Objective

The primary purpose of this pilot grant award program is to assist groups of Cancer Center investigators in the development of cancer-focused collaborative projects that will be competitive for extramural funding as multi-PI grants such as a multi-PI NIH R01, P01 or SPORE grants. Pilot projects must be a multidisciplinary collaboration between two or more cancer center members that links together existing areas of research strength and expertise within the cancer center and focuses on a problem that is related to the strategic goals of the cancer center and its research programs and clinical working groups. Projects may be focused on the identification of novel targets and biomarkers, drug discovery and/or the development of novel imaging technologies and should have the ultimate goal of improving prevention, detection and treatment of cancers that impact the multi-ethnic populations served by the UNM Comprehensive Cancer Center (UNMCCC). Although applicants should make use of the unique technologies and capabilities available at the UNMCCC (genomic characterization of tumors; cellular, animal, or human imaging; high throughput target screening and drug discovery; nanotechnology and engineering; access to multiethnic populations and population networks), they are also encouraged to engage with collaborators at other cancer centers and institutions, who bring critical expertise, capabilities and/or resources, to the project. A specific funding mechanism and a timeline for grant submission based on research milestones are required as part of the application.

Eligibility

All UNMCCC members are eligible to apply. In addition to Cancer Center members, all UNM-associated faculty, as well as faculty at our collaborating institutions (LRRI, Sandia and Los Alamos National Laboratories) are encouraged to form collaborative teams to submit.

Term of Funding

This pilot grant will be for a one-year period with a maximum budget of $100,000 (direct costs only). Successful applicants may apply for one additional year of funding that will be based upon productivity during the initial funding period and competition with new applications. 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.
The number of projects awarded will depend on quality of applications and the availability of funds.

**Key Dates**

Applications will be accepted on a continuous basis.

**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 and focus of proposed collaborative project.
   b. Collaborative team members.
   c. The planned NIH/NCI grant mechanism and proposed submission date for the ultimate application.

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. **Collaborative Project Proposal** (3-page limit). Provide an outline of the proposed collaborative proposal, including details on the team members and what each brings to the project. In addition, include details on the ultimate grant submission, outlining the mechanism and planned submission date.

4. **½ page** each, if applicable for Human Subjects or Vertebrate Animals (* see below)

5. **Literature Cited** (No page limit).

6. **Biographical Sketches** (new NIH format). Provide complete bio-sketches in NIH specific format for all collaborative team members – including personal statements.

7. **Other Support.** Other Support should be done for all collaborative team members and include any current support funding their research.

8. **Budget and Budget Justification.** The application must include a detailed budget and budget justification.

* Proposals involving human subjects must have approval from the School of Medicine HRRC prior to funding.
* Proposals utilizing laboratory animals must submit a completed Laboratory Animal Utilization form prior to funding.

**Application Process**

1. Proposals should be submitted electronically in one PDF to UNMCC-PilotProgram@salud.unm.edu.

2. Application narratives should not exceed 3 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 collaborative team members.
   - If pertinent, 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 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 Senior Leadership and invited content-expert members as needed. Selected applicants may be requested to present their project as part of the final review.

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**

Applications will be reviewed by an ad hoc review committee and subsequently by the Cancer Center Senior Leadership. Collaborative teams may be invited to submit revised applications based on feedback and interactions with the Cancer Center Senior Leadership for final consideration for funding.

**Award Management**

If awardees apply for and receive an additional year of funding, second year payments are contingent upon receipt of progress reports and any applicable publications and approval by Cancer Center Senior Leadership. 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 Cancer Center Senior Leadership terminate an award for non-compliance or non-performance, remaining balances will be returned to the Cancer Center 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 UNMCCC, 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 an applicable Cancer Center retreat and/or meeting. All correspondence should be sent to UNMCC-PilotProgram@salud.unm.edu, including:

- All required progress reports, and all additional requests for updates from the Cancer Center Senior Leadership and/or Administration.

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. Additionally, all publications that result from these awards must abide by the NIH Public Access Policy and obtain a valid PMCID. 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 Alan Tomkinson, Associate Director, Basic Research (atomkinson@salud.unm.edu).