



2025 Funding Opportunity Announcement

Published February 2025

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 \$235 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 opportunity, 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 (subject to change):

Funding Announcement	February 2025
LOI Submission Open	Monday, March 10, 2025
LOI Submission Deadline	Friday, April 4, 2025, noon Central Time
LOI Applicants Notified	June 2025
Due Date for Applications	Wednesday, July 9, 2025, noon Central Time
Applicants Notified on a rolling basis pending the availability of funds	January 2026
Awards Start	No later than June 2026

All applicants should review all necessary materials using the appropriate templates and forms. Failure to comply with the instructions provided 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 the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

Number of Awards

Funding of awards will be dependent on the availability of funds.

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 expenses.

- Salary is capped using the current NIH guidance
- Travel: project-related travel allowed as needed (must be fully justified); up to \$2,000 per year for conference travel
- Indirect costs of 10% of Direct costs 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 U.S. 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
- Please visit our website at www.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. Questions should be submitted to grants@childrenscancer.org

Letter of Intent (LOI)

All applicants are required to submit a Letter of Intent (LOI). The LOI should be 2 pages long, not including the bio sketch. LOIs will undergo peer review to assess alignment with the funding announcement. If approved, invited applications must be substantially similar in focus to the requirements described in the LOI. LOIs and applications must be submitted electronically using ProposalCentral.

The following components should be provided in 2 pages of the LOI (excluding the bio sketch):

1. Describe Principal Investigator's current position and background.
2. Provide a 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 justify their budget request.
6. Attach an NIH bio sketch.

Applicants will be notified if their LOI is approved, and the application materials will be made accessible through the CCRF website and ProposalCentral.

Please visit www.childrenscancer.org/awards for instructions and information on how to access the application submission system.

Resubmission of NIH Unfunded Applications

An original grant application submitted to NIH in 2021-2024 as an R03 (small grant) or R21 (exploratory/developmental research) is eligible under this funding announcement. An application not funded by the NIH is eligible if the following conditions apply; an issued summary statement from a previous review, scored 20th percentile or better, or an impact score of 3 or better. **An eligible applicant must register and submit an LOI.**

Research Grant Policies

Updated May 2023

With our research awards, we intend to support a variety of project areas including hard-to-treat cancers, cancer survivorship, and cancer disparities. Specific details will be released in funding announcements.

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 their organization to develop an application for support. Applicants need not be U.S. citizens; however, they must have a paid appointment at an academic, medical, or research institution in the United States.

Anyone serving on the Children's Cancer Research Fund 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 the approval of their department or Dean of the relevant school or college

Eligible Institutions and Responsibilities

Any nonprofit research institution based in the U.S. is eligible to apply. 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 protection for human and animal subjects (e.g., a sponsored projects office or 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 research (e.g., position or title).

The institution is responsible for immediately reporting to CCRF any action including recertification, loss 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.

Applicants must carefully review the funding announcement instructions and complete all required materials using the specified templates and forms. Non-compliance with the provided instructions may lead to administrative rejection of the application. Additionally, failure to adhere to these terms or any other CCRF policies or procedures may result in the suspension or cancellation of the grant, at CCRF's sole discretion.

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 includes any information generated through 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.

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.

Peer Review of Applications

Each peer review committee includes leaders who are appropriate scientific experts. Reviewers will conduct an independent and confidential review. The Research Advisory Committee at CCRF will then evaluate the highest-scoring applications, considering their relative merit, the available funding, and CCRF's objectives, and will provide recommendations. CCRF leaders will use these recommendations to make final decisions.

Scientific Merit Score

CCRF uses the scientific merit categories and rating scale similar to the NIH. Reviewers assign scientific merit scores based on their evaluation of applications against specific grant criteria.

Reviewers assign whole-number scores based on their analysis of the proposed research, considering the review criteria. They are instructed to use the full range of scores. Applications are evaluated individually, not compared to one another, with each assessed for its potential to advance knowledge in its field.

Number of Applications

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

NIH Salary Cap

Budgets created for CCRF funding should adopt the NIH salary cap (currently \$225,700). A salary cap is defined as a maximum annual rate of salary for a full-time effort that can be charged to an award.

Font (size, color, type density) and Line Spacing

Children's Cancer Research Fund follows the NIH guidelines regarding font and line spacing.

Text in your attachments must follow these minimum requirements:

- Font size: Must be 11 points or larger. Small text in figures, graphs, diagrams, and charts is acceptable, if it is legible when the page is viewed at 100%.
 - Some PDF conversion software reduces font size. It is important to confirm that the final PDF document complies with the font requirements.
- Type density: Must be no more than 15 characters per linear inch (including characters and spaces).
- Line spacing: Must be no more than six lines per vertical inch.
- Text color: No restriction. Though not required, black or other high-contrast text colors are recommended since they print well and are legible to the largest audience.

There is no specific font requirement if the font you use is legible and meets the above requirements.

Progress Reports and Final Reports

Scientific progress reports should be submitted 6, 12, and 24 months after the grant is awarded. Progress reports are due within 60 days of the due date. Grantees should submit reports in a timely fashion or request an exception. Non-compliance may result in withholding of payments.

Each progress report should focus on the activity from the previous report. Financial reports including expenditures are due at 12 months and 24 months. The final report should include details of all financial expenditures and a scientific report for the full grant period.

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 to be calculated as 10% of total direct costs.**

No Cost Extension (NCE)

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

Use of Embryonic Stem Cells & Fetal Tissue

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