**Request for Applications**

# Nexus Award for Junior Investigators Seeking Imaging Support: Sponsored by the ICTR Biomarkers and Diagnostic Testing Translational Research Community (TRC)

**Deadline:**       Applications are due at 11:59pm on December 8, 2015

**Eligible:**       Johns Hopkins University Junior Faculty

**Award Period:**   All scans provided by Nexus Award funds should aim to be completed by June 30, 2015. Funding may be available, but is not guaranteed after this date.

**Application:**    Online at ICTR Connection Request

**GENERAL NEXUS GRANT PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

In 2013 the Institute for Clinical and Translational Research (ICTR) established three Translational Research Communities (TRC):

1. Drugs/Biologics/Vaccines/Devices
2. Biomarkers and Diagnostic Testing
3. Behavioral, Social, and Systems Science

The goals of the ICTR Translational Research Communities (TRCs) are to improve the quality, innovation and impact of translational products through a series of annual symposiums, seminars, workshops and pilot funding.

The Nexus Award Program is designed to accelerate research by providing rapid, targeted funding to address critical gaps in clinical and translational research.  These awards will be the "nexus," or key facilitator, which will propel investigators forward. The research carried out under these awards should also have broad applicability beyond the funded project.

**NEXUS AWARD FOR JUNIOR INVESTIGATORS SEEKING IMAGING SUPPORT:**
**PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

Diverging from a traditional pilot RFA, going forward the TRCs will use funds to help bolster pre-existing cores, centers or resources areas.  This year, the Biomarkers and Diagnostic Testing TRC Leadership decided to provide funds for investigators at the **instructor or assistant professor level,** who wish to initiate pre-clinical or clinical studies that require preliminary *in vivo* imaging data for proof-of-concept research.   Use of facilities within the MRB Molecular Imaging Service Center (https://apps.onc.jhmi.edu/cischeduling/) or the PET Center (http://pet.rad.jhmi.edu/sched/index.html) are strongly encouraged.

**PROGRAM DETAILS**

Investigators may apply for up to $5K for pre-clinical and $15K for clinical studies.  The web-based application form appears on the ICTR Connection Request webpage under, "Nexus Award for Junior Investigators Seeking Imaging Support: Sponsored by the ICTR Biomarkers and Diagnostic Testing Translational Research Community (TRC)" (https://ictrweb.johnshopkins.edu/ictr/?ApplyNexusImaging).  The short application form contains some open ended questions, as well as a place to upload the required documents, listed below under "Supporting Documentation."

Please keep in mind that pre-clinical imaging studies cost on the order of $200 per one hour timeslot, while those for clinical MR are $400 and for clinical PET, $2,000.  Among other criteria mentioned under the "Dissemination and Review Process" section of the RFA, special consideration will be given to investigators who can demonstrate a clear path to future funding.  Shovel-ready projects are preferred.  Investigators looking to engage in clinical imaging should only apply if they have feasible recruitment goals, or a preexisting pool of participants.  Funds may be requested for new projects, or for projects that require additional support in order to overcome a research barrier to continue along the translational pathway.

Examples of potential projects include those that require pre-clinical, namely, small animal MR, PET, SPECT, ultrasound, CT or optical imaging or human PET, SPECT and/or MR imaging.  Large animal PET or SPECT studies will fall under the clinical category, depending on equipment and resources required.

Investigators will receive **Notice of Award in January 2016** and should be prepared to begin work on their project shortly thereafter.  **Awardees are not guaranteed funds after June 30, 2015**, so scans should be completed as soon as possible after award notification.

If awarded, any changes made to the initial research plan will have to be submitted to the Translational Research Communities (TRCs) program administrator, Kelly Crowley (kelly.crowley@jhmi.edu) for approval from TRC Leadership.  The Program Administrator will be in touch with the PI and designated financial manager throughout the award period to be sure that necessary steps are taken to complete scans in a timely manner.  In the future, awardees may be called upon to participate in ICTR and TRC related meetings and events.  Awardees can also expect to receive follo- up from the ICTR and TRC Administration for reporting purposes.

### *Eligibility*

Any **instructor or assistant professor** faculty member at Johns Hopkins University is eligible to apply as the principal investigator for a Nexus Award.  All other individuals, including undergraduates, graduate students, postdoctoral fellows and research associates, are not eligible to apply as principal investigator for this specific Nexus Award RFA, but may be incorporated into a proposal as team members.

Awarded Nexus PIs are not eligible to apply for the Nexus Grant Program in the subsequent grant cycle.

**APPLICATION PROCESS**

*Required Materials*

The short web-based application form contains open-ended questions, which will help reviewers obtain the necessary information required to judge a project's feasibility and merit.

As well as the information provided on the application form, **supplemental materials required to be submitted via the online application include:**

- A research plan two pages or less; Single-spaced, Ariel 11 font, with 0.5" margins. The structure should be in the standard format of Aims, Background (with or without preliminary data, as available), Significance, and Methods.
- A biosketch (old or new NIH format) for the PI and Co-PI(s)
- A document listing other support of the PI and Co-PI(s), and if applicable, a list of other funding sources that will be used to cover other costs associated with this project. Budgets may be submitted in Microsoft Excel format.
- Although not required at the time of application submission, please upload any necessary regulatory approvals you may already have, or proof that approval has been initiated, which is strongly encouraged.

*Regulatory Approvals*

Shovel-ready projects are preferred, so applicants who have the necessary regulatory approvals at the time of submission will be prioritized. Applicants may also initiate approvals at the time the Nexus Award application is submitted. Investigators will receive **notice of award in January 2016** and should be prepared to begin work on their projects shortly after receiving any awarded funds.

*Dissemination and Review Process*

The Nexus Award application form is housed on the ICTR Connection Request webpage under "Nexus Award for Junior Investigators Seeking Imaging Support: Sponsored by the ICTR Biomarkers and Diagnostic Testing Translational Research

Community (TRC)," You may also access the form using this direct link:
https://ictrweb.johnshopkins.edu/ictr/?ApplyNexusImaging

All application materials must be submitted by **December 8, 2015 at 11:59 pm**.  The month following submission, a meeting of experts will convene to discuss applications. Applications will be scored based on scientific merit and clarity of path to future funding. Applicants can expect to receive notice of award in January, 2016.  Applicants who do not receive support will be notified, but will not receive specific feedback.

Please direct any questions to Dr. Martin Pomper (mpomper@jhmi.edu), co-leader of the Biomarkers and Diagnostic Testing TRC, or Kelly Crowley (kelly.crowley@jhmi.edu), TRC program administrator.

**Please note that the details stated here in regards to dissemination and project management are subject to change, and are project-specific.**