



PECARN Competition Technical Assistance Call

Monday, January 24, 2011, 12:00 P.M. EST

Led by HRSA EMSC Program

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Referenced Resources: The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) Emergency Medical Services for Children (EMSC) Program's funding opportunity announcement (FOA) for the [Network Development Demonstration Project](#) (NDDP).

The FOA/application may also be found by searching in grants.gov under CFDA number

Background

The purpose of this EMSC-NDDP cooperative agreement is to fund up to six Research Node Centers (RNCs) that will collaborate to form the Pediatric Emergency Care Applied Research Network (PECARN) and continue to demonstrate the value of an infrastructure or network designed to be the platform from which to conduct investigations on the efficacy of treatments, transport, and care responses in emergency care settings. This funding opportunity announcement is not for a specific research project/site but rather for infrastructure support. All research projects go through a PECARN review process that involve all research sites and then gets funded by an external source such as the NIH. New grantees will be expected to join current PECARN studies. Funded NDDP cooperative agreements and a separately funded data center make up the Pediatric Emergency Care Applied Research Network (PECARN). Information about current PECARN studies is available [online](#).

PECARN was established in 2001. The EMSC Program originally awarded four competitive cooperative agreements through a competitive funding mechanism known as the NDDP. Along with a separately funded data center, these cooperative agreements formed PECARN, the first federally-funded, multi-institutional network for research in pediatric emergency medicine. In 2002, the EMSC Program also awarded a separate three-year cooperative agreement to the University of Utah to serve as the Central Data Management Coordinating Center (CDMCC) for PECARN. With the new funding opportunity announcement, the EMSC Program is increasing the number of nodes from four (4) to six (6). Beginning in September 2011 PECARN will consist of six nodes and one data center.

Application Submission Details

A letter of intent is due **February 15, 2011**. This letter is solely to provide HRSA EMSC with an idea of who the potential applicants will be in order to prepare for the independent review.

The application deadline is on **March 16, 2011 at 8:00 pm (Eastern)** in [grants.gov](#). If you are unable to submit electronically, additional procedures are outlined in the grant guidance. The page limit for the application is 80 pages or 10MB. Please see pages 16 and 17 for more details.

Qualified Applicants: **State governments and accredited schools of medicine** are the only eligible applicants for funding under the EMSC Program (pg. 13). If you are affiliated with a State government, or affiliated with an accredited school of medicine, or have any other questions about your eligibility please contact [Tasmeen Weik, DrPH, NREMT](#) to confirm your eligibility prior to the submission of an application.

Up to six (6) awards will be issued at up to \$630,000 in total (direct and indirect) costs per year for four (4) years for each of the six (6) awards.

Project Period: **September 1, 2011 until August 31, 2015**

For budget related questions, please contact [Thais Diaz-Macaluso](#).

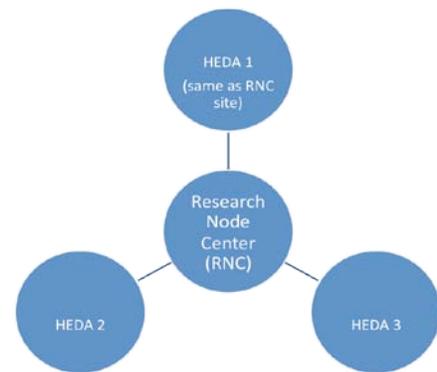
For technical assistance or other programmatic questions, please contact [Tasmeen Weik, DrPH, NREMT](#).

PECARN Structure

The structure for each proposed node of PECARN (pg. 4) is shown to the right. Each node is centralized by a Research Node Center (RNC), which serves as a coordinating body that manages three of PECARN's sites. The RNC will also serve as one of the Hospital Emergency Department Affiliates (HEDAs).

RNC responsibilities are detailed in the FOA.

Nodes are not required to be within geographic proximity to each other.



PECARN is governed by a steering committee. Members of the steering committee are representative of each HEDA site as well as the principal investigator from the CDMCC. The PECARN Steering Committee provides scientific oversight, reviews concepts and proposals, forms membership of the PECARN sub-committee, and is the steering and governing body for all scientific decisions made by PECARN. The Steering Committee meets twice a year. The major roles and functions of the PECARN Steering Committee are outlined in the FOA.

The PECARN Executive Committee is composed of the principal investigators of each node along with the principal investigator of the CDMCC. The PECARN Executive Committee is responsible for the business and operational decisions made to PECARN including: bylaws, policies, resource allocation, and determination of how funds may or may not be distributed within the node. The PECARN Executive Committee meets every month via conference call and one face-to-face meeting held in Washington, DC.

CDMCC

The CDMCC manages and coordinates all the data from each of the PECARN studies and also provides site monitoring (keeping track of IRB approvals, etc.). More information can be found in the FOA.

With regards to data sharing, all data collected by PECARN will be available three years after the last stage of completion of study or one year after the primary manuscript has been published. All PECARN publications credit will be given to the funding agency.

In general, the RNC is the primary applicant and will be responsible for monitoring the HEDA sites; however, all the HEDA sites and node will be reviewed (e.g. performance) by HRSA to ensure that there is compliance to all the requirements outlined in the FOA.

Responsibilities for the RNCs, HEDAs and the Federal EMSC Program are outlined beginning on page 11. These lists are not inclusive but provide an idea of what to include in the application.

All uploaded files may not exceed 80 pages combined and the total maximum file size is 10MB. All application forms are highlighted on pages 16 and 17. This section also highlights what documents are counted and not counted in the page limit. For example the Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424) is comprised of 5 pages, one of which is an abstract. Although the form is not counted, the one-page abstract (uploaded on pg. 2) is counted as it is submitted as an attachment. Another example is the cover form for the project and project narrative—the cover form is not included in the page count, only the document. If the applicant includes a cover page on their attachment, that is counted. It is recommended that applicants print out their application prior to submission as various versions of Microsoft or Adobe products may include excess pages.

Required attachments are listed on page 17.

Budget

A budget is required for all four years of the project. A few key items should be listed in the budget justification narrative (pg. 19).

- The principal investigator (PI) should be funded at a minimum of 20% Full Time Equivalent (FTE). The nodal PI can serve as the HEDA PI for the HEDA site at the RNC.
- A nodal administrator (day-to-day operational manager) must be budgeted for each RNC anywhere with appropriate effort. Typically, the administrator is funded between 50-100% FTE.
- The principal investigator at each HEDA site should be funded at 10% FTE.
- A full-time research coordinator should be budgeted for each HEDA site. Each awardee will be expected to contribute to the leadership of the network by chairing subcommittees or serving as the chair or vice chair of the PECARN steering committee. It is recommended that each awardee budget an additional 5% of time for the nodal PI or a HEDA PI to serve in 1-2 leadership roles.

Travel will also need to be budgeted for the RNC PI, HEDA PI and Nodal Administrator to attend the PECARN Steering Committee meetings. For the Executive Committee meeting, travel for the HEDA PI and the Nodal Administrator will need to be budgeted. The executive committee is in addition to the 2 steering committee meetings and can be combined with travel budgeted for the EMSC annual meeting as outlined in the FOA. Training for specific research studies will also be outlined in some meetings; therefore, a research coordinator should also be budgeted to attend trainings.

Suggested travel and registration costs for all meetings are outlined in the FOA.

For equipment, note that the items must meet the definition of equipment on pg. 21 (a unit cost of \$5000 or more and a useful life of one or more years).

For contractual budget items, every applicant should have at least two contractual agreements, one with each of their HEDA sites. Consultants may also be included in these costs. For each consultant, specify the scope of work for the consultant, the hourly rate, and the number of hours of expected effort.

This FOA only funds the infrastructure for the network and not specific research studies. Therefore, institutions are asked to use the "other sponsored programs" rate. If they do not have such a rate with DHHS, instructions for obtaining a rate are provided. Please pay close attention to the abstract as the abstract summary is frequently read by reviewers and others in the funding agency.

Program Narrative Guidelines

Follow the directions carefully as outlined in the program narrative. The reviewers will be instructed to examine these sections.

Section 1. Background and Significance- This section includes the applicant's basic understanding of why pediatric emergency medical research is important, the role of the research network in the ability to conduct such research and highlights of the priority areas the applicant may see.

Section II. Specific Goals and Objectives- Expected activities for the RNC and HEDAs are outlined in the FOA.

Section III. Capability of HEDA Sites- This should include all HEDA sites and an explanation of how all emergency departments will be able to conduct research. This is the most important section of the program narrative. The following information must be included for each HEDA site (including the RNC site):

- Total number of pediatric ED visits at the HEDA site.
- Characteristics of pediatric ED visits (demographics, percent trauma versus medical, and other available statistics).
- Structure of each HEDA site that facilitates ED research (for example, resources available at the site such as electronic health records, presence of trained research personnel, or trauma center designation, etc. that create a conducive environment to conduct research).
- List of ED based studies that the HEDA site participated in the past 5 years that enrolled pediatric patients.
- Qualifications and experience of the HEDA PI (including the RNC PI if they are serving as the HEDA PI).
- Procedures for obtaining Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval for PECARN research protocols. Include specific information on the frequency of IRB meetings and typical review times for study protocols at each HEDA site. Historical information for the amount of time needed to obtain IRB approval for the studies described above should be included.

Section IV. Methods and Evaluation- An organizational chart can be submitted here to describe the functional structure for involving appropriate RNC and HEDA personnel in the design and implementation of a variety of treatments or services should be provided. An organizational chart and a description of the RNC operation should describe the relationship between the research, clinical practices, and administrative functional units within the Research Node. Potential problems and challenges should also be addressed here. It is also important that applicants identify a process that will be used with the RNC and HEDA sites to generate and review research ideas generated in the node. A concept proposal of no more than two pages should be submitted. For each described objective, an evaluation measure should be included.

Section V. Plan and Schedule of Implementation, and Capability of Applicant- In this section of the narrative, the applicant should provide a description of the organizational plan for management of the project, including an explanation of the roles and responsibilities of project personnel, project collaborators, and consultants. Describe the leadership capabilities of the applicant to serve as a RNC and what qualifies the PI to be a national leader.

Review Criteria

The review criteria are outlined on page 32:

Criterion 1: NEED (5 points)—This comes from the applicants background section, the extent to which one can highlight the high priority areas of EMS research.

Criterion 2: CAPABILITY OF THE HEDAs (40 points)—The extent to which the chosen HEDAs for this application have experience and proven success in enrolling children in Emergency Department (ED) based trials. The qualifications of the HEDA sites are very important.

Criterion 3: CAPABILITY OF THE RNC (15 points)—Capability of RNC institutions to manage all the HEDA sites.

Criterion 4: RESPONSE (20 points)—The quality of the research ideas and concepts presented.

Criterion 5: EVALUATIVE MEASURES (10 points)— The effectiveness of the method proposed to monitor and evaluate the success of the RNC and HEDA sites in enrolling patients in studies, contributing new research ideas to PECARN, and writing grants to bring external funding for specific PECARN studies. How will RNC's be able to evaluate their sites?

Criterion 6: SUPPORT REQUESTED (10 points)—The reasonableness of the proposed budget is adequate to meet stated goals and objectives.

The Division of Independent Review is responsible for managing objective reviews within HRSA. The EMSC Program project officer is available to provide technical assistance to applicants. It is strongly suggested that you read the full FOA carefully and contact Dr. Weik with questions about the FOA.

Applicants will be responsible for PECARN performance measures outlined in Appendix A if awarded funding.

Questions/Comments

- 1. How should in-kind support be included in the application?**
All in-kind support must be listed on the SF 424A, under Section C where there is space to identify non-federal resources. In-kind support should also be listed in the budget justification AND a letter of support from your institution stating the in-kind support should be provided as an attachment.
- 2. Is there a mandatory salary cap?**
You can voluntarily use the NIH salary cap; however, you cannot decrease effort because you are using a salary cap. You may mention the use of the salary cap in the budget justification, but you do not need to list the difference between actual salary and the cap as in kind support.
- 3. Do the HEDA 2 and HEDA 3 sites need to be academic centers?**
No, only the main applicant site needs to be from "state government" or a "school of medicine," but sites 2 and 3 are subcontractors and therefore have no eligibility requirements.
- 4. If we are an academic center applying to be a new site within a node, are we limited to 2 subcontracts if we have existing subcontracts with currently affiliated resources?**
No, you are not limited to 2 subcontracts, and you can utilize additional subcontracts if needed. However, note that you cannot have more than 3 HEDA sites total, including 1 site from the main applicant.
- 5. Does the applicant have to be an existing member of PECARN?**
No, previously unaffiliated sites are welcome to apply. The four incumbent nodes are not guaranteed funding, each is expected to compete for funding, and no previous PECARN experience is necessary to apply.
- 6. In writing the application, how should we balance justifying the need for the network and focusing on our ability to participate in the network?**
The justification for the need of the network is worth 5 points in the review criteria and should be a brief section with a good summary of the literature, what is important in pediatric emergency medicine research, and why the network is needed. The majority of the review points are focused on the capabilities of the RNC and HEDA sites and therefore the application should fully describe the experience and capabilities of the applicant and the HEDA sites and the other information requested in the FOA.
- 7. How should we state our intentions to comply with PECARN bylaws in the application?**
Goals and objectives should include ways in which the applicant will meaningfully participate in PECARN steering committee meetings with specific objectives including the contribution of ideas, proposals, etc. Also how applicants are capable of doing high priority, rigorous, pediatric emergency research. Goals and objectives can state that applicants will participate by complying with PECARN bylaws but do not have to reiterate the bylaws provided in the FOA.

- 8. Are there plans to share previous applications or a template for the application?**
Because this year's FOA is very different from previous FOAs, there is no template available. However, Dr. Tasmeen Weik is available for technical assistance and can provide feedback for goals/objectives and whether they are responsive to the guidance.
- 9. Does the inclusion age range of birth to age 21 include up to the 22nd birthday?**
Yes, this range includes up to age 21 years and 364 days. However, actual PECARN studies may expand or constrict this age range based on needs.
- 10. We are interested in working with rural facilities in network, and although they don't have a proven record of research, a tertiary care center would mentor them. Is there another distinction besides HEDA? Can these sites be funded?**
No, there is no other distinction besides HEDA. Although there is no minimum volume requirement for sites, the FOA and review criteria focus is that ALL sites be able to enroll patients and contribute to developing new research and demonstrate prior success. Based on the number of points assigned to HEDA capabilities, a site without any prior experience in research may not be appropriate for this application.
- 11. What are the criteria for the two-page research proposal?**
The criteria for what should be included in the two page concept proposal can be found on page 27 of the FOA, and write-ups should be limited to two pages per proposal (four pages total). There is no specific review criteria for the proposal. The reviewers will base their scoring on the general science and feasibility of each idea.
- 12. Are we allowed to submit more than two concept/research proposals per application?**
Yes, but the reviewers do not necessarily have to review additional proposals. The HRSA PO recommends focusing on two strong proposals and submitting an additional one only if it greatly enhances your application.
- 13. What are the typical funding sources of current PECARN studies?**
The majority of current studies are funded by the NIH, and the most common mechanism is the R01 grant, although there have been R21 grants in the past. The current PECARN studies and how they are funded are listed on the PECARN website. Some research projects have also been funded through EMSC Targeted Issue grants. Other PECARN pilot projects have also secured funding from other sources.