



# **AACR-MPM Oncology Charitable Foundation Transformative Cancer Research Grants**

## **2020 Program Guidelines and Competitive Letter of Intent Instructions**

**American Association for Cancer Research**

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## **PROGRAM GUIDELINES**

### **PROGRAM SUMMARY**

The AACR-MPM Oncology Charitable Foundation Transformative Cancer Research Grants represents a joint effort to stimulate “high-risk, high-reward” research from early- to mid-career investigators. This novel grant mechanism is intended to promote and support creative, paradigm-shifting cancer research that might not be funded through conventional channels. It is expected that these grants will catalyze significant scientific discoveries that will advance our understanding of cancer and have a potentially transformative impact on future clinical practice.

The grants provide \$400,000 over a two-year period for expenses related to the research project, which may include salary and benefits of the grant recipient and any collaborators (grant recipient/collaborator salaries limited to 25% of the total grant), postdoctoral or clinical research fellows, graduate students (including tuition costs), and research assistants, research/laboratory supplies, equipment, travel applicable to the research project, publication charges for manuscripts that pertain directly to the funded project, and other research expenses. Indirect costs are **not** allowable expenses.

### **LETTER OF INTENT DEADLINE**

June 17, 2020 at **1:00 p.m.** U.S. Eastern Time

### **APPLICANTS NOTIFIED OF DECISION STATUS OF LETTER OF INTENT**

July 2020

### **FULL APPLICATION DEADLINE** *(for those invited to apply based on the Letter of Intent)*

October 5, 2020, at **1:00 p.m.** U.S. Eastern Time

### **NOTIFICATION OF AWARD**

November 2020

### **GRANTS RECEPTION AND DINNER AT THE AACR ANNUAL MEETING 2021**

April 13, 2021 – Grant recipients must attend the Grants Reception and Dinner to formally accept the grant. Grant funds may be used to support the grantee’s registration and attendance at this Annual Meeting.

### **START OF GRANT TERM**

December 1, 2020

### **APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**

Applicants must have a doctoral degree (including PhD, MD, MD/PhD, or equivalent) in a related field and not currently be a candidate for a further doctoral degree.

At the start of the grant term on December 1, 2020, applicants must:

- Hold an appointment at the rank of assistant or associate professor.
  - If eligibility is based on a future position, the position must be confirmed at the time of submission, and CANNOT be contingent upon receiving this grant.

- If the future position is at a different institution than the applicant's current institution, the applicant must contact the AACR's Scientific Review and Grants Administration Department (AACR's SRGA) at [grants@aacr.org](mailto:grants@aacr.org) **before** submitting their Letter of Intent for information on additional verification materials/signatures that may be required.
- Work at an academic, medical, or research institution anywhere in the world
  - *There are no citizenship or geographic requirements. However, by submitting a Letter of Intent for this grant, an applicant applying from an institution located in a country in which they are not a citizen or a permanent resident assures that their visa status will provide sufficient time to complete the project and grant term at the institution from which they applied.*

Applicants must be AACR **Active** members. Nonmembers interested in this grant opportunity must submit a satisfactory application for AACR Active membership by the application deadline. Nonmembers can apply for membership [online](#) or by submitting the [Official Membership Application Form](#) to the AACR with the required documents. Please review the [Membership Categories](#) for the category that best fits your qualifications. Members can renew their membership through [myAACR](#) to bring their membership current. You will need your logon (email address) and password to access the member portal. If you require assistance logging in, please contact [myaacr@aacr.org](mailto:myaacr@aacr.org). Lapsed members must be members in good standing by the application deadline and should contact the Membership Department at [membership@aacr.org](mailto:membership@aacr.org) for assistance.

Investigators may submit only **one** Letter of Intent for the AACR-MPM Oncology Charitable Foundation Transformative Cancer Research Grant but may concurrently apply for other AACR grants. Current AACR Grantees may apply, but must be up to date with all reporting requirements to be considered eligible. **Any individual who currently holds an active AACR-MPM Oncology Charitable Foundation Transformative Cancer Research Grant is not eligible.**

Employees or subcontractors of a U.S. government entity or for-profit private industry are not eligible.

Postdoctoral or clinical research fellows or the equivalent who are working under the auspices of a scientific mentor are not eligible to apply. Qualified fellows are invited to apply for an AACR Fellowship.

All applicants with questions about eligibility must contact the AACR's SRGA at [grants@aacr.org](mailto:grants@aacr.org), **before** submitting a Letter of Intent.

#### **RESEARCH PROJECT CRITERIA**

The proposed research must represent a highly innovative approach to a major problem or challenge in cancer research. The funded projects are expected to catalyze important advances in cancer research, and should have a potentially transformative impact on future clinical practice. The research can be in any area of basic, translational, or clinical research.

## COMPETITIVE LETTER OF INTENT DESCRIPTION

An AACR Competitive Letter of Intent is an application tool designed to identify the projects with the greatest scientific potential and alignment with the Program Guidelines without requiring applicants to first submit a full application. A Letter of Intent is not written as *correspondence* to the Scientific Review Committee, but instead follows a prescribed template that gathers information summarizing the proposed research project. Letters of Intent have also been called "pre-applications," "concept papers," or "letters of inquiry" by other funders.

Letters of Intent are peer reviewed by the AACR-MPM Oncology Charitable Foundation Scientific Advisory Board. A limited number of applicants whose Letters of Intent are deemed most meritorious will be invited by the committee to submit full applications.

The Letter of Intent for the AACR-MPM Oncology Charitable Foundation Transformative Cancer Research Grants is limited to one page and must provide a clear, concise, and comprehensive overview of the proposed work (references do not count against this page limit). Information regarding background, rationale, and innovation of the research idea, and potential impact should be included in the narrative. Relevant references must be attached and are limited to two pages.

The Letter of Intent must be accompanied by:

- Scientific Abstract (limited to 1,000 characters including spaces); the abstract should provide a brief summary of the proposed research project
- Applicant's biographical sketch
- Applicant Checklist (if required)

## EVALUATION OF COMPETITIVE LETTERS OF INTENT AND INVITED APPLICATIONS

The AACR-MPM Scientific Advisory Board will be responsible for the peer review of the Letters of Intent and invited applications. This Board consists of senior laboratory researchers and physician-scientists who are highly respected for their own accomplishments in cancer research and viewed as leaders in the field. *Ad hoc* reviewers may be added, if deemed necessary.

The Committee will consider the following criteria when reviewing the Letters of Intent and invited full applications:

- ***Innovation and Significance.*** Does the project propose creative, paradigm-shifting cancer research? Is the proposed project of high scientific and technical merit? Is the proposed project of high quality, and what potential does it have to provide groundbreaking and innovative advances in cancer research? How will successful completion of the aims challenge and/or enhance the current concepts, methods, or technologies used in the field of cancer research? Are the concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, and/or interventions novel to the field of cancer research?
- ***Investigator.*** What training and experience does the applicant possess to ensure successful implementation of the proposed project? Does the applicant have demonstrated capacity to carry out innovative research? Is there evidence that the applicant has made or might make a career commitment to this field?

- **Approach.** Are the overall strategy, design, and methodology well-reasoned and appropriate to accomplish the specific aims of the project within the grant term? Are the potential problems, alternative strategies, and benchmarks for success presented? Is there an appropriate statistical analysis plan in place to rigorously assess the impact of the data? Is the budget fully justified and reasonable in relation to the proposed project? *(The budget-related question will be used to evaluate only the invited full applications for this opportunity.)*
- **Institutional Environment.** What evidence is provided of institutional commitment for the professional development of the applicant? What support, equipment, and resources will be available to the applicant and is this adequate to successfully complete the proposed project? *(This criterion will be used to evaluate only the invited full applications for this opportunity.)*

### **TOBACCO INDUSTRY FUNDING AND CONFLICTS OF INTEREST STATEMENT**

Scientific investigators or health professionals who are funded by the tobacco industry for any research project are not eligible for any AACR grant. Grantees who accept funding from the tobacco industry for any research project during the term of an AACR grant must inform the AACR of such funding, whereupon the AACR grant will immediately be terminated.

Tobacco industry funding is defined for purposes of AACR grant applicants and recipients as money provided or used for all or any of the costs of any research project, including personnel, consumables, equipment, buildings, travel, meetings and conferences, and operating costs for laboratories and offices. It is not defined as money provided or used for meetings or conferences that do not relate to any particular research projects.

Tobacco industry funding includes: funds from a company that is engaged in or has affiliates engaged in the manufacture of tobacco produced for human use; funds in the name of a tobacco brand, whether or not the brand name is used solely for tobacco products; funds from a body set up by the tobacco industry or by one or more companies engaged in the manufacture of tobacco products.

The following do not constitute tobacco industry funding for the purposes of this policy:

- Legacies from tobacco industry investments (unless the names of a tobacco company or cigarette brand are associated with them)
- Funding from a trust or foundation established with assets related to the tobacco industry but no longer having any connection with the tobacco industry even though it may bear a name that (for historical reasons) is associated with the tobacco industry

## LETTER OF INTENT INSTRUCTIONS

### LETTER OF INTENT PROCEDURES

The AACR requires applicants to complete an online Letter of Intent submission by **1:00 p.m.** U.S. Eastern Time on **Wednesday, June 17, 2020**, using the proposalCENTRAL website at <https://proposalcentral.com/>.

In order to submit a complete Letter of Intent, applicants need to enter information directly into the online submission platform as well as upload a number of documents. The following instructions provide details about information that needs to be entered and the materials that need to be uploaded. The section numbering corresponds to the Letter of Intent Instructions and the online proposalCENTRAL Letter of Intent submission platform.

Information to be Entered Directly into proposalCENTRAL	Letter of Intent Instructions Section	proposalCENTRAL Section
Project Title and Acknowledgement of Reading the Terms and Conditions	1. Title Page	1) Title Page
Applicant Information	4. Applicant	4) Applicant
Institution and Contact Information	5. Institution & Contacts	5) Institution & Contacts
Scientific Abstract	6. Scientific Abstract	6) Scientific Abstract

Templates	Letter of Intent Instructions Section	proposalCENTRAL Section
Letter of Intent Template	7.A. Letter of Intent Documents	7) Letter of Intent Documents

Additional Materials	Letter of Intent Instructions Section	proposalCENTRAL Section
Applicant's Biographical Sketch	7.B. Letter of Intent Documents	7) Letter of Intent Documents
Applicant Checklist (if required)	7.C. Letter of Intent Documents	7) Letter of Intent Documents

Required Signatures	Letter of Intent Instructions Section	proposalCENTRAL Section
Application Signature Page	7.D. Letter of Intent Documents	10) Signature Page(s)

### GETTING STARTED IN proposalCENTRAL

If you are a new user of proposalCENTRAL, click the orange "CREATE ONE NOW!" button and complete the registration process. After logging in, complete your Professional Profile (green tab) before starting a Letter of Intent.

If you are already registered with proposalCENTRAL, access the site and log in with your Username and Password. If you have forgotten your login information, click on the "Forgot Your Username/Password?" link.

To start a Letter of Intent, select the “Grant Opportunities” tab (gray tab). A list of grant opportunities will be displayed. The list of applications can be filtered for just this organization by selecting “American Association for Cancer Research” in the drop down menu at the top and clicking “Filter List by GrantMaker.” Find the “**AACR-MPM Oncology Charitable Foundation Transformative Cancer Research Grants**” and click the blue “Apply Now” button in the “Apply” column.

If you have any difficulties registering, logging in, or creating your application, contact proposalCENTRAL Customer Support at: 800-875-2562 (Toll-free U.S. and Canada), +1-703-964-5840 (Direct Dial International), or by email at [pcsupport@altum.com](mailto:pcsupport@altum.com). See the proposalCENTRAL [FAQ](#) section, for additional information.

### LETTER OF INTENT FORMAT

The following information is required to submit a complete Letter of Intent. Numbers correspond to the sections found on the left side of the proposalCENTRAL website.

- 1. TITLE PAGE.** Enter the title of the research project. The title is limited to no more than 75 characters (including spaces). Do not use abbreviations. A project title must be entered and saved before additional sections may be accessed.

**Terms and Conditions of the Grant.** In order to ensure that the applicant is informed of the terms and conditions of the grant should they be selected as a recipient, applicant must acknowledge that they have read the Terms and Conditions and have shared them with their institution by typing in their name and date in the box provided.

The terms and conditions of this grant may be modified or amended by the AACR prior to execution of the Grant Agreement. In addition, the grant recipient’s institution may only request revisions to sections VII.G.; XII.; XIII.F.; and XIV.A. of the Grant Agreement prior to execution. Only in special circumstances will revisions be considered to sections other than those noted above.

- 2. DOWNLOAD TEMPLATES & INSTRUCTIONS.** The Program Guidelines and Competitive Letter of Intent Instructions document, Terms and Conditions, Applicant Checklist, and the Letter of Intent template, can be downloaded from this page. Applicants are required to use the Letter of Intent template.

See Section 7 of the Letter of Intent Instructions for how to complete and upload the template. This Letter of Intent also requires an additional attachment for which a template is not provided (applicant’s biographical sketch).

- 3. ENABLE OTHER USERS TO ACCESS THIS PROPOSAL.** Optional.
- 4. APPLICANT.** Enter information for the applicant. Applicants must include their contact information, including e-mail address, phone number, mailing address, and AACR membership information.

Applicants who have an ORCID iD are also invited to include this identifier with their application.



**5. INSTITUTION & CONTACTS.** Enter information regarding the applicant's institution and signing official.

**NOTE:** For those invited to submit a full application, the application process will require a Letter of Reference from a nominator and endorser (if necessary). A nominator must be the applicant's department chair, division head, or dean. If the nominator is not an active, emeritus, or honorary member of the AACR, information for an endorser who is an active, emeritus, or honorary member of the AACR must also be provided.

**6. SCIENTIFIC ABSTRACT.** The abstract is limited to 1,000 characters (including spaces) and should provide a brief summary of the proposed research project.

If funded, this Abstract will become public information; therefore, do not include proprietary/confidential information.

From the lists provided, select the research areas that are most applicable to this project (*select no more than two*), select the tumor site that is most applicable to this project (*select only one*), and indicate how you found out about this grant opportunity.

**7. LETTER OF INTENT DOCUMENTS.**

*Formatting Instructions.* Applicants must adhere to the following instructions in completing the templates. Failure to observe type size specifications and page limits will result in the return of the Letter of Intent without review.

- Type size. Must use 12-point Times New Roman for the text, and no smaller than 9-point type for figures, legends, and tables.
- Single-spaced text. Single-spacing is acceptable, and space between paragraphs is recommended.
- Margins. The page margins must be no less than 0.75 inches on each side.
- Page numbering. The Narrative must be numbered consecutively; do not use section designations such as "3A" or "3B".
- Tips and techniques for inserting images in documents.
  - Reduce the file size of documents with images by "inserting" the image (as opposed to "cutting" and "pasting"). Save graphical images as JPG or GIF files. Insert the image into the document by selecting "Insert – Picture – From File" from the MS Word menu.
  - Insert only GIF or JPG graphic files as images in your Word document. Other graphical file formats are either very large or difficult to manipulate in the document.
  - Do not insert Quick Time or TIFF objects into your document.
  - Anchor the images you embed in your document.
  - Once you have anchored the inserted image, you can format text to wrap around the image.
  - Do not edit your images in Word. Use a graphics program.
  - Do not embed your images in tables, text boxes, and other form elements.
  - Do not add annotations over the images in Word. Add annotations to the images in a graphics program.

**When a template is provided, the template MUST be used. Prepare and upload the following documents into your application in portable document format (PDF):**

**A. Letter of Intent.** Applicants are required to use the Letter of Intent template available from the proposalCENTRAL website. The information must be presented in this order:

- I. **Letter of Intent Narrative.** Limited to one page, including figures and tables. The References section does not count against this page limit. Please provide a clear, concise, and comprehensive overview of the proposed work. Include information regarding background, rationale, innovation of the research idea, and the potential impact.
- II. **References.** Limited to two pages. AACR reference style follows that of the [Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts Submitted to Biomedical Journals](#). Note that the *Uniform Requirements* specify that, for articles with more than six authors, the names of the first six authors must be listed, followed by “et al.” For articles with six or fewer authors, all authors must be listed.

**B. Applicant’s Biographical Sketch.** The biographical sketch must be in English. The NIH Biographical Sketch Form [OMB No. 0925-0001 and 0925-0002 (Rev. 03/2020 Approved Through 02/28/2023)] should be used.

**Note:** For those invited to submit a full application, collaborators are allowable. However, co-Principal Investigators are **NOT** permitted. You will have the opportunity to provide Letter(s) of Collaboration and the Biosketch(es) of these collaborator at the full application stage.

**C. Applicant Checklist.** In order to ensure eligibility, applicants who do not hold the title of “Assistant Professor” or “Associate Professor” must complete the checklist and obtain all required signatures. Electronic/digital signatures are permitted. These signatures transmitted by electronic means shall have the same force and effect as original signatures.

The **signed** Applicant Checklist must be uploaded to your online Letter of Intent in the Letter of Intent Documents section.

**D. Signed Signature Page.** In order to ensure that the applicant and institution have approved the Letter of Intent, applicants must obtain all required signatures on page one of the Signature Pages. The Institution Signing Official is an authorized person in the Office of Sponsored Programs or equivalent. Electronic/digital signatures are permitted. These signatures transmitted by electronic means shall have the same force and effect as original signatures.

The **signed** Signature Page must be uploaded to your online Letter of Intent in the Letter of Intent Documents section.

**Uploading the attachments into your submission.** Once you have converted your attachments to PDF files, the next step is to upload the files to your online Letter of Intent. *Only PDF attachments are permitted for this Letter of Intent submission.*

- Open your online Letter of Intent and go to the section for attaching files. Click the blue “Attach Files” button.
- Select the appropriate type of attachment from the drop-down list.
- Enter your own description of the file in the “Describe Attachment” field.
- Click on the “Browse” button to select the file from your computer.

- Click on the “Upload and Continue” button. You will get a confirmation message on your screen that the file was uploaded successfully. You will also see that your file is now listed in the “Uploaded Attachment” section of the screen. Clicking the “Back” or “Upload and Return” button allows you to go back to the main page of this section where the uploaded documents should now be listed. **Click the download icon next to the file name to open and view your uploaded documents.** To delete the file, click on the trashcan icon to the right under the “Delete” column.

In the section for attachments, all the required attachments are listed in the middle of the screen, just below where you upload your files. This list of required attachments helps you track completion and uploading of your required attachments. Once you upload a required attachment, that attachment type will be removed from the required list and will be displayed in the “Current list of uploaded attachments”.

If you wish to modify the attached file, make the revisions to your *original* file on your computer, convert the file to PDF, and use the same process above to attach the new file. **Delete any previously submitted versions of the file before submitting your Letter of Intent.**

#### **SUBMISSION OF COMPLETE LETTER OF INTENT**

- 8. PI DATA SHEET.** This is an automatically populated data sheet based on the applicant’s proposalCENTRAL profile. Information for gender, race, and ethnicity must be provided to the AACR. If fields are not populated, click the “Edit Professional Profile” button in the center of the screen. The applicant must then go to the column on the left side of the screen, select “4) Personal Data for Applications”, and enter their gender, race, and ethnicity. The Scientific Review Committee does not receive this information.
- 9. VALIDATION.** Validate the Letter of Intent on proposalCENTRAL. This is an essential step. A submission that has not been validated cannot be submitted. “Validate” checks for required data and required attachments. You will not be able to submit if all the required data and attachments have not been provided.
- 10. SIGNATURE PAGE(S).** Use the “Print Signature Pages” button to download the Signature Pages. Signatures are only required on the first page. This page can be printed, original signatures obtained, and then uploaded to your online Letter of Intent. Electronic/digital signatures are permitted. These signatures transmitted by electronic means shall have the same force and effect as original signatures. Do not upload the Application Contacts, Scientific Abstract, and Applicant Checklist pages with the signed Signature Page.

**NOTE:** Data entered in the online Letter of Intent submission are automatically included in the Signature Pages. The following signature page fields will remain blank until the full application process: Dates of Proposed Project, Proposed Budget, Human Subjects, Vertebrate Animals, Recombinant DNA, and Biohazards. If information is missing in the signature pages, it could be because you have not entered the information in one of the online sections **OR** the information is not required for this grant program. If the institution's Employer Identification Number (EIN) is not completed on the Signature Page, please request your institution to provide that information in their proposalCENTRAL profile.

While the "Print Signature Pages" option allows applicants to download the Signature Page, Application Contacts, and Scientific Abstract, the AACR **strongly encourages** applicants to also use the "Print Signature Pages with Attachments" option. This option can be used if your institution wishes to review the full Letter of Intent but also should be used by the applicant to ensure that the Scientific Abstract does not cut-off in this view and that your attachments loaded properly. The following application materials will **not** be present when using this option: Signature Page containing the required signatures. Absence of these materials should **not** be considered an error. If your institution requires all components of the Letter of Intent submission to review, the above documents need to be printed individually by the applicant and added.

Excessive spacing in your Scientific Abstract (e.g., line breaks between paragraphs) can cause the abstract to not fully appear in the Signature Page view, even if under the 1,000 character limit. You may want to further edit your Scientific Abstract prior to submission if it does not fully appear. Errors may occur when the uploaded pdf files are assembled by the system. Please check to ensure that all pages of every document included appear in the "Print Signature Pages with Attachments" option. If you are having any issues with this option, please contact proposalCENTRAL customer support at: 800-875-2562 (Toll-free U.S. and Canada), +1-703-964-5840 (Direct Dial International), or by e-mail to [pcsupport@altum.com](mailto:pcsupport@altum.com).

**11. SUBMIT.** After successfully passing the validate check, click the "**Submit**" link. An e-mail will be sent to you confirming your submission.

Once your Letter of Intent is submitted you may view it by selecting "Submitted" from the "Proposal Status" drop-down menu under the 'Proposals' tab, then clicking the "View" button under the Edit column. The status column will show "Submitted" and the date submitted. You may need to refresh your browser screen after submitting the Letter of Intent to see the updated status.

#### **CHANGES TO YOUR LETTER OF INTENT**

**Withdrawal of Letter of Intent.** Please advise the AACR promptly, in writing, should you decide to withdraw your Letter of Intent for any reason. Your correspondence must include your name, the grant opportunity to which you applied, the project title, and the reason for withdrawal.

**Change of Address.** Notify the AACR of any changes of address, e-mail, or phone number, following the submission of a Letter of Intent. Include your name and the proposalCENTRAL identification number. The e-mail address provided with your Letter of Intent will be used for all official communication about your submission including the recipient selection results. Your Professional Profile in proposalCENTRAL must be kept up to date.

**Change of Institution or Position.** If you change your institution or professional position, contact the AACR to determine whether your Letter of Intent is still eligible for review.

#### **INQUIRIES**

Inquiries or technical issues regarding proposalCENTRAL and the online application process should be directed to customer support at: 800-875-2562 (Toll-free U.S. and Canada), +1-703-964-5840 (Direct Dial International), or by e-mail to [pcsupport@altum.com](mailto:pcsupport@altum.com).

Inquiries about the program guidelines, eligibility requirements, and Letter of Intent materials can be directed to the AACR's Scientific Review and Grants Administration department at [grants@aacr.org](mailto:grants@aacr.org).

## MORE ABOUT THE AACR



Founded in 1907, the American Association for Cancer Research (AACR) is the world's first and largest professional organization dedicated to advancing cancer research and its mission to prevent and cure cancer. The AACR has more than 46,000 members in 127 countries and territories around the world; over 31% percent of members live outside the United States. Twenty percent of AACR's international members are located in countries with emerging economies. The AACR offers seven categories of membership to support each aspect of our members' professional development and enhancement in cancer research. In support of the professional development of early-career investigators, no annual dues are required for Associate membership. The AACR marshals the full spectrum of expertise of the cancer community to accelerate progress in the prevention, biology, diagnosis, and treatment of cancer by annually convening more than 30 conferences and educational workshops, the largest of which is the AACR Annual Meeting with more than 22,500 attendees. In addition, the AACR publishes eight prestigious, peer-reviewed scientific journals and a magazine for cancer survivors, patients, and their caregivers. The AACR funds meritorious research directly as well as in cooperation with numerous cancer organizations. As the Scientific Partner of Stand Up To Cancer, the AACR provides expert peer review, grants administration, and scientific oversight of team science and individual investigator grants in cancer research that have the potential for near-term patient benefit. The AACR actively communicates with legislators and other policymakers about the value of cancer research and related biomedical science in saving lives from cancer. For more information about the AACR, visit [www.aacr.org](http://www.aacr.org).