The Rutgers Health

Center for Biomedical Informatics & Health Artificial Intelligence (BMIHAI)
presents

Rutgers Health Roadmap Initiative

2026 Request for Proposals
Pilot Grant Program in Biomedical Informatics and Health AI

Funding Opportunity Purpose:

This RFA solicits project applications from inter-disciplinary teams of investigators at Rutgers University, with the specific goal of providing Pilot Grant funding to encourage new Rutgers-wide collaborations capitalizing on Biomedical Informatics and Health AI centered research and establishing a platform to develop subsequent extramural grant applications and intellectual property generation.

Release Date: September 26, 2025

Information Webinar: October 2, 2025 from 3:00-4:00pm
(host: Antonina Mitrofanova, BMIHAI Deputy Director, SHP) Webinar recording will be available upon request. Register here:
https://rutgers.zoom.us/meeting/register/ajFWMQhtR3K5TbtDx67JMA

Letter of Intent Deadline: October 27, 2025
submit here: https://shprutgers.jotform.com/252595237343158

Pre-selection Notification: December 1, 2025

Application Deadline: January 21, 2026

Award Notification: March 6, 2026

Earliest Start Date: April/May, 2026 (dependent on regulatory approvals)

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I.   Overview of the Program

The Rutgers Health (RH) Center for Biomedical Informatics & Health Artificial Intelligence (BMIHAI) https://ifh.rutgers.edu/center-for-biomedical-informatics-and-health-artificial-intelligence/ is established to serve as the catalyst for a transformative effort that establishes Rutgers as a national and international leader in computational medicine and health AI. The overarching goal of this initiative is to bring together substantial existing, but currently siloed, strengths in the broad area of biomedical informatics, including bioinformatics, clinical informatics, clinical research informatics, public health informatics, translational bioinformatics, etc., and substantially expanding them, especially in the area of health AI, making them collectively much more than the sum of their parts.

BMIHAI Pilot Grants are supported by Rutgers Roadmaps for Collective Academic Excellence Initiative https://academicaffairs.rutgers.edu/roadmaps-collective-academic-excellence . Three (3) Pilot Grants per year supporting multi-disciplinary and inter-CLUs research teams will be awarded. The objective of this mechanism is to support _new_ inter-disciplinary projects and teams that would lack funds to pursue their proposed project otherwise. Collaborative teams are expected to include at least one expert in Biomedical Informatics, Data Science, Computational Biology, Health AI, or related fields. Other team members could hold complementary expertise, including but not limited to experimental biology, clinical practice, chemistry, physics, engineering, rehabilitation and movement sciences, nutrition, public health, statistics, etc., based on the needs of the project. The Pilot Grant awards are expected to promote new Rutgers-wide collaborations and build seeds for extramural grant applications and intellectual property generation.

II.   Requirements for 2026 RFA

Letter of Intent (LOI) Application
- LOI should list PI and co-PIs.
- LOI should be structured similarly to NIH Specific Aims page and include Significance, Rationale, Hypothesis, Specific Aims, Innovation/Impact etc.
- LOI should include a paragraph describing plans for extramural funding, including agency, institute, study section, etc.
- LOI application should include NIH Biosketches for PI and co-PIs
  To submit, click here: 2026 Pilot Grant- Letter of Intent
- LOI will be utilized to pre-screen applications. Selected applicants will be notified of invitation to submit full application by **December 1, 2025**.
- Selected applications will submit full proposals by **January 21, 2026.**
  (link will be provided for selected applications).

Information Webinar
- Information webinar will be hosted to explain proposal requirements, review and selection process. The webinar will be held on **October 2 2025**, **3:00-4:00 pm** (hosted by Antonina Mitrofanova, BMIHAI Deputy Director, SHP). Webinar recording be available upon request.
  To register please click here: Information Webinar Registration. Link to Information Webinar will be sent after registration.

Application
- Primary Investigator (PI) for this Pilot Grant must be a full time Rutgers Health faculty member. Other Co-PIs or co-Is can be faculty from any Rutgers University School, Institute, or Chancellor Led Unit (CLU).
- Multi-disciplinary and inter-CLU collaborations are encouraged.
- Research teams must include at least one expert (PI or co-PI) in Bioinformatics, Data Science, Computational Biology, Health AI, or related field.
- Newly developed projects are required for this application, with no evidence of prior funding for proposed projects.

Funding Amount and Duration
- Awards are for $50,000 per year.
- Project period is one year. One no-cost extension of 6 months is permitted, assuming sufficient progress has been made and a reasonable justification is provided.
- Three (3) Pilot Grants will be awarded each year.

III. Application Process

Eligibility:

- Primary Investigator (PI) must hold a Rutgers Health full-time faculty appointment.
- Co-PIs or co-Is can be faculty from any Rutgers University School, Institute, or Chancellor Led Unit (CLU).
- Multi-disciplinary and inter-CLU collaborations are encouraged.
- Each research team must include at least one expert (PI or co-PI) in the field of Bioinformatics, Data Science, Computational Biology, Health AI, or related field.
- Faculty members at all ranks are eligible. Junior faculty members are especially encouraged to apply.
- PIs are limited to one application per cycle, but co-PIs/co-Is may participate in several applications.
- Newly developed projects are required for this application, with no evidence of prior funding for proposed projects.

Letter of Intent:

All applicants are required to submit a Letter of Intent (LOI) Application by **October 27, 2025**, via online portal here: [2026 Pilot Grant- Letter of Intent](#) . The LOI should be structured similarly to NIH Specific Aims page and include Significance, Rationale, Hypothesis, Specific Aims, Innovation/Impact etc. (up to 1 page). The PI or first MPI will serve as the contact PI. LOIs do not require institutional review before submission.

LOIs will be utilized to pre-screen applications and only selected applications will be invited to submit a full proposal. Awardees will be notified of invitation to submit full application by **December 1, 2025**.

Application Submission:

Final applications must be submitted by **January 21, 2026**, via online application system. Links to the application will be forwarded to awardees upon notification of invitation to submit full application by **December 1, 2025**.

Institutional Review Requirements:

This is an internal application and **does not** require review by Rutgers Office of Research and Sponsored Programs (ORSP).

The application may require approval of the Dean/Chair of the PI/Co-PIs based on school/departmental policy or if the project involves in-kind support.

Application Requirements:

A full proposal must contain the following elements:

	Page Limits
Pilot Grant in Biomedical Informatics and Health AI online form	online form
Aims	1 page
Research Strategy (NIH R21 style formatting), excluding references	4 pages
References	unlimited
Plan for extramural funding, seeded by this Pilot Grant mechanism	up 1 page
NIH Style Biosketch for PIs, co-PIs, and other key personnel (as one document)	up to 5 pages for each Biosketch
Support letter from the Unit/Department chair	as needed
Justification of overlap with existing funded projects, if any	unlimited
Budget	template
Budget Justification	1 page

- Aims page should follow NIH format and include Significance, Rationale, Hypothesis, Specific Aims, Innovation/Impact etc.

- Research Proposal should adopt NIH R21 style and should include Background and Significance, Innovation and Impact, Research Approach, and Timeline sections. No preliminary data are required.

- Plan for extramural funding must include details on prospective independent extramural grant applications (including agencies, institutes, potential study sections etc.) that the team will pursue to support continuation of the proposed project, beyond this Pilot Grant period.

- If PI or co-PIs have a funded project with similar aims/objectives, justification for Pilot Grant funds must be provided (as "Justification of overlap with existing funded projects" submission field). This could include Other Support document if needed.

Font and Margin Requirements: 0.5" margins and Arial 11 Font, single spaced.

Budget Guidelines:

- Project period is one year, with one no-cost extension of 6 months permitted (assuming sufficient progress and reasonable justification).
- All funds awarded must be used per the Scope of Work of the project.
- Foreign subcontracts are not permitted under this mechanism.
- Salary may not be requested for faculty or PIs, but may be requested for research support staff, graduate students or assistants, postdoctoral researchers and consultants (i.e., methodologist, statisticians or content experts).
- Requested budget items must support proposed project aims and must be justified.
- F&A (indirect) cost is not allowed.

Regulatory Approvals:

- If needed, awardees must obtain all regulatory approvals (e.g. IRB, IACUC, or Radiation Safety) and meet all compliance requirements prior to project start and maintain approvals during the entire length of the award, as necessary.
- When team applies for IRB approval, it should indicate that their research is supported by the Rutgers Health Pilot Grant in Biomedical Informatics and Health AI.
- The team must keep their IRB approval current and active for the duration of the award period. Copies of the approval letters need to be sent to the Pilot Grant administrator at BMIHAI_PilotGrant@ifh.rutgers.edu

Proposal Review Process:

The review process includes:
- Administrative review for completeness of the application
- Evaluation for meeting eligibility requirements
- Solicitation of expert reviews
- Final review by the Review Committee

IV. Post-Award management

Budget and Financial Management:

- Funds must be spent according to the approved budget. Prior approval is required to amend the budget.
- If you wish to amend your budget, send a copy of the original budget and the proposed amended budget with a justification for the budget changes to the Biomedical Informatics and Health AI Pilot Grant administrator at BMIHAI_PilotGrant@ifh.rutgers.edu.
- If your project runs over budget or you charge something that is not allowable, you/your department/school are responsible for the charges and will be asked to provide an alternate project number for those costs.

Reporting Requirements:

- PIs/Co-PIs will be expected to complete an annual report that summarizes progress on the project, as well as all abstracts, presentations, publications, and proposals/funded awards that resulted from the Pilot Grant. This is required for reporting and evaluation purposes.
- PIs/Co-PIs with outstanding final reports may not be allowed to compete for any other program in Rutgers Health Roadmap Initiative.

Additional Requirements:

Research teams will be expected to present results of their Pilot Project as oral/poster presentation at the Annual Rutgers Health Symposium for Biomedical Informatics and Health AI.

Award Recognition:

Any publication or patent that results from this funding should include the following language, receive a PMCID number, and be linked in My Bibliography:

"Research reported in this publication was supported by Rutgers University through the Rutgers Health Pilot Grant in Biomedical Informatics and Health AI. The content is solely the responsibility of the authors and does not necessarily represent the official views of the institution."

Other Notices:

- Abstracts and names of PI/Co-PIs for the selected projects may be posted on an institutional website.

- Awards are not transferable or renewable.

Questions/Inquiries:

For Inquiries, please email BMIHAI_PilotGrant@ifh.rutgers.edu