PCORI Funding Announcement

Eugene Washington PCORI Engagement Award: Capacity Building

Published August 19, 2020

This PCORI Funding Announcement (PFA) applies to the LOI deadline of October 1, 2020, at 5 pm ET. Submission instructions, templates, and other resources are available at https://www.pcori.org/funding-opportunities/announcement/engagement-award-capacity-building.
About PCORI

The Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI) was authorized by Congress in 2010 as a nonprofit, nongovernmental organization. PCORI’s purpose, as defined by our authorizing legislation, is to help patients, caregivers, clinicians, policy makers, and other healthcare system stakeholders make better-informed health decisions by “advancing the quality and relevance of evidence about how to prevent, diagnose, treat, monitor, and manage diseases, disorders, and other health conditions” and by promoting the dissemination and uptake of this evidence.

PCORI is committed to transparency and a rigorous stakeholder-driven process that emphasizes patient engagement. PCORI uses a variety of forums and public comment periods to obtain public input to enhance its work. PCORI helps people make informed healthcare decisions and improves healthcare delivery and outcomes by producing and promoting high-integrity, evidence-based information that comes from research guided by patients and other stakeholders.

Key Information for the Engagement Awards October 2020 Funding Cycle:

- Applicants should consider alternative plans for convening should an in-person meeting not be feasible. Please consult [PCORI’s Applicant and Awardee FAQs Related to COVID-19](https://www.pcori.org) to ensure your proposed project adheres to PCORI’s guidance related to applicant pre-award concerns.
Overview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Published</th>
<th>August 19, 2020</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Letter of Inquiry Deadline</td>
<td>October 1, 2020, by 5 pm (ET)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Letters of Inquiry (LOIs) will be screened for responsiveness to this PCORI Funding Announcement (PFA) and for fit to program goals. Only those invited will be permitted to submit full proposals. Notification of invitation or rejection to submit a full proposal will occur within 60 days of the LOI deadline.</td>
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<td>Key Dates</td>
<td>Online System Opens: September 1, 2020</td>
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<td>Applicant Webinar: September 1, 2020</td>
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<td>Applicant Office Hours: September 14, 2020</td>
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<td>LOI Deadline: October 1, 2020, by 5 pm (ET)</td>
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<td>LOI Status Notification: Within 60 calendar days of LOI deadline</td>
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<td>Application Deadline: 40 calendar days after invitation</td>
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<td>Earliest Project Start Date: May 1, 2021</td>
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<tr>
<td>Announcement Type</td>
<td>Research Support Award</td>
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<td>Total Costs</td>
<td>Award total costs may not exceed $250,000</td>
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<td>The maximum budget includes all direct and indirect costs. At the time of contract execution, PCORI sets aside all of the funds associated with an awarded project to be made available throughout the contract’s period of performance. This PFA does not consider exceptions to the budget. PCORI will not review submissions exceeding the stated maximum budget.</td>
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<td>Maximum Research Project Period</td>
<td>2 years</td>
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<td>This PFA does not consider exceptions to period-of-performance limits. PCORI will not review submissions exceeding the stated period of performance.</td>
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<td>Funds Available Up To</td>
<td>PCORI plans to award up to $21 million in fiscal year 2021 as part of the Eugene Washington PCORI Engagement Awards.</td>
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<td>Eligibility</td>
<td>Applications may be submitted by any private-sector organization, including any nonprofit or for-profit organization; any public-sector organization, including any university or college hospital or healthcare system; or any unit of local, state, or federal government. The Internal Revenue Service must recognize all US applicant organizations. Organizations may submit multiple funding applications. Individuals are not permitted to apply. Nondomestic components of organizations based in the United States and foreign organizations may apply, as long as there is demonstrable benefit to the US healthcare system, and US efforts in the area of patient-centered research can be shown clearly.</td>
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<td>Review Criteria</td>
<td>1. Program Fit</td>
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<td>2. Project Plan and Timeline</td>
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<td>3. Qualifications of the Project Lead</td>
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<td>4. Personnel and Collaborators</td>
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<td>5. Past Performance</td>
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<td>6. Budget/Cost Proposal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contact Us</td>
<td>Programmatic Inquiries: <a href="mailto:ea@pcori.org">ea@pcori.org</a> or phone (202-370-9312)</td>
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<tr>
<td>PCORI will respond within three business days. However, we cannot guarantee that all questions will be addressed three business days prior to a Letter of Intent (LOI) or application deadline. Applicants are asked to plan accordingly. It is the applicant’s responsibility to submit the LOI or application on or before the stated deadline.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Deadlines are at 5 pm (ET).</td>
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I. Introduction

The Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI) plans to award up to $21 million in fiscal year 2021 as part of the Eugene Washington PCORI Engagement Awards. These awards are for research support. This program does not fund research studies.

The Eugene Washington PCORI Engagement Awards support projects that encourage active, meaningful involvement of patients, caregivers, clinicians, and other healthcare stakeholders as integral members of the patient-centered outcomes research/comparative clinical effectiveness research (PCOR/CER) enterprise.

The Engagement Award: Capacity Building aims to support projects that help communities increase their facility with and ability to participate across all phases of the patient-centered outcomes research/comparative clinical effectiveness research (PCOR/CER) process.

II. General Requirements for Engagement Awards

This section includes language that is specific to PCORI’s requirements for programmatic responsiveness under this funding announcement. Applicants should use this section as guidance when preparing their LOIs and applications. For information related to administrative and technical requirements for LOI and application submission, please consult the Engagement Award Submission Instructions.

Engagement Award Priorities

The Engagement Award program supports PCORI’s Engagement Imperative—defined in our Strategic Plan—and provides a platform to increase engagement in research, that is, the meaningful involvement of patients, caregivers, clinicians, and other healthcare stakeholders throughout the research process. We expect projects selected for an Engagement Award to result in tools and resources that may be useful to other awardees for increasing patient and/or other stakeholder engagement in PCOR/CER, PCORI, and the broader PCOR community. We are committed to using and broadly sharing this information.

Categories of Nonresponsiveness

LOIs and applications will be considered nonresponsive for an Engagement Award if they propose:

- Projects solely intended to increase patient engagement in health care or healthcare systems rather than healthcare research
- Projects to design or test healthcare interventions
- Activities that involve the use of a drug or medical device
- Development of clinical practice guidelines, care protocols, or decision support tools
- Development of coverage, payment, or policy recommendations or guidelines
- Projects related to quality measures, or engagement around quality measures
• Projects to recruit and enroll patients for clinical trials
• Projects that only involve patients as subjects (individuals enrolled into a study as participants)
• Research studies including randomized controlled trials, observational studies, and pragmatic clinical studies
• Development or maintenance of a registry, or recruitment to participate in a registry
• Projects designed solely to validate tools or instruments not created through a PCORI-funded project
• Writing research proposals or completing grant applications, grantmaking
• Projects focused on social determinants of health, with no focus on patient-centered outcomes research or comparative clinical effectiveness research
• Planning for dissemination or dissemination initiatives without including PCORI-funded research or related products
• Implementation of PCORI findings in a clinical practice setting (PCORI will fund dedicated implementation efforts through the Limited PCORI Funding Announcement: Implementation of PCORI-Funded Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Results)
• Projects or meetings without a clear focus on patient-centered outcomes research or comparative clinical effectiveness research

Avoiding Redundancy

PCORI encourages potential applicants to review funded projects at pcori.org. We intend to balance our funded portfolio to achieve synergy and avoid redundancy where possible.

Required Education of Key Personnel on the Protection of Human Subject Participants

PCORI requires that all applicants adhere to the National Institutes of Health (NIH) policy on education in the protection of human subject participants in the conduct of research. This applies to all individuals listed as key personnel in the application. The policy and FAQs are available on the NIH website.

III. Capacity Building

The Engagement Award Program is now accepting Letters of Inquiry for Engagement Award: Capacity Building, a research support—not research—funding opportunity, for projects up to two years in duration, and up to $250,000 in total costs.

• For the October 2020 Engagement Awards Funding Cycle, the contract start date should be planned for no earlier than May 1, 2021.
Funding Priorities

This funding announcement offers an opportunity for organizations and community groups to continue to build capacity/skills for patient-centered outcomes research/ and comparative clinical effectiveness research (PCOR/CER).

PCORI is interested in the following types of projects:

- **Building Capacity to Support Research**
  - Projects that support organizations with strong ties to patients, caregivers, clinicians, and/or other stakeholders who have a connection to, expertise in, or lived experience related to, the focus area to equip them to engage as partners in PCOR/CER. These projects will focus on building the knowledge, competencies, and abilities of their community to be meaningful partners with researchers throughout the research process from topic selection through design and conduct of research to dissemination or implementation of results.
  - Projects that strengthen the skills of researchers to be better partners with patients and other stakeholders involved in PCOR/CER.
    - Applicants must clearly explain how the capacity that is developed through an award will be applied to existing or planned PCOR/CER partnership opportunities
  - Projects that support the expansion of use or adoption of existing engagement tools/resources whenever possible, rather than develop new products and tools. Projects may implement available tools, processes, or programs, alone or in combination, in a new population or geographic area—for example, a new network of clinicians, patient advocates, and academic researchers.
    - If this project is using a PCORI-funded engagement tool/resource, applicants should identify the existing engagement tool/resource that this project will be scaling or adopting by listing the: (a) Tool Name, (b) Project Title, (c) Project Lead Name, (d) URL to project page.
    - Applicants should identify and describe all tools/trainings/programs that will be used as part of the project, as well as share the evidence base for the resources that will be used.

- **Building Capacity to Support Dissemination**
  - Projects that support organizations with strong ties to end-user audiences that lay the groundwork for disseminating and implementing PCOR/CER results. PCORI intends for these projects to focus on strengthening the infrastructure and relationships necessary to actively disseminate and implement research results or products derived from PCORI or related studies. Project activities may include developing, demonstrating, and evaluating the processes/pathways/tools necessary to incorporate PCOR/CER results into decision-making settings.
For these types of projects, applicants must identify existing or emerging PCOR/CER findings highly relevant to their target population. Research results should also be placed within the context of the existing body of evidence in the topic area identified.

Applicants must clearly explain how the infrastructure and relationships developed to disseminate and implement PCOR/CER could be sustained over time. Additionally, applicants should indicate whether the project may have the potential to be scaled to reach an even greater audience or if it could be a vehicle for disseminating and implementing additional PCOR/CER findings.

We expect that projects selected for an Engagement Award will further PCORI’s goals of promoting the relevance of research to target audiences and the uptake of research results by end users. We are committed to using and sharing successful approaches.

The information and tools generated by Engagement Award projects must be generalizable; they must be of interest or use not just to the applicant organizations but to others doing related work. The tools and information will be made public so they can have a broader impact.

PCORI is receptive to LOIs and applications to the Engagement Award: Capacity Building encompassing a wide range of research support project topics. Such projects may explore virtual/distanced methods of engagement and may include activities to generate new questions and evidence needs around stakeholder groups related to COVID-19 and its impact on health.

**PCORI’s Updated Research Priority Areas**

PCORI’s reauthorizing legislation in 2019 included two new research priority areas: intellectual and developmental disabilities and maternal mortality. These additional priority areas provide more focused opportunities for engaging diverse stakeholders and facilitating patient-centered outcomes research (PCOR) that is critical in understanding and addressing the needs of those impacted by these conditions.

While PCORI will accept Engagement Award: Capacity Building LOIs for research support projects—not research—on any topic, this funding cycle welcomes projects highlighting either of the two special areas of interest around intellectual and developmental disabilities and maternal mortality.

**Capacity Building for Dissemination: Evidence Available**

The following sources of PCORI-funded evidence may serve as the basis for activities to lay the groundwork for disseminating and implementing PCOR/CER results under this award:

- **PCORI-funded Comparative Clinical Effectiveness Research (CER) Results.** Papers resulting from PCORI-funded research studies that present comparative clinical effectiveness research results.
- **PCORI-funded Systematic Reviews and Systematic Review Updates.** Evidence around specific clinical questions by analyzing published and unpublished results from all relevant studies on a given topic.
- **PCORI Evidence Updates.** Briefs highlighting some of the important research findings from PCORI-funded projects in a plain-language format for patients and other stakeholders.
Applicants must identify the title(s) of the completed PCORI-funded research study (including the institution name for identification purposes, the hyperlink from PCORI’s website, and the specific evidence that will be the focus of the capacity building for dissemination) in the LOI and application.

All evidence that is the focus of an Engagement Award must have been published (comparative clinical effectiveness research results) or posted on PCORI’s website (the other sources) by the LOI receipt date.

- All applicants must also include as part of their application (if invited) acknowledgment and/or support from the Principal Investigator (PI)—or another member of the original research team who played a significant role—of each PCORI-funded study whose published findings are being disseminated in the project, demonstrated by additional written letters of support (applicable for the dissemination of CER study results only).

**Project Evaluation**

Applicants must include a completed Evaluation Reporting Tool as a deliverable at the end of the project period. The Evaluation Reporting Tool provides a template to collect information about Engagement Awards that can help with evaluation of our portfolio, as well as evaluation of individual projects. This reporting tool should be taken into consideration during proposal development and uploaded at the end of the project period with the Final Deliverable Milestone. Awardees may use a different evaluation framework if there is one that is more aligned with their project proposal, subject to PCORI approval. Applicants adopting such an approach must identify the proposed alternate evaluation framework in their application.

The goal of this reporting tool is to ensure a standard set of reported information for Engagement Awards. Given the difficulty in applying metrics and a standard set of indicators around engagement best practices, this tool provides a baseline of outcomes to report on in Engagement Award projects.

At a minimum, evaluation plans should document the reach (in absolute numbers) of the engagement effort among the targeted end users and settings.

**Submitting a Successful Application**

Successful applications will include:

- Applicants should consider alternative plans for convening should an in-person meeting not be feasible. Please consult PCORI’s Applicant and Awardee FAQs Related to COVID-19 to ensure your proposed project adheres to PCORI’s guidance related to applicant pre-award concerns.

- Rationale that there is a need for additional patient and/or stakeholder capacity to participate in PCOR/CER with a clear and direct link to participation in research opportunities.

- Commitment from the patient and/or stakeholder communities to be involved in the project, and clear patient and/or stakeholder involvement/leadership in all stages of the project from LOI development to dissemination of project results.

- The potential impact of the proposed project.
- Evaluation metrics for assessing the success of engagement strategies.
- Plans for sustainability after the project period has ended. Future funding from PCORI should not be assumed. If the project does not lend itself to sustained activities after the project period concludes, provide justification.
- The organization’s relationship to the population and/or context, and track record in engagement.
- If using or adopting a PCORI-funded engagement tool or resource:
  - Description of the engagement tool(s) or resource(s) selected and justification for its continued and expanded use. Information about prior use/implementation of the tool(s) or resource(s), including any data on its effectiveness to build capacity for patient and stakeholder engagement in PCOR/CER should be provided.
  - Approval to use and, if applicable, adapt tool(s) and resource(s) from the relevant copyright owner of the tool(s) and/or resource(s) in the form of a written letter of support. This will typically be from the awardee institution of the original PCORI Award project team. The relevant owner must grant the applicant rights to the engagement tool(s)/resource(s) sufficient to carry out the project.
- If capacity building for dissemination:
  - Acknowledgment and/or support from the Principal Investigator (PI)—or another member of the original research team who played a significant role—of each PCORI-funded study whose published findings are being disseminated in the project, demonstrated by additional written letters of support (applicable for the dissemination of CER study results only)
IV. Review Process

Letters of Inquiry (LOI) should be submitted by the stated deadline. Full proposal submissions are by invitation only, after review and approval of the LOI. Letters of Inquiry will be screened for responsiveness to the call for applications and fit to program goals. Only those selected will be permitted to submit full applications. LOIs will be reviewed within 60 calendar days of submission. A full proposal, submitted upon invitation only, should be submitted within 40 calendar days of receiving the invitation. PCORI may request additional information from the applicant after the initial review of the full proposal. PCORI aims to provide a final decision on the full proposal, via email, within 90 calendar days of receipt. If the full proposal is awarded, a PCORI staff member will coordinate arrangements to begin contracting negotiations. Typically, contract negotiations take about eight weeks.

To select high-quality patient-centered projects, PCORI’s Engagement and Contract Management and Administration teams, and internal and external subject-matter experts (as necessary) will review all Letters of Inquiry (LOI) and applications.

Review Criteria:

1. Program Fit
2. Project Plan and Timeline
3. Qualifications of the Project Lead
4. Personnel and Collaborators
5. Past Performance
6. Budget/Cost Proposal

For additional details on the review process, click here.
V. Applicant Templates

- Biosketch Template
- Board of Directors Template
- Budget Justification Template (Two-Year Project)
- Budget Template (Two-Year Project)
- Project Deliverable/Milestones Template (Two-Year Project)
- Project Workplan and Timeline

VI. Applicant Resources

Guides

- Capacity Building PFA (PDF)
- Capacity Building LOI Question Guide
- Submission Instructions
- Submission Checklist
- PCORI Online: Pre-award User Guides
- Evaluation Reporting Tool Template

Web Resources

- Applicant FAQs
- Review Process
- Applicant Webinar: September 1, 2020
- Applicant Office Hours: September 14, 2020
- Funded Projects Portfolio: Engagement in Research

VII. Questions?

If you have any additional questions, please contact PCORI at ea@pcori.org or (202) 370-9312. PCORI will provide a response within three business days.