

Georgia CTSA K12 (formerly KL2) Scholars Program

Application submission (online submission only!)

All application components listed below must be submitted through the online submission system ([click to start](#)). After entering their name and email address, applicants receive a confirmation email containing a link to their application. Applicants should share this submission link with their Department Chair, lead mentor, co-lead mentor(s), and Advisory Committee members, as applicable, so that letters of support can be uploaded.

Required Georgia CTSA K12 Program application components

1. Cover Page ([save link as document](#))

- Complete the required K12 cover page.
- Format: All application sections should be single-spaced, with margins of at least 0.5 inch and a font size of 11 points or larger using Arial font.

2. Cover Letter from Applicant. A cover letter must be included in the application and include the following information:

- Applicant's academic rank and lead mentor.
- Title of application.
- Acknowledgement from the applicant that they will comply with all K12 Program requirements if accepted.
- Agree to meet with the K12 Program Director(s) at least every six months.
- Commit to submitting an NIH K award (or other NIH grant application) by the end of the first year of the Georgia CTSA K12 Program.

3. K12 Abstract - 30 lines maximum (using half-inch margins). The abstract is a succinct summary of the entire application: the candidate, the research environment, and the proposed research and career development plan. It should be understandable to a scientifically literate reviewer outside your field. Include:

- A brief description of the candidate and the research environment.
- The candidate's immediate and long-term career goals.
- Key elements of the career development plan and the proposed research project.

4. Specific Aims Page (1-page)

- Provide a 1-page Specific Aims document describing your proposed mentored research project. Include the health problem, the knowledge gap, and the significance of the proposed work, along with the overall goal of the project. State your central hypothesis, your approach to testing it, and the supporting rationale or preliminary data. Because the K12 is a career development award, briefly describe your long-term career goal and how the proposed project and training plan will support your development as a clinical and translational scientist. List two to three Specific Aims, each stated in one to two sentences as a discrete, testable objective; aims should be related but not interdependent. Close with expected outcomes, the impact of the proposed work, and how the project will position you to compete for future funding (e.g., an NIH K or R award).

5. Research and Training Plan (12-page limit)

Candidate/Training Plan and Research Strategy (12 pages). Provide a Research and Training Plan consisting of two major sections: a **Candidate/Training Plan** section and a **Research Strategy** section. Suggested subsections are provided below, although applicants may organize the document as best suits their application.

- The **Candidate/Training Plan** section should include: (1) *Candidate Background and Career Goals* — your background, your long-term career goals, and how the Georgia CTSA K12 Program will support your career development and transition to research independence; (2) *Training Plan* — didactic coursework (e.g., MSCR, CPTS, or “Menu” option), workshops, and other career development activities, and how these address gaps in your current skills; and (3) *Mentoring Team* — your lead mentor (and their qualifications) and co-mentors, their qualifications, and how the mentoring team will support both your research and career development. Describe interactions with members of your mentoring team and frequency of meetings.
- The **Research Strategy** section should describe the significance of the proposed work, the innovation, and your approach, including study design, methods, human subjects recruitment, statistical analysis plan, and anticipated outcomes for each Specific Aim. Address potential pitfalls and alternative approaches. Include an integrated timeline (see below).
- **PLEASE NOTE:** NIH no longer allows using K12 funds to support a clinical trial (i.e., use of the K12 technical budget is not allowed to support a clinical trial by a K12 Scholar). If a K12 applicant proposes a clinical trial, support for such study would need to come from sources outside the K12 award (which should be described in

the application). Research training on clinical trials is permitted, and K12 scholars are allowed by NIH to obtain research experience in a clinical trial led by a mentor or co-mentor.

- Preliminary data are not required but may strengthen the application when appropriately presented.
- Include a **timeline** covering the award period that integrates your research milestones with your training and career development activities, including planned publications and grant submissions. The anticipated start date would be August 1.
- Include a clear plan for future NIH grant applications, including an NIH K award or other NIH awards (e.g., R01).

6. Facilities and Other Resources, Equipment (2-page limit)

7. Human Subjects/Data and Safety Monitoring Plan (no page limit; not counted toward the 12-page limit)

- Include this section when applicable.
- Follow the NIH SF424 Application Guide (Forms J) requirements for protection of human subjects. Forms J should be available from NIH as of October 1, 2026.
- Include a Data and Safety Monitoring Plan when required (e.g., for greater than minimal risk studies).
- IRB approval is not required at the time of application but is required before funding and K12 support can begin.

8. Bibliography & References Cited (no page limit)

- Provide standard literature citations in the **Bibliography & References Cited** section. This section does NOT count toward the page limit.

9. Budget and Budget Justification

- A **line-item budget** and **budget justification** are required and do NOT count toward the page limit. The line-item budget may be submitted on the NIH SF424 forms or as a line-item budget without the use of the form.
- Include the applicant's salary, requested percentage of salary support (must be 75% unless the applicant is in surgery or a surgical subspecialty, in which case effort can be 50%), and applicable fringe benefits (use the federal fringe rate for your institution). The National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences (NCATS) at

NIH limits its support of the K12 Scholar salary to \$120,000 per year for 75% effort (plus fringe benefits at the applicant's institutional federal fringe rate). If 75% of the applicant's annual salary is above \$120,000, then the applicant's division or department must cost share the difference.

- Include a K12 technical budget of \$30,000 per year. These funds may be used to support the mentored research project (e.g., research supplies, laboratory assays, non-faculty research staff salary support, and travel to national meetings or to receive additional specialized training). Please note that travel-related expenses are limited to \$2,500 per year by NIH. The K12 technical budget can also be used for tuition costs although most K12 Scholars receive a courtesy scholarship to cover most or all tuition costs. Please contact Rachel Hardison (rachel.hardison@emory.edu) for additional information regarding tuition costs. Salary support for the lead mentor or co-mentors or other faculty is NOT allowed by NIH.
- Provide a budget justification of no more than two pages.
- Provide a budget and budget justification for Year 1 and Year 2 of the K12 Program.

10. Letters of Support. The following letters of support are **required**:

- **Lead mentor letter:** The lead mentor's letter should describe the mentor's commitment, assessment of the candidate, mentoring experience, proposed research, and mentoring plan.
- **Department Chair letter:** *(for applicants in the Department of Medicine, a Division Director letter can be submitted in lieu of a Chair's letter.)* The letter from the Department Chair must guarantee that the applicant will have protected time (equivalent to the salary support provided by the program, usually 75%) to carry out research and research training if accepted into the K12 program. As noted, the K12 Program requires a minimum of 75% effort (50% minimum for those in surgery or the surgical subspecialties).
- **Letters from co-mentors.** Each co-mentor (or Advisory Committee member) should provide a letter of support.
- Other letters of support for the candidate from applicants' consultants and advisory committee members are also required.

11. NIH Biosketches. NIH biosketches (using the NIH SciENCv format; <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/sciencv/>) are required from the following:

- K12 Applicant
- Lead mentor
- Co-mentor(s) or Advisory Committee members
- Any other collaborators

Questions

We encourage interested K12 candidates to contact the Georgia CTSA Research Education Program leadership for questions and assistance with the application process at your institution: [Dr. Henry Blumberg](#) and [Dr. Anandi Sheth](#) (Emory); [Dr. J. Brandon Dixon](#) (GT); [Dr. Alexander Quarshie](#) (MSM); [Dr. Somanath Shenoy](#) (UGA). Questions on the application process can be directed to [Rachel Hardison](#), Georgia CTSA Research Education Programs Assistant Director. For questions, especially technical issues, or problems with the online submission website please contact [Alexey Kurbatov](#).