

From Programs to Infrastructure: Building an Integrated Research Support Ecosystem in a College of Medicine

A practice-based case study in intentional organizational alignment

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WHY THE ECOSYSTEM

Research support is increasingly complex and often fragmented. Together, these challenges point to the need for a more connected infrastructure approach.

FRAGMENTATION: Fragmented research support can create inefficiency and make an increasingly complex research environment harder to navigate.<sup>1</sup>

WORKFORCE: A sustainable research enterprise requires intentional investment in workforce onboarding, development, communication, and career pathways.<sup>2</sup>

COORDINATION: Cross-functional coordination can reduce fragmentation and duplication while creating more consistent support and information sharing.<sup>3</sup>

INFRASTRUCTURE: Research capacity may be strengthened through multiple, complementary infrastructure investments rather than a single intervention.<sup>4</sup>

LISTEN FIRST

Our ecosystem began with research community voices. A college-wide survey of researchers and research teams identified needs for research navigation and grant development support, leading to dedicated roles in both areas and a broader shift toward connected research support.

OUR RESEARCH PURPOSE

Promote an environment that encourages excellence in transformative research by investing in people, fostering collaboration, and providing the infrastructure and support needed to advance health in Kentucky and beyond.

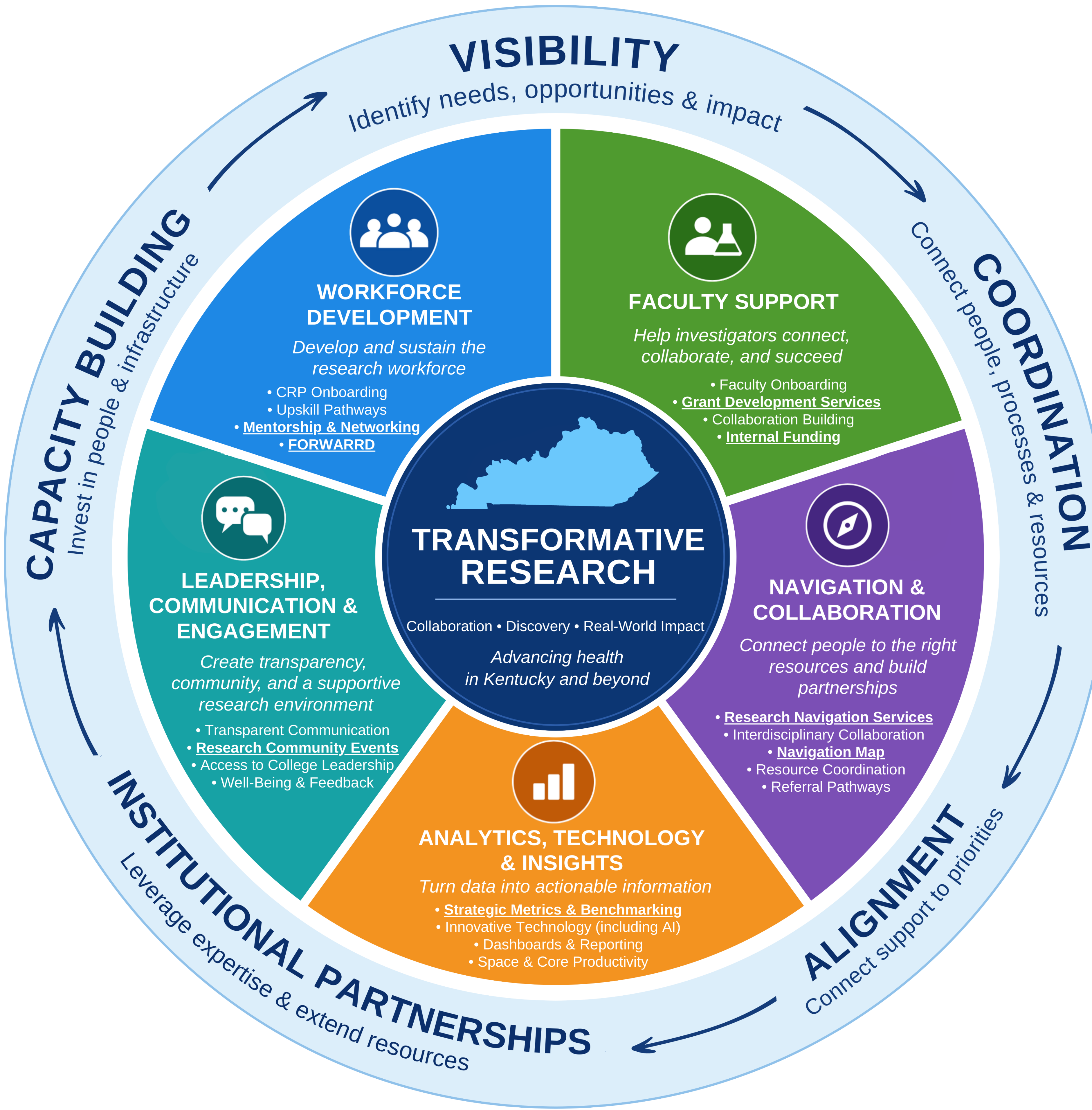
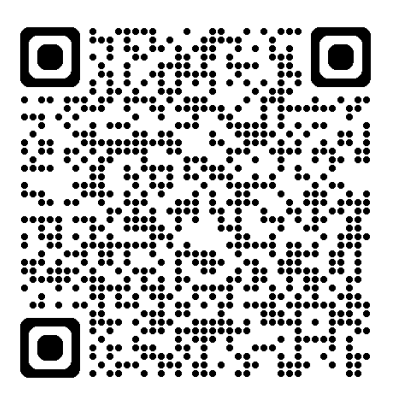
OUR RESEARCH LANDSCAPE

College of Medicine | FY2026

|                                   |                                                          |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| \$195M<br>Annual Sponsored Awards | 378<br>Principal Investigators                           |
| 923<br>Research Awards            | 201<br>Research Professionals Across 30+ Dept/Centers    |
| 889<br>Active Clinical Trials     | 6,672<br>Participants Enrolled in Active Clinical Trials |

AN ADAPTABLE RESEARCH SUPPORT ECOSYSTEM

Intentional connection turns individual programs into organizational infrastructure.



CONNECT with our College of Medicine Office of Research Team  
Scan the QR Code to explore the digital poster, linked resources, and COM Office of Research contacts.

THE ECOSYSTEM IN ACTION

College of Medicine | July 2024 – September 2026

|                                                        |                                                       |
|--------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| 57<br>Incoming Faculty Onboarding                      | 197<br>Research Navigation Assistance Requests        |
| 23<br>Research Staff Professional Development Sessions | 68<br>Department & Center Space Productivity Meetings |
| 130<br>Grant Development Consultations                 | 74<br>GURU Grant Writing Workshop Participants        |
| 54<br>Research Community Building Events               | 2,511<br>Research Navigation Map Views/Engagement     |

WHAT WE LEARNED

Integration can create more value than expansion. Connect and align what already exists before building something new.

Workforce development is research infrastructure. Invest in pathways to enter, learn, connect, lead, and grow.

Shared analytics turn visibility into decisions. Put actionable information in leaders' hands to identify needs, guide resources, and measure progress.

Relationships make the system work. Build trust through accessible communication, intentional engagement, and institutional partnerships.

REFERENCES

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2. Knapke JM, et al. J Clin Transl Sci. 2022;6(1):e81.  
3. Canevaro MA, et al. Acad Med. 2026;101(3):271–278.  
4. Seehusen DA, et al. Fam Med. 2023;55(6):367–374.

Disclaimer: The authors retain intellectual ownership and responsibility for the overall concept and intellectual content of this work, including the abstract, conceptual framework, poster content, interpretations, institutional data, and final design. OpenAI ChatGPT was used as a collaborative tool to support refinement and visual design.

TAKE IT HOME

A MODEL YOU CAN ADAPT: Use these questions to start the conversation at your institution.

