

Sarcoma Funding Opportunity FY2024 Award

Background

The University of Colorado Cancer Center is interested in developing a collaborative and cohesive sarcoma group that is one of a kind in this country, that is able to compete for, and obtain, highly prestigious collaborative grants such as NCI multiple-principal investigator grants, or an NCI program project grant in sarcoma, which recognizes a broadly based, multi-disciplinary research program in a particular area. CU Anschutz has all of the building blocks needed to create this robust program. The CU Cancer Center has the great fortune of working with individuals willing to provide philanthropic support for this purpose. For fiscal year 2024, the Cancer Center anticipates having funds available to support two to three pilot projects of up to \$50,000 direct costs each.

These grants are intended to stimulate collaborative research involving two or more co-PIs (one of whom must be a Cancer Center member¹) 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 a 12-month period.

Important Dates

09/26/2023	RFA release
11/14/2023	Proposal deadline – 11:59 pm (MT)
12/13/2023	Review committee meeting
Late December	Award notification
01/01/2024	Award start date

Eligibility

Pilot projects will be competitively awarded to Cancer Center members who submit innovative ideas that have a high likelihood of attaining NCI or other national funding. Collaborative efforts leading to multi-PI and/or multi-project grants are encouraged. Projects will be awarded for 1 year only.

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 grant. Recipients are expected to submit competitive national grant proposals (R level) within 6 months following the completion of this scope of work. Failure to uphold this provision may limit future opportunities for pilot funding.

Review Criteria

Applications will be competitively reviewed and assigned an NIH-style overall priority score based on the scientific impact and significance; the qualifications, experience and productivity of the applicant(s); project feasibility given facilities, budget and timeline; and the likelihood of leading to successful NCI or other national-level funding.

¹ 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>

Application Process

Application: Individuals will submit their application to the link below. Proposal submissions are due by **Tuesday, November 14, 2023, at 11:59 pm**. No late proposals will be accepted.

[Sarcoma Pilot Grant Application Form](#)

Proposal Requirements

Proposals must include all sections outlined below. Non-conforming proposals 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.

Individuals interested in applying must hold research or tenure track faculty appointments at the instructor level or above and must be current or pending members of the CU Cancer Center. Pending members must meet all membership criteria. Membership applications and guidelines are found on-line at:

<https://medschool.cuanschutz.edu/colorado-cancer-center/research/membership-resources> .

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

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

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

Lay Audience Summary: On a separate page, describe in one page or less, the objectives, the expected results, and the *significance* of your proposed research in non-scientific language. This summary may be used by the donors to determine final funding decisions and therefore should be informative and user-friendly.

Project Narrative: Provide a complete but concise description of the project using standard NIH sections:

- **Specific Aims – 1 page maximum.** Describe succinctly the specific objectives of the proposed research and summarize the expected outcome(s), including the impact that the results of the proposed research will have on the research field(s) involved.
- **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 one or more broad fields. As appropriate, discuss how your proposal addresses cancer issues that are relevant to the challenges faced by Coloradoans (see the [COE Fact Sheet](#) for catchment-relevant issues); issues addressing diversity, equity, inclusion, or access; and or supports the training of the next generation of researchers.
 - **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).

References: References should be limited to two pages and are in addition to the Specific Aims and Narrative page limits.

Timeline: Using a GANTT chart or similar visual, outline the timeline for the major activities associated with your specific aims. Briefly describe the timeline providing sufficient information for reviewers to understand the milestones relevant to each of your Specific Aims and the timeframe in which you expect to meet each milestone.

Multiple PI leadership plan (if applicable; 1 page limit): Provide a multiple PI leadership plan if your proposal involves co-PIs. Describe the rationale for choosing a multi-PI approach; the governance and organizational structure of the leadership team; and the technical/scientific responsibilities of each PI as they relate to this pilot project.

Other Factors (if applicable; ½ page limit): Applicants may include a concise description of any other factors that should be considered in evaluation of the proposal, for example, specialized resources or equipment available to the study, collaborative arrangements (verified by letter of agreement), etc.

Budget: Provide a detailed, categorical budget for the project. The budget request can be up to \$50,000 direct costs for one year only. Faculty salary support is not allowed. Funds will not be provided to pay for standard of care clinical services or other expenses that are reimbursable through insurance. No indirect costs will be funded.

Budget Justification: Provide a detailed budget justification for all costs. Requests for travel funds or for items of capital equipment (i.e. equipment at or exceeding \$5,000 per item) will require detailed justification.

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; and are chaired by cancer center Associate Directors. Each application is assigned 2 to 3 reviewers and will be judged by the following criteria:

- Scientific merit and quality of the proposed research
- Impact – will the proposed research provide sufficient preliminary data to support an application for extramural funding from a national-level sponsor?
- Qualifications and experience of the investigator(s) – is the combination of expertise, experience and qualifications likely to lead to success?
- Project feasibility – is it likely that the proposed research can be accomplished within the timeline outlined, given the laboratories, research teams, facilities, and budget?

Award Process

Applications are reviewed for scientific merit by a Study Section convened by the Associate Director of Basic Science. The evaluation criteria are attached at the end of this RFA. The anticipated start date for the award will be January 1, 2024. The Cancer Center's Administrative Office will set up speed types for all pilots selected for funding.

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 investigators 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

Awards are issued for 12 months only. The official start of the 12 months 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 only. Please contact Cancer Center Administration at CC_FundingOps@cuanschutz.edu if you have questions.

An initial summary of progress and the impact of the funding will be required 14 months after the start date of the award. Subsequent information on publications, the success of your national grant submission, subsequent grants, and any other research resources resulting from the pilot funding will be solicited for up to 5 years following the completion of your pilot grant. Awardees may be expected to present an in-person, brief lay summary of the aims of the project and impact to the benefactor.

Investigators who receive awards will be expected to serve as Reviewers in future rounds.

Publications

All publications, abstracts, or similar communications resulting from an award must acknowledge this support by inclusion of the statement: *"Supported by a pilot grant from the University of Colorado Cancer Center and a generous donation by Arnette Schouten."*

Projects that use Cancer Center Shared Resources must include the following acknowledgement and be submitted to PubMed Central: *"Research supported by the ### Shared Resource funded through the University of Colorado's Cancer Center Support Grant (P30CA046934)."*