



May 27, 2026

RICCIO DIGITAL MEDICINE AND HEALTH TECHNOLOGY INITIATIVE - REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

Digital health has matured over the past 20 years, with wearable devices reaching mainstream adoption, remote monitoring becoming routine clinical practice, and thousands of studies emphasizing the transformative impact these approaches can have on human health. Clinical-grade sensing is migrating from the clinic to the home, opening access to patient populations and information that are otherwise siloed. Importantly, development of these digital health technologies is accelerating at a rapid, global pace.

The goal of the Riccio Digital Medicine and Health Technology Initiative is to leverage the strengths of our multi-campus system to become a driver for where these technologies are heading and to provide thought leadership on shaping the future of digital medicine and health technology.

A key enabling feature of this Initiative is pilot funding. Individual project awards (**up to \$100,000 for 12 months**) will be made on a peer-reviewed, competitive basis to enable investigators to assemble transdisciplinary teams and initiate projects that will garner external funding.

Pilot projects must address an unmet clinical need with a potentially transformative digital medicine or digital health technology solution. Projects should:

- (1) explore innovative new directions for established investigators representing both UMass Amherst and UMass Chan;
- (2) stimulate investigators from different disciplines and across campus boundaries to apply their expertise to solve impactful healthcare problems; and
- (3) use pilot funds and institutional services and core resources to establish proof of concept.

Projects must also **include clear, measurable milestones and timelines** and have high methodological and scientific quality. Projects must be feasible within the proposed 12-month timeframe; funds carryover beyond 12 months will not be allowed. Pilot project support is not intended for large projects by established investigators that would otherwise be submitted as separate research grant applications. The purpose of this funding mechanism is to catalyze investigator collaboration for collection of initial data that will enable competitive proposals for extramural funding.

Successful proposals will include collaboration between both campuses. We are particularly interested in proposals which feature trans-disciplinary collaborations, e.g., a clinician or clinical scientist working with a basic scientist or engineer, support the career development of new investigators, and r that directly address health systems or administrative roadblocks to improve future ability to engage in cross-campus collaboration on these topics.

Interested in connecting and learning more? Email Nate Hafer at nathaniel.hafer@umassmed.edu to be added to the Riccio program listserv.

ELIGIBILITY

The Principal Investigators must be faculty from the UMass Amherst and UMass Chan campuses. At least 1 person per campus (UMass Amherst and UMass Chan) is required. Proposals require faculty, staff and facilities from both campuses to be utilized as part of the pilot project. The science and budget proposed for each campus should represent true collaboration and be balanced accordingly.

All applicants must become members of the UMCCTS and IALS. UMCCTS membership is easy and entails completion of a quick, [membership form](#). To become a member of IALS email Janet Glick at janetglick@umass.edu. Pilot project funding carries the expectation for use of core services at UMass Amherst and UMass Chan via UMCCTS, IALS, or other units.

ALLOWABLE USE OF FUNDS

Funding can support a full array of resources, including services from UMCCTS, UMass Amherst and UMass Chan cores. This includes core user fees for regulatory services (including IRB docket submission), biostatistics consultation, and data access. Funds are typically used for student/postdoc support, reagents, supplies, and small equipment. PI support up to \$20,000 is allowed with strong justification (e.g. buying out a clinician's time). Indirect costs are not allowed.

OVERSIGHT

The program is overseen and administered by the UMass Digital Health Technology Operations Committee. The Executive Committee, in consultation with the Operations Committee, makes funding decisions based upon the scientific merits and potential impact of the proposals. The committee will review proposals to determine which projects are significantly linked to the criteria listed below. Proposals will be reviewed by a panel of investigators and administrators with relevant clinical, technical, and business expertise.

CRITERIA FOR AWARDS

The evaluation criteria that are used to review proposals include the following:

1. **Significance:** Does the project address an unmet healthcare need with an innovative and potentially transformative digital solution?
2. **Collaboration and Growth Opportunity:** Does the project include collaborating faculty from both UMass Chan and UMass Amherst? Is there evidence of true collaboration, or will the different members of the team work in isolation? Has there been, or is there the potential for, outside investment from a federal, state, or private source in the project? Does the applicant plan to use one or more of the research resources/cores available through the UMass Amherst and UMass Chan campuses? Is it capable of producing generalizable pathways for collaboration between the campuses?
3. **Scientific Premise:** Is there a clear scientific premise and evidence provided to support it?
4. **Innovation and Impact:** Does the proposed technology have the potential to transform patient outcomes or how patient care is delivered? (E.g., a new Point of care that enables diagnosis/treatment in the home of a patient who would otherwise have had to go to the clinic or hospital for the diagnosis/treatment?)
5. **Technology Performance:** Is there a clear pathway to development of the innovation or working prototype of the relevant technology? Is the technology readiness level (TRL) specified?
6. **Project Plan Feasibility:** Is it highly likely that the proposed science can be accomplished with the financial award and time allotted? Does the project plan include clear milestones and timelines? Does the application include novel approaches to address translational barriers to cross-campus collaboration such as data use and sharing? If commercialization is planned, is the timeline to commercialization and estimated total cost to commercialization feasible? If appropriate, are all human subject regulatory procedures (approved IRB protocol, human subjects training certification, project registered as a clinical trial) complete so that the project can start in a timely way?

APPLICATION AND REVIEW PROCESS

Due date: Friday July 10, 2026 by 5PM EDT

Application packet

Describe the research plan in four (4) pages or less. Do not include a cover page. Carefully review the review criteria listed above and address all questions. Include the following:

- Title of project
- Name, rank, affiliation, and email of contact PIs and any other key personnel
- Background describing the healthcare problem (unmet need) and significance of the project
- Preliminary data / Scientific premise
- Innovation and impact
- Description of the technology
- Project description/approach, including potential administrative pain points (IRB timeline, data access, hiring new staff) and planned approaches to mitigate challenges
- Milestones and timelines
- Collaboration and Growth Opportunities

In addition to the research plan, the application should include:

- References (no page limit)
- Description of facilities to be used (2 page limit)
- Detailed budget and budget justification (NIH PHS 398 form pages 4 & 5, no page limit)
- NIH biosketches of the PIs (use current format)
- Consistent formatting: Minimum 11-point font (Arial, Helvetica, Georgia, or Palatino Linotype), at least 0.5-inch margins, no applicant text in the headers/footers, and a character density of 15 characters per inch maximum.

Please email your application as a single attachment (Word or PDF) to: ccts@umassmed.edu on or before Friday July 10, 2026 by 5:00 PM EDT

APPLICATION TIMELINE

Request for Applications Announced	May 27, 2026
Proposals Due	July 10, 2026
Feedback meeting with digital health navigator. Selected project teams will meet with a UMass digital health navigator to provide initial feedback, suggest additional resources / personnel that may improve project impact, and discuss plans to overcome administrative barriers to project success	Scheduled during the months of July and August 2026
Project Start Date	No sooner than September 2026

PARTIAL LIST OF RESOURCES AVAILABLE FOR APPLICANTS

More information about UMass Amherst core facilities can be found at <https://www.umass.edu/ials/core-facilities>. For information about these and other resources, contact Loren Walker at loren@research.umass.edu

More information about these resources can be found at <http://www.umassmed.edu/ccts> or by contacting Nate Hafer at nathaniel.hafer@umassmed.edu.

- Research Informatics Core
- Quantitative Methods Core
- Regulatory Consultation
- Clinical Research Center
- Investigational Drug Service (Pharmacy)
- Conquering Diseases Biorepository
- Conquering Diseases Volunteer Recruitment Core
- Community Engagement resources and consultation services