



Call for  
**'Expressions of Interest'**

to join the  
Cochrane US Network

December 2018

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# 1 Introduction

An internal review of Cochrane's structures carried out in 2016 highlighted that in order for the organization to achieve its ambitious [Strategy to 2020 goals and objectives](#) a single Center approach for a country the size of the US has many limitations, and that a Network of multiple groups is a better model to deliver a wider range and expanded scale of Cochrane activities, share collaboration across and between institutions, and create greater impact of that work in diverse regions and different contexts. Following the closure earlier this year of the US Cochrane Center at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, Baltimore, there is an opportunity to launch a new chapter in Cochrane's activities in the United States by establishing a new collaborative Network along these lines.

An initial meeting to discuss the formation of a Cochrane US Network took place at the Cochrane Colloquium in Edinburgh in September 2018, **organised by Cochrane's Central Executive** and the existing Cochrane US West Associate Center at the Oregon Health Sciences University (OHSU). A two-day strategic planning meeting held in Fort Worth in October (hosted by the Texas Christian University) allowed for more in-depth discussion and planning, and participants concluded that a Cochrane US Network would strengthen evidence-informed health care and decision making in the US and agreed to establish one as soon as possible ([see the meeting report](#)).

It was agreed at the meeting that the Cochrane Central Executive Team will develop and publish an open call for 'Expressions of Interest' to allow institutions involved in the planning so far, and those who have not yet been involved, to express their interest in joining or supporting the Network.

## 2 Aim

The aim of this call for 'Expressions of Interest' is to invite US-based institutions of different kinds to indicate their interest to support and/or join and become part of a new Cochrane US Network.

**This is not a 'one-time' call.** The Cochrane US Network will be an open Network; and institutions that are not in a position to apply to the current call will be able to apply to join the Network, or support it in mutually beneficial ways, at a later stage.

## 3 Responsibilities of institutions joining the Cochrane US Network

The functions of Cochrane's Geographically-oriented Groups (of which the Cochrane US Network is one) have been established by the organization and are described [here](#). A Cochrane single country Network is expected to deliver (to some degree) all of the relevant functions set out. These functions are broken down into four tiers, so that institutions can begin their Cochrane work at a level that best meets their interests, capabilities and resources.

Tier 1 functions are those essential functions to be fulfilled by any Cochrane geographic Group:

- To promote Cochrane and its work;
- To disseminate Cochrane reviews locally; and

- To support and develop the community of Cochrane members in the locality/region/country.

These functions are performed by accredited Cochrane 'Affiliates'.

Tier 2 functions are performed by Cochrane 'Associate Centres' (in addition to Tier 1 functions). They cover:

- To build local partnerships with key stakeholders;
- **To contribute to Cochrane's priority setting work (in review production and knowledge translation outputs);**
- To support Cochrane authors in review production and/or build capacity of stakeholders for use of evidence synthesis;
- To hold local events; and
- **To be Cochrane's official 'Representatives' in a local/regional or country setting.**

Tier 3 functions are normally performed by Cochrane 'Centres' (in addition to Tier 1 and Tier 2 functions).. They cover:

- To act as a coordinating Center for Cochrane activities;
- To expand and diversify the funding base of Cochrane work in the geographic space;
- **To maintain an advocacy programme (in support of Cochrane's central Advocacy strategy and plans);** and
- To undertake or contribute to methodological or other research linked to synthesized evidence production or use.

Tier 4 functions are voluntary additional functions which can be performed by any Cochrane Group of any size. They involve:

- To undertake additional knowledge translation initiatives;
- **To support the work of Cochrane's consumer network in the geographic area;**
- To support or lead translation initiatives (not relevant in the US); and
- To conduct searching for Randomised Control Trials (RCTs) of local sources (especially non-English sources – not likely to be relevant in the US).

The Cochrane US Network will not have one national Center, but will instead be made up by Associate Centers and Affiliates. Tier 3 and 4 functions are therefore not mandatory for any institution responding to this Expression of Interest, but institutions are free to indicate their interest in working on and contributing to any of **the Network's** Tier 3 and 4 functions.

Participants in the Fort Worth strategic planning meeting highlighted several priorities for the Cochrane US Network, once it is established<sup>1</sup>, to meet the health and healthcare needs in the US. These include:

- Knowledge Translation (also known in the US as Dissemination and Implementation) including:
  - External stakeholder engagement
  - Collaborating with professional medical societies
  - Consumer engagement

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<sup>1</sup> The meeting also highlighted priorities for establishing the Cochrane US Network, including:

- Mapping current capacity amongst US institutions interested in joining the Network;
- Defining the Network's **intended mission and impact (strategic planning, monitoring and evaluation);**
- Ensuring effective communication and engagement between Cochrane US Network members (including regular Network meetings); and
- Recruiting a US Network Coordinator to facilitate and support its work.

- Social media advocacy and outreach.
- Training and education for systematic review and evidence-based medicine.
- Fundraising.

Institutions responding to this call are encouraged to reflect on their potential contribution to contribute to the Network's work in one or more of these focus areas.

## 4 Responsibilities of Cochrane's Central Executive Team to the Cochrane US Network

The detailed responsibilities of Cochrane's Central Executive in supporting Cochrane's geographic-oriented Groups are outlined [here](#).

Cochrane will establish Collaboration Agreements with the Associate Centres and Affiliates forming the Cochrane US Network, outlining the responsibilities of parties towards the work of the Network. The current template Collaboration Agreement for Centres can be found [here](#).

## 5 Eligibility and Assessment criteria

Institutions and organizations are eligible to submit their Expression of Interest (individuals are advised to visit the [Join Cochrane pages](#) on our website to find ways in which they can contribute to our work) which:

- Are based in the USA;
- Have demonstrable skills, experience and resources in (the various components of) producing and using evidence for informed decision making in health and healthcare;
- Are committed to contribute to the Cochrane US Network, demonstrated by activities the institution proposes to contribute;
- Have no conflict of interest. For Cochrane's policy on conflict of interest for Cochrane Groups see: <https://community.cochrane.org/organizational-info/resources/policies/conflict-interest-policy-cochrane-groups>

An institution or organization may wish to support or contribute to the work of Cochrane and the Cochrane US Network without becoming a recognized Affiliate or Associate Center in the Network. This is welcomed as the Network will have a range of stakeholder partnerships and support arrangements, and these relationships can be developed on a more ad hoc basis. Institutions and organizations should **highlight their preference in their 'Expressions of Interest' document.**

All 'Expressions of Interest' for institutions or organizations seeking to become a Cochrane Affiliate or Associate Center member of the Cochrane US Network will be assessed against the eligibility criteria. All eligibility criteria need to be fulfilled. Multiple expressions of interest from one institution will not be accepted (multiple departments within one institution are encouraged to submit one 'Expression of Interest').

**Organizations and institutions are welcome to discuss their 'Expressions of Interest' with Sylvia de Haan, Senior Advisor (Centres, Partnerships & Fundraising – [sdehaan@cochrane.org](mailto:sdehaan@cochrane.org)) or Jeanne-Marie Guise**

(Co-Director, US Cochrane West – [guisej@ohsu.edu](mailto:guisej@ohsu.edu)) if they have any questions or require further information before they submit them.

## 6 Review process

The review process of the **'Expressions of Interest'** will be led by **Cochrane's** CEO Office. The review will be supported by the Cochrane US West Associate Center and other selected Cochrane collaborators. Institutions not invited to join the Cochrane US Network, or at a level they have not applied for (for instance, as an Affiliate not an Associate Center), may ask for the decision to be re-assessed by the Chief Executive Officer.

## 7 Timelines

To express your **'Expression of Interest'**, please complete an:

- Application form
- Strategic plan for an Associate Centre or Affiliate

Your application should be complemented by:

- A letter of support from your institution or organization;
- A signed **'Conflict of Interest'** statement for the primary leader(s)/contact(s) of the proposed Associate Center or Affiliate.

Please send the complete documentation to [Sylvia de Haan](#) by 31 January 2019.

The applications will be reviewed by February 28, 2019. All institutions will be contacted in early March 2019 regarding the outcome of the review process and information regarding next steps.