

2027 Joseph and Dorothy Giddan Child Health Research Awards Funding Opportunity Announcement

The Joseph and Dorothy Giddan Child Health Research Awards are seeking proposals for highly innovative laboratory-based basic or translational research projects that expand knowledge in the field of child health. Applicants must propose research addressing a significant child health problem and involving laboratory-based (i.e., non-clinical biomedical) research to be considered responsive to this funding opportunity. Proposals focused primarily on behavioral or social science research will be considered non-responsive.

Deadlines and Award Timeline

RFA Issued	September 1, 2026
Proposal Submission Deadline	October 31, 2026
Notice of Award	December 18, 2026 (Anticipated)
Earliest Anticipated Funding Start Date	January 1, 2027
Funding Period	1 year

PI Eligibility

Eligibility is limited to Northwestern University faculty.

- Faculty applicants must be engaged in research and be eligible to apply for follow-on external grant funding as a PI or MPI.
- Faculty applicants may or may not also hold appointments in one of the NUCATS Institute's clinical affiliate institutions (Northwestern Memorial HealthCare, Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago, or Shirley Ryan AbilityLab).

Funding priority will be given to PIs (or contact MPIs) who have not previously received NIH R01-equivalent funding.

Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine residents, clinical fellows, and postdoctoral fellows are not eligible to apply as a PI or MPI.

- Such trainees are eligible to have a limited role on a proposal as a co-investigator.
- A fellow may be eligible to apply if a letter stating that a faculty appointment is imminent is provided by their department chair or division chief and uploaded with the full application. In this case, the imminent faculty appointment must become effective during the funding period.

Application Requirements

In the order they are outlined below, applications must compile all requirements into a single PDF and use the following filename convention:

[Submitting/Contact PI's Last Name]-[Submitting/Contact PI's First Name]-Giddan-2027.pdf
(e.g., DAquila-Richard-Giddan-2027.pdf).

Incomplete proposal submissions will not be considered by the Giddan Awards' Scientific Review Panel.

- **Cover Sheet:** Complete the required cover sheet. (<https://www.nucats.northwestern.edu/docs/nucats-pilot-coversheet.docx>)
- **Scientific Research Strategy:** In no more than 5 pages, single-spaced with Arial 11-point font and 0.5-inch margins, inclusive of all figures and tables, applicants should address the project's significance, aims and associated hypotheses, research strategy, analysis plan, anticipated impact, expected deliverables, need for pilot funding, and plans for future extramural funding. Applicants should specifically describe how the proposed research will advance understanding of an important child health problem and

contribute new knowledge in pediatric health, development, disease, or treatment. The proposed work must involve laboratory-based basic research or laboratory-based translational research. The 5-page limit does not include references, although applicants are encouraged to limit references to no more than 30.

- Applicants are strongly encouraged to provide clear and detailed feasibility and analysis plans that demonstrate the likelihood of project completion within the proposed funding period.
- Following NIH guidelines, applications must address how sex as a biological variable will be factored into research designs, analyses, and reporting in vertebrate animal and human studies. Strong justification from the scientific literature, preliminary data, or other relevant considerations must be provided for applications proposing to study only one sex.
- When describing plans for future funding, include as much specific detail as possible, including the anticipated sponsor, funding mechanism, targeted funding opportunity announcement, and expected submission timeline, if known.
- **Budget:** NIH-style budget (including, when applicable, (a) specific line-item estimates from the applicable NU research cores and/or resources or (b) separate budget expenses/amounts for the academic and community MPIs; <https://www.nucats.northwestern.edu/docs/nucats-pilot-budget.docx>).
 - Note: If the proposed project has secured support for expenses in excess of the maximum budget cap allowed in this request for proposals, the applicant must clearly document guaranteed complementary funding.
- **Budget Justification:** NIH-style budget justification describing all proposed expenses in detail.
- **Biosketch(es):** NIH-style biosketches for all key personnel (principal investigator, co-investigators, other significant contributors).
- **Other Support:** NIH-style other support document for all key personnel (principal investigator, co-investigators, other significant contributors).
- **Other Documents:** Formal, detailed cost estimate from a research core, such as the Northwestern Medicine Enterprise Data Warehouse (NMEDW), if utilized.

Additional requirements for applicants who do not have prior or current NIH funding:

Applicants without prior or current NIH funding are required to ask a Feinberg-based faculty mentor to

- review the full pilot application prior to submission;
- provide a 1-paragraph statement in the full application indicating their review of the proposal, support for the proposed project, and willingness to mentor the applicant throughout the project period if funded;
- and provide an NIH-style biosketch.

Applicants are encouraged to identify and engage a mentor early in the application development process.

Applicants may request up to 2% effort for the mentor in the application (applying NIH salary cap at time of pilot submission) or use other effort already designated for this specific mentoring responsibility.

Applicants with prior or current NIH funding may choose to engage a faculty mentor as described above but are not required to do so.

Budget Requirements

Maximum Funding Level: Up to \$100,000 in direct costs for a one-year project period.

- Examples of **allowable** expenses:
 - Salary expenses for Northwestern PI, MPI(s), and Co-I(s) (applying NIH salary cap at time of pilot submission)
 - Salary expenses for the lead PI's Northwestern faculty mentor (up to 2% effort, applying NIH salary cap at time of pilot submission)
 - Consultation with Northwestern faculty/staff with quantitative and/or qualitative analysis expertise
 - Computational Cluster Central Processing Unit (CPU) time to run specific analyses
 - Laboratory or hospital tests (e.g., complete blood count (CBC) tests)
 - Participant recruitment stipends

- Regulatory support from NUCATS
- Analysis of samples by a Northwestern University or affiliated research core facility (including research cores at the University of Chicago and University of Illinois at Chicago covered by the reciprocity agreement)
- Design/printing of materials
- Examples of **non-allowable** expenses:
 - Consultants, except as noted above
 - Student or temporary employee salary expenses
 - Subcontracts with or payments to other academic institutions or other public/private organizations (beyond clinical affiliate institutions identified above or research cores covered by the reciprocity agreement)
 - Technology development activities intended primarily for commercial product development
 - Travel
 - Tuition expenses

Indirect Costs: Indirect costs are not permitted and will not be funded. Applicants with primary appointments at a clinical affiliate institution should confirm the institution's acceptance of these terms prior to submission.

Application Review Process

Proposals will be reviewed by a multidisciplinary standing review committee comprised of faculty with expertise in child health and/or basic and translational research all of whom will be required to complete training in equitable review practices.

REVIEW CRITERIA

Proposals will be evaluated based on their scientific merit, innovation, and potential to advance knowledge in the field of child health. Reviewers will assess the significance of the child health problem being addressed, the strength of the scientific rationale, the rigor and feasibility of the proposed laboratory-based research, and the potential for the project to generate preliminary data that will support future extramural funding.

Particular emphasis will be placed on highly innovative basic or laboratory-based translational research that advances understanding of pediatric health and disease and has the potential to inform future advances in the prevention, diagnosis, or treatment of pediatric disease. Behavioral and social science projects are considered non-responsive and will not be reviewed.

Competitive applications should clearly demonstrate:

- **Child Health Significance:** A clear focus on an important child health problem, unmet need, or gap in scientific knowledge relevant to pediatric health, development, or disease.
- **Innovation and Scientific Impact:** A novel, creative, or high-impact research concept with the potential to substantially advance understanding of biological mechanisms, disease processes, therapeutic targets, diagnostic approaches, or other areas of child health research.
- **Need for Pilot Funding:** A project that requires preliminary data, proof-of-concept findings, or feasibility testing before it is competitive for federal funding mechanisms. The proposed research should generate critical data that will strengthen a future NIH or other extramural funding application.
- **Scientific Rigor and Feasibility:** Clearly defined objectives, testable hypotheses, a rigorous experimental design, appropriate analytical methods, measurable outcomes, and a realistic plan to complete all proposed activities within the funding period. Because no-cost extensions are not permitted, applicants should clearly demonstrate project feasibility.
- **Investigator Team and Resources:** Access to the expertise, facilities, equipment, laboratory infrastructure, and other resources necessary to successfully complete the proposed project.
- **Future Funding Potential:** A clear and compelling plan for pursuing NIH or other external funding upon completion of the project. Applicants should identify anticipated funding mechanisms, target sponsors,

and expected submission timelines whenever possible. Identification of a specific NIH Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) and target submission date is strongly encouraged.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Proposals are reviewed internally and are considered confidential information, not to be disclosed to anyone outside the review process.

QUESTIONS

Questions regarding the application process may be directed to NUCATS-Funding@northwestern.edu.

Questions regarding NUCATS Competitions may be directed to competitions@northwestern.edu