FY2018 Cancer Genetics, Epigenetics and Genomics (CGEG): Research Program Pilot Grant Award Program

APPLICATION GUIDELINES

Objective

The primary purpose of this pilot grant award program is to support the acquisition of preliminary data that will lead to external grant funding and published work. Research projects should further the CGEG mission to conduct high impact research in areas related to the three Program aims:

1. the characterization of unique patterns of gene expression in normal and cancer cells;
2. the definition of the pathways that regulate genome stability and their response to environmental carcinogens in normal and cancer cells; and,
3. the identification of mutational and gene expression signatures in leukemia, lung cancer, and other cancers with increased incidence and/or mortality in New Mexico populations that can be translated to clinical and community interventions

Priority will be given to projects that involve intra-programmatic and inter-programmatic collaborations. We are also interested in projects that use UNM Comprehensive Cancer Center (UNMCCC) Shared Resources (http://cancer.unm.edu/research/shared-resources/) and provide training opportunities.

Eligibility

All members of the Cancer Genetics, Epigenetics and Genomics Research Program are eligible to apply.

Term of Funding

These awards are intended to provide funding for innovative projects that can be completed within 1 year – funding for a second year may be possible and will be contingent on productivity during the initial funding period and competition with new applications. The number and amount of awards will depend upon the quality of the proposals received and available funding. Expenditures may begin at any time after the official start date but generally all funds should be expended within one year of receipt. Successful applicants must produce a 1-2 page 6-month progress report as well as a 2-3 page final report within 30-days of completing the project.

Awards may be up to $25,000 each. The number of projects awarded will depend on quality of applications and the availability of funds.
Key Dates

- Application Due Date: July 17, 2017
- Estimated Earliest Start Date: September 1, 2017

Allowable Costs

The award(s) should be used for research activities and cannot be used for faculty salary support or for the purchase of large equipment. Funding is available for salaries and fringe benefits of post-doctoral fellows, students, technicians, and other non-faculty project personnel costs. Laboratory supplies and other related research non-personnel expenses are appropriate with the exception of: travel to scientific meetings (local research travel is allowed); office furniture and equipment; and, computers.

Format

Proposals should be submitted in one PDF file and include the following items:

Application Components:

1. Cover letter that addresses the following aspects of the proposal:
   a. Title of proposed research project and how it specifically relates to the aims of the CGEG Program, and its potential significance or relevance to the field.
   b. PI, co-investigators, and trainees’ involvement in UNM CGEG activities.
   c. Proposed study’s UNMCCC inter-programmatic and/or intra-programmatic collaborations.
   d. Indicate from which NIH/NCI extramural support program(s) you will ultimately be seeking support, and why you anticipate that the research supported by this pilot grant will leverage external support. Include planned submission date(s) for the application.
   e. How the project will include training of a doctoral student or postdoctoral fellow (if applicable).
   f. Use of UNMCCC Shared Resources (if applicable).

2. Face Page (2 pages). Complete the application’s face page (see template Application Face Page) and be sure to include a 100 to 150 word abstract typed in 11-point Arial font.

3. Narrative (5-page limit). The research project narrative must include the following content: (1) Hypothesis (2) Specific Aims, (3) Background and Significance, (4) Research Plan

4. ½ page each, if applicable for Human Subjects or Vertebrate Animals

5. Literature Cited (No page limit).

6. Biographical Sketches (new NIH format) Provide complete bio-sketches in NIH specific format for all key personnel – including personal statement.

Application Process

1. Proposals should be submitted electronically in one PDF by July 17, 2017 at 5 PM to: UNMCC-PilotProgram@salud.unm.edu. Late applications will not be accepted but additional calls may be issued if there are insufficient applications for the first call.

2. Application narratives should not exceed 5 single-spaced, typewritten pages. Note that the face page, references, biographical sketches, and budgets are not included in this page limit. Additional supportive attachments are allowed, but they must be pertinent (i.e. protocols, IRB/IACUC approvals, letters of support, etc…).
   - Complete the face page in the template provided (Application Face Page).
   - The required font for the proposal is 11-point Arial.
   - Margins must be at least 0.50 inches wide on all four sides of each page.
   - Attach biographical sketches (new NIH format) for all key research personnel.
   - If available, please attach copies of the IRB approval and approved protocols for the project. All applicants are encouraged to submit IRB applications at the same time as the funding application due to the potentially long time-line for IRB approval. Funds will not be released without IRB approval.

3. Incomplete proposals or those that exceed the page limits (not including attachments) will not be considered.

4. The applications will be reviewed by UNMCCC CGEG Steering Committee members and invited content-expert members as needed. Anonymous reviews will be made available to all applicants.

If the proposed research makes use of a UNMCCC Shared Resource, the applicant should include a letter of support from that unit. These can be letters, notes, or emails from the relevant Shared Resource Director. The indication/note can be brief but must make clear that the shared resource is willing to work with the investigator(s) on the proposed project.

Application Review Process

Proposals for the Research Program Awards will be screened by CGEG Co-leaders and scored by a committee that includes CGEG Co-leaders and selected members. All applications will be reviewed for specific scientific merit and for their appropriateness in meeting the scientific aims of the CGEG Program.

The following ten criteria will be considered in the review process:

1. Scientific merit
2. Technical soundness
3. Innovation
4. Potential for translation of research to the clinic or population
5. Transdisciplinary interaction
6. Potential for reducing cancer incidence and mortality
7. Collaborative interactions with other UNMCC members
8. Appropriateness of the proposed budget and potential for future NCI grant funding
9. Use of the UNMCCC Shared Resources
10. Relevance to the UNMCCC catchment area (NM)
Each reviewer will assign a score of 1 (exceptional) to 9 (poor) for each of the standard NIH criteria, considering all of the above criteria.

If a proposed project lies outside the expertise of the Program Leaders/committee members, an ad hoc external reviewer will be asked to review the application.

**Selection of Awardees**

The UNMCCC Research Program Leaders will make the selections, with final approval by the UNMCCC Senior Leadership, who will review recommendations from all Programs, assess in the context of broad Center goals, and insure lack of redundancy. Proposals with the best (i.e., lowest) mean priority scores will be considered for funding. Proposed budgets will be scrutinized and may be reduced at the discretion of the Program Leaders. The maximum award is $25,000 for one year. Funding for a second year may be possible and will be contingent on productivity during the initial funding period and competition with new applications.

**Award Management**

If awardees apply for and receive an additional year of funding, second year payments are contingent upon receipt of progress reports and publications and on their approval by the Program Leaders. The progress report at the end of the first year of funding will be a component of a new application for the second year of funding. *All funds must be spent within the 12 month period;* unused funds will be returned to the central Cancer Center budget for redistribution during the next budget cycle. If the Program Leaders terminate an award for non-compliance or non-performance, remaining balances will be returned to the Program Leaders for redistribution within the next award cycle.

**Change In Status Of Awardee**

Awards must remain solely with the designated awardee and cannot be transferred to any other personnel. If a recipient decides to discontinue his or her work in the CGEG Program, the award will be terminated as described above, and unused funds will be returned to the UNMCCC. Likewise, if an investigator awardee changes institutions during the funding period, the award cannot be transferred and the remaining balance will be returned to the central UNMCCC budget.

**Expectations of Award Recipients**

Recipients of these awards are expected to actively participate in UNMCCC activities such as seminars, meetings, and retreats. Awardees will be expected to present their research findings at a CGEG Program Update Meeting. All correspondence should be sent to UNMCC-PilotProgram@salud.unm.edu including:

- All required progress reports (6-month, and final), and all additional requests for updates for the CGEG Program Leaders, Senior Leadership, and/or Administration.
- A financial accounting of project funds.
- Annual reports for up to 5 years of funding and publications (with PMCID numbers) resulting from the award.

Additionally, recipients are expected to appropriately acknowledge the pilot funding. *All material derived from the research supported by UNMCCC funding that is published or presented must*
carry a statement that credits the Cancer Center Support Grant P30CA118100 and Shared Resources, where appropriate. Publications that cite the Cancer Center Support Grant funding will be included in progress reports to NCI.

Any questions about this pilot grant program should be directed to the CGEG Program Leaders, Drs Mary Ann Osley Mosley@salud.unm.edu and Steve Belinsky at SBelinsk@lrri.org