

**Collaborative for Community Engagement and Research:
Increasing Communication about Clinical Research through Dialogue
with Community Health Centers in Massachusetts**

Request for Proposals

Release Date: 03/01/2010

Submission Date: 03/29/2010

Updates posted at: <http://www.connecttoresearch.org/about/ccer>

Overview: *Community Connect to Research* (<http://www.connecttoresearch.org/>) is a web-based health resource that supports communication with the public about health and clinical research. The website has information about health topics, ongoing medical trials, understanding research, and how communities participate in research. The website was launched in April 2009 as an initiative of the Harvard Catalyst Community Engagement Program. It has evolved into a partnership among all three Boston-area Clinical and Translational Science groups: Boston University, Harvard University, and Tufts University. This partnership has been named the Collaborative for Community Engagement and Research. The collaborative strives to encourage collaboration among their institutions and the communities they serve.

This **request for proposals** invites community health centers in the state of Massachusetts to address **creative** and **innovative** ways in which community health centers can help improve communication about health topics and clinical research for the populations they serve. Effective communication will not only expand knowledge about health and clinical research, but will increase the ability to locate health information and improve understanding of the clinical research process. For the purpose of this request for proposals, we define clinical research as a process that involves human participation to answer specific health questions.

Background: Many people who are ill or have a family member who is suffering from a serious condition want, and even demand, to have access to high quality health information. This comment from the mother of two children with a rare disease is representative: “I wanted access to ... critical information in order to make informed decisions about care, to consider participation in clinical studies, and to expand my knowledge of research” (Pat Furlong, Webcast 2007). Unfortunately, people continue to have problems accessing, understanding, and applying health information (Institute of Medicine, 2004).

Increasingly, people with varying health needs are turning to the Internet for their health information. While health information on the Internet is plentiful, access issues and high literacy demands can leave disadvantaged populations such as the elderly, racial and ethnic minorities, and those with low socioeconomic status behind (Institute of Medicine, 2009).

Community Connect to Research (<http://www.connecttoresearch.org/>) attempts to address these needs by providing a high quality resource that is openly available to anyone. It is novel in bringing together, in one place, local, targeted, scientifically sound, and easily understandable information about health topics and clinical research. We have tried to make the resource accessible by keeping our primary audience - patients and their families - in mind at all stages of development.

This request for proposals seeks to forge new partnerships with community health centers, who will engage in active dialogue within their patients to gain insights into effective methods for communicating about health topics and clinical research. Knowledge about health and clinical research among the general public is an ongoing concern. Through this initiative we hope to make some progress in both understanding barriers to communication and in providing methods for more effective communication.

Applicants should propose innovative methods to address communication with the public about health topics and clinical research. Proposals must outline how the proposed activities will help increase communication with patients in your own community. Applicants are encouraged to use the *Community Connect to Research* website to inform their proposals. Proposed activities can be centered on the website or on other relevant means of communicating information about health topics and clinical research. Successful applications will embody the mission of empowering members of the public to make more informed health decisions. They will help identify effective methods of communicating about health topics and clinical research.

Examples of topics to address include (but are not limited to):

Accessing health information: In your patient population, identify challenges to providing or obtaining information about health topics and clinical research.

Understanding health information: In your patient population, explore strategies for improving comprehension of available, high quality, information about health topics and clinical research.

Applying health information: In your patient population, assess how individuals might use high quality health and clinical research information to make better health decisions.

Key Dates

March 1, 2010	RFP Release
March 9, 2010	RFP Information Session; Time: 1:00 pm
- Phone-in details will be posted at http://www.connecttoresearch.org/about/ccer	
March 29, 2010	Proposals Due
April 14, 2010	Notice of Award
April 21, 2010	Grantee Information and Discussion Session; Time: 1:00 pm
May 3, 2010	Release of Funding

For more information:

<http://www.connecttoresearch.org/about/ccer>

617-432-7849

E-mail: info@connecttoresearch.org

Eligibility: Applicants must be a **community health center** located in the state of Massachusetts. Only **non-profit** community health centers that provide direct patient services and who are committed to addressing community health needs should apply. This includes (but is not limited to) community health centers that are licensed through a hospital, are federally qualified, or are public. Applicants should have some familiarity with clinical research. Only one application per community health center may be submitted for consideration.

Funding: These grants are funded by an American Recovery Act Administrative Supplement for the Community Engagement Program of the Harvard Catalyst Clinical Translational Science Center. We expect to make up to four awards at approximately \$25,000 per grantee.

Funding Period: May 2010 – September 2011.

Application Guidelines:

- 1) Submit a statement of interest (no more than 5 pages) which includes the following:
 - a) Title of the project.
 - b) Names, titles, and contact information of project director (s) and other project staff.
 - c) Description of your community health center, including your community health center's mission statement, and the population you serve.
 - d) A discussion of the issue(s) you want to explore, why you are applying and the potential impact your project will have on your patient population.
 - e) The goals and objectives of your project and your evaluation plans.
 - f) A project plan and timeline.

- 2) On a separate page, submit the project budget and budget justification. The budget can include staff salaries, minimal administration, food and stipends for participants, preliminary data collection (e.g., focus groups), and analysis.

- 3) Include a cover page with your project abstract (no more than 400 words), your agency's authorizing signature, and your contact information.

Post-Award Requirements

Grantees are required to:

- Submit project and budget progress reports every four months for the duration of the funding period.
- Be available for periodic site visits at mutually agreeable times.
- In the last month of the funding period, provide a written report with project findings and recommendations.
- In the last month of the funding period, present project findings and recommendations in person to grant management and other interested individuals.