ImplementatioN Science and Team Effectiveness in Practice

(IN STEP)

Children's Mental Health Research Center

RESEARCH PILOT GRANTS

The application period for funding in 2023-2024 is now open.
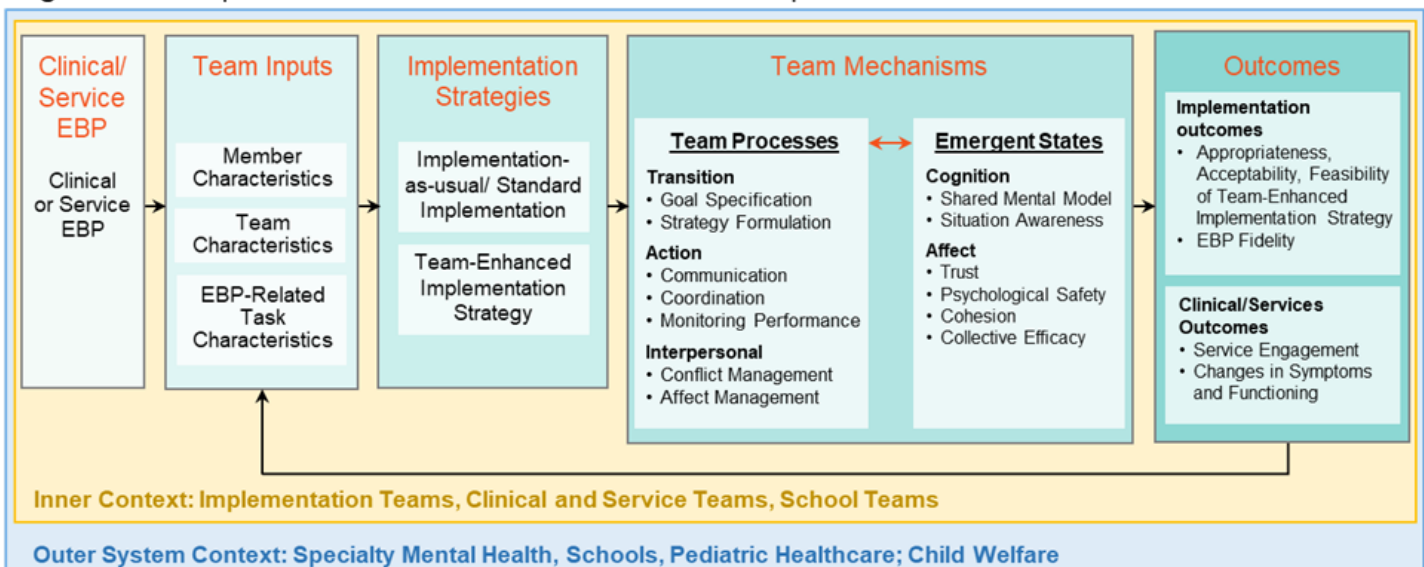
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The ImplementatioN Science and Team Effectiveness in Practice (IN STEP) Children's Mental Health Research Center now offers funding to support pilot feasibility studies that leverage IN STEP Center resources to pursue innovative proof-of-concept studies. These studies will position investigators to address critical targets in community services for children with mental health concerns by focusing on strategies that enhance team approaches to the implementation of evidence-based innovations and practices. Projects will foster opportunities for early career investigators to benefit from the substantive content and methodological expertise of IN STEP Center investigators.

The mission of the IN STEP Center is to leverage team effectiveness research (TER) to develop and test novel team-based implementation strategies, methods, and tools to improve the reach, quality, and effectiveness of care delivered in public systems serving children with mental health needs. Gaps between evidence-based practice (EBP) and routine care persist and limit the quality and effectiveness of services for children. High performing implementation teams are essential to effective services and team-level mechanisms can hinder or facilitate EBP implementation. There is substantial research on team development interventions developed for the military, business, and other complex contexts, but they have not been leveraged to improve children's mental health. The IN STEP Center brings together experts in children's mental health, implementation research, EBPs for children and adolescents, implementation strategies, models, and methods, TER, and computer science.

The purpose of this pilot funding announcement is to catalyze the development of projects that improve the implementation and sustainment of EBPs by engaging TER mechanisms. Thus, all proposed pilot studies must focus on **team-enhanced EBP implementation in a community service system caring for children with mental health concerns.** PIs can be Center-affiliated or external, but studies must include a community partner. Proposals must apply the Team Effectiveness for Implementation Science model (see Figure 1) to guide the research aims and approach.

Figure 1. Conceptual Model of Team Effectiveness for EBP Implementation

Pilot funds are to be used for the development of new projects or the expansion of existing projects (including novel secondary analysis of data from ongoing or completed projects) to investigate team effectiveness mechanisms within community-partnered implementation research. It is expected that pilot studies will generate preliminary data to support a future federal funding proposal (e.g., Agency for Healthcare Research Quality (AHRQ), the National Institutes of Health (NIH), Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the Patient Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI)). Awards will be issued in the amounts of $25,000 or $50,000, to be spent within the 12-month award period. The funding period for the 2022 application cycle is April 1, 2023 - March 31, 2024. A total of $100,000 is available for this award cycle and the number of awards will depend on the number of appropriately competitive applications. **The deadline for 2022 applications is December 2nd, 2022 at 12pm PST.**

PRE-APPLICATION WEBINAR

For interested applicants, the Center will host an informational webinar on October 26th, 2022 from 9-10:30am PT to provide an overview of the IN STEP Center, the Team Effectiveness for Implementation Science model, as well as a review of the procedures and requirements for the IN STEP Center Pilot RFA. Interested applicants can contact INSTEP@health.ucsd.edu to inquire about the application and registration for the webinar. You may also request a 30-minute pre-submission consultation by emailing INSTEP@health.ucsd.edu to ensure that your proposal is responsive to the RFA.

ELIGIBILITY

The purpose of this pilot funding is to support pilot feasibility studies that leverage IN STEP Children's Mental Health Research Center resources to pursue innovative proof-of-concept studies. These studies will position investigators to address cross-cutting gaps and critical targets in community systems caring for children with mental health concerns. Projects will foster opportunities for early career investigators to benefit from the substantive and methodological expertise of IN STEP Center investigators.

Principal Investigators (PIs) on the proposed pilot projects must be Faculty members at research/academic institutions. Community Practitioners in service settings serving youth., Project Scientists, Research Trainees, Postdoctoral Fellows and Scholars may serve as Co-PIs. Although all eligible individuals are encouraged to apply, in instances of evenly scored proposals, funding preference will be given to early career investigators (≤10 years of terminal degree) in research teams that are well positioned to optimize team effectiveness in the context of EBP implementation efforts for children's mental health. PIs can be Center-affiliated or external, but studies must include a community partner.

AIMS

The IN STEP Center aims for this funding opportunity are to:

1. Stimulate D&I research focused on optimizing team effectiveness in the implementation of EBPs in community-based systems serving children with mental health needs;
2. Generate data that will lead to success in garnering major research funding (e.g., NIH, PCORI, IES) or other agencies or foundations that fund implementation science for children's mental health;
3. Support the career development of early career investigators in D&I, particularly among individuals from groups underrepresented in federally funded health services research.
4. Increase the public health impact of EBP implementation efforts in community care settings that serve children with mental health concerns.

APPLICATION GUIDELINES/PROJECT REQUIREMENTS

- Applicants who are selected for funding will participate in a consultation session with TER experts from the IN STEP Center Methods Core during the <u>first month of the award</u>.
- <u>6-Month Interim Presentation</u>- The principal investigator(s) selected to receive funding will be required to present their project at a Center webinar at the 6-month period of funding.
- <u>1 Year Progress Report and Survey</u>- The principal investigator(s) will be required to complete a one-year online progress report and evaluation survey. This survey will ask for a description of progress to date and a listing of all submitted publications and grant applications (pending or funded), meeting abstracts, and seminars relating to the pilot project and evaluation of the IN STEP pilot grant experience.
- Awardees are expected to publish their findings in one or more scholarly peer-reviewed journals and present this research at professional research, clinical, and/or community meetings.
- Investigators are responsible for submitting any peer-reviewed journal articles resulting from research funded by this award to [PubMed](), the NIH digital archive of life sciences journal literature, and the [UCSD online repository](). The IN STEP Center will include these on the Center website.

BUDGET GUIDELINES

- The funding period is 12 months. Requests for carry forward for up to 6 months will be considered. Any unspent funds will be returned to UC San Diego. Investigators must have IRB approval in place <u>before</u> the beginning of the funding cycle.
- If any funds in the budget are designated for a community agency, provide a letter from that agency, on their letterhead, that describes: (a) the agency's support for the proposed project, (b) agency's role in the project, (c) the name, address, contact information (e-mail and telephone) of the agency representative who has primary responsibility for that portion of the project.

For guidance on how to apply, please refer to our informational webinar hosted virtually on October 26th, 2022 from 9-10:30am PT. Webinars will cover an overview of TER and the RFA application process. To register for this webinar, please click here. Additional questions regarding the application process will be addressed via email at INSTEP@health.ucsd.edu to provide equal feedback to all applicants.

ALL MATERIALS MUST BE UPLOADED BY 12PM PT ON DECEMBER 2, 2022. LATE APPLICATIONS WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED WITHOUT A FORMAL WRITTEN REQUEST.

1. **Submit application via Qualtrics** - The IN STEP Center uses the Qualtrics platform for submission of pilot grants. Click here to access the application. Questions about the application platform and/or technical difficulties may be directed to INSTEP@health.ucsd.edu.

2. **Proposal Narrative - Provide a maximum 5-page application (not including references) describing the project** - 1 page for Specific Aims; 4 pages for Research Strategy.

   APPLICATIONS MUST INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING SECTIONS (IN A COMBINED PDF):

   a) Specific Aims (1 page)
   b) Background and Significance, (~1 page)
   c) Preliminary Studies or Data Collection / Analysis (if applicable), (~1 page)
   d) Research Design and Methods, (~2 pages)
   e) References (not be included in 5-page limit).

   All applications must apply the Team Effectiveness for Implementation Science model. It is expected that team effectiveness mechanisms are made central throughout the project to guide the research questions, design, measure selection, analysis, interpretation, and reporting of the research findings. You do not need to have a TER expert on your proposal to be successful. Once your proposal is funded, you will obtain support from the IN STEP Center Methods Core to refine your team effectiveness and implementation science methods and ensure your proposal is clear and comprehensive.

3. **Community Impact Statement - Prepare a one-page (maximum) statement articulating the Community Relevance and potential impact of your Proposal -** Create a one-page statement on community relevance that includes the project title and is understandable at an eighth-grade reading level (non-scientist reviewer). Do not include your name, as this page will receive blinded review by an external community reviewer. The statement should address the following:
   a. How are you engaging and/or partnering with the community to achieve the goals of the project?
   b. How will both partners benefit from the work, and from future research, treatments or interventions based on the work?
   c. Describe how the community partner represents, in a meaningful way, the population under study.

    d. Consider the potential immediate, short term and long term impact of the work. How does the research impact the individuals/participants in the community that is the focus of the proposed research?

    e. Describe your process for sharing relevant information (e.g., research results, plans for future research, health resources, etc.) with the community after your pilot concludes.

    f. How important is funding this research to improving human health overall, either in the near or distant future?

4. **Dissemination Plan - Prepare a one page (maximum) description that outlines your dissemination plan and next steps** for this project that addresses the following:

    a) Plans for follow up grants and proposals

    b) Dissemination products such as toolkits/playbooks, decision aids, community facing resources/products, and academic products, indicate the target audience (other researchers, policymakers, clinicians, community residents, patients, etc.).

    c) Plans for sharing relevant information and products with the community of focus.

5. **Biosketches - Provide an NIH biosketch** (Instructions here) **for each of the following**: the principal investigator(s), any co-investigators, and any postdoctoral fellows, residents, graduate or medical students you know will be involved in the proposed project. Biosketches need to be compiled into a single combined PDF for upload.

6. **Budget** — Provide a detailed budget (using NIH Budget Form "page 4" only) along with a brief budget justification.

7. **Submit an IRB application –** We recommend that you submit an IRB application to your home institution at the same time the pilot application is submitted to the IN STEP Center. Funding is contingent on successful IRB approval.

8. PROPOSED PROJECTS WILL BE EVALUATED USING THE FOLLOWING THREE SCORING SYSTEMS:

    1. NIH scoring guidelines (1 = high impact – 9 = low impact). See Appendix A.

    2. Projects will also be scored with an adapted version of the ImplemeNtation and Improvement Science Proposal Evaluation CriTeria (INSPECT), a tool for evaluation of D&I specific research proposals adapted from Proctor et al. "Key ingredients" that constitute a well-crafted implementation science proposal. For explanation of the rating rubric for each of the 10 dimensions, see Appendix B.

    3. The community-based review includes three grading criteria centered on community engagement, strength of community partnership, and short and long term population outcomes. See Appendix C.

9. APPLICATIONS SHOULD ADHERE TO THE FOLLOWING FORMATTING SPECIFICATIONS:

1. 11-point Arial font
2. Single-spaced
3. 0.5 inch margins on all sides
4. 8 ½" x 11" (i.e., standard U.S. size) paper
5. Numbering of all pages

KEY DATES

- **Pre-application Webinar**: October 26th, 2022
- **Deadline for Applications:** December 2nd, 2022 at 12:00pm PST
- **Preliminary notice of award & scheduling of consultation meetings: Early February 2023**
- **Final funding contingent on successful completion of IRB.**
- **Final Approval and Notice of Award:** Late March 2023
- **Funding Period:** April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024

Review Criteria	Considerations	Weight/ Score
Quality of Dissemination and Implementation Science and the Scientific Potential	The quality of the research design and its potential to make significant contributions to the field of dissemination and implementation science, the importance of the questions being addressed, and the likelihood that the project will provide a basis for future fundable research applying dissemination and implementation strategies to improve use of evidence- based treatments or interventions.	30%
Approach	The soundness and feasibility of the approach, the fit of the plan to the research questions, as well as the appropriateness of the approach given the context of implementation/dissemination science.	25%
Innovation	Does the project include an innovative technique or explore a new area? Is the project appropriate for pilot funding due to the lack of previous work in this area?	10%
Investigators	Do the junior investigators have potential to continue in successful research careers, and/or do the senior investigators have successful track records, and a history of productive mentorship (as determined by prior work with junior investigators who have advanced in their discipline)?	15%
New to D&I Science	Is this an investigator/team that is new to dissemination and implementation science? To what extent does this pilot program enable them to advance in a field of research that they may not have otherwise pursued?	20%

Total Score: NIH scoring guidelines (1 = high impact – 9 = low impact)

APPENDIX B. THE IMPLEMENTATION AND IMPROVEMENT SCIENCE PROPOSAL EVALUATION CRITERIA (INSPECT)

#	Criterion	Score
1	The care, quality, community gap or need	0-3
2	The evidence-based treatment to be implemented	0-3
3	*Application of the Team Effectiveness for Implementation Science model*	0-3
4	Stakeholder priorities, engagement in change	0-3
5	Settings' readiness to adopt new services/treatment/programs	0-3
6	D&I strategy/process	0-3
7	Team experience with setting, treatment, and D&I process	0-3
8	Feasibility of proposed research design and methods	0-3
9	Measurement and analysis section	0-3
10	Policy/funding environment; leverage of support for sustaining change	0-3
	Total Score	**0-30**

As explained by Crable et al., in general, a score of 3 will be given for an element if all of the criteria requirements for the element were fully met; a score of 2 will be given if the criteria were somewhat, but not fully addressed; a score of 1 will be given if the ingredient was mentioned but not operationalized in the proposal or linked to the rest of the study; and a score of 0 will be given if the element was not addressed at all in the proposal. Total score will range between 0 and 30.

APPENDIX C. COMMUNITY REVIEW CRITERIA

Community Review Criteria	Considerations	Weight/ Score
Strength of Community Engagement	Evaluate the strength and appropriateness of the community partnership and/ or community engagement approach. Do community partners share in the design, and conduct of the project? The project oversight? The funding? Will both partners benefit from the work, and from future research, treatments or interventions based on the work? Does the community partner represent, in a meaningful way, the population under study?	33%
Potential Impact on Community	Evaluate the potential for the research to have a significant positive impact on the individuals who are the participants in the community that is the focus of the proposed research. Consider the potential immediate, short term and long term impact of the work. How will the researcher be communicating relevant information back to the community?	33%
Impact on Human Health	How important is funding this research to improving human health, either in the near future or distant future?	33%