American Cancer Society
Institutional Research Grant (ACS IRG) Pilot Awards
2023 Request for Applications (RFA)

A. Overview

Timeline:

Date of Announcement:	**July 14, 2023**
Application Due by 4:00 pm CST:	**August 18, 2023**
Earliest Award Decision Date:	**October 30, 2023**
Pilot Project Start Date:	**January 1, 2024**

Assumptions:
- These pilot awards are made possible by the American Cancer Society Institutional Research Grant (IRG-21-133-64) received by Washington University (WU).
- Awards are dependent upon scientific merit. The number of awards may increase or decrease each year dependent upon scientific merit of the projects submitted for review.
- Up to **five** projects (including the new **Cancer Research Diversity Pilot Award** slots) will be awarded up to **$40,000 each (direct costs) for one year**/non-renewable.

B. Purpose

- Support the development of new investigators to conduct independent cancer research.
- Foster direct relationships between funded institutions and the local American Cancer Society chapter.
- Support research by newly independent investigators in areas of special interest to the Society.

C. Eligibility

- **Applicants must be tenure track or clinical track Instructors or Assistant Professors at the time of award** and **within six (6) years of their first independent research or faculty appointment** at Washington University (WU). Postdoctoral fellows are not eligible to apply. Senior, tenured faculty members are not eligible.
- **NEW: Cancer Research Diversity Pilot Awards:** The American Cancer Society is supporting up to two additional pilot grants targeted specifically for early-career faculty who self-identify as a racial or ethnic minority underrepresented in medicine (URiM). Only applicants who identify as African American (or Black), American Indian, Alaska Native, Hispanic (or Latinx), Native Hawaiian, or other Pacific Islander are eligible for this pilot grant slot (Source: NIH NOT-OD-20-031). All other eligibility guidelines listed below apply. If you would like to be considered for this opportunity, please indicate this on the cover sheet of your application.
- Individuals who have previously received this award and individuals who already have independent, national competitive research grant funding from the NIH* (e.g., K99, R00, R01, R03, R21), ACS, NSF or Veterans Administration are not eligible.
  - *** As long as the applicant meets all other criteria, holders of personnel awards such as the NIH K series (except K99/R00), are eligible to receive pilot project money from the IRG.**
- Applicants who are not Siteman Cancer Center (SCC) members must apply for membership at the time of submission. Awards will be contingent upon acceptance of the applicant as a member. Membership review will be expedited as necessary. More information regarding the application process and benefits

can be found on the [SCC Membership Information website](). Questions regarding membership should be directed to Carrie Wehking, [wehkingc@wustl.edu]().

- Recipients of IRG pilot project grants are not required to be United States (U.S.) citizens. However, any applicant for IRG pilot project funding who is not a U.S. citizen must hold a visa that will allow them to remain in the U.S. long enough to complete the IRG pilot project and provide SCC with the appropriate documentation at the time of submission.

D. Submission Guidelines

These are internal awards and are NOT submitted through the Office of Sponsored Research Services (OSRS).

Application Guidelines:
- The required application forms can be found on the [SCC ACS IRG website]().
- The completed application must be submitted through [proposalCENTRAL](), an online submission website, by 4:00 pm CST on the due date listed on Page 1.
- This funding opportunity can be found on proposalCENTRAL under "Siteman Cancer Center"**.**
- Late or incomplete applications will not be accepted. If you do not have a proposalCENTRAL account, you will need to access the website and create one for your submission.

Formatting:
- Applicants should use 11-point Arial font. Single spaced text is acceptable and there should be space between paragraphs.
- Applicant should type their name (Last Name, First Name) in the top left corner of each page where indicated.
- It is best to **combine all pages into one document** and **print to PDF** versus saving to PDF. The applicant is responsible for reviewing the final document in proposalCENTRAL and ensuring no errors occurred in uploading.

Required Application Components:

1. **Siteman Cancer Center ACS IRG Cover Sheet** ([Download from website]() – Updated July 2023)
   - ACS and SCC require a description of your research project written in "lay" language. The purpose of the summary is to provide a clear overview of the research in straightforward, non-technical language to be shared with donors, the general public, and the media. Provide investigator information, as well as your mentor's name. It is important that applicants fully complete each section.
     - **NEW:** The Becker Library offers a variety of services and resources to assist applicants with making written materials easier to understand. For more information, visit the Becker Health Literacy and Communication webpage at: [https://becker.wustl.edu/services/health-literacy-communication/]()
   - If you are applying for the new Cancer Research Diversity Pilot Award, be sure to indicate your eligibility as a self-identified URiM faculty member on your cover sheet.

2. **Application for a Pilot Project Grant** ([Download from website]() – Updated July 2023)
   - **Biographical Information**
     - Be sure to complete the "Verification of Applicant Eligibility by Department Chair" section and include your department chair's signature as required on the first page of the biographical information form page.
     - "Other Research Support" should include ALL research support available to the applicant (including federal, non-federal, institutional, private industry, etc., currently funded, and pending). Other support information must include sponsor, sponsor's project number (if applicable), title of project, dates of award, percent effort, direct costs, and goal of project. If applicable, please note any overlap in support with this application.
   - **Project Title and Abstract (300-500 words)**
   - **Research Plan/Description of Research Proposed (Strict 6 page maximum)**

- o Please paginate the research plan at the bottom of each page. The following headings and page limits are suggested:
  - Specific Aims (limit 1/2 page)**:** State concisely the hypothesis to be tested and the specific aim(s) to be achieved during the grant period. The aims must be reasonable to achieve during the one-year period of grant support.
  - Background and Preliminary Investigations (limit 1.5 pages)**:** Discuss the pertinent research findings that have been described in the scientific literature and how this proposal will add to these results. Also, discuss any preliminary data obtained by the applicant that are relevant to this proposal.
  - Experimental Design and Methods / Tables and Figures (limit 4 pages)**:** Concisely present the experimental design and the methods to be used to accomplish the specific aims. Indicate how the results will be interpreted and how they will lead to future investigations. Well-documented experimental methods and standard procedures may be described very briefly or referenced, but novel experimental approaches should be described in more detail. Be sure to include any tables or figures relevant to your proposal (formerly in the appendix) in this section as well.

3. **Budget Proposed**
   - The budget should be completed with as much detail as possible. A list of allowable expenditures can be found below. A budget justification should be provided with detailed information regarding expenditures. Budgets may not exceed a total of $40,000 in direct costs. Indirect costs are not allowable.

4. **Appendix**
   - References (2 page maximum; authors may be abbreviated, reference titles optional)
   - Letters of Support: Applicants must submit two letters of support - one from their department chair and one from their mentor.
     - o Note: These support letters must clearly show the applicant has the appropriate training, ability, and time available to complete the proposed project.
   - Curriculum Vitae or Biosketch of Applicant
   - Approval Letters
     - o Copies of submitted regulatory application forms (PRMC) or approval letters from myIRB or Human Research Protection Office (HRPO - *see note below regarding human research studies*), Radiation Safety Committee, Animal Studies Committee (see note below regarding animal studies), etc. if applicable.

Human Research Studies Note*:* All cancer-related research involving human subjects needs approval by the Human Research Protection Office (HRPO), and must first be reviewed and approved by the SCC Protocol Review and Monitoring Committee (PRMC). Approval by the PRMC and the HRPO must be obtained before any of the awarded funds will be made available and before the research can commence. Protocols must be submitted to the PRMC office on or before the submission deadline in order for applications to be reviewed by the ACS IRG Committee. Applicants are strongly advised to contact the SCC Protocol Development office (Stephanie Myles, slmyles@wustl.edu) several weeks prior to the application deadline for assistance with submission of research protocol information to PRMC and HRPO. Any application submitted without prior human research protocol submission to the PRMC will not be reviewed. Regardless of delays incurred due to the PRMC/HRPO review process, there will be no extensions made on the terms of the grant.

Animal Studies Note*:* Please include an approved protocol from the animal studies committee, or a draft of your planned submission and an expected approval date. Animal approvals must be in place prior to the funding start date of January 1, 2024.

Budget Guidelines:

Expenditures Allowed:
- Research supplies and animal maintenance
- Technical assistance
- Domestic travel when necessary to carry out the proposed research program
- Publication costs, including reprints not to exceed $500
- Costs of computer time
- Special fees (pathology, photography, etc.)
- Stipends for graduate students and postdoctoral assistants if their role is to promote and sustain the project presented by the junior faculty member
- Equipment costing less than $2,000
- Registration fees at scientific meetings

Expenditures Not Allowed:
- Secretarial/administrative salaries
- Salary of principal investigator
- Student tuition and/or fees
- Foreign travel; special consideration will be given for attendance at scientific meetings held in Canada or Mexico)
- Honoraria and travel expenses for visiting lecturers
- Per diem charges for hospital beds
- Non-medical services to patients (patient travel to a clinical site or patient incentives are allowable expenses)
- Construction, renovation, or maintenance of building/laboratory
- Books and periodicals
- Office and laboratory furniture
- Office equipment and supplies including laptop computers
- Rental of office or laboratory space
- Recruiting and relocation expenses
- Dues and membership fees in scientific societies
- Indirect costs

E. Terms of the Award

- Awardees will apply for membership in the Siteman Cancer Center, attend Washington University's research seminars designated for career development throughout the year, and identify a research mentor through a letter of support at the time of application.
- **NEW:** Awardees must participate in the annual Siteman Cancer Research Symposium (generally held in December) as a presenter (either podium or poster). This event features cancer research from all departments and all types of research, including basic, pre-clincial, clinical, and public health projects. Abstracts are encouraged from Instructors, Assistant Professors, and Associate Professors, as well as undergraduate students, predoctoral trainees, postdoctoral scholars, and fellows.
- The awardee will be expected to meet with their mentor periodically during the year of the award to review potential topics for grant proposals, review grant proposals, critique investigators' manuscripts, discuss techniques for recruitment of physicians, students, and postdoctoral scientists to their studies, and discuss personal and career advice, including how to balance conflicting obligations. Awardees who have difficulty identifying and/or securing a mentor will contact Dr. Jason Weber for assistance.
- Awardee shall notify SCC Administration (Steve Baer, steve.baer@wustl.edu) of each funded invention made by awardee within thirty (30) days after the disclosure of the funded invention to WUSTL's Office of Technology Management (OTM).
- The ACS requires interaction between the local ACS office and awardees. Awardees may be asked to allow local ACS staff and/or volunteers to tour their laboratories and/or may be asked to speak about

their research at local meetings. Acceptance of this award means that you agree to participate in activities or interactions through direct request from the ACS or via participation in local events.

- Awardees will be required to submit to SCC a brief annual progress report describing the results of their work, as well as related publications, funding, and interactions with the local ACS office. Annual reports are required for five years, post-award.
- Publications resulting from the research supported by this Institutional Research Grant from the American Cancer Society <u>must contain an acknowledgment</u>.
- It is understood that the principal investigator, by the act of accepting this award, agrees to abide by the American Cancer Society's Institutional Research Grant Policies, including the Society's Patent Policy and Intellectual Property Rights policy, and failure to comply with such policies or with any other terms in connection with the grant may result in the suspension or cancellation of grant funding. ACS IRG policies can be downloaded from the ACS IRG webpage.

F. Review Process

All applications will be evaluated by the ACS IRG Review Committee members. Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- <u>Significance:</u> Does this study address an important cancer research problem? If the aims of the application are achieved, how will scientific knowledge be advanced? What will be the effect of these studies on the concepts or methods that drive this field? Would you consider this project translational research?
- <u>Potential:</u> If this project is successful, would it likely lead to external peer-reviewed funding? <u>This is an important criterion in determining whether a project will be funded.</u>
- <u>Approach:</u> Are the conceptual framework, design, methods, and analyses adequately developed, well-integrated, and appropriate to the aims of the project? Does the applicant acknowledge potential problem areas and consider alternative tactics?
- <u>Innovation:</u> Does the project employ novel concepts, approaches or method? Are the aims original and innovative? Does the project challenge existing paradigms or develop new methodologies or technologies?
- <u>Investigator:</u> Is the investigator appropriately trained and well suited to carry out this work? Is the work proposed appropriate to the experience level of the investigator? Is the investigator likely to continue cancer research? <u>Will the investigator have the appropriate time to commit to this project?</u>
- <u>Environment:</u> Is the mentor a suitable advisor for this project? Does the scientific environment in which the work will be done contribute to the probability of success? Are there necessary facilities available? Do the proposed experiments take advantage of unique features of the scientific environment or employ useful collaborative arrangements?

G. Questions

For any questions, please contact:
Steve Baer
Program Manager, Alvin J. Siteman Cancer Center
Email: steve.baer@wustl.edu