

C-Path's Translational Therapeutics Accelerator Announces 2026 Request for Proposals from Academic Investigators

Included is a dedicated polycystic kidney disease track alongside investments in brain health, pediatrics, and rare diseases.

TUCSON, Ariz., January 21, 2026 — Critical Path Institute's® (C-Path) Translational Therapeutics Accelerator today officially launched its 2026 global Request for Proposals for Bridging Research and Innovation in Drug Development Grants (BRIDGE). These awards aim to empower academic researchers by providing the critical funding and strategic guidance needed to overcome the “valley of death” in drug development — helping transition innovative therapeutics from the lab to patients.

Maaïke Everts, Ph.D., Executive Director of C-Path's accelerator program, said, “BRIDGE was built to help strong science move forward faster and with greater confidence. By pairing targeted funding with hands-on development and actionable regulatory expertise, we aim to de-risk promising academic innovations and help position them for the partnerships needed to ultimately reach patients.”



For the first time, C-Path is partnering with the PKD Foundation to offer a specialized BRIDGE track focused on drug development projects targeting polycystic kidney disease (PKD). Designed to accelerate the translation of innovative PKD research into viable therapeutic candidates, this

collaboration unites C-Path's drug development and regulatory expertise with the PKD Foundation's deep disease-area knowledge and patient-focused mission. This partnership builds on the Foundation's long-standing support of [C-Path's Polycystic Kidney Disease Outcomes Consortium](#) and highlights a shared commitment to accelerate the development of new therapies for the estimated 500,000 people in the U.S. affected by PKD. Founded in 2010, the consortium is currently focused on the development of a clinical trial simulator tool for autosomal dominant PKD, identification and qualification of novel prognostic and drug response biomarkers, development of clinical outcome assessment and patient reported outcome tools, and increased data sharing opportunities.

Susan Bushnell, Chief Executive Officer of the PKD Foundation, said, “As PKD science continues to advance, it is critical that funding keeps pace. We are proud to partner with C-Path's Translational Therapeutics Accelerator to advance promising drug development efforts for polycystic kidney disease. This

collaboration ensures that innovative research is fully supported by the resources needed to accelerate potential therapies and meaningfully improve the lives of people living with PKD.”

As a nonprofit drug accelerator, this program offers selected BRIDGe awardees a comprehensive suite of resources, including:

- Funding to advance drug development initiatives
- Strategic and tactical expertise in drug discovery and development, including regulatory science considerations
- Resources and hands-on guidance, collaborating closely with academic researchers to develop comprehensive data packages for potential drug candidates — key to garnering interest from biotechnology and pharmaceutical companies to invest in clinical trials

For this RFP, eligible platforms include small molecules, protein-based therapeutics, and in vivo gene-based therapies.

In addition to PKD, C-Path is accepting applications for projects in the following therapeutic areas:

- Brain health
- Pediatrics
- Rare and orphan diseases

C-Path is also pleased to recognize additional collaborators supporting this year’s BRIDGe effort – Cerebrum DAO and Project CASK, who are working with us to help bring additional funding to projects focused on neurodegeneration and CASK-related disorders.

More information about this funding opportunity is available in the [Translational Therapeutics Accelerator Guidance Document](#) for Applicants.

To assist applicants, C-Path will host a [2026 BRIDGe Funding Opportunities webinar](#) at 10 a.m. ET, Tuesday, January 27. Registration is required for this no-cost event. The webinar will provide an overview of the types of projects C-Path funds, eligibility criteria for awards, details about how to apply before the first submission deadline of March 16, 2026, and a live Q&A.

To learn more, visit c-path.org/programs/trxa or email the team at trxa@c-path.org.

About Critical Path Institute

Critical Path Institute (C-Path) is an independent, nonprofit established in 2005 as a public-private partnership, in response to the FDA’s Critical Path Initiative. C-Path’s mission is to lead collaborations that advance better treatments for people worldwide. Globally recognized as a pioneer in accelerating drug development, C-Path has established numerous international consortia, programs and initiatives that currently include more than 1,600 scientists and representatives from government and regulatory agencies, academia, patient organizations, disease foundations and pharmaceutical and biotech companies. With dedicated team members located throughout the world, C-Path’s global headquarters is located in Tucson, Arizona and C-Path’s Europe subsidiary is headquartered in Amsterdam, Netherlands. For more information, visit c-path.org.

About the PKD Foundation

Since 1982, the PKD Foundation has been dedicated to improving the lives of people impacted by polycystic kidney disease (PKD). The Foundation drives research to find treatments and a cure while providing education, advocacy, and direct support to communities nationwide. It is the largest private funder of PKD research in the U.S.

PKD is a chronic, genetic disorder marked by the uncontrolled growth of cysts in the kidneys and other organs, often leading to kidney failure. An estimated 500,000 people in the U.S. have PKD. There is

currently no cure and only one approved treatment to slow disease progression.

The PKD Foundation is the only U.S. organization solely focused on PKD.