

GUIDELINES AND INSTRUCTIONS

GOALS:

- Identify new research opportunities focused on Prostate, Kidney, and Bladder cancers;
- Address identified needs of our catchment area;
- Create synergies and collaborations among UFHCC members and other members of University of Florida, Gainesville that will lead to impactful publications;
- Stimulate future program-type applications for federal or national extramural peer-reviewed funding.

The purpose of UF Health Cancer Center (UFHCC) pilot program is to 1) provide developmental support for promising, cancer-focused collaborative research projects with a well-defined objective; 2) promote new transdisciplinary research initiatives stimulating novel cancer research in areas of strategic interest of the center, as defined by the UFHCC Strategic Plan, including novel interventional clinical studies; and, 3) create synergy and collaborations between cancer researchers that will lead to impactful publications and applications for federal or other peer-reviewed funding. 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 UFHCC member, acting as the Contact PD/PI for the project.
- Faculty at all academic stages are eligible to apply.
- **Priority will be given to projects that demonstrate meaningful collaboration with clinical co-investigators, advance epidemiology research, and foster collaboration between UFHCC research programs** (Cancer Population Sciences [CPS]; Cancer Therapeutics & Host Response [CTHR]; and, Mechanisms of Oncogenesis [MOO]).
- 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:

The maximum award amount is \$50,000.

- The award period is 12 months, with the expectation that all funds will be expended within that term.
- The award period can be extended to 24 months for clinical research projects requiring IRB approval, or projects using animals requiring IACUC approval, with the expectation that all funds will be expended within that term.

- One project will be awarded depending on the quality of science and availability of funds.

The deadline for receipt of applications is: Monday, May 24, 2021.

Applications should be submitted to Natalie Roman: Natalie.Roman@ufl.edu, and copied to: researchadmin@cancer.ufl.edu

Funds are expected to be released by **summer of 2021**.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS:

Grant applications will provide a scientific rationale, project narrative, significance, detailed timeline and budget.

The minimal requirements for the grant applications are:

- A proposal that explicitly focuses on the genetics, biology, prevention or treatment of Prostate, Kidney, or Bladder cancers.
- A proposal that explicitly presents the goals and significance, as well as future potential growth of the overall project.

Applicants should submit the following using the UFHCC [Application Template](#):

- Cover Page
 - List of Key Personnel
 - Biosketches (PI and Co-PI biosketches ONLY)
 - Project Title
 - IRB, IACUC approval numbers and dates
 - 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):
 - Multiple PI Plan (explain what each lab is doing in support of the project)
 - Expected Outcomes & Plan for Future Funding
 - Impact Statement: Applications must describe whether and how the proposed project impacts the identified needs of the Catchment Area.*
- Budget by major category & budget justification.

*Note: The UFHCC catchment area includes 22 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 of 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 May 24, 2021 to:

Natalie Roman: Natalie.Roman@ufl.edu, and copied to: researchadmin@cancer.ufl.edu.

Awardee Requirements:

- Grantees must submit a progress report 3 months before the end of project.
- Grantees will be required to present, in report form and/or presentation format, on use of the funding and next steps to advance their research.
- Grantees will be required to provide annual outcomes reports for five (5) years after the end of the pilot project regarding publications and extramural grant applications that resulted from work supported by the pilot funds.
- All outcomes resulting from the funded project must assign credit to the UF Health Cancer Center and the Department of Urology for supporting the project

Questions: Please contact Natalie Roman at Natalie.Roman@ufl.edu