INNOVATIVE/TRANSLATIONAL CANCER RESEARCH GRANT
APPLICATION ANNOUNCEMENT

APPLICATIONS WILL BE ACCEPTED FROM NOVEMBER 1, 2025 - FEBRUARY 1, 2026

The Mary Kay Ash Foundation®, a committed funding source for innovative cancer research, invites applications for translational research grants focused on cancers affecting women, including but not limited to breast, cervical, endometrial, ovarian, uterine, and other cancers that predominantly affect women.

Grants will be awarded in the amount of $100,000 total over a two-year period to support projects with strong potential to advance the understanding, prevention, diagnosis, or treatment of cancers affecting women.

ELIGIBILITY

- This opportunity is by invitation only to NCI-designated cancer centers and accredited schools of medicine or universities.
- Each invited institution may submit one application for consideration. Institutions are responsible for conducting an internal selection process to identify their designated applicant. No exceptions will be made.
- Principal Investigators (PIs) must hold a full-time appointment at the rank of Assistant Professor or higher at the time of submission and must commit a minimum of 5% effort to the proposed project.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS & FORMATTING:

- All application materials must conform to NIH-style formatting standards, including text limits and general page layout guidelines (see the NIH website for reference).
- Applications must be submitted electronically through the GrantsConnect portal.
- If submitting on behalf of a PI, please ensure that the GrantsConnect User Profile is created under the PI's first and last name, as this name will appear in the Research Review Committee's review system.
- Applicants are strongly encouraged to review the FAQs and Applicant User Guide prior to submission for detailed instructions and troubleshooting tips.

FOR ALL OTHER QUESTIONS, PLEASE CONTACT JULIA SANTOSUOSSO

ELIGIBILITY & PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR (PI)

WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO APPLY?
This invitation-only program is open to PIs affiliated with NCI-designated cancer centers or accredited schools of medicine or universities invited to participate. Applicants must hold a full-time appointment at the rank of Assistant Professor or higher at the time of submission.

ARE STAFF SCIENTISTS, POSTDOCTORAL TRAINEES, OR INSTRUCTORS ELIGIBLE?
No. Only full-time faculty at the Assistant Professor level or higher are eligible.

ARE CO-PIS ALLOWED?
Yes. One co-PI is permitted and must meet the same eligibility requirements as the PI. Postdoctoral contributors should be listed as co-investigators, not co-PIs.

IS U.S. CITIZENSHIP REQUIRED?
No. However, grants are awarded only to U.S.-based institutions. International co-PIs are permitted, but all funds must remain with the U.S. institution.

DOES THE PI NEED TO BE APPOINTED WITHIN A MEDICAL SCHOOL?
No. Eligible PIs may hold appointments in any school within the invited university, provided the research focus aligns with cancers affecting women.

ARE PENDING APPOINTMENTS ELIGIBLE?
No. Applicants must hold their qualifying appointment at the time of submission.

WHAT IS THE MINIMUM EFFORT REQUIRED?
PIs must commit a minimum of 5% effort to the proposed project.

IS THERE A SALARY CAP?
Yes. Salary support must adhere to the NIH salary cap ($225,700 as of January 1, 2025). Please consult the most current NIH Salary Cap, Stipends & Training Funds guidelines.

CAN I ASSIST A PI IN SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION?
Yes, but the GrantsConnect User Profile must be created using the PI's first and last name, as that is what the Research Review Committee will see. Additional administrative contacts may be added to receive system notifications or serve as institutional liaisons.

INSTITUTIONAL GUIDELINES

HOW MANY APPLICATIONS MAY AN INVITED INSTITUTION SUBMIT?
Each invited institution may submit **one** application. Institutions are responsible for conducting an internal review process to select their applicant. No exceptions will be made.

WHAT IF OUR UNIVERSITY HAS MULTIPLE CAMPUSES?
Each campus within a larger university system (with a unique EIN) may submit one application.
Example: The University of Texas at Austin and The University of Texas at San Antonio are each eligible to submit one application if both are invited institutions.

WHAT IF MULTIPLE SCHOOLS OR CENTERS EXIST WITHIN ONE CAMPUS?
All schools, departments, and affiliated centers under the same EIN must coordinate to submit a single application. The institution should determine the strongest proposal through its internal review. If you feel you have extenuating circumstances, please email Julia.santosuosso@mkcorp.com to discuss the situation.

ARE PREVIOUS GRANT RECIPIENTS ELIGIBLE TO APPLY?
Yes, provided they are not currently receiving funding from the Mary Kay Ash Foundation.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

WHAT FORMAT SHOULD BE USED?
All documents must follow NIH formatting standards, including page setup, font, and spacing.
Refer to the NIH website for current guidelines.

HOW SHOULD FILES BE NAMED?
Use consistent and descriptive filenames (e.g., "BudgetJustification_Smith.pdf") to ensure clarity during review.

WHAT ARE THE REQUIRED COMPONENTS OF THE APPLICATION?
All documents must be submitted as PDFs in NIH or similar format. Page maximums are strongly encouraged and should be adhered to whenever possible though we understand extenuating circumstances may occur. The full application must include:
- Research Description (6 pages max.)
- Literature References (2 pages max.)
- Letters of Collaboration/Support (3 pages max.)
- Current Financial Support (2 pages max.)
- NIH-format Budget & Justification
- PI Biosketch (5 pages max.)
- Co-PI or collaborator résumés (combined into a single PDF, if applicable)

IS A NOMINATION OR FORMAL LETTER OF INTENT REQUIRED?
No. Internal institutional review is assumed. A separate nomination or LOI is not required.

IS PRELIMINARY DATA REQUIRED?
Not required, but inclusion is encouraged if available and relevant.

ARE ANIMAL STUDIES ALLOWED?
Yes. Applicants must clearly describe how the research could translate to patient benefit.

CAN THE APPLICATION BE SUBMITTED UNDER A 501(C)(3) OR INSTITUTIONAL EIN?
Yes. Either is acceptable, depending on institutional policy.

BUDGET & FUNDING

WHAT IS THE TOTAL GRANT AMOUNT?
$100,000 over two years ($50,000/year).

WHAT ARE THE BUDGET RESTRICTIONS?
- Total costs (direct + indirect) must not exceed $100,000.
- Indirect costs are capped at 15% of direct costs. Example: Direct costs ≤ $86,956; Indirect costs ≤ $13,044.
- Equipment and travel costs must be fully justified.
- Budget format should follow NIH two-year budget guidelines.

IS THERE FLEXIBILITY IN COST ALLOCATION?
Yes, within the total cap. However, all costs must be well justified and align with project goals.

REVIEW & AWARD PROCESS

HOW ARE APPLICATIONS REVIEWED?
Applications are evaluated by the Mary Kay Ash Foundation Research Review Committee, composed of experts in oncology and translational medicine. Proposals are scored for:
- Scientific merit and innovation

- Relevance to cancers affecting women
- Translational potential
- Feasibility and impact

WHEN WILL AWARD NOTIFICATIONS BE ISSUED?
Pending final board approval, all applicants are notified by late August via the PI and institutional contact listed in the application.

WHEN WILL FUNDS BE DISTRIBUTED?
Upon execution of a grant contract (expected June 2026):
- Year 1: $50,000 issued at contract execution.
- Year 2: $50,000 released upon approval of a one-year progress report.

GRANT PERIOD & REPORTING

WHAT IS THE GRANT PERIOD?
September 1, 2026 – September 1, 2028.
- Progress report due September 15, 2027
- Final report and financial statement due October 1, 2028

WHAT HAPPENS IF THE CONTRACT IS DELAYED?
Funds are not released until a fully executed contract is in place. Institutions are encouraged to expedite internal review to prevent delays.

WHAT IF FUNDS REMAIN UNSPENT AT THE END OF THE PERIOD?
Unspent funds must be returned at the conclusion of the grant period unless an extension is approved in writing by the Foundation or the institution has sought and received permission to retain the remaining funds.

CAN EXTENSIONS BE REQUESTED?
Yes. No-cost extensions (NCEs) may be requested in writing before the project end date, subject to Foundation approval. Contract amendments will be required to extend the grant period, and any extension period must be reflected in the grant agreement.

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

WHERE CAN I FIND SUBMISSION RESOURCES?
Consult the Applicant User Guide and this FAQ for detailed instructions and troubleshooting.

WHO SHOULD I CONTACT FOR ASSISTANCE?
For technical issues or assistance with the GrantsConnect portal, please contact:
YourCause Support – MaryKay-support@yourcause.com

For all other questions, please contact:
Julia Santosuosso – Julia.Santosuosso@mkcorp.com