Clinical Trial Recruitment Lab | USC Schaeffer | Keck School of Medicine of USC Alzheimer's Therapeutic Research Institute

2025 Request for Applications | Clinical Trial Recruitment Lab

Overview of the Clinical Trial Recruitment Lab

The USC Clinical Trial Recruitment Lab (CTRL) brings together stakeholders from academia, industry, and philanthropy to create a collaborative platform for testing and disseminating innovative recruitment strategies that improve access and representation in clinical trials. CTRL's goal is to coordinate the resources and expertise to not only design but also test real-world solutions, generate evidence, and share best practices that advance clinical trial recruitment and retention. Once evaluated, effective solutions can be scaled and applied across clinical trial settings beyond CTRL.

About the Request for Applications (RFA) Opportunity

CTRL is seeking innovative technology-based approaches, especially those using artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning, to overcome barriers to recruitment and retention in Alzheimer's clinical trials. Areas of interest include:

- Expanding accessibility and affordability of validated diagnostics
- Enhancing efficiency of patient identification and trial matching
- Increasing referrals by primary care providers (PCPs) and neurologists
- Improving structural accessibility through trial decentralization
- Sustaining long-term participant engagement

Successful pilot applications will propose and evaluate technology-driven approaches to improve access and representation in Alzheimer's clinical trials. Proposed approaches should be scalable, affordable, and designed for long-term sustainability. All findings, data, and materials will be broadly shared to inform future interventions and enhance recruitment and retention efforts across the clinical trial landscape. Pilot teams will participate in the annual CTRL symposium dedicated to sharing ideas, findings and best practices.

We welcome pilots from academic and non-academic groups. All projects should be designed to generate evidence suitable for publication in high-quality, peer-reviewed journals. To support applicants who may not have sufficient research expertise, we offer the option to be matched with experienced researchers from our network who can collaborate on research and evaluation design. If you would like to be connected with a research collaborator, please indicate your interest by checking the designated box on the submission form.

Selected pilots will receive up to $250,000 in total funding and are expected to be completed within one year.

Key Application Dates

Application period opens	June 2, 2025
Pre-proposal submission deadline	July 18, 2025
Notification of pre-proposal approval	August 29, 2025

Application Details

1. Pre-Proposal

By July 18, 2025: Please submit a pre-proposal including a title page and a brief (1-2 page) project description.

The title page should include:

- Working title for the project
- Complete contact information for the Principal Investigator
- List of key project personnel
- High-level budget (total cost not to exceed $250,000, inclusive of up to 15% indirect costs)
- The recruitment and/or retention barrier(s) the project seeks to address (not limited to the examples provided above)

The project description (1-2 pages; maximum 1,000 words) should include:

- Research questions and study objectives
- Concise summary of relevant literature, highlighting key gaps in current knowledge
- The significance of the project and its potential impact
- Overview of the research design, including data sources and study methods
- Anticipated project milestones and timelines

To apply, please complete and submit the application form HERE.

2. Full Proposal

Selected applicants will be invited to submit a full project proposal. Submissions will be reviewed and evaluated by CTRL's Leadership Team and Advisory Committee, which includes experts representing a range of stakeholders across the clinical trials ecosystem. A full proposal template and instructions will be provided.

Applicants invited to submit a full proposal should include the following components:

- Project plan outlining research questions and study objectives, background and relevant literature, description of the proposed experiment or method, an evidence-based evaluation plan for assessing project outcomes, anticipated impact, and a strategy for disseminating findings
- Biographies for key personnel, highlighting relevant experience and expertise
- Detailed project implementation plan, including major milestones and anticipated timelines
- Detailed project budget, including travel expenses to participate in the annual CTRL symposium
- Letters of support from collaborators and agreement to open data and content sharing

Proposed pilots should:

- Explore innovative recruitment strategies that are scalable, sustainable, cost-effective, and easily applied to clinical trial settings
- Address how successful solutions could be rapidly disseminated and broadly adopted
- Include an evidence-based evaluation plan to assess outcomes
- Identify actionable insights and best practices
- Demonstrate a commitment to open data and content sharing

For questions, please contact Maria-Alice Manetas at manetas@usc.edu.