

## GUIDELINES AND INSTRUCTIONS

### Background and Purpose:

The scientific objective of the Cancer Population Sciences research program (CPS) is to understand and reduce cancer risks and cancer-related burden within the UFHCC catchment area. The CPS Specific Aims are to:

- Identify cancer risk factors, improve cancer prevention, and optimize screening;
- Reduce cancer burden by mitigating treatment toxicities, alleviating symptoms, improving palliative care and survivorship, and increasing participation in clinical trials via tailored communication.

### Goals:

The goals of CPS Program-based pilot projects are to:

- Provide developmental support for promising, cancer-focused collaborative research projects with a well-defined objective that are responsive to the CPS aims and review criteria;
- Promote new transdisciplinary research initiatives stimulating novel cancer research in areas of strategic interest of the program, as defined by the UFHCC Strategic Plan to address an identified need within the UFHCC catchment area and/or one of the UFHCC priority cancers such as lung, colorectal, hematologic malignancies, and breast;
- Create synergies and lasting collaborations between cancer researchers that will lead to impactful publications and stimulate collaborative grant applications for future Federal or other peer-reviewed extramural cancer research funding.
- **Priority will be given to projects that demonstrate meaningful collaboration with clinical co-investigators, advance epidemiology research or foster collaboration with other UFHCC research programs** (i.e., Mechanisms of Oncogenesis [MOO] and Cancer Therapeutics & Host Response [CTHR]);

A successful pilot project is a preliminary investigation of the feasibility of a study, intended to help the investigator refine the data collection and instruments, study design, and hypothesis, and acquire preliminary results to submit a competitive extramural research proposal. Pilot project funds are not meant to be bridge funding, nor to extend the funding available for an already established study.

### Eligibility:

- Each project must include at least one CPS member, acting as the Contact PD/PI for the project.
  - Co-PI's and collaborators from other UFHCC programs are encouraged with a clear Scope of Work included in the Budget Justification;
- Faculty at all academic stages are eligible to apply.
- A collaborating investigator can submit only one project during a funding cycle as PD/PI. Clinical/Scientific advisory roles on more than one application are allowed.
- Investigators with active pilot projects or active multi-investigator projects are not eligible to apply unless:
  - The investigator(s) is/are engaged in projects that are clearly scientifically distinct from the current application or the active pilot project is ending before awards are issued for the current round of funding.
- UFHCC Startup Funds:
  - Early stage investigators\* receiving UFHCC startup funding are eligible to apply if they collaborate with another lab/group and they will be working on a new project not covered by an existing externally sponsored research award;
  - Established investigators receiving UFHCC startup funding within the first five years of initial UF appointment are eligible to apply if they collaborate with another lab/group. However, it is expected that 50% of their budget is supported from their existing startup funds.

\*UFHCC defines Early Stage Investigators (ESIs) as full-time faculty within the first five (5) years of initial academic appointment, with one of the following:

- i. Have a UFHCC commitment of funds, resources, and/or space as part of a recruitment package.
- ii. Have an academic rank of assistant professor, research assistant professor, or clinical assistant professor.
- iii. Be eligible to apply as a Principal Investigator for external peer-reviewed funding from national agencies (NCI, NIH, ACS, DOD, NSF, etc.)

#### **Award Amount & Duration:**

- One Pilot Award, up to \$50,000, is expected to be awarded;
- Pilot funds must adhere to the approved UFHCC Pilot Project Allowable & Unallowable Costs (attached) ;
- The award period is 12 months, 24 months for pilots involving human subject research
  - Applicants should provide a one-year budget, with the expectation that all funds will be expended during that term; two-year budget for pilots involving human subject research;
- Funds are expected to be released, and projects awarded **April 1, 2021**.

#### **Required Grant Application Components:**

**Application Requirements:** Use the UFHCC [Application Template](#) including the following:

- Cover Page
  - List of Key Personnel
    - Biosketches (PI and Co-PI biosketches ONLY)
  - Project Title
  - IRB, IACUC approval numbers and dates (if available)
  - List of similar pending projects for all key personnel
- Scientific Abstract (30 Lines)
- General Audience (Lay) Abstract (30 Lines)
- Research Plan (no more than 3 pages) should include the following sections:
  - Specific Aims (1 page)
  - Research Strategy (no more than 2 pages):
    - Background & Significance
    - Innovation
    - Approach
- Bibliography/References Cited (no page limit)
- Response to Research Objectives & Impact Statement (up to 1 page):
  - Expected Outcomes & Plan for Future Funding: Applicants must describe how the research will improve the competitiveness of the application for a specific funding announcement(s).
  - Impact Statement: Applicants must describe whether and how the proposed project impacts the identified needs of the Catchment Area.\*
- Budget by major category & budget justification.

The UFHCC catchment area includes 23 counties\*\* located in north Florida characterized by rurality and high rates of current smokers, obesity, poverty, adults over 65 years, late stage cancer diagnoses (lung, head and neck, colorectal, and breast); lower educational attainment; and lower rates of cancer screening (particularly mammography), relative to Florida and to the United States (US).

\*\*UFHCC Catchment Area Counties: Alachua, Baker, Bradford, Citrus, Clay, Columbia, Dixie, Gadsden, Gilchrist, Hamilton, Jefferson, Lafayette, Lake, Leon, Levy, Madison, Marion, Putnam, Sumter, Suwannee, Taylor, Union, and Wakulla.

#### **Review process and Merit criteria:**

Pilot proposal evaluation will be conducted through peer review process, where all projects are judged based on NIH review criteria. In addition, the feasibility for obtaining extramural funding and impact on the UFHCC catchment area identified needs will be reviewed as score-driving criteria.

**The Peer Review Process:** Each application is assigned a primary and a secondary reviewer.

**Scoring:** Reviewers are instructed to evaluate research applications by scoring each of the review criteria below and assign an overall score from 1-9.

**Innovation:** Does the application challenge and seek to shift current research or clinical practice paradigms by utilizing novel theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions?

**Significance:** Does the project address an important problem or a critical barrier to progress in the field? Is there a strong scientific premise for the project? If the aims of the project are achieved, how will scientific knowledge, technical capability, and/or clinical practice be improved? How will successful completion of the aims change the concepts, methods, technologies, treatments, services, or preventative interventions that drive this field?

**Investigators:** Are the PD/PIs, collaborators, and other researchers well suited to the project? If the project is collaborative or multi-PD/PI, do the investigators have complementary and integrated expertise?

**Approach:** Are the overall strategy, methodology, and analyses well-reasoned and appropriate to accomplish the specific aims of the project? Have the investigators presented strategies to ensure a robust and unbiased approach, as appropriate for the work proposed? Are potential problems, alternative strategies, and benchmarks for success presented? If the project is in the early stages of development, will the strategy establish feasibility and will particularly risky aspects be managed? Have the investigators presented adequate plans to address relevant biological variables, such as sex, for studies in vertebrate animals or human subjects?

**Potential to result in Federal or other peer-reviewed funding:** Is the proposed study likely to lead to the development of a competitive external, peer-reviewed application?

UFHCC is committed to promoting rigorous and reproducible research. Therefore, all reviewers will be asked to evaluate how well rigor and reproducibility is addressed in the proposal according to NIH guidelines <https://grants.nih.gov/policy/reproducibility/guidance.htm>

**Impact on the Catchment Area:** Does the proposed project address an identified need within our catchment area? More information on UFHCC catchment area needs can be found here (<https://cancer.ufl.edu/community/>).

All applicants will receive reviewers' comments at the end of the review process.

**Applications must be submitted on or before the published due date of January 25, 2021 to Research Administration c/o Natalie Roman: [Natalie.Roman@ufl.edu](mailto:Natalie.Roman@ufl.edu).**

**Questions:** Please contact Natalie Roman at [Natalie.Roman@ufl.edu](mailto:Natalie.Roman@ufl.edu)