

2021 Funding Opportunity Announcement

Originally published May 2021

Updated June 30, 2021 (updates are indicated in blue)

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 \$200 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 with the scientific literature.

Key Dates

This funding opportunity will use the following schedule:

Funding announcement	Tuesday, June 15, 2021
LOI submission open	Monday, June 28, 2021
LOI submission deadline	Thursday, July 15, 2021, noon Central time
LOI applicants notified	Friday, August 13, 2021
Due date for applications	Wednesday, September 15, 2021, noon Central time
Applicants notified	Week of November 15, 2021
Awards start	February 1, 2022

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 6 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 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's current position and background
2. Provide a brief summary 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.**

Children's Cancer Research Fund

Research Grant Policies

Effective June 2021

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 \$200 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 our 2021 research awards, we intend to support a variety of project areas including hard to treat cancers, cancer survivorship, and early career research awards. Specific details will be released in Funding Announcements.

1. Eligible Individuals (Principal Investigator)

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. Applicants need not be American citizens; however, they must have a paid appointment at an academic, medical, or research institution in the United States.

Anyone serving on the CCRF Research Advisory Committee is not eligible to apply for funding or to receive research support from a CCRF grant, for example as a co-investigator.

In general, the following positions may be designated as PIs in CCRF applications:

- All tenured and tenure-track Assistant, Associate, and Full Professors
- All Research Assistant Professors, Research Associate Professors, Research Professors, and Clinical Professors
- All Adjunct, Visiting, Emeritus, Lecturers or other faculty with have the approval of their Department and Dean of the relevant School or College
- Post-Doctoral Fellows and other trainees who have the approval from their Department may **only** apply for an Emerging Scientist Award

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. 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, an 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 PI 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. Data Sharing

Children's Cancer Research Fund is dedicated to data sharing and interoperability. Please describe the data generated by your research, how it will be [FAIR](#) (findable, accessible, interoperable, reusable), and your plan for sharing and dissemination. Data include any information generated through the research, including clinical data, sequencing data, real-world evidence, etc. As appropriate, please indicate what data standards will be used, and if none are available, how this will be addressed.

Please describe how the data will be shared both during and after the award. Awardees are encouraged to place data into a publicly accessible repository (e.g., dbGaP for genomics). Or describe your organization/campus data sharing policy.

Please also include a description of any protections for privacy and security, including any data governance considerations.

Discuss any intellectual property considerations and how they will be addressed. For any algorithms or tools developed, please discuss what software license will be leveraged and why. Finally, please describe your plan to share your research findings with the wider scientific community.

4. Peer Review of Applications

Each peer review committee includes leaders who are 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.

5. Scientific Merit Score

CCRF uses the scientific merit categories and rating scale similar to the NIH. Scientific merit scores are assigned by reviewers after evaluating applications in relation to specific grant criteria. Scientific merit scores are assigned according to the following scale:

Score	Descriptor	Strengths/Weaknesses
1	Exceptional	Extremely strong with negligible weaknesses
2	Outstanding	Extremely strong with negligible weaknesses
3	Excellent	Very strong with only some minor weaknesses
4	Very Good	Strong but with numerous minor weaknesses
5	Good	Strong with at least one moderate weakness
6	Satisfactory	Some strengths but also some moderate weaknesses
7	Fair	Some strengths but with at least one major weakness
8	Marginal	A few strengths and a few major weaknesses
9	Poor	Very few strengths and a few major weaknesses

Reviewers assign scores as whole numbers and base their rating on analysis of the proposed research in light of the review criteria. Reviewers are instructed to use the full range of scores. Applications are not compared with one another, but rather each is evaluated according to its potential for advancing the state of knowledge in its particular area.

6. Number of Applications

Applicant organizations may submit more than one application, provided that each application is scientifically distinct. However, CCRF will only accept one application from a PI each calendar year.

7. 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: it has been issued a summary statement from a previous review; scored 20th percentile or better, or an impact score 3 or better. An eligible applicant with an unfunded NIH application must register and submit an LOI.

8. NIH Salary Cap applies to CCRF grants

Budgets created for CCRF funding should adopt the NIH salary cap (currently \$199,300). A salary cap is defined as a maximum annual rate of salary for full-time effort that can be charged to an award.

9. Letters of Intent (LOI) process

Submission of an LOI is required for certain grant types – see specific Funding Announcement for complete details. LOIs will be reviewed in a 2-step process: CCRF staff will verify consistency with the application

requirements. If approved by program staff, LOIs will be peer reviewed. The top scoring LOIs will be invited to submit a full application. A submitted application must be substantially similar in focus to the eligibility requirements as described in the LOI, or will be rejected.

We encourage applicants to contact CCRF staff with questions regarding eligibility requirements before submission. Application questions should be submitted to grants@childrenscancer.org

Once an LOI applicant is invited to submit an application, the materials will be made accessible through a link on the CCRF website.

Applicants should review 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.

10. 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. Noncompliance may result in withholding of payments.

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 exception will extend the 60-day deadline.

11. Expenditures and Indirect Costs

Our research grants are not intended to cover the total costs of the proposed research. The institution is expected to provide facilities and administrative support. We allow indirect costs calculated as 10% of total direct costs.

12. No cost extension (NCE)

A no-cost extension (NCE) extends a research project beyond the original end date. Grantees must submit NCE requests, using the template provided by CCRF, at least two (2) months prior to the original end date. NCE requests should be emailed to grants@childrenscancer.org.

13. Use of embryonic stem cells and fetal tissue

CCRF does not fund research utilizing embryonic stem cells or fetal tissue.