Multi-Investigator Award Program

Submission & Budget Guidelines

The Massey Cancer Center offers funding for multi-PI research projects to encourage collaborations in cancer research. The purpose of this funding is to provide preliminary support to either:

1) a team of two or more investigators that is expected to lead to a multi-PI external peer-reviewed grant submission (e.g. NIH Multi-Investigator R01), or, 2) two synergistic projects from a team of two or more investigators that are being developed to lead to the submission of a program project grant.

This funding mechanism is intended to bring together investigators 1) who are authorities in their respective areas of research, 2) whose research is complimentary, and 3) where both investigators are essential for the success of the project.

Investigator Eligibility

- The project must involve two or more independent investigators, each of whom substantively contributes to the research. A Cancer Center member and/or associate member must be a Co-PI on the project in order to be eligible to apply.
- An investigator can submit only one project as PI/Co-PI during a funding cycle.

Research Project Criteria

The intent of this funding mechanism is to provide preliminary funding for collaborative projects with significant involvement of two independent investigators. Proposed projects must not fall within the specific aims of a currently funded project of any of the collaborating investigators. All aspects of cancer research involving two or more distinct areas of scientific expertise will be considered, and the Cancer Center continues to be committed to all areas of innovative cancer research. However, for the current funding cycle, special emphasis will be given to the following projects:

- Projects involving population based sciences, immunology, obesity, inflammation and metabolism, and precision medicine.
- Projects that have at least one aim that addresses cancer disparities or focuses on minority health research.
- Projects involving collaborations from at least two of the three major research areas of basic, clinical, or population (prevention & control) sciences.
- Any proposed use of the new Mouse Model Core is also desirable for appropriate projects.

Ranking will be by peer review, based on novelty and scientific merit. A major criterion will be the perceived probability that the research project will lead to the submission of a fundable multi-PI or program project research grant application to NIH or similar major source of grant funds. It is not the purpose of this program to serve as the sole source of funding for small projects, but rather to allow the gathering of preliminary data needed for the investigators to prepare a successful grant application for a larger study. Other factors to be considered in the review will be the areas of expertise of the collaborating investigators, synergism between/among the collaborating investigators, and value of the project to the cancer research priorities of the Massey Cancer Center.
Reviewers are instructed to look for:

- INNOVATION, first and foremost
- At least two investigators on a project, each of whom are established experts in their respective areas of research
- Investigators should each provide unique, complimentary and substantive contributions to the research
- Interactive projects that bridge disciplines or areas of expertise
- Projects that are clearly going to result in multi-investigator grant applications
- Projects that are likely to be funded when submitted in grant application form after (and because of) the utilization of the research award
- Projects that are clearly cancer-related research, although we ask you to view this concept with an inclusive, rather than exclusive, eye. All aspects of cancer research involving two or more distinct areas of scientific expertise will be considered, and the Cancer Center continues to be committed to all areas of innovative cancer research.

**Funding Limits**

MCC multi-investigator awards are for up to $100,000 for one year. Only in cases where there have been exceptional scientific accomplishments, significant advancement towards stated research goals, compliance with awards terms and conditions, and availability of funds, will a second year of funding be considered. This determination will be made by Senior Leadership of the Center after reviewing the progress report given after nine months of the award.

**Allowable** expenses include the following:

- Research/laboratory supplies
- Shared Resource expenses, DNA & RNA sequencing
- Technical or laboratory staff salaries (including fringe benefits)
- Stipends (including fringe benefits where applicable)
- Animal costs
- Patient care costs and stipends
- Research related contractual agreements
- Travel directly related to the aims of the project
- Software (prior approval required)

**Non-Allowable** expenses include the following:

- Faculty salaries (including fringe benefits)
- Equipment (including computers)
- Equipment maintenance and service contracts
- Secretarial/administrative salaries
- Graduate and undergraduate student tuition and student fees
- Textbooks/coursebooks and periodicals
- Subscriptions to periodicals
- Membership dues
- Rental of office or laboratory space
- Recruiting and relocation expenses
Construction, renovation, or maintenance of buildings/laboratories
Food costs associated with meetings or conferences held by investigative team

Questions regarding your proposed budget can be addressed to Morgan Hembarsky, at 804-828-3114 or mhembarsky@vcu.edu.

Submission Guidelines

All interested investigators are required to submit a Pre-Application Form (available at: http://www.massey.vcu.edu/research/funding/multi-investigator-award-program/) which requires a one-page concept, one page leadership plan, NIH format biographical sketches and other support documents (PHS 398 suggested format) for all investigators. Upon review of the Pre-Application Forms and concepts, projects that are determined to meet the criteria of the award and have a reasonable probability of funding will be invited to submit a Full Application by April 1, 2019.

The full application should be a detailed description of your proposed project, following the format below:

1. Budget (use PHS 398 Form Page 4) and a brief justification. The total budget should not exceed $100,000.
2. Biographical Sketch (use PHS 398 suggested format)-submit biosketches for all project investigators.
3. Other Support (use PHS 398 format example)-document other support for each project investigator, including a statement of the specific aims for all funded projects.
4. Lay language description of the proposed project. In the event of funding, this statement will be provided to donors to demonstrate the use of funds.
5. Research Plan (not to exceed 6 pages, excluding references)-discuss the scientific basis and specific goals of the research project for each year of the award, providing sufficient detail for reviewers to judge the potential for the project to obtain multi-PI grant funding after completion. To ensure appropriate consideration of your application, you should address in your research plan (a) the cancer relevance of the proposed research (b) how this project differs from any similar ongoing, funded research of the investigators, including grants on which they may be co-investigators, and (c) any changes in pending funding for similar research since the submission of the research concept for this project.
6. Leadership Plan (not to exceed 1 page)-discuss how the members of the team will function on the project and how their inclusion will facilitate the accomplishments of the identified aims of the project. This should include a description of the roles and areas of responsibility of the PIs, the process for making decisions concerning scientific direction, budget allocations, and other information related to the management of the proposed multi-PI project.
7. Discuss the specific plans for applying for and obtaining future support as a result of this project (not to exceed 1 page).

Copies of the PHS forms and samples may be accessed at http://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/phs398/phs398.html
Submission Deadline

The deadline for submitting a completed Pre-Application Form is March 1, 2019.

If invited to submit, the deadline for submitting a completed Full Application is April 1, 2019.

Please email your Pre-Application Form and Full Application to Morgan Hembarsky at mhembarsky@vcu.edu.