



## REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

### Connecting Persons with Autism with Researchers:

**Aim:** The New Jersey Autism Center of Excellence (NJACE) aims to help New Jersey researchers connect with individuals with autism and their families who may be interested in participating in research.

**Background:** Individuals with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and their families often are unaware of opportunities to participate in research projects that may benefit them. Conversely, a major challenge for autism researchers involves identifying and recruiting a large sample of participants who meet the study's inclusion/exclusion criteria, so that the study sample is representative of the target population and there is sufficient power to accurately test the study's hypotheses. The NJACE is committed to addressing both problems by developing ways to connect New Jersey researchers with individuals with autism and their families who may be interested in participating in research, by: (a) providing information about potential research participation opportunities on our website; and (b) providing small seed grants to researchers who wish to build a register or cohort of potential participants for promising research investigations through the current request for applications (RFA).

**Available Funding:** We anticipate funding up to four seed grants with a maximum of \$2,000 per award.

**Funding Priorities:** Applications that address one of the following NJACE critical areas of need will be prioritized for funding, other things being equal (e.g., significance, innovation). However, we encourage researchers who address other important areas of need to also apply for this funding.

- Transition to adulthood, including health care, educational pursuits, and employment
- Developmental support services (e.g., early identification, co-occurring ID)
- Use of data to drive measurable health improvements
- Identifying and targeting vulnerable populations for interventions to address health disparities
- Promotion of collaboration across sectors to develop health policies and achieve health equity

**Potential Resources to Assist Researchers:** The NJACE can assist autism researchers to connect with the following participant recruitment resources and, when appropriate, provide seed funding to help cover associated costs. Researchers who are awarded seed money from the

current RFA can propose to use the funding to access these resources or to fund other activities that will help them identify and recruit potential participants for their research.

**Deep 6 Software.** Through an artificial intelligence (AI) powered software, [Deep 6](#), the [Rutgers Clinical Trials Office](#) offers researchers the ability to electronically search the EPIC database from the Robert Wood Johnson Barnabas Health System for patients who may be appropriate for their research investigations. Researchers can input relevant demographic information (e.g., patients between 12 and 17 years of age with co-occurring diagnoses of ASD and Fragile-X syndrome), thereby identifying patients that appear to meet the relevant research criteria. The AI concepts of Deep 6 allows researchers to match patient characteristics to research criteria much more accurately and efficiently than through other methods. The size of the EPIC database from the Robert Wood Johnson Barnabas Health System allows researchers to identify many patients that may participate in and benefit from their research. Currently, the Rutgers Clinical Trials Office use the database primarily for researchers at Rutgers University. The Clinical Trials Office conducts the initial searches (i.e., feasibility assessments) for the number of patients who appear to meet the research criteria for free. This allows researchers to report these numbers in their grant application to help demonstrate the feasibility of the research project. However, they charge a fee for the next step in the process whereby the software is used to help connect the researcher and potential participants.

**Meditech Medical Records Search.** The Research Office at Children's Specialized Hospital also assists autism researchers who wish to identify and recruit potential participants through their electronic medical records software, Meditech. This software allows the Research Office to input patient demographic data (e.g., diagnosis of autism, co-occurring diagnosis of ADHD, ages 6 to 10) to help identify patients who meet the study's inclusion/exclusion criteria.

**How to Apply:** Please complete the following request form and submit to [NJACE@children-specialized.org](mailto:NJACE@children-specialized.org) to be considered for funding.

**Seed Grant Application:**

Principal Investigator (PI):

PI Address:

PI Email:

PI Telephone:

Project Collaborators (if applicable):

Participating Institutions and Organizations:

**Project Overview:**

Descriptive Title of the Project Proposed:

Provide a brief description of how the money will be spent (about 1 paragraph):

Abstract and Specific Aims (1-page limit):