
Request for Proposals: Feasibility Grants to Advance Graduate Medical Education in California

RFP released	July 1, 2021
Responses due	August 12, 2021
Initial awards announced	September 15, 2021
Awards	\$25,000 – \$40,000

Executive Summary

We are issuing a request for proposals (RFP) for hospitals interested in using small grants to explore the feasibility of beginning graduate medical education (GME) programs.

About Mathematica

Mathematica collaborates with public- and private-sector changemakers by working at the intersection of data, methods, policy, and practice to accomplish our mission: improving public well-being. Our services include research and evaluation, program design and improvement, and data analytics. Mathematica is helping create a world in which evidence routinely drives public policy and program decisions. For more information, visit <https://www.mathematica.org/>.

Overview

California has a shortage of physicians—especially primary care physicians and psychiatrists—to care for its large and diverse population. To ensure the future stability and capacity of the health care system, the California Future Health Workforce Commission recommended an expansion of GME to increase the number of California-trained physicians, especially in needed specialties and underserved regions of the state.

Mathematica is working with philanthropic foundations to accelerate GME expansion efforts across California. In addition to working to establish a permanent GME governance council for the state of California, Mathematica coordinates with GME experts and leaders at the state and national level, producing resources, such as toolkits and case studies, and offering small grants to hospitals attempting to establish new residency programs. Through this RFP, Mathematica is overseeing a grant program for hospitals interested in exploring the feasibility of starting GME programs within their institutions.

Eligible hospitals include those in the state of California that have never before sponsored GME, also known as GME-naive hospitals. To successful applicants, Mathematica plans to award feasibility study grants in the range of \$25,000 to \$40,000 over nine months. Hospitals are required to match 25 percent of the awarded funds. These grants are intended to be large enough to encourage hospitals to engage in internal discussions about GME and to hire a consultant for a high-level assessment of feasibility. Because a goal of this work is to stimulate and incentivize, there is no requirement that applicants actually establish residency programs—only that they explore the opportunity. Hospitals can use the grants to fund relevant activities, such as:

- Assessing whether the hospital can meet guidelines of the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education and, if not, identify specific gaps and create an action plan (for example, call rooms, medical libraries, required faculty expertise)
- Examining the hospital’s basic finances to understand viability and investment needs in early years
- Verifying with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services that the hospital has not triggered a Medicare GME funding cap at some earlier time
- Ensuring buy-in from key stakeholders, including but not limited to the Board of Directors, the administration (particularly the CEO and CFO), and the medical staff
- Identifying a physician champion to lead the GME effort
- Identifying areas in which out rotations might be required and investigating potential partnership opportunities

Eligible applicants

This RFP is open to California acute care hospitals that have never sponsored graduate medical education but that are interested in exploring the possibility of doing so. Hospitals that have begun GME but are interested in exploring the feasibility of adding a new specialty may also apply if they have not yet triggered their Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) cap. Hospitals will receive priority if their GME programs would address the needs of underrepresented populations, priority specialties (psychiatry and family medicine), and/or geographic areas. Hospitals interested in starting programs in multiple specialties will also receive consideration. Hospitals with an estimated CMS per resident amount (PRA) below \$120,000 are ineligible. Please contact us to confirm your eligibility.

The Graduate Medical Education Expansion Fund has been seeded by the California Health Care Foundation. As other foundations join the collective action fund, we expect to have additional rounds of funding in 2021 and 2022. Priority may be given to applicants that meet the above criteria and that are located in funder catchment areas.

This grant is for new feasibility studies only. If a feasibility assessment has already been done or is currently in progress, please respond to Mathematica’s RFP for start-up funding grants.

Response submission

Responses should be delivered by email as two files (a PDF and a Word document) to Amanda Lechner (Alechner@mathematica-mpr.com) no later than 5:00 p.m. (PT) on August 12, 2021.

Proposal requirements

Please briefly address the following questions in no more than five pages:

- a. Why is your hospital interested in exploring the feasibility of adding GME?
- b. How do your hospital’s vision, mission, and values align with beginning a GME program? What would GME do for your hospital and community?
- c. How would a feasibility grant help your hospital explore the possibility of adding GME? What, specifically, would you use grant funding to do and achieve?

- d. Does your hospital have any previous experience with teaching (e.g. nursing, chaplaincy, pharmacy, or undergraduate medical education)? If so, please briefly describe.
- e. Who are the key leaders interested in exploring a GME program? Please describe their experience with leading prior GME programs.
- f. What specialty program(s) are you interested in exploring?
- g. What are the top three challenges you anticipate in starting a GME program and how will you mitigate these challenges?
- h. How much money are you requesting?

Additional proposal materials

The following required materials do not count toward the five-page limit:

- a. Hospital demographics: Please describe hospital type, ownership status, and size.
- b. A brief bio-sketch or CV for all key team members
- c. A brief explanation of how you plan to allocate the budget across proposed activities
- d. A letter in support from the hospital CEO and CMO

Deliverable and timeline

Award recipients must submit a final narrative report of about five pages. The report will be due 10 months after award. Key questions to be addressed in the report include the following:

- a. Will you go forward with starting a GME program?
 - If so, please briefly describe your next steps, your timeline for implementing the GME program, and the specialties you will include. Also note the resources you need to go forward with adopting a GME Program.
 - If not, why not?
- b. What did you learn from your project?
- c. How did your hospital spend the money?

Funding

Funds will be awarded from the Graduate Medical Education Expansion Fund, a collective action fund of [Tides](#). In addition to the program narrative report noted above, Tides may require additional financial reporting at project close.

For more information

For questions about the project or proposal submission process, contact Amanda Lechner, health researcher, at alechner@mathematica-mpr.com.