

Overview

The Coordinating Center for Colorectal Cancer Screening Across Texas (CONNECT) was funded in 2023 by the Cancer Prevention & Research Institute of Texas (CPRIT) to develop a statewide plan to reduce the burden of CRC across the state. CONNECT serves as a central hub in Texas, comprised of a diverse set of content experts, evidence-based resources, and stakeholders. This call for proposals “Improving Colorectal Cancer Screening in Texas” is sponsored by CONNECT and designed to develop new evidence-based pathways or workflows to support CRC screening, diagnostic testing, and navigation to treatment for eligible individuals. Activities may include community assessment, developing and testing evidence-based test completion and follow-up pathways for implementation, that either addresses gaps in our knowledge of CRC screening, diagnosis, or uptake of treatment e.g., in subpopulations, or different settings. The pilot programs selected for funding are intended to address underserved populations that face CRC screening, incidence, and mortality disparities within Texas.

The maximum budget per program is \$20,000 over one year. At the conclusion of each project’s funding period, these pilot projects should be able to demonstrate significant progress and impact on CRC screening, follow up or treatment, or produce findings that will directly enable this.

Based on CONNECT’s priorities, proposals focused on the following areas are welcomed:

- » Priority among the underserved, resource-poor, geographically isolated, and racial/ethnic minority populations
- » Development of an innovative program based on evidence-based methods
- » Leveraging existing programs to develop new pathways or collaboration
- » Development of infrastructure to support and maintain the project

AREAS OF INTEREST

- » Medically underserved settings and or rural areas
- » Colorectal cancer among those 45 to 49 years old

- » Refugee populations
- » Patients seen in safety net settings, Federally Qualified Health Centers, rural health clinics, or charity clinics
- » Programs that incorporate cultural accommodations and tailoring

LENGTH OF FUNDING: 1 year

No Cost Extension: a 3-month no cost extension may be considered on a case-by-case basis

ELIGIBILITY

1. Federally Qualified Health Centers, rural clinics, safety-net clinics, or other clinics serving priority populations.
2. Community Based Organizations (non-profit, for-profit, and governmental or non-governmental)
3. Current CPRIT grantees
4. Academic organizations

Please note that each agency or organization may submit no more than one application.

REQUIREMENTS OF FUNDED PROJECTS

1. Final written report
2. Regular (quarterly) check-ins with CONNECT Pilot Program Manager, Nicole Kluz, and if needed, Project Director Dr. Navkiran Shokar and Evaluation Lead Dr. Jessica Calderon-Mora, to share program progress and/or identify any concerns, challenges, or barriers with program deliverables
 - a. A PowerPoint template will be provided to ensure updates/data are sufficiently reported
3. The awarded pilot programs will need to be awarded as a subaward contract through the University of Texas at Austin Dell Medical School Sponsored Projects
4. All materials created or presented as part of the pilot program must cite CPRIT project PP230060 as its source of funding.
5. IRB approval (if applicable) is required before funds can be released

Note: A template for the final report will be provided by CONNECT

FUNDING GUIDELINES

Please refer to the table below regarding allowable costs and funding constraints. Email CONNECT Pilot Program Manager Nicole Kluz (nicole.kluz@austin.utexas.edu) if you have additional questions about funding or budgeting.

Examples of Allowable Costs	Non-Allowable Expenses
Staff salary to perform activities	Conference travel
Supplies	Conference registration
Participant incentives	Manuscript publication
Printing	Equipment

DOCUMENTS AND SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Pilot project proposals must be submitted using 0.5" margins, Arial font, 11-point, single spaced. Applications must include the following components. Please submit them in order and as a single PDF document, using the following naming convention: "CONNECT_pilot_program_LastNameofPI".

Submit final proposals via email to Nicole Kluz (nicole.kluz@austin.utexas.edu) with subject line "CONNECT Pilot Program {PI Name)".

1. Cover Page should include the following:
 - a. Project Title
 - b. Name of Principal Investigator, Co-Investigators, and collaborators
 - i. Include titles, organizational affiliations, and email addresses for each individual
2. Abstract (250 words or less)
 - a. This should be written for a non-technical audience with a focus on overall goals, significance, and impact, and how funds will be used (i.e., purchase of screening kits, processing of samples, etc.).
3. CV of Principal Investigator and key personnel
4. Project Proposal (up to four pages) should describe: 1) the rationale, need, prior work; 2) goals, objectives and deliverables; 3) work plan; 4) evaluation plan including

metrics for tracking progress; and 5) a sustainability plan. Plans for tracking CRC screening rates should be clearly described.

- a. Project description and plan (3-page limit):
 - i. background and rationale for the project (need, population to be served or prioritized, setting, geographic area, prior work, baseline CRC screening rates, in clinic/region and how the activities will help improve CRC screening, etc.).
 - ii. Goals, objectives, and deliverables
 1. Clearly define how these will be tracked and measured
 - iii. The methods/work plan should clearly describe the planned intervention, changes to be implemented, or information to be gained and how this will help to improve CRC screening rates. Activities to achieve the deliverables should be clearly described with reference to the evidence base where relevant.
 - iv. The outcomes and evaluation plan should include metrics for tracking objectives and deliverables and should include details about how they will be measured.
 - v. A sustainability plan should describe how the project or project findings will be sustained and integrated into practice or will be utilized to improve CRC screening.
 - b. Timeline: one-page limit
 - c. References: no page limit
5. Proposed Budget
- a. Budget spreadsheet: use template provided
 - i. \$20,000 max for the 1-year project period
 - b. Budget Justification: itemize expenses and describe how those costs will support the project's goals

Note: no additional materials beyond those listed above will be considered.

KEY DATES

Submission Deadline: 5pm (CT) on June 15, 2025

Notification Date: August 6, 2025

Project Start Date: November 1, 2025

SELECTION CRITERIA

Each proposal will be reviewed by a subcommittee of CONNECT Steering Committee members. Proposals will be evaluated on feasibility, potential impact, approach, evaluation, and plans for sustainability.

STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS	CONNECT TEAM
Deepak Agrawal	Navkiran Shokar
Paula Chambers	Jessica Calderon-Mora
Lewis Foxhall	Keith Argenbright
David Lakey	Cynthia Chacon
Pradeep Kumar	Michael Pignone
Jason McKnight	Jenny Spencer
Jennifer Molokwu	Ginny Mitchell
Jane Montealegre	Roxana Cruz
Izi Obokhare	Ben Zhan
Lisette Osborne	Alexcis Mascorro
Alison Rosen	Nicole Kluz

CONTACT and QUESTIONS

Please direct questions to CONNECT Pilot Program Manager, Nicole Kluz:
nicole.kluz@austin.utexas.edu

CONNECT
CPRIT Grant PP230060
CRCCconnect@austin.utexas.edu