



Pilot Projects as Catalysts for Research Initiatives

Evaluating and Improving the NJ ACTS Pilot Program



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Abstract

Pilot grants are financial investments given out by Clinical and Translational Science Award (CTSA) hubs to facilitate new clinical and translational research and science. NJ ACTS is one of 65 CTSA hubs. For this project, the goal was to evaluate CTSA pilot grants across hubs to see how NJ ACTS operates in comparison, and potentially propose changes.

Methods/Approach

Initial research on CTSA pilot award programs was conducted using the CTSA Search Solutions tool (developed at NJ ACTS), and the data was compiled and analyzed using Excel. Surveys created in REDCap were distributed to colleagues at all CTSA hubs to gather additional information and thoughts on pilots. The data was collated to see how NJ ACTs compares to other pilot programs.

Acknowledgments

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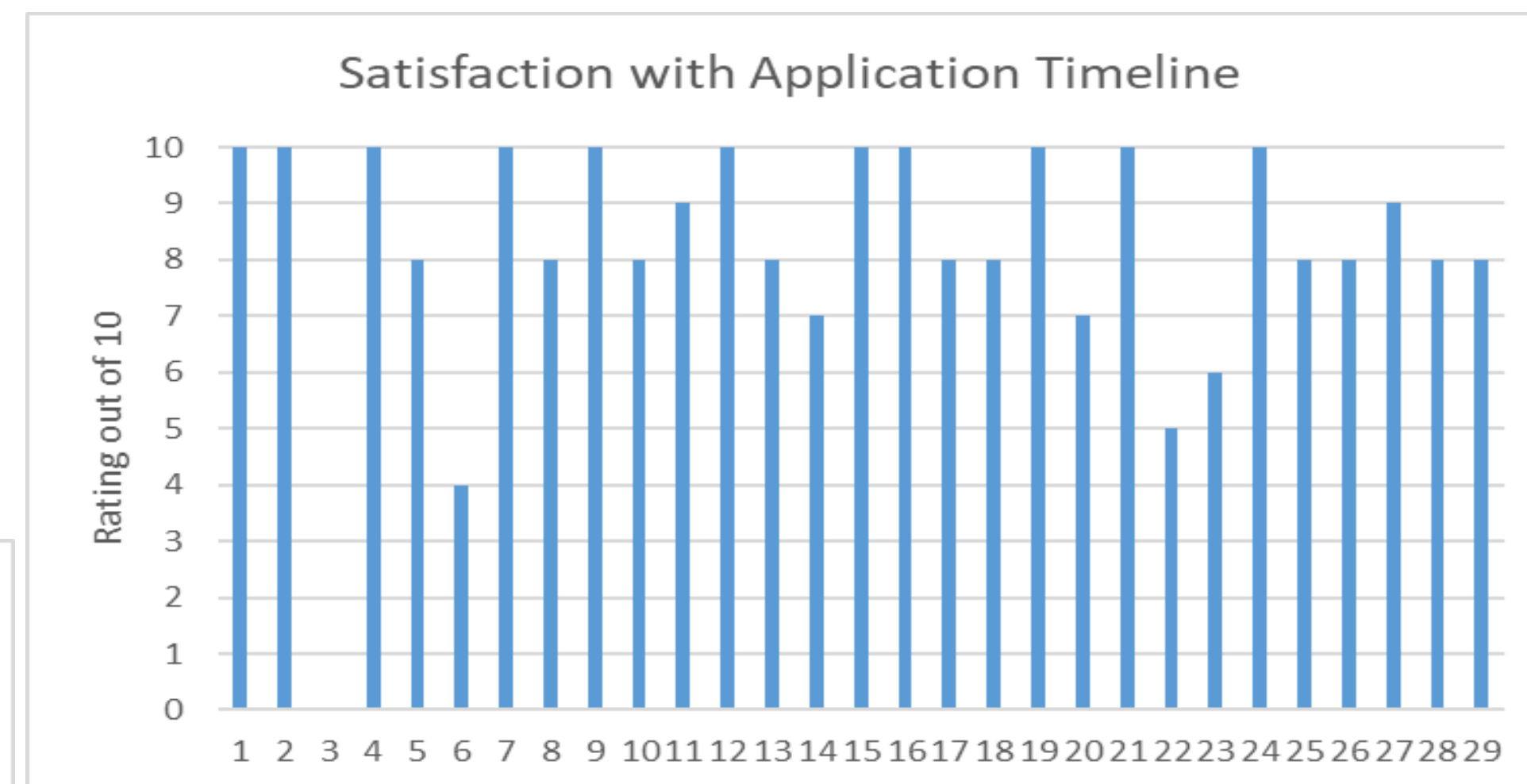
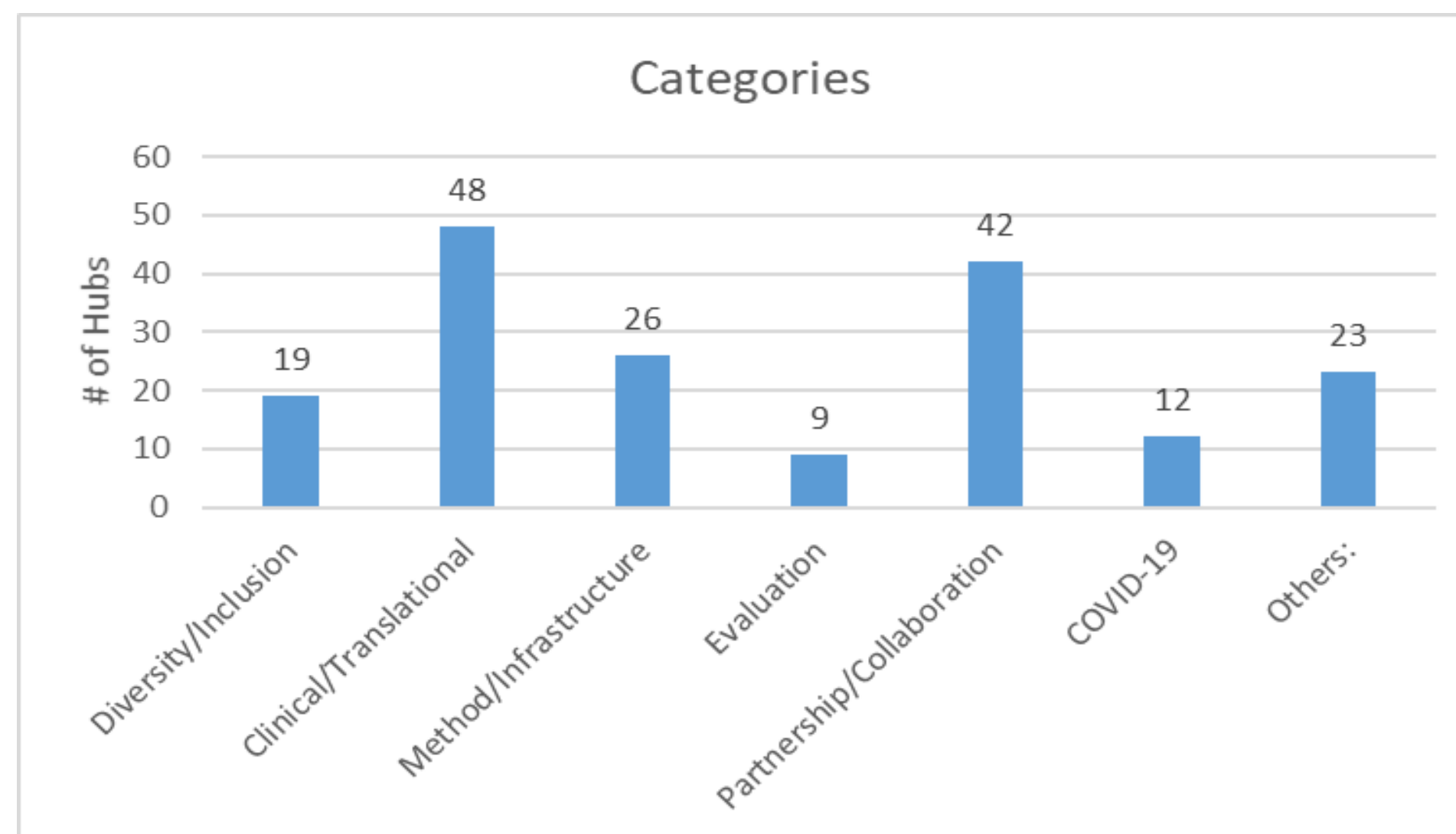
<https://njacts.rbhs.rutgers.edu/>

CTSA Search Solutions: <https://ctsa-search.rutgers.edu/search/>

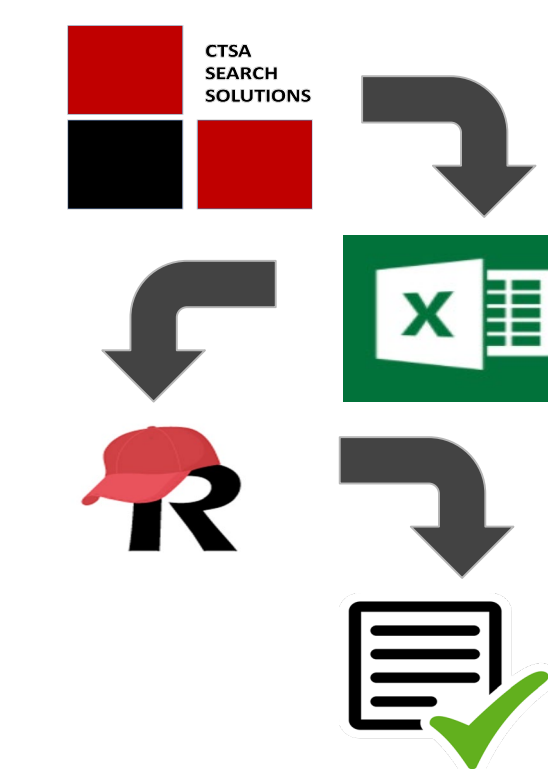
Results

NJ ACTS utilizes REDCap to collect applications, as do 14 other CTSA hubs. Surveys show NJ ACTS is following similar processes for choosing categories to fund awards. Clinical/Translational Innovation categories are shared with 47 institutions, Methodology/ Infrastructure categories are shared with 25 institutions, and Partnership/Collaboration categories are shared with 41 institutions (see below). NJ ACTS requires collaboration from multiple institutions, as do 28 other hubs.

Institution	Letter of Intent		Application Due	Time between LOI and Application
	Required?	Date	Date	
Totals/Averages:	25	18-Jul	26-Aug	39
Rutgers University	YES	19-Mar	16-Apr	28



Overall, surveys also show NJ ACTS is following similar processes for letter of intent and application due dates (see above) and having a standing review committee. NJ ACTS focused on COVID-19, which 11 other CTSA hubs did, as well.



Conclusions

As a relatively new CTSA hub, NJ ACTS is on the right track. It operates comparably regarding the number of awards and the review process. It does not, however, have a public notification of award date, and notifications tend to go out relatively late. Using the survey data, NJ ACTS can implement modest changes, better serving its scientific community. The methods shown here can be utilized by any hub to understand how they compare and can implement changes to improve their pilot programs.