

ACTRI Voucher Program – Policy Guide

I. Purpose

The ACTRI Voucher Program is designed to accelerate clinical and translational research by lowering barriers to accessing specialized research infrastructure and enabling early stage investigators to generate preliminary data to enhance competitive external funding.

This document outlines ACTRI's voucher program policy, describing the scope & terms, eligibility criteria, and voucher categories & amounts. The information contained herein is intended to be public-facing (e.g., for publication on ACTRI website or other external libraries).

II. Scope & Terms

- ACTRI offers vouchers for ACTRI research services to support early stage investigators conducting translational research projects that need preliminary data for subsequent applications for federal or foundation grants and to supplement federally-funded studies. Commercially-funded research is not eligible.
- Vouchers are not cash awards. Vouchers may only be applied to approved ACTRI recharge services and are contingent upon resource availability. Voucher funds may not be used for personnel salary support, equipment purchases, participant incentives paid outside ACTRI services, travel, indirect costs, subcontracted work, or other non-ACTRI expenses.
- Voucher funding is limited and not guaranteed. Applications are reviewed on a rolling basis and awards are made until funds are exhausted. Submission of an application does not ensure award.
- Voucher applications can be submitted at any time during the voucher period (May 1 – March 31, based on the CTSA grant budget year). The March 31 application cutoff (vs. April 30) was established to allow for sufficient time to spend the funds before the end of the budget year.
- Voucher applications are evaluated on a first-come, first-served basis by ACTRI Administrative Reviewer, Service Units, and Finance Team using established eligibility criteria as outlined further below.
- The voucher award period begins on the award date and ends no later than April 30 of that budget year, as vouchers are only valid through the end of the applicable CTSA budget year. Services must be completed within this period. Unused voucher balances will automatically revert to ACTRI at the close of the budget year (April 30). Voucher balances do not carry over.
- All voucher applications require a prior submission of a service request via the [ACTRI Services](#) webpage. Voucher applications without prior service request submission are subject to rejection.
- The voucher recipient will be notified as soon as the voucher approaches depletion (~80% of awarded amount) to determine (a) if services should be continued beyond what is covered by the voucher amount and, consequently, be expensed at applicable recharge rates or (b) if services should not be continued once the voucher has been spent.
- Voucher recipients agree to:
 - Provide a valid back-up chartstring should the services be continued beyond what is covered by the voucher amount. Expenses beyond the approved voucher amount will be expensed to the back-up chartstring(s) provided at applicable recharge rates.

- Use voucher funds only for the approved project scope.
- Notify ACTRI of significant project changes.
- Provide updates or outcomes upon request for CTSA reporting.
- Cite the ACTRI CTSA grant as a contributing source of support for publications that result from research utilizing any of the ACTRI resources as follows:

“This publication was supported in part by the Altman Clinical and Translational Research Institute at the University of California, San Diego, funded by the National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences, National Institutes of Health, Award Number UM1TR005449. The content is solely the responsibility of the authors and does not necessarily represent the official views of the NIH.

This manuscript is subject to the NIH Public Access Policy, and the final peer-reviewed manuscript will be made publicly available in PubMed Central upon the Official Date of Publication.”

- Ensure all award cited manuscripts comply with the [NIH Public Access Policy](#), including deposit in PubMed Central upon publication with no embargo; open access journals or preprints alone do not satisfy this requirement. Investigators with non-compliant publications will be ineligible for future ACTRI funding until the papers are available in PubMed Central.
- Voucher applications are submitted via the [ACTRI Service Voucher Request Form](#). Voucher-related questions should be discussed with the ACTRI Finance Team (ctri-fin-recharges@health.ucsd.edu) prior to submitting an application. ACTRI reserves the right to decline technically eligible applications if programmatic priorities, feasibility, or resource availability warrant.
- ACTRI leadership reserves the right to modify voucher terms, eligibility criteria, and amounts at their discretion throughout the voucher period.

III. Eligibility Criteria

Voucher applications are reviewed administratively and, as appropriate, by relevant ACTRI service units to ensure feasibility and appropriate use of CTSA resources. Eligibility is determined based on investigator qualifications, project characteristics, and applicable administrative and fiscal requirements.

When demand exceeds available funds, ACTRI may prioritize applications based on:

- Early stage investigator status
- Likelihood of leading to extramural funding
- Scientific merit and feasibility
- Alignment with ACTRI mission and translational impact

Formal

- Investigator may not submit more than one voucher application per voucher period, though that one application can contain multiple voucher categories.
(Example: Investigator may submit an application that contains both Clinic and CRC voucher categories. However, investigator may not submit an application for Clinic voucher category first and then later another application for CRC voucher category for the same project.)

- Investigator is required to provide a valid chartstring as part of their submission, which will be charged in the event that services provided exceed the awarded voucher amount.
- Investigator is required to provide a valid ACTRI Service Request ID as part of their submission.
- Investigator may not apply for voucher support for the same project in two consecutive voucher periods (no back-to-back vouchers for the same project).
- Investigator may apply for voucher support for different projects in two consecutive voucher periods.

Investigator

- Eligibility is determined based on the primary PI of the proposed project or study. The program is currently intended for early stage investigators, junior faculty at the Assistant Professor level, and clinicians who are new to NIH-funded clinical research. Exceptions may be considered for early Associate Professors supporting NIH or other federally funded studies. Eligibility may be expanded to senior faculty in the future, subject to funding availability.
- Applications must be submitted by eligible faculty PIs; trainee-led submissions are not permitted.
- Investigator is required to have a current [ACTRI Membership](#) at the time of award.

Project

- Unfunded projects that are designed to gather preliminary data for a grant submission and NIH-funded studies are eligible and the primary focus of the program. In addition, ACTRI Pilot Projects, Career Development Awards (K-series only; UC San Diego only) and ACTRI KL2/K12 awardees are also eligible.
- Vouchers can potentially be used to supplement two types of NIH-funded studies:
 - Type I use the vouchers to supplement the NIH-approved funds for clinical, biostatistics, bioinformatics, and laboratory services required for the project.
 - Type II use the vouchers to expand on the project to collect new data that will be used for renewal or new grants.
- For any project requiring IRB or IACUC approval, the voucher application should be submitted in conjunction with the IRB/IACUC submission. IRB or IACUC approval must be in place before voucher-funded services begin.
- Commercially-funded research is not eligible.

Fiscal

- Voucher request does not exceed applicable voucher maximum amounts.
- Service Unit has not exceeded their allocated voucher budget.
- PI does not have any outstanding balances for any of the ACTRI or CRA recharge units.

IV. Categories & Amounts

- The overall voucher budget as well as individual voucher categories and maximum amounts are determined by the ACTRI Director and Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) at the beginning of each voucher period.

- Service directors may adjust individual voucher amounts depending on project needs and resource availability. Voucher amount increases require prior approval from ACTRI CAO.
- All voucher categories are subject to applicable ACTRI recharge rates.
- Finance Team may further adjust individual voucher amounts if needed.
- The following table shows current voucher categories and amounts:

Voucher Category	Maximum Amount
Biomedical Informatics and Data Science (BIDS)	\$2,000
Biostatistics, Epidemiology and Research Design (BERD)	\$2,500
Center for Clinical Research: Clinic	\$5,000
Center for Clinical Research: Clinical Research Coordinators (CRC)	\$5,000
Center for Clinical Research: Clinical Trial Support Services (CTSS)	\$5,000
Translational Research Hub (TRH): Biobank and BRIDGE Laboratory	\$5,000
Computational Biology and Bioinformatics (CCBB)	\$10,000