

To: Norris Cotton Cancer Center Members  
From: Steven D. Leach, MD  
Date: September 1, 2020  
Subject: Cancer Center Developmental Funds (Pilot Projects)  
2020 Second Cycle

In 2020 NCCC again will fund pilot projects that advance meritorious cancer research. The purpose of developmental funds is to support preliminary studies that have the potential to demonstrate novel approaches and provide preliminary data necessary for planned external grant applications.

Eligibility Criteria: At least one Principal Investigator on a project must be a current Cancer Center Member. Funded investigators (including current Pilot Project PIs) are eligible, but the application should address how the request represents novel work in light of current funding. Priority will be given to projects that clearly include key approaches (e.g., innovation, team science and translational research) and themes (e.g., prevention/treatment/survivorship, promoting precision oncology, engineering cancer cures, immune-oncology) of the NCCC strategic plan. In addition to priority score, final funding decisions will seek a set of awards that spans basic, clinical, and population-based research, including efforts in prevention and health promotion, patient-centered precision medicine, and optimization of patient outcomes. In response to growing NCI expectations that designated Centers engage in community-focused research, outreach, and engagement special consideration will be given to applications that address our catchment area population (i.e., New Hampshire and Vermont)—addressing the population at-large, specific sub-populations (e.g., rural, elderly, cancer survivors), or within specific community settings (e.g., primary care clinics, schools). Studies that lead to interventions in the catchment area are especially encouraged. Applicants needing advice on incorporating this consideration into their proposed work can consult with our Community Outreach and Engagement team (Jenna Schiffelbein: [Jenna.E.Schiffelbein@dartmouth.edu](mailto:Jenna.E.Schiffelbein@dartmouth.edu)), or plan to participate at September 29<sup>th</sup> NCCC Grand Rounds in a general discussion on this consideration.

Awards: In 2020, awards are available in the following categories:

*Prouty Pilots:* Available funding totals \$250,000.

*(Individual PIs):* New early stage cancer investigators (i.e. assistant professor appointment within the last 5 years) individually may apply for one-year of support, up to \$30,000 in direct costs, for a proposal that includes the commitment of an established Cancer Center Member in an unfunded role of mentor.

*(Multiple PIs):* Any Cancer Center Members may apply, for up to \$50,000, for collaborative translational proposals (i.e., that pursue either application of scientific discoveries to clinical practice or community interventions or underlying mechanisms behind observations from patient care or public health). Requests for clearly exploratory work are capped at \$25,000, with \$50,000 requests requiring citation of specific planned grant applications.

*Clinical Research and Population Science:* Available funding totals \$200,000.

Pilot projects that advance clinical trials and/or public health studies may request up to \$100,000 direct costs. These applications need to address why the proposed work involves clinical practice and/or community-based interventions that require the larger award.

As noted above, currently funded investigators must propose a project that takes work in a new direction. Given the pilot intent of the awards, projects requiring more than consumable costs (e.g., PI salary support and/or equipment purchases) should cite an institutional commitment (e.g., Department Chair Letter of Support) to pursuing the results of the work proposed beyond the project award period's support for ongoing costs. Other Expense requests for purchased services outside of an NCCC Shared Resource require confirmation from the NCCC Shared Resource Director that the service needs to be purchased elsewhere.

Review criteria: Proposals will receive internal peer review, including NCCC Program leadership. Criteria include scientific merit, translational emphasis, and likelihood of obtaining pilot data necessary for a planned grant application. Applications should address feasibility of the work proposed, but preference will be given to pilot projects testing novel approaches to innovative and high-risk aims. Translational projects may bridge laboratory, clinic, and/or population-based research in either direction. Proposals are encouraged to involve co-investigators from diverse disciplines to demonstrate the translational nature of the work, as long as one co-investigator is a current NCCC Member. Interventional studies are encouraged, particularly those that engage a catchment area population.

Please note that informational Letters of Intent are required (to plan reviews and not to reject submissions), and confirmation will be provided regarding responsiveness to review criteria.

Applications: Proposals should use the attached forms, which begin with a one-page letter of intent and cover sheet, principal investigator biographical sketch, description of the research proposed, and budget justification. The description of the research proposed is limited to 5 pages and must address background, aims, methods, and cancer relevance.

Resubmissions should begin with a focused response to the prior critique.

Letters of Intent (to confirm the responsiveness of proposals to award criteria) and applications should be sent to the attention of Robert Gerlach, NCCC Research Administrator. Questions should be directed to Mr. Gerlach at 653-6187.

**Letters of Intent are due Thursday, October 1<sup>st</sup>. Applications must be received by Monday, November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2020. Awards are anticipated to be made by**

**January 1<sup>st</sup>.** Awards will include confirmation of the requirement for recipients to participate as requested in future reporting and presentation of funded work to our generous public supporters, Friends of Norris Cotton Cancer Center, and to our catchment area population, through our Community Outreach and Engagement initiative.