

Flexible Funding Support for Early Career Investigators

Implementation and Outcomes

Health Research Alliance Members Meeting
October 17, 2023

Charles A. King Trust Postdoctoral Research Fellowship

Mission:

To “support and promote the investigation of human disease and the alleviation of human suffering through improved treatment.”

AWARD SUMMARY

Award Amount:	Ranging from \$194,100 to \$215,000 total, inclusive of a \$25,000 annual flexible expense allowance..
Award Duration:	Two-Years
Eligibility:	Who: Senior postdoctoral researchers and mentored clinician-scientists (MD, DO or equivalent). Where: Working in the state of Massachusetts.
Research Focus:	Basic and Preclinical Science & Clinical and Implementation Research



Charles A. King Trust Postdoctoral Research Fellowship

Goal:

Empower postdoctoral fellows to overcome common research and career hurdles *through flexible funding*

Considerations:

- Support research-related costs and work/life balance
- Regional cost of living

Pilot Approach:

- Increase base pay rate
- Add fringe allowance (10%)
- Add \$25,000 flexible discretionary funding

Preliminary Evidence of Success:

- Increase in applications received
- Greater institutional representation
- Positive reviewer feedback



King Trust: Empowering Postdoctoral Fellows

**Today's
Discussion:**

Implementation

Pilot Findings

Opportunities for Iteration



Grant Cycle Implementation and Evaluation

How we did this



Communication

Funding Announcements
Terms of the Award
Office Hours



Due Diligence

Checking Budgets & Requests
Follow-Up as Necessary

How we measured success



Understanding Funding Use

How are funds proposed for use?
How else the work is supported?
Does this change as an award progresses?
Understanding salary needs



Assessing Feedback

Applicant Surveys
Awardee Interviews
Reviewer Feedback
Institutional Representation



Opportunities for Improvement



Communication

Funding Announcements
Terms of the Award
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Due Diligence

Checking Budgets & Requests
Follow-Up as Necessary

Increased Communication

- Intention of the purpose of the flexible funding
- Define the term “flexible” and how funds can be used

Increased Support for 1st Time Applicants

- First time applicants may need assistance in constructing budgets in navigating Offices of Sponsored Programs



Opportunities for Improvement



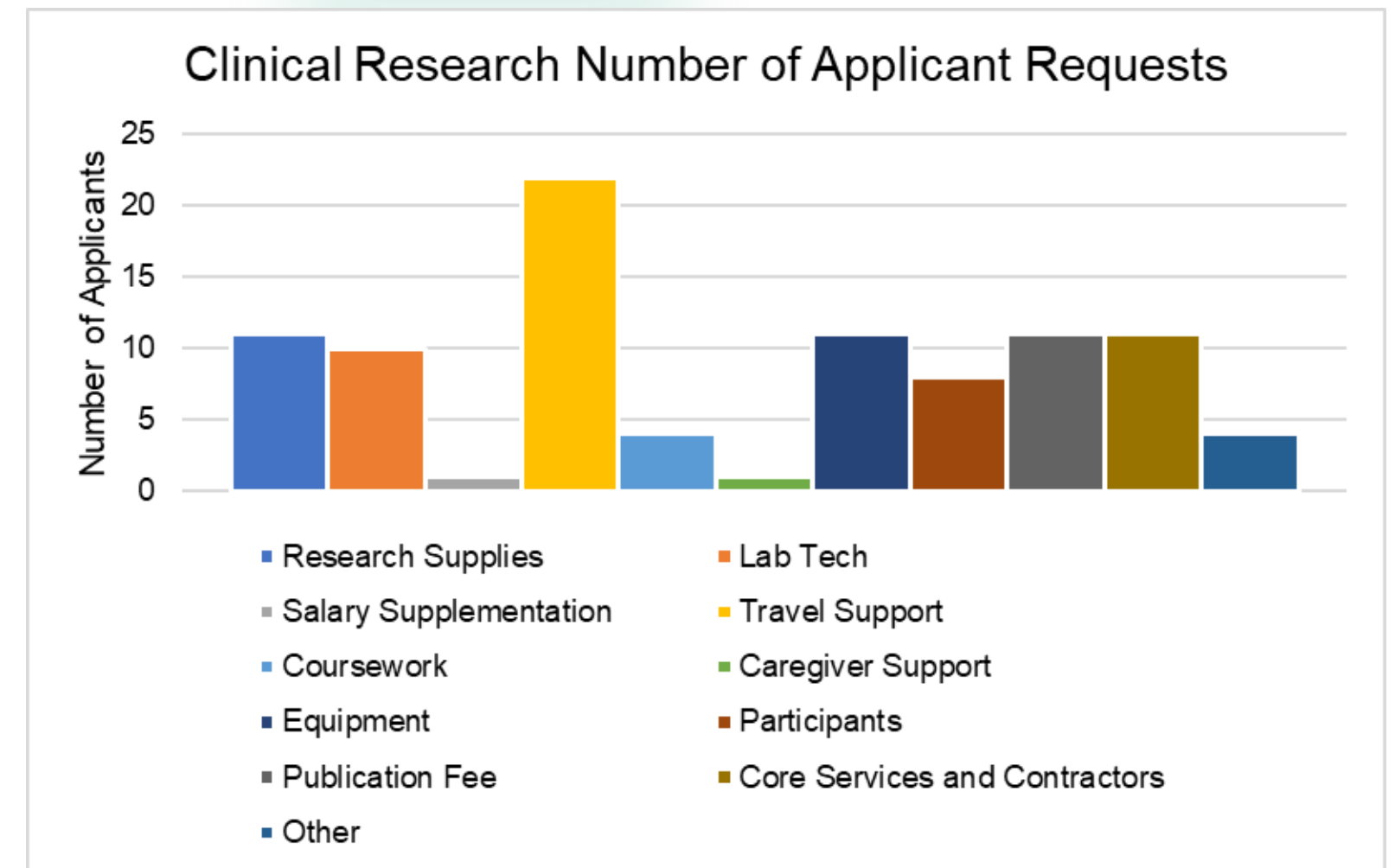
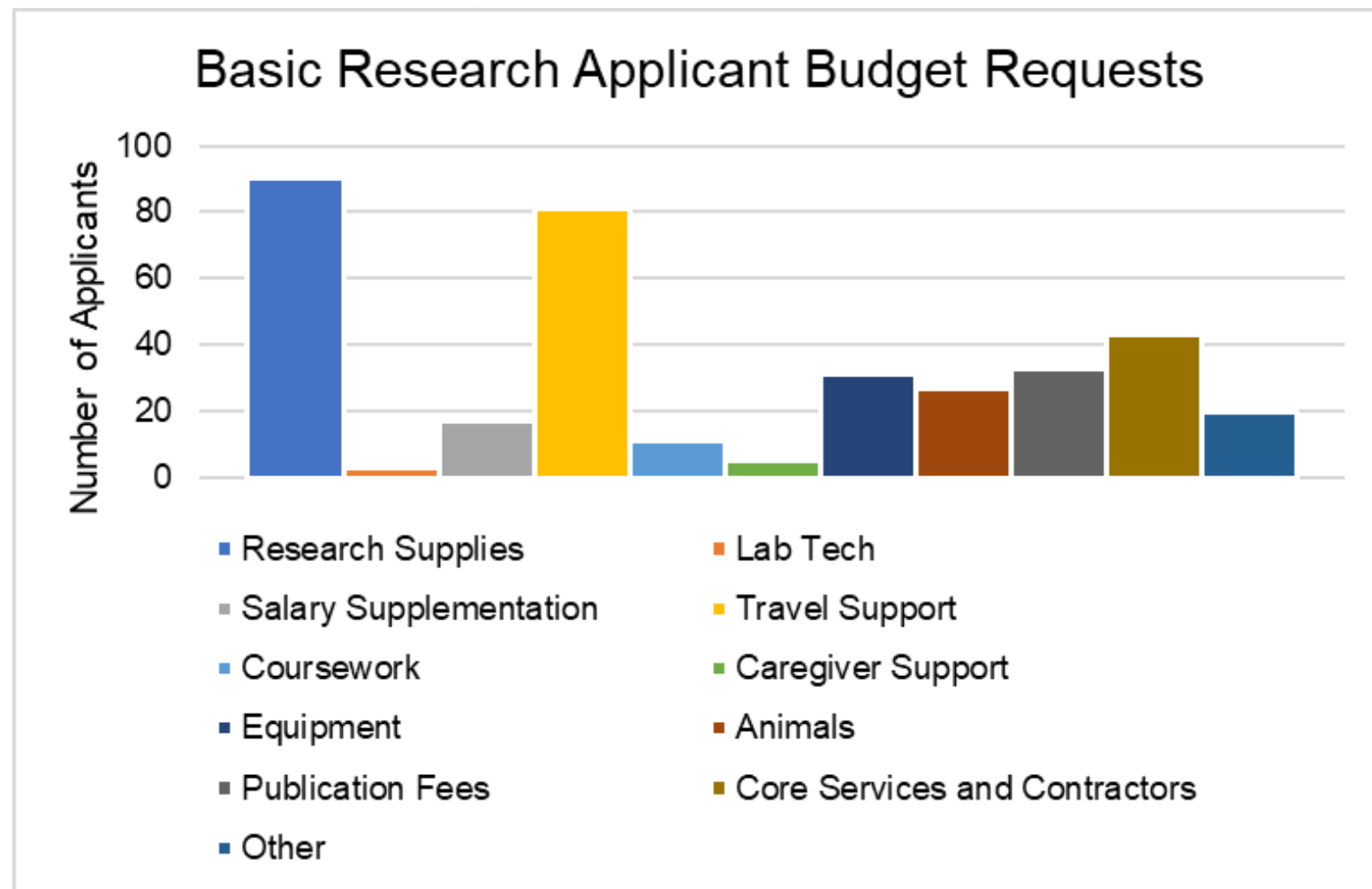
Understanding Funding Use

How are funds proposed for use?
 How else the work is supported?
 Does this change as an award progresses?
 Understanding salary needs



Assessing Feedback

Applicant Surveys
 Awardee Interviews
 Reviewer Feedback
 Institutional Representation

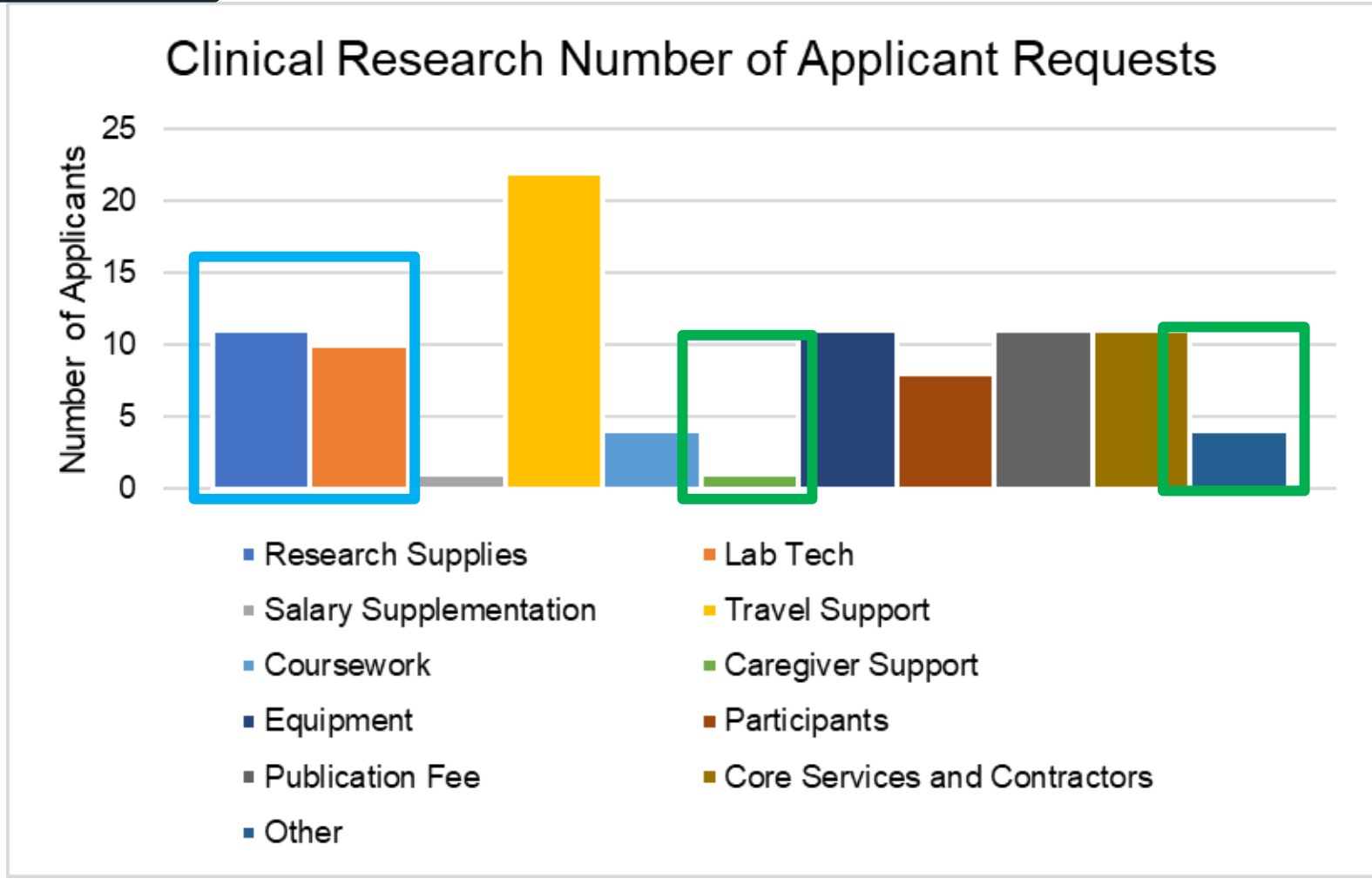
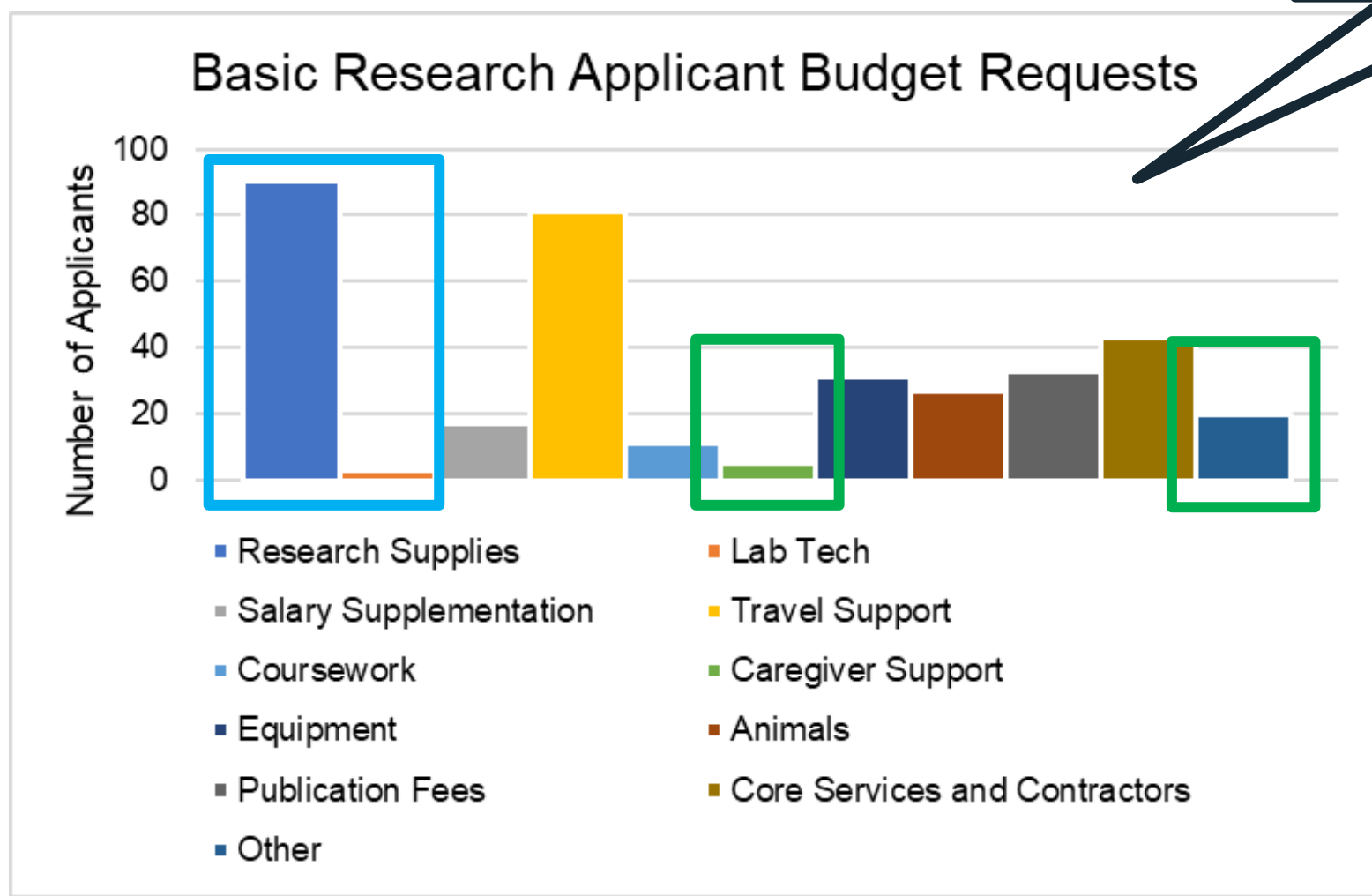


Opportunities for Improvement

Learned Lesson:
Expect requests that are tailored to the project and research path needs

Additional Information Needed:
Are there institutional restrictions?
Awareness of applicants?

Opportunity for Iteration:
Follow up with applicants to understand rationale



Successes and Next Steps

Continue flexible funding for postdoctoral fellows

Program Iteration

Provide applicant assistance

Increase communication

Request budget rationale

Ask for total compensation

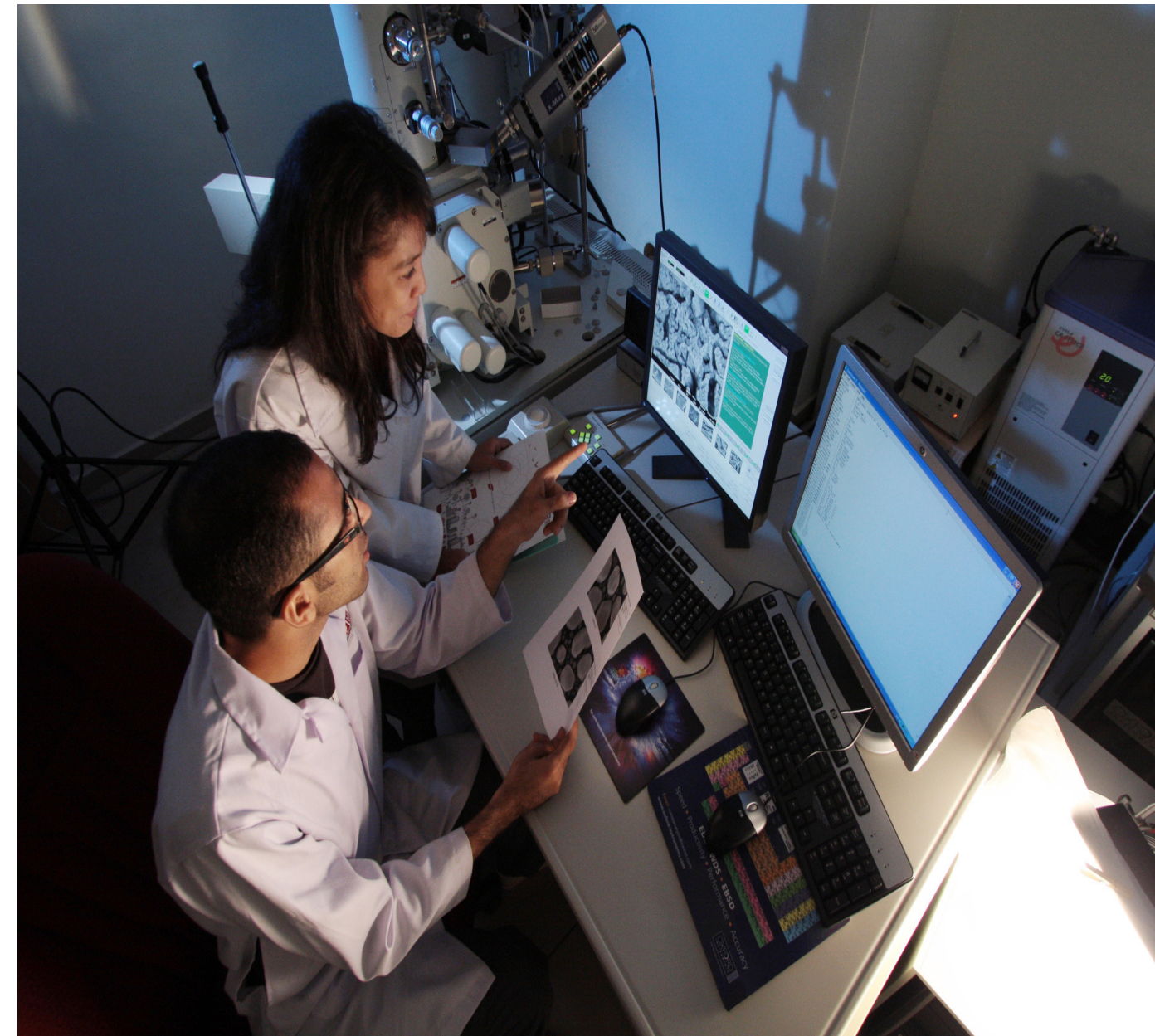
Evaluation

Application rates & institutional representation

Applicant & Awardee feedback

Funding expenditures

Determine research related salary support



Thank you!
