

# UAB SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

## 2021 REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS (RFA)

### The Dr. Levi Watkins, Jr. Breakthrough Award for Research that Transforms Health

**Purpose:**

Dr. Levi Watkins, Jr. Breakthrough Awards of up to \$1 million will be given to faculty who propose and secure substantial extramural funding for research that will advance health broadly across the population of Alabama, the Southeast region, the United States, and globally.

The purposes of the awards are to catalyze and accelerate research at UAB that applies quantitative, epidemiologic, social, and behavioral sciences to advance health with large extramural grants, and to celebrate Dr. Levi Watkins, Jr., a physician from Alabama who made breakthroughs in heart surgery and civil rights. The vision for this award is that UAB will be the magnet for talented scientists who will create a dynamic, self-sustaining community driving discovery that advances health.

Dr. Levi Watkins, Jr. Breakthrough Awards are to be used to support the faculty member's research team and program. The full Breakthrough Awards will be paid out as \$100,000 when awarded, with subsequent payments made after the Notice of Award for the extramurally funded grant is received (see below).

**Eligibility:**

Proposals in response to this RFA must meet the following criteria:

- Propose research in people that aims ultimately to improve the prevention, diagnosis, or management of disease, as elaborated below (see Areas of Interest below);
- Propose an application for an extramural research grant of \$5 million or more in total costs. Proposals for larger grants will be given preference.
- Submission by a faculty in the School of Medicine as PI. Collaborating faculty may have an appointment in any School of UAB, and multi-PI submissions are encouraged.

Preference will be given for proposals to NIH and AHRQ; proposals to other federal and non-federal funders will be considered.

**Funding:**

Up to three (3) Watkins Breakthrough Awards will be made based on the ambition of the proposal, its likely impact on health or health care, the size of the proposed project, the proposed funder, and the likelihood of the faculty and research team to secure the award.

\$100,000 will be awarded upon receipt of the Watkins Breakthrough Award. The rest will be awarded when the Notice of Award for the extramurally funded grant is received, with 4% of the annual total costs of the award being paid each year of the grant, up to a maximum award of \$1 million over the course of the grant (the size of awards will be adjusted if IER is reduced substantially because more than 10% of the grant is subcontracted). For example, a NIH award with \$2M/y in total costs (and all work performed at UAB) would lead to an award of \$80,000/y to the PI and research team.

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### The Dr. Levi Watkins, Jr. Breakthrough Award for Research that Transforms Health

#### **Areas of Interest:**

Breakthrough Awards will be given for research in people that aims ultimately to improve the prevention, diagnosis, or management of disease. The research questions will address either of two general topics: (1) the efficacy, effectiveness, and/or efficiency of specific maneuvers to improve the prevention, diagnosis, or management of disease, or (2) information that will inform studies of efficacy, effectiveness, and/or efficiency. For example, an application for a Breakthrough Award might address the question, "What is the effect of a program to promote physical activity on the incidence of cognitive impairment in white people and black people in the Deep South?", or the question, "What is the association of past and present physical activity with cognitive impairment in white people and black people in the Deep South?" The research subjects will be people, with data gathered either from individuals or from existing data sources. The research methods may include those of epidemiology, biostatistics, economics, informatics, social and behavioral sciences, implementation sciences, health services research, or other relevant disciplines.

The RFA is agnostic to the disease or problem being investigated. Proposals may address research problems in any disease area (e.g., cancer, heart disease, dementia, diabetes, an infectious disease, obesity, etc) or in population health (e.g., disparities in health or health care, screening, or prevention).

#### **Submission Guidelines:**

Applications of no more than 5 pages should be submitted in the SOM portal by 5:00 pm, Monday, March 1, 2021. The application should describe the long-term goals, the specific aims, background and rationale for the proposal, a synopsis of methods, and a statement of the impact of the research if funded. Special considerations about the likelihood of funding based on the funder's priorities should also be addressed. The CV(s) and Other Support pages of the lead faculty (PI) and of up to 3 other key faculty should accompany the proposal. A separate addendum (1 page) should state the applicant's current plan for applications for extramural funding independent of this application, and how the award and proposed application will multiply the investigator's current funding and planned proposals.

- Link to submit application:  
<https://apps.medicine.uab.edu/funding/WatkinsApplication.asp>
- Cover Page
  - Title of project
  - Investigators names
  - Budget amount requested
  - Duration of award
  - Abstract of proposed work
  - Signatures of investigators
- Key Personnel
  - Budget
  - Budget Justification
  - NIH Biosketches (*for lead PI and up to 3 other key faculty*)
  - Other Support (*for lead PI and up to 3 other key faculty*)
- Research Proposal
  - Five (5) pages
  - 1 inch margins
  - Single spaced
  - Arial 11 font (except tables)
- Addendum
  - One (1) page
  - 1 inch margins
  - Single spaced
  - Arial 11 font

#### **DEADLINE:**

**March 1, 2021**

**5:00 PM**

**APPLICATION**

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**Naming**

This Award is named for an exemplar of American medicine., Dr. Levi Watkins, Jr.

Dr. Levi Watkins, Jr., grew up in Montgomery, Alabama and attended and graduated from Vanderbilt's School of Medicine after being denied admittance to the University of Alabama School of Medicine in 1966. He trained at Johns Hopkins and Harvard, was the first black chief resident in heart surgery at Hopkins and the first surgeon to implant an automatic heart defibrillator in February 1980. He had a distinguished career on the faculty at Hopkins.

**Frequently Asked Questions**

1. Can faculty salary support be requested?  
*No, only support for non-faculty personnel can be requested.*
2. If the investigators are proposing a project or experiments that require IRB, IACUC, FDA approval (IND approval) before the project can begin, can they use the JIT "option" and not start the regulatory paperwork unless the project is chosen for funding?  
*Yes.*
3. Can the investigator request pilot funding for projects that will be submitted to non-NIH entities for funding?  
*Yes. The investigator can send applications to other federal agencies (i.e. DOD, DARPA, NSF etc.) or foundations, however highly competitive applications that are targeted to NIH are preferred.*
4. Can NIH budget forms and NIH biosketch be used for this application?  
*Yes.*
5. Are the proposals required to go through OSP?  
*No.*

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**Schedule:**

December 2, 2020	Announcement
March 1, 2021	Deadline for Full Application Submission
April 9, 2021	Notification of Awards
April 15, 2021	Funding Start Date
<i>February 28, 2022</i>	<i>Deadline for Submission of Extramural Grant</i> <i>*A later deadline may be approved by the SOM in accordance with the deadlines of the funding agency.</i>

**Questions regarding scientific issues should be addressed to:**

Seth Landefeld, MD  
 Professor and Chair, DOM, SOM  
 Phone: 205.934.7700  
 Email: sethlandefeld@uab.edu

Etty (Tika) Benveniste, PhD  
 Senior Vice Dean for Basic Sciences, SOM  
 Phone: 205.934.7667  
 Email: tika@uab.edu

**Questions regarding application issues should be addressed to:**

Jenna Pate, MSHA, MSHQS  
 Data Analyst  
 Phone: 205.934.6654  
 Email: somresearch@uab.edu

**Selwyn M. Vickers, MD**  
 Senior Vice President for Medicine  
 and Dean, UAB SOM

**Seth Landefeld, MD**  
 Professor and Chair, DOM, SOM

**Etty (Tika) Benveniste, PhD**  
 Senior Vice Dean for  
 Basic Sciences, SOM