

Wings of Hope for Pancreatic Cancer Research Funding Opportunity 2026 – 2027 Award Cycle

Background

The University of Colorado Anschutz Cancer Center has the great fortune of working with the Wings of Hope for Pancreatic Cancer Research to sponsor pilot grants at various levels focused on advancing research in pancreatic cancer.

Founded in 2012, Wings of Hope for Pancreatic Cancer Research (www.wingsofhopepcr.org) is a not-for-profit foundation dedicated to raising awareness and funding for pancreatic cancer research and programs at the University of Colorado Anschutz Cancer Center.

In February 2013 the CU Anschutz Cancer Center entered a formal partnership with Wings of Hope, with both entities combining efforts to have the CU Anschutz Cancer Center become the regional hub and national destination for pancreatic cancer research. The donations and fundraising efforts of Wings of Hope are to advance pancreatic cancer research conducted at the CU Cancer Center. The foundation's focused effort not only helps better define priorities but also makes a definitive statement as to the critical urgency and need for pancreatic cancer research to continue at an accelerated pace.

Funding Opportunities

In the 2026-2027 round, the Wings of Hope seeks to support awards under any of the following funding opportunities. Project budgets exceeding the amounts outlined will be considered with ample justification. Applications will be evaluated using an NIH-style peer-review process. Applicants selected for funding consideration will be asked to present their project briefly to the Wings of Hope Board in December and awards are anticipated to start January 1, 2027.

1. Small Pilot Grants: These grants are intended to support investigators interested in **(a)** testing new ideas in pancreatic cancer research, or applying a research concept to pancreatic cancer for the first time, **(b)** developing a new line of research focused on pancreatic cancer in an investigator's lab not previously focused on pancreatic cancer research, or **(c)** supporting the acquisition of additional data to address critiques of an NIH or other national grant focused on pancreatic cancer. Awards are anticipated to be in, but not limited to, the \$30-50K range and will be issued for 12 months. These pilot grants are open to all investigators. Those funded must be members of the Cancer Center.

2. Collaborative Pilot Grants: These grants are intended to stimulate collaborative research involving two or more co-PIs (one of whom must be a Cancer Center member¹) focused on pancreatic cancer that has a high likelihood of leading to a multi-PI NIH or other national grant submission within 15-18 months of the award start. Awards will be issued for an 18-month period and are anticipated to be in, but not limited to, the \$50-100K range.

3. Team Science Awards: These grants are to support the development of pancreatic cancer-focused team science grants such as large multi-PI R01 (>\$250K directs/yr), P, U or other multi-project team grants offered by a national-level sponsor. The proposal must involve three or more investigators (one of whom must be a Cancer

¹ Cancer Center membership is available to all faculty who have a demonstrated track record in cancer research. Application for membership is voluntary and is required to submit under this RFA. Applications are located at:
<https://medschool.cuanschutz.edu/colorado-cancer-center/research/membership-resources>

Center member¹), each providing substantive contributions to the proposed research. Awards will be issued for an 18-month period and are anticipated to be in, but not limited to, the \$150K range.

Please see the instructions starting on the following page for more information.

Application Process and Eligibility

Eligibility: Pilot projects will be competitively awarded to Affiliate, Clinical, Mentored and Full Cancer Center members² who submit innovative ideas that have a high likelihood of attaining NCI or other national funding. APP and Adjunct members are not eligible for this award. Collaborative efforts leading to multi-PI and/or multi-project grants are encouraged. Projects will be awarded for 12-18 months.

Funds are not intended to support extensions on prior pilot project efforts or to extend funding already provided by the Cancer Center for the development of multi-project grants. *Wings will not fund largely duplicative pilots when they have been funded through another pilot award or other foundations. All progress reports, including previous Wings pilot updates, must be current. Eligibility requires active awards to be in good financial standing; applicants with awards in deficit will not be considered.* Applicants who received a pilot grant from the Wings of Hope in previous years that are not yet complete at time of application are ineligible for this round of pilot awards. Recipients are expected to submit competitive national grant proposals (R level) within 12 months following the completion of this scope of work. Failure to uphold this provision may limit future opportunities for pilot funding.

Funds awarded through this mechanism are non-transferable. Should the Principal Investigator leave the institution before the award is fully spent, and no Co-PI is available to assume responsibility for the project, the remaining funds will revert to the foundation. Any transfer of project leadership to a Co-PI due to an institutional transfer requires prior approval from the appropriate institutional and board authority.

Intent to Apply: Individuals interested in applying for a Wings of Hope Pilot grant **must** complete an **Intent to Apply** form by **5:00 pm MST, July 23, 2026**. Only those individuals who submit an Intent to Apply form will receive a link to submit a full proposal. The Intent to Apply form is located at:

[Wings of Hope Letter of Intent to Apply](#)

Application: Individuals who submit an Intent to Apply form will receive a web link to submit a full proposal. Proposal submissions are due by **5:00 pm August 20, 2026**. No late proposals will be accepted.

Important Dates

06/29/2026	RFA release
07/23/2026	Mandatory <i>Intent to Apply</i> form submission deadline – 5:00 pm (MST)
08/20/2026	Proposal deadline – 5:00 pm (MST)
11/12/2026	Review committee meeting
December	Wings of Hope Board meeting with presentations from finalists
01/01/2027	Award start date

Proposal Requirements

Applications must include all sections outlined below. Non-conforming applications will not be reviewed. All narrative sections must maintain at least ½ inch margins; must be at least single-spaced; and must be in a font size not less than 11-point Arial.

² Cancer Center membership is available to individuals holding research or tenure track faculty appointments at the instructor level or above, who have a demonstrated track record in cancer research and who meet all membership guidelines. Application for membership is voluntary and is required to submit under this RFA. Applications are located at: <https://medschool.cuanschutz.edu/colorado-cancer-center/research/membership-resources>

Only one proposal per contact/lead PI will be accepted.

Title Page: Include the title of the project and the name and email address of the Principal Investigator(s) and other Key Personnel.

Summary: Include a summary of the project not to exceed one-half page or 30 lines of single-spaced type. It should consist of a brief description of the objectives, rationale, methods, and expected results.

Lay Audience Summary: In one page or less describe the objectives, the expected results, and the significance of your project **in non-scientific language. This summary may be used by the donors to determine final funding decisions and therefore should be informative and appropriate for a lay audience.**

Budget and Budget Justification: A detailed, categorical budget request and justification must be provided. No indirect costs will be funded. If support for personnel is requested, a thorough justification clearly describing their role and expected contribution(s) to the project should be included. Depending on the breadth and type of applications received, the Wings of Hope Board and review committee may elect to fund partial awards.

Small Pilot Grants: The budget is anticipated to be in the \$30-50K range, though higher amounts with ample justification will be considered. Funds may not be used to support faculty salaries or purchase equipment.

Collaborative Pilot Grants: Budgets in the range of \$50-100K are anticipated, though higher amounts with ample justification will be considered. Funds may not be used to support faculty salaries or purchase equipment. Distribution of the funds between the collaborating PIs should be commensurate with the scope of work to be performed by each PI's lab. In the budget justification, briefly but clearly describe the scope of work for each collaborator in addition to justifying the specific items included in the budget.

Team Science Grants: The budget is anticipated to be in the range of \$150K, though higher amounts with ample justification will be considered. Funds will be distributed incrementally based on progress on the project-defined milestones. The budget should be outlined relative to the project milestones; and the justification should clearly describe the specific costs (personnel effort, supplies, and other expenses) associated with each milestone. Co-PIs may receive up to 5% salary support; and funds may be used to support the effort needed by faculty-level biostatisticians, bioinformaticists, and other specialists contributing to the development of the team science proposal. However, effort supported should be aligned with milestones and should be discontinued as milestones are completed. Funds may not be used to purchase equipment.

Project Narrative: Provide a complete but concise description of the project including the following sections (adherence to stated page limits is required):

Small Pilot Grants (types a and b)

- Specific Aims – **1 page maximum**
- Narrative – Significance, Innovation and Approach – **3 page maximum combined**
 - Significance
Explain the importance of the problem or critical barrier to progress that the proposed project addresses. Describe the scientific premise for the proposed project, including consideration of the strengths and weaknesses of published research or preliminary data crucial to the support of your application. Explain how the proposed project will improve scientific knowledge, technical capability, and/or clinical practice in pancreatic cancer.
 - Innovation
Explain how the application challenges and seeks to shift current research or clinical practice paradigms. Describe any novel theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions to be developed or used, and any advantage over existing methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions.

Explain any refinements, improvements, or new applications of theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions.

- Approach

Describe the overall strategy, methodology, and analysis to be used to accomplish the specific aims of the project. Describe the experimental design and methods proposed and how they will achieve robust and unbiased results. Include how the data will be collected, analyzed, and interpreted. For trials that randomize groups or deliver interventions to groups, describe how your methods for analysis and sample size will yield statistically significant results. Discuss potential problems, alternative strategies, and benchmarks for success anticipated to achieve the aims. Explain how relevant biological variables, such as gender, are factored into research designs and analyses for studies in vertebrate animals and humans.

Other information required to fully describe the proposed work may be included. **However, the Specific Aims and Project Narrative should be no more than a total of 4 typed pages, including figures, tables and other relevant data.** (Appendices will not be accepted).

- Timeline – on a separate page, using a GANTT chart or similar visual, outline the timeline for the major activities associated with your specific aims. Include your planned timeline for securing future funding to further the research.
- References – limit to two pages.

Small Pilot Grants (type c – support acquisition of additional data to address critiques on submitted national-level grant)

- Summary Review – attach a copy of the Summary Review
- Specific Aims – **1 page** – include the specific aims of the submitted project
- Response to Critique – **1 page**

Describe the overall strategy, methodology, and analysis to be used to address the critiques, including the experimental design and methods proposed and how they will achieve robust and unbiased results. Include how the data will be collected, analyzed, and interpreted. Be sure to address all critiques in the Summary Review.

- Significance – **½ page** – in lay terms, describe the importance and relevance of the proposed work to pancreatic cancer.
- Timeline – on a separate page, using a GANTT chart or similar visual, outline the timeline for the experiments/activities you propose to respond to the critiques and specify the date for resubmission of the grant.

Collaborative Pilot Grants

- Specific Aims – **1 page maximum**
- Narrative – Significance, Innovation and Approach – **3 page maximum combined**

- Significance

Explain the importance of the problem or critical barrier to progress that the proposed project addresses. Describe the scientific premise for the proposed project, including consideration of the strengths and weaknesses of published research or preliminary data crucial to the support of your application. Explain how the proposed project will improve scientific knowledge, technical capability, and/or clinical practice in pancreatic cancer.

- Innovation
Explain how the application challenges and seeks to shift current research or clinical practice paradigms. Describe any novel theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions to be developed or used, and any advantage over existing methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions. Explain any refinements, improvements, or new applications of theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions.
- Approach
Describe the overall strategy, methodology, and analysis to be used to accomplish the specific aims of the project. Describe the experimental design and methods proposed and how they will achieve robust and unbiased results. Include how the data will be collected, analyzed, and interpreted. For trials that randomize groups or deliver interventions to groups, describe how your methods for analysis and sample size will yield statistically significant results. Discuss potential problems, alternative strategies, and benchmarks for success anticipated to achieve the aims. Explain how relevant biological variables, such as gender, are factored into research designs and analyses for studies in vertebrate animals and humans.

Other information required to fully describe the proposed work may be included. **However, the Specific Aims and Project Narrative should be no more than a total of 4 typed pages, including figures, tables and other relevant data.** (Appendices will not be accepted).

- Timeline – on a separate page, using a GANTT chart or similar visual, outline the timeline for the major activities associated with your specific aims. Include your planned timeline, award type, and intended sponsor for submitting a collaborative national grant proposal.
- Multiple PI leadership plan – provide a multiple PI leadership plan as required for an NIH grant (limit 1 page).
- References – limit to two pages.

Team Science Awards

- Specific Aims – **1 page maximum**
- Narrative – Significance, Innovation and Approach – **3 page maximum combined**
 - Significance
Explain the importance of the problem or critical barrier to progress that the proposed project addresses. Describe the scientific premise for the proposed project, including consideration of the strengths and weaknesses of published research or preliminary data crucial to the support of your application. Explain how the proposed project will improve scientific knowledge, technical capability, and/or clinical practice in pancreatic cancer.
 - Innovation
Explain how the application challenges and seeks to shift current research or clinical practice paradigms. Describe any novel theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions to be developed or used, and any advantage over existing methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions. Explain any refinements, improvements, or new applications of theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions.
 - Approach
Describe the overall strategy, methodology, and analysis to be used to accomplish the specific aims of the project. Describe the experimental design and methods proposed and how they will achieve robust and unbiased results. Include how the data will be collected, analyzed, and interpreted. For trials that randomize groups or deliver interventions to groups, describe how your methods for analysis and sample size will yield statistically significant results. Discuss potential problems, alternative strategies, and benchmarks for

success anticipated to achieve the aims. Explain how relevant biological variables, such as gender, are factored into research designs and analyses for studies in vertebrate animals and humans.

Other information required to fully describe the proposed work may be included. **However, the Specific Aims and Project Narrative should be no more than a total of 4 typed pages, including figures, tables and other relevant data.** (Appendices will not be accepted).

- Team Science Plan – **1 page** – describe the contribution of each co-PI to the project outlined.
- Analysis of Expertise, Resources and Environment – with respect to the intended national-level team science grant, discuss concisely the expertise, resources and environment that you will leverage. Discuss any weaknesses or gaps that you will need to address prior to pursuing a national grant submission. Be sure to consider whether the grant mechanism you intend to pursue requires an External Scientific Advisory Board. No page limits, but please be concise.
- Timeline – on a separate page, using a GANTT chart or similar visual, outline the timeline for the major activities associated with your specific aims. Refer to the budget instructions above and be sure the budget justification and timeline are aligned. Include your planned timeline, award type, and intended sponsor for submitting a national grant proposal.
- Multiple PI leadership plan – provide a multiple PI leadership plan as required for an NIH grant (limit 1 page) if your proposal involves co-PIs.
- References – limit to two pages.

Biographical Sketch: Include an NIH-style biographical sketch (new format please) for all key personnel listed on the title page.

Other Support: Provide a complete list of all current and pending research support for all key personnel. Be sure to include the funding Agency, project title, award amount (annual direct costs and total project direct costs), period of award and Principal Investigator. Overlap with the present application must be defined and justified. Unsigned NIH-style other support documents can be used.

Human Subjects, Vertebrate Animals, Radiation Safety, and Biosafety: As applicable to your proposed project, please have protocol numbers and most recent approval dates available at the time you submit your application.

Scientific Review

Applications are peer-reviewed using a typical NIH-style study section approach. Reviewers are comprised of cancer center members and other investigators with relevant scientific expertise. Each application is assigned 2 to 3 reviewers and will be judged by the following criteria (be certain to address these in your proposal submission):

- Scientific merit
- Qualifications, experience and productivity of the applicant
- Project feasibility given facilities, budget, and timeline
- Potential to lead to NCI or other national-level funding

Award Process

Those applications selected for funding consideration will be expected to present a brief lay summary of the aims of the project and the potential impact to the Wings of Hope for Pancreatic Cancer Research Board in December.

Final funding decisions will be made following the Board meeting. The start date for the award is anticipated to be January 1, 2027.

Pre-Award Requirements

Institutional Approvals: Awardees must obtain research approval from appropriate institutional review bodies, such as COMIRB, IACUC, Biosafety, IBC, Children's Hospital Research Institute, CSU IRB or any other regulatory group relevant to their project. **FUNDS CANNOT BE RELEASED UNTIL ALL REQUIRED APPROVALS ARE OBTAINED.** It is the investigator's responsibility to provide all required approval memos to the UCCC Administrative Office to secure release of award funding. **Investigators who fail to obtain all regulatory approvals within three (3) months of the intended start date of the award will forfeit their award.**

Post-Award Requirements

Small Pilot Grants are issued for 12 months only. Collaborative and Team Science Awards may be up to 18 months based on the milestones. The official start of the award is dependent on the submission of any required regulatory approvals. Please note the limitation above regarding failure to obtain regulatory approvals within 3 months of the intended start date.

No Cost Extensions *may* be granted on a limited basis for extraordinary circumstances. If approved, only one NCE will be allowed.

All publications, abstracts, or similar communications resulting from an award must acknowledge this support by inclusion of the statement: *"Supported (in part) by pilot funding from the Wings of Hope for Pancreatic Cancer Research."*

Periodic Reports

Recipients will be asked for one in person update with the donor during the funding cycle and may be asked to provide periodic progress reports (scientific and/or lay language) in response to donor requests and/or Cancer Center needs. The Cancer Center Administration Core will make every effort to limit such requests to no more than one time per year.

A 6-month progress report status update is required by the Wings of Hope board. A final report summarizing the results of the studies, detailing your timeline for pursuing national-level funding, and listing any publications resulting from the work will be due 1 month following the original end date of your award. Awardees will be provided with a REDCap link to submit their final reports on-line via an automated email from Smartsheet. Failure to provide the required reports will render recipients ineligible to apply for the following Wings of Hope grant cycle.

Collaborative Pilot Grants and Team Science Awards may be funded incrementally based on the outcome of the interim reports detailing progress and milestones achieved. The timeline for interim reports will be outlined in the award notice.

No cost extensions may be considered for extenuating circumstances **only** (see above). Please contact Cancer Center Administration at CC_FundingOps@cuanschutz.edu if you have questions.

Updates on your success in achieving national funding, additional publications and other outcomes – i.e. patents, or other intellectual property - are required for up to four years following the completion of the project.

SAVE THE DATE!

Applicants who are interested in attending the September 19, 2026, [Evening of Hope presented by Wings of Hope for Pancreatic Cancer Research](#) are asked to contact Allison.krebs@cuanschutz.edu.