
2. Nominees/applicants must consult with a biostatistician in preparation of the full application. If a biostatistician or other statistical support is not available at your institution, or you are located at UNMC, please complete a request for services through CCORDA, [here](https://www.unmc.edu/publichealth/centers/ccorda/request.html), so that we can identify the appropriate Biostatistics, Epidemiology & Research Design (BERD) consultant for your work. Projects must be reviewed by a biostatistician prior to submission. If you have questions, please contact [Dr. Fang Yu](mailto:fangyu@unmc.edu), or call 402-559-9436. There is no need to budget the statistician’s time for your proposal. The BERD Core is funded to support investigators in developing their applications for this award.
3. Nominees/applicants must also consult with the Bioinformatics, Biomedical Informatics and Cyberinfrastructure (BIBCE) Core. Please reach out to [Jerrod Anzalone](mailto:alfred.anzalone@unmc.edu) to set up a consultation. There is no need to budget this consultation in your proposal as the BIBCE Core is funded to support the investigators in developing their applications for this award.
4. Full curriculum vitae (CV) of applicant (NIH biosketch not acceptable).
5. NIH biosketch to include other support of the proposed primary mentor and the mentoring team (a minimum of two mentors).
6. NIH Face Page (download and complete Form Page 1, [here](https://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/phs398/fp1.pdf)). If the nominee/applicant is from UNMC, this form does not need to be signed by an institutional official, but we strongly encourage you to work with your Grants Administrator or Sponsored Programs Office to ensure that **all fields on the NIH Face Page are complete and correct**. For applicants outside of UNMC, please ensure that your documents are signed by the appropriate institutional official(s) and are reviewed by your Grants Administrator or Sponsored Programs Office.
7. A personal summary of no more than **3 pages that** describes the applicant, career development plan, and interactions with mentors.

This personal summary will be evaluated by the following criteria:

I. Candidate – Relevant review criteria will include:

* + 1. Does the candidate have the potential to develop as an independent and productive researcher?
    2. Is the candidate's prior training and research experience appropriate for this award?
    3. Is the candidate’s academic, clinical (if relevant), and research record of high quality?
    4. Is there evidence of the candidate’s commitment to meeting the program objectives to become an independent investigator in research?
    5. Do the two letters of recommendation required (see below) address the above review criteria, and do they provide evidence that the candidate has a high potential for becoming an independent investigator?
       1. [Career Development Plan/Career Goals & Objectives/Plan to Provide Mentoring](http://grants.nih.gov/grants/peer/critiques/k_D.htm#k_02) – Relevant review criteria will include:

1. What is the likelihood that the plan will contribute substantially to the scientific development of the candidate and lead to scientific independence?
2. Are the content, scope, phasing, and duration of the career development plan appropriate when considered in the context of prior training/research experience and the stated training and research objectives for achieving research independence?
3. Are there adequate plans for monitoring and evaluating the candidate’s research and career development progress?

Additional considerations:

* 1. Past experience(s) in CTR and rationale for additional training. Gaps in training or career development that will be addressed through further training should be clearly identified.
  2. Primary CTR area of interest or targeted research area. If applicable, describe how the proposed CTR focus addresses the overall theme of the Great Plains IDeA**-**CTR (diseases of aging, health disparities pertaining to urban-rural residence or other causes, etc.).
     + 1. [Mentor(s), Co-Mentor(s), Consultant(s), Collaborator(s)](http://grants.nih.gov/grants/peer/critiques/k_D.htm#k_04):
  3. Potential mentor(s) and their area(s) of expertise.
  4. Mentors may be chosen from any of the participating institutions, but at least one must be identified near (or at the same institution) to the applicant to assure adequate observation of Scholar progress. Scholars should have a project that is independent of their mentor’s ongoing research.

Criteria to evaluate the mentor:

* 1. Are the mentor's research qualifications in the area of the proposed research appropriate?
  2. Do(es) the mentor(s) adequately address the candidate’s potential and his/her strengths and areas needing improvement?
  3. Click [here](https://grants.nih.gov/grants/peer/critiques/k.htm) to see additional K criteria for evaluating a mentor.

1. Research Plan: Include a research proposal that follows the NIH guidelines (e.g., Specific Aims, Significance, Innovation, and Methods - design, sample (including sample size calculation), measures, procedures, and data analysis). The **Aims (1-page) plus Research Plan (6-pages) should not exceed 7 pages in total.** (References not part of page limit).

The Research Plan will be evaluated by the following criteria:

* 1. Are the proposed research question(s), design, and methodology of significant scientific and technical merit?
  2. Is the research plan relevant to the candidate’s research career objectives?
  3. Is the research plan appropriate to the candidate's stage of research development and as a vehicle for developing the research skills described in the career development plan?
  4. Is there a strong scientific premise and scientific rigor and reproducibility for the project?
  5. Has the candidate presented strategies to ensure a robust and unbiased approach, as appropriate for the work proposed?
  6. Has the candidate presented adequate plans to address relevant biological variables, such as sex, for studies in vertebrate animals or human subjects?
  7. References

1. Community Impact: Write a brief narrative in plain language (limited to 30 lines or less), so even a non-scientist can understand the importance and potential community impact of the project. This will be critiqued by a member(s) of the Great Plains IDeA-CTR Community Advisory Board (CAB). Comments and questions from the CAB member(s) will be provided to the applicant at the end of the review process.

Include the following:

* + 1. Project’s broad, long-term objectives and specific aims.
    2. Briefly describe the research design and methods for achieving the stated goals.
    3. Clearly describe the potential long-term community impact.

1. [Environment and Institutional Commitment to the Candidate](http://grants.nih.gov/grants/peer/critiques/k_D.htm#k_05): Current resources (e.g., equipment, lab or office space, research resources, clinical coordinator, or statistical support) available to support the pilot research project and lead to submission of an R01, K grant application or equivalent within 3-4 years of funding, as applicable.

Criteria to evaluate:

* 1. Is there clear commitment of the sponsoring institution to ensure that the required minimum effort (50% FTE) will be devoted directly to the Research Scholar Program?
  2. Is the institutional commitment to the career development of the candidate appropriately strong?
  3. Are the research facilities, resources and training opportunities, including other available faculty capable of productive collaborations with the candidate, adequate and appropriate?
  4. Is the environment for scientific and professional development of the candidate of high quality?
  5. Is there assurance that the institution intends the candidate to be an integral part of its research program as an independent investigator?

1. Letters of Recommendation/approval (in addition to the nominating cover letter outlined under #1 above):
2. A letter from the primary mentor detailing their commitment to the applicant throughout the training period (see above criteria under Mentor(s)). The mentor should have current or a history of external research funding and should not be the applicant’s immediate supervisor (e.g., Division Chief, Chair, Dean). Scholars should have a project that is independent of their mentor’s ongoing research.
3. A letter from a senior faculty member who can attest to the applicant’s ability to succeed as a Scholar in this program.
4. Regulatory Requirements:
   1. If your project meets the NIH definition of [human subjects](https://humansubjects.nih.gov/walkthrough-investigator%20-%20tabpanel11) research, you must include a Protection of Human Subjects section (as required by NIH grants; follow the “A Protection of Human Subjects section” which can be accessed via the link above). The Protection of Human Subjects section should also include sections for Inclusion of Women & Minorities and Inclusion of Children. You are also required to complete Human Subjects education (e.g., Collaborative IRB Training Initiative (CITI) training) and submit a copy of the certificate to the GP IDeA-CTR, if awarded. This is not included in the 7-page limit.
   2. If your project meets the NIH definition of human subjects research *and* meets the new NIH definition of a clinical trial, you must check “Yes” to the clinical trial question on the NIH Face Page. If you are unsure whether your project meets the new NIH clinical trial definition, answer the four questions below. If the answer to all four questions is “Yes”, then your project is considered a clinical trial.
      * 1. Does the study involve human participants? Yes/No
        2. Are the participants prospectively assigned to an intervention? Yes/No
        3. Is the study designed to evaluate the effect of the intervention on the participants? Yes/No
        4. Is the effect being evaluated as a health-related biomedical or behavioral outcome? Yes/No
        5. For additional information on clinical trials and grants [click here](https://grants.nih.gov/policy/clinical-trials.htm).
   3. If your project meets the NIH definition of vertebrate animal research, you are required to include the Vertebrate Animals items for NIH grants (Click [here](https://grants.nih.gov/grants/olaw/vertebrate_animal_section.htm) for instructions). This is not included in the 7-page limit.  
      * 1. Budget and Budget Justification

a) Budget should assume up to $25,000/year in direct costs to cover research or professional development. The award will cover 25% of the applicant’s effort (with an additional 25% FTE required by the applicant’s institution), plus benefits and indirect costs. See budget sheet on page 10 for additional details.

b) To reduce potential funding delays, protocols should be submitted to the IRB for approval within 15 days of notification of award, with final approval sent to our office within 60 days.

c) If IRB approval is not needed, an exemption letter or email from the IRB is still required.

d) Funding will not be released until IRB approval is obtained.

**Program Expectations:**

Awardees will be required to:

* Become a member of the GP CTR via our [website](https://gpctr.unmc.edu/membership/).
* Devote at least 50% effort to the program.
* Complete Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) training within first 6 months of funding (if not already completed).
* Remain current on all required regulatory training based on your project and institutional requirements and provide all updated approvals to the Research Scholar Program coordinator, Heather Braddock ([heather.braddock@unmc.edu](mailto:heather.braddock@unmc.edu)).
* In addition to the required reporting by your institution for adverse events, as a courtesy, we ask that you notify the Program Coordinator, Heather Braddock ([heather.braddock@unmc.edu](mailto:heather.braddock@unmc.edu))  if the study has any adverse events (AE’s).
* Submit an Individual Development Plan (IDP) within 6 months of entrance to the program.
* Mentoring:
  + Meet with your primary mentor weekly and other mentors as needed to discuss progress and concerns.
  + Meet with your full mentoring team at least every 6 months.
* Meet (along with your mentor[s]) with the Scholars Program leadership team twice a

year.

* Submit an electronic progress report to the Scholars Program leadership twice a year.
* Complete CTR Leadership Seminars 901 and 903 (to begin Fall 2022), if not already completed, or completion of a comparable training.
* Participate in a Research Studio for an external grant submission during the program. For more information on the studio process please visit our website, [here](https://gpctr.unmc.edu/cores/professional-development/research-studios/).
* Attend the Great Plains IDeA-CTR Annual Scientific Meeting where you will present your project and progress to date to the External Advisory Committee and meet with NIGMS program officers as requested.
* Attend or watch a minimum of 8 out of 12 monthly lectures offered annually by the Great Plains

IDeA-CTR Network.

* Maintain all IRB/IACUC documentation and approval status, as applicable.
* Submit an R01, K or equivalent extramural grant application within 3-4 years of selection.
* Maintain engagement with the Great Plains IDeA-CTR after graduation via regular communications. For example, this might include possible participation in future Annual Scientific Meetings, Research Studios, providing invited presentations or acting as a mentor.
* Complete post-graduation evaluations and assist with post-award tracking (e.g., papers, promotions, grants, etc.).
* Cite the GP-CTR/NIGMS grant in all publications and presentations as appropriate.
* Agree not to hold concurrent funding from any other IDeA program throughout the course of the award.

**Full Application Process:**

Applying to the program is done centrally through UNMC’s REDCap portal. To submit your application, please [**click here**](https://unmcredcap.unmc.edu/redcap/surveys/?s=J34N7DP4RAL3RKLY).

If you are new to REDCap or have any difficulties during the application process, please contact the Research Information Technology Office (RITO) at 402-559-4878.

Once your application has been submitted, you will receive a confirmation email from REDCap. In addition, you will receive a copy of your submission within two business days from the Great Plains email address listed below. Review the document carefully to ensure that all pages have been received by our office.

**Additional Information:**

1. We anticipate that the nominee/applicant will work closely with the nominator and mentor(s) on the preparation of this application. Your institutional program leader is also available for consultation and should read your materials. See institutional representatives listed by site on page 3.
2. Applications will receive a review in accordance with NIH K23 guidelines for Career

Development K-awards. The five criteria considered in providing an overall assessment will

include: 1) Qualifications of candidate; 2) Career Development Plan/Goals; 3) Research Plan;

4) Mentor(s); and 5) Environment & Institutional Commitment. The PDC Leadership Committee, with membership from all partner sites and led by the PDC Directors (with additional ad hoc review as needed), will review applications. Top applicants will be invited for an in-person (or web-based) interview. Based on review panel evaluations, the director and co- director will make their program recommendations to the Steering Committee, EAC, and NIGMS for final approval.

1. After a Scholar has received R01, K or equivalent funding, the applicant will “graduate” from

the program and her/his position will be opened for new applications from which a new Scholar

will be chosen.

For questions, contact Heather Braddock, [heather.braddock@unmc.edu](mailto:heather.braddock@unmc.edu), or 402.559.9870.

Program Director/Principal Investigator (Last, First, Middle):

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| DETAILED BUDGET Sheet (DIRECT COSTS ONLY) | FROM  7/1/2022 | THROUGH  6/28/2023 | GRANT NUMBER |

List PERSONNEL *(Applicant organization only)*

Use Calendar, Academic, or Summer to Enter Months Devoted to Project

Enter Dollar Amounts Requested *(omit cents)* for Salary Requested and Fringe Benefits

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| SUBTOTALS |  | | |  |  |  |  |  |  | |
| CONSULTANT COSTS | | | | | | | | |  | |
| EQUIPMENT *(Itemize)* | | | | | | | | |  | |
| SUPPLIES *(Itemize by category)* | | | | | | | | |  | |
| TRAVEL | | | | | | | | |  | |
| INPATIENT CARE COSTS | |  | | | | | | |  | |
| OUTPATIENT CARE COSTS | |  | | | | | | |  | |
| ALTERATIONS AND RENOVATIONS *(Itemize by category)* | | | | | | | | |  | |
| OTHER EXPENSES *(Itemize by category)* | | | | | | | | |  | |
| SUBTOTAL DIRECT COSTS FOR NEXT BUDGET PERIOD | | | | | | | | | **$** |  | | |
| CONSORTIUM/CONTRACTUAL COSTS | | | DIRECT COSTS | | | | | |  | |
| CONSORTIUM/CONTRACTUAL COSTS | | | FACILITIES AND ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS | | | | | |  | |
| TOTAL DIRECT COSTS FOR NEXT BUDGET PERIOD *(Item 8a, Face Page)* | | | | | | | | | **$** |  | |