2020 Funding Opportunity Announcement

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Accelerating Impact for Hard to Treat Cancers Award

Children’s Cancer Research Fund (CCRF) is a national nonprofit committed to finding safer, more effective therapies for kids battling cancer. Thanks to donors and partners around the country, we have contributed $186 million to research, education and awareness, and quality-of-life programs for childhood cancer families. We believe kids deserve safer, less toxic treatments, and we’re committed to funding groundbreaking research and services that enhance healing and care.

With these research awards, we intend to support projects that enable the prevention, early detection, treatment, and improve outcomes of pediatric cancers that remain hard-to-treat.

Treatment success against hard-to-treat cancers has remained out of reach. This grant mechanism supports basic, clinical, and population studies. Projects may include pilot and feasibility studies; secondary analysis of existing data; small, self-contained research projects; development of research methodology; and development of new research technology.

For this funding announcement, hard-to-treat cancer is defined as 5-year survival less than 70% in an individual cancer (e.g. osteosarcoma, AML, DIPG), in a cancer with unfavorable behavior (e.g. relapse or metastasis), or in a molecular defined subtype (e.g. MLL rearranged leukemia, PAX3-FOXO1 rearranged RMS). Cancers with survival <70% in demographic groups defined by age, sex, or race/ethnicity may also qualify if a biologic hypothesis is being pursued.

Applicants must demonstrate that the cancer(s) they propose to study is consistent with this definition of "hard-to-treat" and is consistent with the scientific literature.

The following examples are possible topics:

- Research into the molecular and genetic basis of pediatric cancer risk and pathogenesis
- Therapeutic efficacy studies of new biologics in small or large animal models of pediatric cancer
- Development of “theranostic” molecular imaging methods for simultaneous diagnosis and treatment of pediatric cancer.
- Characterization of newly discovered genetic or epigenetic alterations in pediatric cancer.
- Pathways in the development of resistance to PD-1/PD-L1 targeted immunotherapies.

These examples are for illustrative purposes only and not meant to limit the range of possible proposals. Creativity is encouraged, so long as the proposal addresses a hard-to-treat cancer as defined above.
**Key Dates**

This funding announcement will use the following schedule:

- Funding announcement: Monday August 10, 2020
- LOI submission open: Monday August 31, 2020
- LOI submission deadline: Thursday September 17, 2020, noon Central time
- LOI applicants notified: Thursday October 15, 2020
- Due date for applications: Wednesday November 25, 2020, noon Central time
- Applicants notified: Week of February 15, 2021
- Awards start: April 1, 2021

All applicants should review all necessary materials using the appropriate templates and forms. Failure to comply with the provided instructions may result in administrative rejection of the application.

**Award Information**

- **Application types**: We will accept applications that are new or from a previous pilot study, and applications (R03, R21) that have been reviewed but not funded by National Institutes of Health (NIH).
- **Number of awards**: Up to 4 awards; maximum of $250,000 each may be funded
- **Award budget**: A budget for total costs of up to $125,000 per year may be requested
- **Award period**: Maximum project period is 24 months

Allowable direct costs include: Salaries, fringe benefits, supplies, sub-contracts, equipment, & travel

- Salary is capped using the current NIH guidance
- Travel: Project-related travel: As needed (must be fully justified); Up to $2,000 per year for conference travel
- Indirect costs of 10% are allowed
- All sub-contracts and collaborations must be described and well-justified
- Any equipment to be purchased with grant funds must be well-justified

**Award requirements:**

- Applicants must be PI-eligible at their sponsoring institution
- Awardees are required to commit at least 10 percent of their research effort each year to activities supported by this award
- Applicant U.S. citizenship is not a requirement
- Applications will be accepted only from US-based institutions
Call for Applications Requirements:

- Submission of a letter of intent (LOI) is required
- Follow all instructions and submit all required forms to avoid administrative rejection
- Applications may be rejected based on programmatic or administrative review
- Go to childrenscancer.org/awards for LOI/Application instructions and information on how to access the application submission system

We encourage applicants to contact CCRF staff with questions regarding eligibility requirements before submitting an LOI or application. Application questions should be submitted to grants@childrenscancer.org

Letters of Intent (LOI)

Submission of an LOI is required for all applications. LOIs should be limited to 2 pages (excluding biosketch).

LOIs will be peer reviewed and only those with sufficient merit will be invited to submit a full application. LOI reviews that receive an “unsure” rating will be discussed by the CCRF Research Advisory Committee who will make the final decision on invitations to submit full applications.

A submitted application must be substantially similar in focus to the eligibility requirements as described in the LOI.

LOIs and invited Applications must be submitted electronically using proposalCENTRAL. Go to childrenscancer.org/awards for LOI/Application instructions and information on how to access the application submission system.

Once an LOI is approved, the applicant will be notified and the application materials will be made accessible through the CCRF website.

The following components should be provided in 2 pages of the LOI (the 2 page limit does not include the biosketch):

1. Describe Principal Investigator current position and background
2. Provide a brief background of the research topic
3. Provide an abstract of the research proposal, including the significance, objective, hypotheses, specific aims, and methods to be employed
4. Applicants should describe how the proposal will address hard-to-treat cancers
5. Applicants should briefly describe their budget request
6. Attach an NIH biosketch
Resubmission of NIH unfunded applications

An original grant application submitted to NIH in 2018-2020 as an R03 (small grant) or R21 (exploratory/developmental research) is eligible under this funding announcement. An application not funded by NIH is eligible if the following conditions apply: have been issued a summary statement from a previous review; scored 20th percentile or better, or an impact score 3 or better. **An eligible applicant must register and submit an LOI.**
Research Grant Policies

Effective August 2020

1. Eligible Individuals (Principal Investigator)

Similar to NIH, any individual(s) with the skills, knowledge, and resources necessary to carry out the proposed research as the Principal Investigator (PI(s)) is invited to work with his/her organization to develop an application for support. The PI is one person responsible to the applicant organization for the scientific and technical direction of the project. Applicants must be PI eligible at their institution. Applicants need not be American citizens; however, they must have a paid appointment at an academic, medical, or research institution in the United States. Applicants cannot hold more than one CCRF grant at the same time.

2. Eligible Institutions and Responsibilities

Any nonprofit research institution based in the US is eligible to apply. CCRF grants are intended for nonprofit institutions located within the United States. CCRF research grants are not intended to cover the total costs of the proposed research. The institution is expected to provide facilities and administrative support. An applicant institution should have appropriate resources and infrastructure to support the proposed research, including:

- Adequate facilities and services to manage the award
- Fiscal and grants management infrastructure to support policies including protections for human and animal subjects (e.g., a sponsored-projects office or a contract with an IRB or IACUC).

Human Subjects or IACUC approval is required as a condition of grant funding.

To signify agreement with grant policies, a completed application must be signed by an authorizing official of the institution. The institution is responsible for verifying that all documentation related to the application and grant is correct, including all representations made by any named researcher (e.g. position or title).

It is the responsibility of the institution to immediately report to CCRF any action including recertification, loss of certification, breach of contract, misconduct, or change in employment status for a named researcher with the institution. This includes administrative leave, which may occur during the term of any award pertinent to the work described in the grant application.

All applicants should review the Funding Announcement Instructions, and complete all necessary materials using the appropriate templates and forms. Failure to comply with provided instructions may result in administrative rejection of the application.

Failure to abide by the terms above, or by any other CCRF policy or procedures, may result in suspension or cancellation of the grant, at the sole discretion of CCRF.
3. **Peer Review of Applications**

CCRF will conduct peer review of letters of intent (LOI) and full applications. LOIs with highest priority will be invited to submit a full application. Each peer review committee will include appropriate scientific experts. Reviewers will conduct an independent and confidential review. The top scoring applications will be recommended for funding. After considering the relative merit of the applications, the amount of available funds, and the CCRF objectives, the Research Advisory Committee will review the recommendations and the CCRF Board will approve grants for funding.

4. **Number of Applications**

Applicant organizations may submit more than one application, provided that each application is scientifically distinct. However, CCRF will accept up to one application per PI applicant.

5. **Resubmission of NIH unfunded applications**

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6. **Progress Reports and Final Reports**

Scientific progress reports should be submitted 6, 12, and 18 months after the grant is awarded. Both Final reports and progress reports are due within 60 days of the due date. Grantees should submit reports in a timely fashion or request an exception.

Each progress report should focus on the activity since the previous report. Financial reports of expenditures are due 12 months from the grant award date. The Final report should include details of all financial expenditures and a scientific report for the full grant period. Any extension will extend the 60 day due date.