

[COVID Information Commons \(CIC\) Research Lightning Talk](#)



Transcript of a Presentation by Florence Hudson (Columbia University), February 2022

Title: [CIC-E: COVID Information Commons Extension for Pandemic Recovery](#)

[Florence Hudson CIC Database Profile](#)

NSF Award #: [2139391](#)

[Youtube Recording with Slides](#)

[February 2022 CIC Webinar Information](#)

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Transcript

Florence Hudson:

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So the COVID Information Commons actually began in 2020, similar to when we all became aware of COVID-19 and had to deal with it. So when we created the COVID Information Commons it was requested that we create a single portal so that all the NSF awards related to COVID could be found easily. At the time they were RAPID awards being given out, RAPID response awards. When they initially contacted us in March of 2020, we looked it up and there were only 32 awards at the time, they were COVID RAPIDS. Now there are many. So they asked us to create this portal, which we did which quickly became a community. We kicked it off in July of 2020 and we had about 170 people that joined the event, which really surprised us. What was also surprising and wonderful is that we had 42 PIs that had NSF COVID awards asked to present their research, which was great. So we immediately said well welcome to the COVID Info Commons portal and community. We will have these webinars until you're all done presenting and that hasn't happened. And there are more awards being given out.

So we actually have a few different features as Lauren is showing, thank you. We currently have the NSF COVID awards and PI database, when we - about a year ago we had about 990 awards for the end of last year. Now with our COVID Info Commons Extension, we actually update the corpus every month, and now there are 1,770 awards, all NSF at this point. We invite NSF and NIH speakers PIs to present on these webinars and our plan is to add the NIH COVID awards to the corpus in the second quarter of this year. And that's part of the extension program that we have going on. There's also a machine learning maps

tool, you could see the blue bar in the middle - click for coded research explore ML maps which is a machine learning based clustering technology that clusters the awards so you can see them by category, and there's a lot of information that all the PI videos are in there and Meet the Researchers. We're going to be announcing a new COVID Info Commons student paper challenge in a couple of months. We had one this past year, and this is really a community for all of you to collaborate as we combat COVID-19 in 2022 still and then look to the future. So we're very grateful for the funding from the NSF convergence accelerator program who funded the initial RAPID award in the extension that we received in October. And as Lauren mentioned we at the Northeast Hub have been leading this effort but we work collaboratively with the other three NSF big data innovation hubs in the Midwest, the South and the West. So, thank you so much Lauren.

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Lauren Close:

Thank you Florence and I wanted to take a moment to just expand on some of the things that you touched on just now, specifically about the COVID Extension award that we received in October. [clears throat] Excuse me, so we're very excited about this new initiative and wanted to talk about it quite briefly before we head over to the speaker presentations.

So as of October last year the CIC received an additional two million dollars in funding from the NSF to support our new COVID Information Commons Extension for Pandemic Recovery Program.

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And as Florence noted the CIC was initially established in May of 2020 to facilitate information sharing, collaboration across NSF funded COVID research efforts. And by extending the CIC effort to include these pandemic recovery phases. [clears throat]

Florence:

Lauren, I can take over if you need me to, we've both been going through coughing - just let me know.

Lauren:

Thank you, yeah I don't know what it is just a small cold. But in any case, what I was gonna say is by extending the CIC effort to include this pandemic recovery phase the extension will reach an even greater audience - that's our hope to reach a more diverse community of COVID-19 researchers. And this would potentially include NIH or CDC researchers, including those that are funded through the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021.

So I've included in this slide just some information about the various tasks and projects that we're working on as part of the CIC-E award. Some items to note in particular are that we've increased the number of awards in our new database - this has just been updated today to 1,770, which is really exciting, it's a big jump from where we were earlier this year. Additionally, we're developing new

resources to encourage COVID PIs to find new collaboration opportunities across disciplines and that's obviously a key function of our webinar event today for example. And as Florence noted, we're creating new student challenges programs and opportunities to really bolster that next generation of scientists and grow their interest in COVID health research and in data science.

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So regarding those awards that we mentioned, we brought into our team this year - who's also here in the webinar with us today, Ryan Scherle, who is our lead technical developer. Ryan and our support team at Columbia have made really fantastic progress in the CIC-E since even October. So we now offer the database to the public for for just under 1,800 award records you can use our database to search NSF awards related specifically to the coronavirus, but in the coming months we'll be adding awards on related adjacent topics which may include pandemics broadly, zoonoses, disaster management, etc. And in the second quarter of this year we're going to add additional NIH research awards also related to the coronavirus. Again we're just trying to expand this database to be as useful as possible to the community. So we'll be pulling in feedback from PIs whose work is featured in our CIC database, so please keep an eye out for those details, we'll be doing a survey on how we can best help you find this crucial information.

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So in the coming months we'll also be expanding the CIC's digital events offerings. We've received some feedback from the community already about what opportunities and resources you'd like to see offered through the CIC. We're hearing that you would like us to offer more networking, collaboration opportunities, so we'll be facilitating those and stay tuned.

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And excitingly, I also want to briefly mention that we're working closely with Columbia University Libraries on an accessibility initiative for the CIC. This will allow us to make the content of webinars like this one accessible to a broader audience. And so with the help of our students and our volunteers we're in the process of transcribing our monthly webinars so that individuals with accessibility needs can read about this research, rather than just listen to it or watch the live stream. We're also beginning to translate those texts into Spanish and reach an even wider part of our community. In the coming months, we may also add American Sign Language overlays to those videos. And the goal overall is to make this space that we've already created open to an even greater public audience.

And so before I hand over the presentations today to the speakers I want to ask Florence - is there anything else we should you know promote or say about this really exciting CIC Extension?

Florence:

Thank you so much Lauren, thank you for creating such a comprehensive list of things.

So yeah, there are a couple of other things, one is that we do these monthly webinars. They've been multi-disciplinary to help us hear each other and see each other's thinking so we can work more collaboratively across different areas to bring better answers and newer answers to the forefront. The other thing we're looking at is creating some thematic events. And Kenia as our new CIC Program Manager, actually in her interview process she even brought this up, and so we discussed it with NSF yesterday in our monthly call with them, and they really like the idea of, you know, let's give it a try like if we have a special theme. So if any of you have ideas on like one of these CIC webinars that we could do maybe in April or May, if there is a thematic area you would like us to focus on, either have like some type of presenter we bring in or it's you know the PIs in in that area that could be presenting their research. Let us know if there are any areas like that that of interest - that are of interest to you. Some of the things we've heard from PIs who presented before included vaccines from many different perspectives - vaccine hesitancy, you know social and behavioral implications of COVID and other things. So there are different areas we could go into as well as you know, zoonotics as compare - as an example. So you know if there are areas like that that you would like to to be one of the presenters or you think would be a good thematic discussion area we can have presenters and then like we do in these CIC webinars every month, spend, you know, like you know a third to a half of the time actually having the discussion around it and seeing where we can go forward together.

The other thing - two things I want to mention briefly, which are on the list that Lauren had was that as part of our CIC Extension, we're going to be creating a new metadata and data search and discovery mechanism. When you go into the CIC database now, in that area Lauren was highlighting with the award search, if you put in a keyword it goes against the corpus of the awards in the database. What we would like is that when you put your keyword in there or on the home page or something, Ryan is organizing for as their technical leader, is that you could actually go beyond the corpus of NSF awards. It will include the NIH awards, by the end of June is our plan. But also more broadly when you look at the COVID Info Commons you can see at the top here where it says Opportunities and Resources, when you go into there there are data sets groups and guides that we vet to make sure it looks like it's you know, legitimate information, but we would like to be able to crawl more of that and find information pertinent to you. As well as through the PI surveys where we ask them for additional information about their awards, we actually link to websites with the results of their research so what we want to do is create a more comprehensive metadata and data search and discovery mechanism. And we're going to be working with some of the Open Knowledge Network (OKN) projects in this area. Some of you may have gone to the NIH ODSS, for those of us who love acronyms, discussion last week where the National Institutes of Health from the Office of Data Science Strategy was talking about some of their new initiatives. So there's a lot of collaboration we can do in this space to bring the content you need to you so that's an important thing.

And then the other thing is that we're planning on doing an annual conference as part of the ongoing COVID Info Commons plan. And we're thinking that we would integrate the student paper challenge with that. So if you have any thoughts on that we were hoping to do it in person with the sine wave affiliated with COVID, we're thinking that's not a great idea, so we're probably going to do virtual. We may try something hybrid, but that'll be planned for later this year. So as we work through the four years that we're very grateful NSF has asked us to continue this effort, we want to bring to you what's most important to you and for this effort.

So feel free to engage with us, you can put it in the chat. I think Lauren has on a lot of the the slides we have info@covidinfocommons.net - that's our email address - go to the CIC website put it in there. There are a lot of ways to find us but we want to keep on working with you and we want to hear what you want so please continue to tell us thank you very much, Lauren.