

ADULT AND CHILD CENTER FOR OUTCOMES
RESEARCH AND DELIVERY SCIENCE (ACCORDS)

ACCORDS Director's Cross-Collaboration HSR Pilot Funding

Building Collaborations Across Schools, Colleges, and Organizations to Advance
Health Services Research (HSR)

Purpose

The **Adult and Child Center for Outcomes Research and Delivery Science (ACCORDS)** invites applications for the **ACCORDS Director's Cross-Collaboration Health Services Research (HSR) Pilot Grant**.

The purpose of this pilot grant is to **promote new and expanded cross-school, cross-college, and external-organization collaborations in HSR** and to catalyze innovative research partnerships that have the potential to develop into sustained programs of collaborative HSR.

The program is intended to bring together investigators who contribute complementary expertise, perspectives, methods, populations, data, or settings to address important questions related to healthcare delivery, outcomes, quality, access, implementation, effectiveness, value, or health systems.

A **central goal** of this pilot grant program is to encourage investigators to move beyond traditional disciplinary and school/college/organizational boundaries. Competitive applications should demonstrate that the proposed collaboration adds meaningful scientific value and creates an opportunity that would be difficult for either investigator or organization to accomplish independently.

Award at a Glance

Award	Up to \$50,000
Project Period	Up to 18 months
Faculty Salary + Fringe/Benefits Support	Up to \$25,000 of the total award
Collaboration Requirement	CU faculty investigator + faculty/faculty-equivalent collaborator from another school/college or external organization
ACCORDS Requirement	One PI must be an ACCORDS Investigator and the proposal must use at least one ACCORDS Core in carrying out the pilot study
Application Deadline	January 22, 2027, 5:00 p.m. MT
Research Focus	Health Services Research

Eligibility

Applications must include a collaborative investigative team consisting of:

1. **A full-time faculty member at the University of Colorado who is also an ACCORDS investigator, and**
2. **At least one faculty member or faculty-equivalent collaborator who is either:**
 - from a **different CU school or college**, or
 - from an **external organization**

The intent is to support **genuine cross-collaboration**. External organizations may include, for example, healthcare delivery systems, governmental organizations, community organizations, academic institutions, or other organizations relevant to the proposed HSR question.

Applicants at different career stages are encouraged to apply, including teams involving early-stage investigators.

ACCORDS Investigator and Core Requirement

Each application must include an ACCORDS Investigator as either the Principal Investigator or as a Multiple Principal Investigator. To become an ACCORDS investigator click [here](#).

In addition, the proposed pilot study must utilize **at least one ACCORDS Cores** to carry out the proposed health services research study.

Applicants should identify:

- The ACCORDS Core(s) that will be used;
- The expertise or services the Core will contribute;
- How the Core strengthens the scientific approach or feasibility of the project; and
- The anticipated Core-related costs included in the proposed budget.

Applicants must engage the relevant ACCORDS Core(s) to leverage methodological and research infrastructure in strengthening the study **during application development**, rather than after funding decisions have been made.

Funding

Awards will provide **up to \$50,000 in total direct funding for a project period of up to 18 months**.

Up to \$25,000 of the total award may be used for faculty salary support, including fringe and benefits costs. The NIH salary cap will be imposed.

Allowable other expenses may include:

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- Research staff or analyst support;
- ACCORDS Core services;
- Data acquisition or data-access expenses;
- Participant recruitment and compensation;
- Qualitative or quantitative data collection;
- Statistical or methodological support;
- Research supplies;
- Project-specific operating expenses;
- Dissemination expenses directly related to the project; and
- Faculty salary support and fringe/benefits, subject to the \$25,000 maximum. Multiple faculty investigator's FTE and fringe/benefits could be covered, as long as you stay within the \$25,000.
- Carryforward will be considered towards the end of the project and must be justified.

Funds should directly support completion of the proposed pilot project and generation of products or preliminary evidence that position the collaborative team for its next stage of research.

Priority Areas

Applications may address **any substantive area of health services research**.

Projects may include, but are not limited to, research focused on:

- Healthcare quality and safety;
- Healthcare access and delivery;
- Patient, clinician, or health-system outcomes;
- Healthcare effectiveness and value;
- Implementation and dissemination;
- Healthcare utilization and costs;
- Health policy;
- Data science and secondary-data research;
- Learning health systems;
- Patient-centered outcomes;
- Healthcare workforce;
- Community-health system partnerships;
- Innovative research methods or technologies (e.g., digital health technology, AI, LLMs) applied to healthcare delivery; and
- Other questions relevant to improving healthcare and health outcomes.

Interdisciplinary approaches and projects that bridge clinical, methodological, health-system, policy, community, or population perspectives are particularly encouraged.

What Makes a Strong Cross-Collaboration?

Because **cross-collaboration is the defining feature of this mechanism**, applicants should explicitly explain why the proposed partnership matters.

Competitive applications will demonstrate that:

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The collaboration is scientifically meaningful. Each partner brings expertise, perspective, access, methods, data, population, or infrastructure that strengthens the project.

The collaboration is integrated. Collaborators have substantive roles in developing and executing the research rather than functioning primarily as consultants or nominal co-investigators.

The project benefits from crossing boundaries. The research question or approach is strengthened by working across schools, colleges, disciplines, health systems, or organizations.

The collaboration has potential beyond the pilot. The project provides a foundation for a subsequent competitive research grant externally funded by NIH or equivalent funding agency, publications, implementation, or other meaningful impact.

Application Components

Applications should be concise and designed to allow reviewers to evaluate the **science, collaboration, feasibility, and potential for future impact**. The total page limit for the uploaded research project document is 4 pages, as described below. Single spacing, 11 point font, and .5 margins is acceptable. Other components of the application will be input via Smartsheet.

1. Identifying Information (via Smartsheet):

Include:

- Project title;
- Lead CU investigator name, academic rank, department/division, and school/college;
- Collaborating investigator(s), academic rank or equivalent position, department/unit, and school/college or external organization;
- ACCORDS Core(s) to be utilized;
- Total amount requested; and
- Proposed project period.

2. Project Abstract (via Smartsheet):

Provide a concise overview of the problem, research question, proposed approach, cross-collaboration, and anticipated impact.

3. Specific Aims: **Maximum 1 page; uploaded document**

State the overall objective, specific aims, and hypotheses of the pilot project.

4. Research Plan: **Maximum 4 pages; uploaded document**

Address the following:

Significance

What important HSR problem does the project address, and why does it matter?

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What is new about the question, approach, partnership, setting, methods, or application?

Approach

Describe the study design, population/data source, methods, analysis, expected outcomes, potential challenges, and alternative strategies.

Feasibility and Timeline

Explain how the proposed work can reasonably be completed within the proposed 18-month project period and budget. Include major milestones for the **up-to-18-month project period**, including anticipated dates for study initiation, data collection/acquisition, analysis, dissemination, and development of the next-stage proposal.

No-cost extensions will be allowed on a very limited basis because the pilot grant is designed to quickly generate data to be used in a larger grant application.

5. Cross-Collaboration Statement (via Smartsheet):

Describe:

- How the collaborators came together;
- What each investigator/organization contributes;
- Why the research benefits from this partnership;
- How responsibilities will be shared;
 - How the collaboration extends beyond what could be accomplished by either partner independently; and
- How the pilot could establish or strengthen an enduring HSR collaboration.

6. Future Research and Funding Plan (via Smartsheet):

Describe what the pilot is intended to enable next.

Examples include:

- NIH R-, K-, or other grant submission;
- AHRQ, PCORI, VA, foundation, professional society, or other external funding;
- Larger multisite study;
- Pragmatic trial;
- Implementation study;
- New cross-organizational research program; or
- Other appropriate next-stage research.

Applicants should identify at least one plausible next-step funding mechanism or research opportunity.

9. Budget and Budget Justification: No page limit; uploaded document

Provide an itemized budget of **up to \$50,000** using SF424 budget templates and briefly justify each expense.

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Faculty salary support may **not exceed \$25,000**, including fringe and benefits. NIH salary cap must be followed.

Clearly identify funds allocated to ACCORDS Core services.

10. Investigator Materials: [uploaded document](#)

Include:

- NIH-format biosketch for the lead CU investigator; and
- NIH-format biosketch or equivalent for the primary collaborating investigator(s)

Review Criteria

Applications will be reviewed by a multidisciplinary committee with expertise in HSR.

Criterion
Significance and potential HSR impact
Alignment with ACCORDS mission
Strength and value of cross-collaboration
Innovation
Scientific approach and rigor
Potential impact of project on the field of HSR
Feasibility within 18 months and \$50,000
Collaboration with ACCORDS Core(s) and resources
Potential for sustained collaboration and future external funding

Significance and HSR Impact

Does the project address an important problem in health services research? Could the findings meaningfully advance healthcare delivery, outcomes, quality, access, value, implementation, policy, or health systems?

Alignment with ACCORDS Mission

Does the project align with ACCORDS mission and priorities? The **mission** of ACCORDS is to improve health, both locally and nationally, by supporting state-of-the-art outcomes and community translational research to guide clinical practice and policy.

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Does the partnership meaningfully cross schools, colleges, organizations, disciplines, or systems? Is there evidence of genuine intellectual and operational collaboration? Would the project be difficult to accomplish as effectively without the partnership?

Innovation

Does the project introduce a novel question, study design, method(s), collaboration, data source, setting, or approach?

Approach and Rigor

Are the design and analytic methods appropriate to the research question? Is the science cutting-edge and have high potential to advance the field of HSR? Is the approach rigorous and reproducible? Are potential limitations adequately considered?

Potential Impact on the Field of HSR

Does the pilot project have high potential impact to significantly advance the field of Health services Research? The proposed pilot project should demonstrate high potential to impact the field of health services research by addressing an important unmet need with an innovative and rigorous approach that can generate actionable findings, inform healthcare delivery or policy, and catalyze future research, implementation, or external funding.

Feasibility

Can the proposed aims reasonably be completed within **18 months and \$50,000**?

Collaboration with ACCORDS Core(s) and resources

Does the team have appropriate expertise and access to the required populations, data, infrastructure, and ACCORDS Cores and resources?

Future Potential

Is the pilot likely to generate evidence, infrastructure, partnerships, or products that support subsequent externally funded research or a sustained collaborative HSR program?

Additional Consideration

When applications are otherwise similarly meritorious, priority may be given to projects that:

- Establish **new collaborations** across schools/colleges or organizations;
- Meaningfully engage early-career investigators or trainees;
- Use highly innovative methods and study designs;

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- Create partnerships with healthcare systems or community organizations;
- Demonstrate strong potential for external funding; or
- Establish infrastructure or partnerships that can support future cross-collaborative HSR.

Awardee Expectations

Awardees will be expected to:

- Complete the proposed work within the approved project period;
- Acknowledge ACCORDS pilot support in resulting presentations, publications, and grant applications;
- Present findings at an ACCORDS-sponsored event, seminar, or future **Health Services Research Day**;
- Engage the identified ACCORDS Core(s) as proposed;
- Reporting: Resulting manuscripts, presentations, grant submissions, subsequent funding, and other research products will be reported at:
 - 12-month progress report—required to ensure study aims will be complete by 18 months, or a request for carryforward can be considered; and
 - 18-month a final report—summarizing accomplishments and next steps

Because the purpose of the mechanism is to catalyze sustained collaboration, teams will also be asked to report subsequent **cross-collaborative products and external grant submissions** resulting from the pilot once yearly for 5 years.

Important Dates

Announcement: October 1, 2026

Application Deadline: January 22, 2027 at 5:00 p.m. Mountain Time

Review Period: January 2027–February 2027

Award Notification: February

Earliest Project Start: Early February

Project Period: Up to 18 months

Submission

Applications must be received by:

January 22, 2027 at 5:00 p.m. MT

Submission mechanism: Smartsheet link