American Cochlear Implant Alliance (ACI Alliance)
Telehealth Innovation Grant

A. PURPOSE
The advent of COVID-19 has introduced challenges to providing patient care across the healthcare spectrum. As it relates to the mission of the ACI Alliance, the COVID-19 pandemic has prompted the need for transformative and innovative approaches to providing care to cochlear implant patients and candidates. In this funding opportunity announcement (FOA), the ACI Alliance seeks to support efforts to obtain data to support attempts to justify financial reimbursement of telehealth for CI-related services by CMS in the future. The ACI Alliance encourages proposals which involve innovative team-based approaches which incorporate elements of diagnosis, programming and/or rehabilitation. The award is intended to facilitate the recipient’s preparation of a more comprehensive individualized research plan suitable for submission to the National Institutes of Health or comparable funding agency.

B. ELIGIBILITY
Applicants may be any member of the ACI Alliance in good standing at the time of the application and award. This includes, but is not limited to, audiologists, speech language pathologists, psychologists, educational specialists, and physicians. All candidates must be sponsored by the Chair of his/her Division or Department and by an official representative of the institution which would administer the award and in whose name the application is formally submitted. This FOA is open to all ACI Alliance members in good standing.

C. CONDITIONS
Research supported by this award should be specifically directed towards innovative telehealth pilot approaches to providing care to cochlear implant recipients and candidates. The research aims should target enhanced access, affordability, and efficacy in providing care with a minimization of burden on CI recipients. Projects must be designed so as to yield useful information within the period of award, but priority will be given to projects that are also innovative with promise to develop into new long range or expanded research programs capable of attracting funding from other sources. Applications must be accompanied by a letter of support from the applicant’s Department Chair verifying that the applicant will be permitted to devote an appropriate amount of time to the conduct and timely completion of the proposed research project. Applicants must obtain letters of support/understanding from all key personnel on the project. Priority will be given to projects that demonstrate a high degree of team collaboration.
D. TERMS
Amount: Up to 25,000 maximum total (1 year) costs for a total of 1 grant
Period: 12 months.
Use of Funds: Award funds may be used for any legitimate costs associated with the purpose of the award, other than salary support for the Principal Investigator and clerical support. A detailed budget and budget justification constitute part of the application and will be evaluated as an important factor in the review process. If university policy stipulates that a portion of this very modest award must go toward institutional indirect costs, no more than five percent (5%) of the direct costs (maximum $1000) may be applied for indirect costs. Indirect costs refer to expenses associated with facilities and administration costs. Examples of indirect costs include, but are not limited to utility expenses, communication costs, accounting and legal expenses, and shared monies across institutions. Please refer to the NIH website for specific information on grant budgets. Allowable expenses include consultant fees (e.g., statistician, methodologist); salary support for research assistants or other supporting personnel; computer software or hardware; computer database access fees; and expenses related to presentation or publication of results. Equipment and supplies purchased with this award become the property of the recipient institution.
Funding Disclosures: ACI Alliance will withhold up to ten percent (10%) of the grant until such time that the research project is completed and all requirements have been meet, as outlined in section K; Reporting Requirements. This condition must be acknowledged when signing and submitting the terms and conditions contract to release the initial funds.
Notification: Letters of notification will be sent no later than November 16, 2020. Please do not call or email the ACI Alliance office prior to that time to inquire about results.
Starting Date: The award may be activated as early as December 16, 2020, but no later than June 1, 2021.

E. FORMAT
Applications are in a similar format to the National Institutes of Health. Visit https://www.acialliance.org/page/ACIAResearch for information on the application process.

F. SIGNATURES
The original copy of an application must be signed by the person legally authorized to represent the institution in any contractual relationship that might result. This is typically someone in the administration whom the applicant does not know personally. All signatures must be original or verified electronic signatures. ACI Alliance grants are awarded to the institution with which the Principal Investigator is affiliated, not to the investigator or his/her division or department. For this reason, it is very important that applicants comply with their institutions' policies with regard to pre-submission processing of grant applications. Applicants are advised to consult their institutions' offices of research administration or sponsored projects for information on processing requirements for an application prior to its submission.

G. APPROVALS
ACI Alliance grants are awarded to the institution with which the Principal Investigator is affiliated, unless the individual is an independent practitioner unaffiliated with an institution. For this reason, it is very important that applicants comply with their institutions' policies with regard to pre-submission processing of grant applications. If the proposed research involved human subjects, the project must be reviewed and approved by an institutional review board (IRB) prior to funds being released. Independent practitioners involving human subjects must also submit
evidence of a review by an institutional or non-institutional review board prior to release of funds. Absence of IRB approval by final deadline for funds disbursement (June 1, 2020) will result in rescinding of grant funding. It is highly recommended that IRB approval be obtained prior to January 1, 2021. Any changes in the proposed work required by an IRB to secure approval must be submitted to the ACI Alliance with the follow-up certification, prior to review or after the work is in progress.

**H. LETTER OF INTENT**
All applicants must submit a Letter of Intent (LOI) online no later than 11:59pm Eastern Standard Time July 15, 2020. The LOI includes the title of the project, the principal investigator, and an abstract of the work. See the ACI Alliance website [https://www.acialliance.org/page/ACIAResearch](https://www.acialliance.org/page/ACIAResearch) to begin the LOI process.

**I. RECEIPT DATE**
All materials must be submitted to [research@acialliance.org](mailto:research@acialliance.org) by 11:59pm EST, August 28, 2020. Extensions are not granted.

**J. FOLLOW-UP**
In carrying out its stewardship of research programs, the ACI Alliance may request information essential to an assessment of the effectiveness of this program. Accordingly, the recipient is hereby notified that s/he may be contacted after the completion of the award for periodic updates on various aspects of employment history, publications, support from research grants or contracts, honors and awards, professional activities, and other information helpful in evaluating the impact of the program.

**K. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**
Recipients of the ACI Alliance Telehealth Innovation Grant are required submit an interim progress report every six months for the entire duration of the project until completion, a final progress report thirty (30) days after the close of the project period, and a financial status report within ninety (90) days after the close of the grant period. Verbal presentations will be required at the most proximate ACI Alliance meeting based on appropriate completion of data analysis. In addition, public service announcements containing the applicability of findings from these studies to cochlear implant recipients and/or candidates will be a requisite and will be posted on the ACI Alliance website. While no publications are required to result from this award, any which do shall acknowledge the contribution of this source of funding. The recipient(s) is/are encouraged to use the results of the research program as pilot data for the development of an application for a Clinical Investigator Award from National Institutes of Health.

**L. CONTACT**
If you have questions regarding this funding opportunity announcement, please contact Donna Sorkin, Executive Director of American Cochlear Implant Alliance by email [dsorkin@acialliance.org](mailto:dsorkin@acialliance.org)
M. GRANT PROPOSAL FORMAT
Please write your application using this checklist. Please follow these guidelines carefully:

1. **Title Page (first page of proposal)**
   - Title of research project
   - Principal investigator name(s)
   - Credentials
   - Institution name
   - USPS mailing address
   - Telephone number
   - Email address
   - Financial officer contact information

2. **Description**
   - Brief 2-page summary of the project
   - Include performance site and key personnel of project.

3. **Table of Contents**
   - Include all first-level headings with page numbers.

4. **Detailed Budget**
   - Provide a one-year budget that includes salary for support staff (students, post-doctorate fellows, etc.), equipment and supplies. Salaries plus fringe benefits may not be more than 80% of your total direct costs.
   - Do **NOT** include salaries for principal investigator(s), travel or conference attendance expenses, educational costs, or indirect costs (overhead). **ACI Alliance does not fund these costs.**
   - The budget should include the total amount requested.

5. **Biographical Sketch**
   - Include contact information (USPS mailing address, telephone, email, etc.) with each investigator’s biographical sketch page.
   - List all publications ([maximum of two pages]), current funding, pending funding, and requested funding.
   - Indicate what you will do if you receive overlapping funding.
   - Letters of support from colleagues are welcome, but not required. Include any letters of support within your proposal document whenever possible.

6. **Main Body**
   - Include specific aims of the project (body no longer than 10-15 pages at 12-point type, standard margins); background and significance; methods; and what type of subjects (human or animal), if applicable.

**Saving your proposal as a PDF:**
1. Save your proposal as a PDF, naming it as follows: “Yourlastname_Yourfirstname”
2. Please email the PDF and application form data to research@acialliance.org