Engagement Award: PPRN Limited Competition
Frequently Asked Questions
Updated December 12, 2018

Q: Can a project have "co-leads"?
A: Yes. You will have to assign one Project Lead (PL) for the purposes of the PCORI Online system, but co-leads and their roles can be outlined in the sections describing the project team.

Q: If PPRNs decide to apply together, will the budget be $350k or $700k?
A: The limit for individual award is $350k total cost. Collaboration is encouraged, but applying together will not change the limit for individual awards.

Q: Can we submit linked applications with the idea that one won’t be funded without the other?
A: No, proposed projects should fit into the described guidelines and will be reviewed on their individual merits. However, collaboration is encouraged, so we recommend applications with the potential for collaboration if both are approved, but that can each stand on their own individually.

Q: The PFA limits the Letters of Support to 5 letters maximum. Given that the PFA implies partnering with other large data projects and being a part of a network, which may require more than 5 partners, would it be feasible to allow for more letters of support than 5?
A: Yes, you can submit more than 5 Letters of Support. This guidance has been updated in the Application Guidelines and Checklist.

Q: How would a proposal be viewed if it did not address all 6 areas of interest, but focused all the available funding to deliver something in just one of the areas of interest that would be transformative and useful to the network as a whole?
A: There is no requirement that the projects address all areas.

Q: To what degree can infrastructure be created for the performance of engagement, with engagement representing the primary focus?
A: The creation of infrastructure or tools and resources would be permissible.

Q: In the application, how much information do we need to include about our past performance?
A: Past performance should include capacities and capabilities that you have built, as well as having experience in what you’re proposing.

Q: Is the $350k direct or indirect?
A: $350k is the total cost. It includes both indirect and direct.

Q: Who will be reviewing the application—engagement experts only or will reviewers include research and sustainability (business model) experts?
A: Applications are reviewed by PCORI’s Research Infrastructure and Engagement Department, Contracts Management, and other PCORI internal staff, as needed.

Q: If we develop metrics to assess how stakeholders and patient’s input impact design of CER project, will that fall under research?
A: No.
Q: It is required that we focus on patient-centered outcomes research (PCOR) or comparative clinical effectiveness research (CER). What does this mean, given that both are considered research?
A: This is consistent with the same restrictions applied with infrastructure contracts as well. These awards are categorized as research support and contracted as such. These funds should not be used for the conduct of the CER studies.

Q: I presume that, although the project plan should not focus solely on the development of research proposals, if one of the objectives of the plan was to enable the pathway for participant-driven research, then a deliverable of a funded, participant-driven research project as evidence of the success of the "pathway" would be okay?
A: Yes. We are not looking for projects solely focused on producing grant applications, but that is a reasonable component and in line with the PFA goals.

Q: How much might the “research” requirement limit groups who have not yet accomplished a lot of research just yet?
A: This will be a factor as one of the priorities described is for applicants to have an active research portfolio.

Q: Can the Project Lead be from a different institution than the contract Prime?
A: Yes. An Admin/Contact PI from the Prime institution would be designated along with the Project Lead. The Admin PI would be responsible for assuring the contractual obligations whereas the Lead PI would typically be responsible for the project oversight. Definitions are accessible on our website -- https://www.pcori.org/glossary.

Q: Do all stakeholder partners need a Letter of Support?
A: No, you are not required to provide a Letter of Support for all stakeholders.

Q: Are Biosketches in NIH format acceptable?
A: Please use the indicated biosketch templates for consistency across all applications.

Q: I see there is a two page section for the Engagement Plan. I am a bit confused by this, as the entire award is an engagement award. Can you clarify?
A: The engagement plan section is meant to describe how patients/stakeholders are involved in the actual planning and execution of the project itself. This could be in a governance capacity, providing input on the plans for how the project can best serve the needs of the community. It’s not unlike the engagement plan for a research project.

Q: Are ‘page number and header’ (page 7 of application guidelines) required for ‘recent articles/evaluations’ and ‘letters of support’ since they are PDF documents or images?
A: No.

Q: Should the ‘Project Deliverables/ Milestones document be converted into PDF – the template is Excel?
A: Either is fine.
Q: It's suggested that the naming convention for file be ‘organization name-file type’. Should the organization name be of the prime organization or the PPRN?
A: The PPRN.

Q: Who should be listed as the PI Designee? Should it be a proxy of the project lead/PI since there is a specific place to enter Project Lead name?
A: The Project Lead is basically equivalent to the PI in a research award. The designee is anyone else that will be accessing the system on the PI/PL's behalf.

Q: Is there a minimum percent effort required (or recommended by you) for the Project Lead (PL)?
A: There is no minimum percent effort required. However, note that one of the review criteria is “Qualifications of the Project Lead, Personnel, and Organizational Capabilities” which includes consideration of whether there are adequate human resources to carry out the project (as outlined here).

Q: Is requesting salary support that is different than the percent effort dedicated permitted? For example, can the PL devote 10% effort but only request 5% salary support so that the majority of the budget is available for other parts of the project?
A: The percent effort budgeted/charged to PCORI may differ from the percent effort dedicated to the project. Please be sure to clearly articulate any differences in the Budget Justification.

Q: Would it be possible to merge the two research tables (list of research proposals and list of externally funded studies) that we are supposed to include in the workplan?
A: Yes, as long as all of the appropriate information is included, and the two categories are differentiated.

Q: Could you please provide clarification about whether or not externally funded studies only refers to studies not funded through PCORI?
A: Externally funded could be by a number of funders that include PCORI; it's meant to differentiate these from projects that are supported by internal funds.

Q: The Engagement Award instructions ask for us to submit “Articles by or evaluations of your organization (published or conducted within the past five years)”. Is this asking about articles describing our network, or should we also include articles that utilized our network?
A: Yes, articles utilizing the network should be included as well.