R3 Initiative for COVID-19 Research
A Rush University and RTI International Research Collaboration

Summary of Opportunity

In order to foster greater collaboration between institutions, Dr. Andrew Bean, Dean of the Graduate College and Interim Vice Provost for Research at Rush University Medical Center (Rush), and Dr. Wayne Holden, President and CEO of RTI International (RTI), have each pledged up to $50,000 for as much as $100,000 to support the Rush-RTI Research (R3) Initiative. R3 is intended to enable new and exciting collaborations that will enable Rush and RTI to attract future funding opportunities from extramural federal and non-federal sources (e.g. non-profits). The goal of R3 is to select one seed project that leads to a collaborative proposal to an external funder within 12 months of the project ending. We are focusing this initiative on COVID-19 research given the significant impact this pandemic has had on local and global populations and the strong research positions that both Rush and RTI have taken to improve the response.

- The proposed team must be a collaboration that includes at least one researcher from Rush and one researcher from RTI.
- Any existing Rush-RTI collaborators can compete, but it must be in a new, unfunded area.
- Applicants are encouraged to identify funding mechanisms (e.g. NIH R01, R21, or specific foundation grant) for future funding opportunities following the R3 project.
- Faculty and researchers from both organizations are encouraged to propose collaborations in an area where no collaboration already exists.
- Junior faculty at Rush and early career scientists at RTI are encouraged to participate.

Target Research Areas

This call is seeking research proposals that address COVID-19 from one or more disciplines that are likely to be of interest to an external funder (see examples below). The collaboration should strengthen the probability of funding success beyond what the Rush-RTI researchers could achieve on their own. Here are some examples of COVID-19 research areas that would be acceptable for this opportunity:

- Innovations in Care Delivery for COVID-19
  - Accounting for Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) and health disparities within communities, for women, or for minorities in addressing care for COVID-19 and co-morbidities
  - Health quality measurement for patients diagnosed with COVID-19 within primary care, bone and joint, Alzheimer’s, and/or cancer settings
- Advancements in Health Education and Learning
  - Evidence-based and scalable approaches for workforce training in managing patients with COVID-19
Innovations in promoting communication and empathy via telehealth in the treatment of COVID-19 and co-morbidities

Interventions using Technology and Data
- Digital data from electronic repositories and informatics solutions to improve care coordination for patients with COVID-19 and any co-morbidities
- Natural language processing or AI solutions to improve population-level interventions for tracking, managing, or treating COVID-19

Funding Amounts & Important Dates

Up to $100,000 is available for this effort. The intention is to fund one collaborative project, but the reviewers reserve the right to fund more than one project if merited.

- Application Period Opens: Thursday, May 28, 2020
- Round 1 Submission Closes: Thursday, June 25, 2020 at 6pm EST
- Round 2 Submission Closes (for selected proposals): Tuesday, August 11, 2020 at 6pm EST
- Award Notice: No later than Thursday, September 10, 2020
- Period of Performance: 12-months

About the R3 Partners

- Rush University – *Rush University is one of America’s Best Graduate Schools (2020 U.S. News & World Report)* that is in the Illinois Medical District near Chicago’s Loop and comprised of four colleges: Rush Medical College, College of Nursing, College of Health Sciences, and The Graduate College. Furthermore, *the Rush University System for Health encompasses leading hospitals and practices that serve patients throughout Chicago and the surrounding areas*. See the website here to learn more: [https://www.rushu.rush.edu/about/rush-university-mission-vision-and-values](https://www.rushu.rush.edu/about/rush-university-mission-vision-and-values)

- RTI International – *RTI International is an independent, nonprofit research institute dedicated to improving the human condition and has offices throughout the United States—including the Chicago Loop—and around the world. RTI’s researchers represent a wide spectrum of expertise including healthcare quality improvement, population health, and disease-specific domains*. See the website here to learn more: [https://www.rti.org/practice-areas](https://www.rti.org/practice-areas)

Finding Rush and RTI collaborators

Rush and RTI each provide online access to their faculty, scientists, and fellows within their research communities:

- Rush – [https://profiles.rush.edu/search/](https://profiles.rush.edu/search/)
An introductory web conference will be held on the date and time below to familiarize potential applicants to R3 and potentially identify collaborators across Rush and RTI. A recording of the conference will be made available, and additional conferences may be added.

Date: June 3, 2020
Time: 1pm CT / 2pm ET

Zoom link

- https://rtiorg.zoom.us/j/91703068634?pwd=Uzl2bmdxa0EwS2pxRjJQTWJha3hpdz09

Zoom phone (optional)

- +1 312 626 6799 (CT) or +1 929 205 6099 (ET)
- Meeting ID: 917 0306 8634
- Password: 109681

You may also reach out to the Rush and RTI representatives listed at the end of this RFA.

Proposal Formatting for the Two-Round Review Process

Round 1 – Aims and Biosketches Submission Due Monday, June 25, 2020 at 6pm EST

- Project Aims – limited to 1 page.
  - List a proposal Title, Rush-RTI co-principal investigators, and individual job titles.
  - Discuss the COVID-19-related problem you propose addressing, the broad impact that your solution will have, the goals and expected outcomes from 1-year’s funding, the future funding opportunities you can expect to pursue after 1-year’s funding (e.g. NIH RO1 application, foundation proposal, etc.).

- Streamlined Biosketches for each co-PI – limited to 2 pages (see template).
  - Include most relevant research background, publication history, and funding history.

- Format
  - Please use one-inch margins and Times New Roman, 11-point font.

Round 2 – Full Proposal & Budget Submission Deadline Due Tuesday, August 11, 2020 at 6pm EST

- Project Summary – limited to 1 page.
  - Teams are permitted to revise their original Aims document.

- Proposed Approach – limited to 5 pages.
  - Significance, Innovation, Approach.

- Relevant Environment and Facilities: limited to 1 page.
  - Discuss where at Rush and RTI the research will take place.

- Budget – limited to 1 page.
  - Use the budget template provided.
- Allowable: publication cost, conference travel.
- Not allowable: Hardware purchase.
- Any other costs are to be determined, applicants must describe.

**Format**
- Please use one-inch margins and Times New Roman, 11-point font.

**Award Announcement**
- No later than September 10, 2020.

**Proposal Submissions**
Round 1 proposals should be submitted via Rush University’s REDCap System at [https://is.gd/2020R3LOI](https://is.gd/2020R3LOI). Please compile the documents into a one merged PDF document. The submission portal for Round 2 will be provided to those that advance to the next stage. Both Rush and RTI employees have access to the REDCap form. For any assistance, please contact Norma Sandoval at Norma_Sandoval@rush.edu.

**Proposal Review**
A review panel made up equally of noncompeting researchers and staff from Rush and RTI will review all applications.

**Round 1 proposals** – will be judged as competitive or non-competitive based on the following criteria:

- Clarity of the research problem
- Innovativeness and feasibility of the proposed solution
- Nature and degree of collaboration between Rush-RTI investigators
- Identification of one or more future funding streams

Successful Round 1 applicants will be notified if they have been approved to apply for Round 2 via email by Tuesday, July 7, 2020.

**Round 2 proposals** – will be evaluated on the following criteria:

- How well the proposal addresses the significance, innovation, approach, investigators, and environment
- Quality and scientific impact of the application
- Chances for external funding, if successful

The review panel will make the final recommendations for funding to Drs. Bean (Rush) and Holden (RTI) who will then make the final decision based on those recommendations. Successful applicants will be notified via email not later than September 10, 2020.
More Information

Joshua E. Richardson, PhD, MS, MLIS
Health IT Scientist
jrichardson@rti.org
www.rti.org/
RTI International
230 W. Monroe Street, Suite 2100
Chicago, IL 60606 USA

Jacqueline M. Olich, PhD
Vice President, University Collaborations
jolich@rti.org
www.rti.org/
RTI International
3040 E. Cornwallis Road, PO Box 12194
Research Triangle Park, NC 27709-2194 USA
RTI 9064 0914

Alan Landay, PhD
Vice Chair of Research and Professor in the
Department of Internal Medicine
Assistant Provost for Team Science
Alan_Landay@rush.edu
www.rush.edu/
Rush University Medical Center
1653 W Congress Pkwy
Chicago, IL 60612