

## MAYS CANCER CENTER and TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

### JOINT REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS – COLLABORATIVE CANCER PILOT PROJECTS

#### Overview

The Mays Cancer Center at UT Health San Antonio and Texas A&M University Health are soliciting proposals for joint pilot projects resulting from collaborations between investigators at the two institutions. The primary goal of these programs is to support early-stage collaborative studies that will lead to increased interdisciplinary, institutional, and community-based research likely to compete successfully for extramural NCI-recognized peer-reviewed grant support and ultimately to improve human health. The programs are supported by the Mays Cancer Center and TAMU Health institutional funds.

#### Collaboration Requirement

Each project should be led by two co-principal investigators, one from the Mays Cancer Center (MCC) and one from TAMU (minimum 2 team members with equal PI status). An individual may submit no more than one project as a Principal Investigator and one as a Co-Investigator. PIs are encouraged to [join the Mays Cancer Center](#) at the time of submission if they are not already members of the Cancer Center. *Projects may also include (but not fund) other scientific/industrial partners from the south Texas region.*

*MCC PI eligibility under MCC requirements page.*

*TAMU PI eligibility under TAMU requirements page.*

If a Non-Disclosure agreement (NDA) is required, one should be drafted (by either organization's contracts office) and approved by both parties prior to funding distribution.

#### Award Information

The maximum budget for these one-year awards is \$50,000, although proposals with smaller budgets will be considered and reviewed under the same criteria.

- **Estimated Number of Awards:** 3\*, subject to availability of funds
- **Maximum Total Funding Per Project:** \$50,000
- **Performance Period:** March 15, 2024 – March 14, 2025\*\*

**\*Each project will receive up to \$50K (\$25,000 Mays Cancer Center; \$25,000 TAMU).**

#### Program Timeline

September 18, 2023	Letter of Intent due to <a href="mailto:mccgrants@uthscsa.edu">mccgrants@uthscsa.edu</a> (by 5:00pm CST)
November 24, 2023	Applications due to <a href="mailto:mccgrants@uthscsa.edu">mccgrants@uthscsa.edu</a> (by 5:00pm CST)
March 1, 2024	Awards announced
March 15, 2024	Grant performance period begins (funds available)
September, 2024	Progress report requested by Mays Cancer Center & TAMU
April 15, 2025	All funds must be spent
April 15, 2025	**Grant performance period ends (unspent funds will be swept January 2, unless an extension request has been submitted and approved)
June 30, 2025	Final project report due
January 31, 2026	Deadline for Extramural Funding Submission

*\*Program timeline subject to change. PIs will be notified of any changes.*

### **LOI and Application Submission:**

**Mays Cancer Center will be the lead institution for collection and administration of this grant program.** The PIs will submit one LOI and one combined application as instructed below.

### **Letter of Intent (LOI)**

Information provided in the LOI is required for planning purposes, but will not serve as a screening tool for proposal submission (i.e. all PIs submitting the LOI should then proceed to full proposal preparation). Email the following in a **single PDF file** attached to an email message to [mccgrants@uthscsa.edu](mailto:mccgrants@uthscsa.edu) by **5pm CT on September 15, 2023**. Please do not send multiple documents. The following elements are required:

- Email subject line: **LOI - MCC TAMU 2023 Pilot Awards**
- Title of the project
- Principal investigator (PI) for each institution
- Few sentences describing the project
- List of 3 to 4 potential reviewers from outside UT Health San Antonio and TAMU.

### **Application Submission Instructions:**

Submit complete application in a single PDF file to [mccgrants@uthscsa.edu](mailto:mccgrants@uthscsa.edu) by **5pm CT on November 24, 2023**. **NO LATE APPLICATIONS WILL BE ACCEPTED.**

- Email subject line: **MCC TAMU 2023 Pilot Awards**
- Application file should be named as follows: "PI Last name, first and middle initials MCC TAMU 2023 Pilot Awards".
- **Applications will not be accepted in any other format.**

### **Regulatory Compliance:**

Projects are subject to Institutional Review Board (IRB), Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC), Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC), export control, conflict of interest, and institutional safety regulations and approvals. The PIs are expected to have thoroughly investigated all regulatory components of the intended research and to have discussed relevant components in the proposal. Prior to making an award, required protocols must be in place.

For projects involving the use of human subjects or vertebrate animals, no expenditures will be permitted until MCC and TAMU is provided with a copy of the official letter of approval by the appropriate Institutional Review Board (IRB) or Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC), respectively. Investigators are encouraged to submit IRB and IACUC protocols early in order to avoid significant delays in project initiation. Applicants must also be up to date on compliance with institutional conflict of interest disclosure policies.

### **Application requirements and format:**

Applications should be prepared using the templates attached (adapted from PHS Form 398). Font size should be no smaller than 11 point, preferably Arial or Times New Roman. The font size for figures, figure legends, charts, and tables may be smaller, but must be clearly legible. Margins all-around should be at least 0.5". Pages should be numbered sequentially. The length of the Research Plan (narrative with illustrations included) is limited to 4 single-spaced pages.

All required application components shall be contained in a single Adobe Acrobat PDF file. The application must include the following, in the order shown below:

- **Cover page** (p. 1) – Pages 1-4 are included in application template
- **Project summary** (level appropriate for scientific peers in the field) and key personnel (p. 2)
- **Budget** (p. 3). Please include a separate budget for each institution.
- **Budget justifications** (p. 4; maximum 1 page)
- **Biographical sketch for each PI/Co-PI** (maximum 5 pages; for NIH template, format, and sample see (<https://grants.nih.gov/grants/forms/biosketch.htm>))

- **Biographical sketches for other key personnel** (maximum 5 pages each)
- **Research plan** (maximum 4 pages; use continuation page template)
  - Hypothesis and specific aims
  - Background and significance
  - Preliminary data
  - Work proposed (including statistical analysis, pitfalls, alternatives)
- **Literature citations** (maximum 1 page)
- **Additional information regarding the project** (maximum 1 page)
  - Career development potential
  - Prospects and specific plans with a timeline for seeking extramural funding
  - Collaborative, interdisciplinary, or community engagement features
- **Letters of support from core directors are required** (if applicable)
- **Letters of collaboration** (optional)
- Appendices are **NOT** allowed.

### **Budget Considerations**

MCC PI budget considerations under MCC requirements page.

TAMU PI budget considerations under TAMU requirements page.

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

Applications will go through an initial administrative review to ensure compliance with guidelines. Any applications deemed, non-compliant will be returned to investigators and investigators will be given 24 hours to fix the application.

Applications will go through a two-tiered system of review. Scientific review will be performed by appropriate content experts and may be selected from those recommended. Scientific merit will be scored by these groups based on the following criteria using the NIH scale (1-9):

- Significance
- Novelty / innovation
- Strength of the study protocol, including:
  - Design
  - Feasibility
  - Preliminary data (to the extent available)
  - Integration with ongoing research
  - Quality of the investigative team
- Contribution to career development of clinical / translational scientists, if applicable
- Extent of meaningful interdisciplinary collaboration and / or community engagement
- Likelihood of future NIH or other competitive external funding
- Use and leveraging of MCC or TAMU resources (for example, MCC Shared Resources, biobanking, TAMU Core Facilities)
- Potential for ultimately improving health outcomes
- Protection of human subjects and experimental animals

A second tier of review will be performed by MCC/TAMU leadership. Funding decisions will be based on scientific merit, as well as programmatic considerations, such as breadth and depth of the overall pilot study portfolio, interactions among investigators, community involvement, and balance among program areas and disciplines.

### **Grant Administration**

Each PI is responsible for the administration of grant funds within their respective institutions' rules and regulations. In particular, each PI must be certain that over-expenditures do not occur and that all funds are fully expended according to institutional programmatic deadlines. All work must be completed within the performance period.

**Interim and Final Reporting Requirements:**

A progress report and budget summary are required every 6 months. Continued funding is contingent upon receipt of Progress Report.

PIs awarded funding under this opportunity will be required to submit a final report capturing both quantitative and qualitative output. A final report must be filed in order for members on the project team to be considered for future pilot project funding.

Reports are submitted via REDCap. Principal Investigators will receive notice of the due date a month in advance through email in the form of a REDCap survey invite. If, due to extenuating circumstances, an extension is required, it must be requested **30 days prior** to the report due date. Please address any such requests to [mccgrants@uthscsa.edu](mailto:mccgrants@uthscsa.edu).

**Extramural Grant Submission Required**

Awardees must produce a new proposal for extramural funding as part of the final reporting requirements within one year of completion of the project. In exceptional cases, where seed funding may prove the project non-competitive, a waiver of the extramural proposal requirement can be requested from the MCC and TAMU. If neither an extramural proposal nor waiver is submitted, no new research funds will be made available to the PI or Co-PIs from either institution until an extramural proposal or waiver is submitted.

**The PIs must submit a report describing the extramural proposal submission details by January 31, 2025.**

**Terms and Conditions:**

Acceptance of Mays Cancer Center/TAMU pilot award funding constitutes acceptance of the policies and compliance requirements of the award. This includes the submission of progress reports in the time frame established by the Cancer Center and TAMU.

All awards will be established and managed within the Cancer Center in coordination with TAMU Health. Unless approval has been obtained in advance, all projects will be closed by the Office of Sponsored Programs of our respective institutions on the project end date.

All awardees are expected to cite the Cancer Center and TAMU as part of their institutional affiliation on all publications and to cite the CCSG (P30 CA054174) and TAMU Health as institutional funding in the acknowledgements section of all publications.

**Questions:** Questions may be addressed to Kelly Durham ([durhamk@uthscsa.edu](mailto:durhamk@uthscsa.edu)) in the Mays Cancer Center Administrative Offices and Dr. Jorge Gomez at TAMU Health.

## MCC Requirements

### MCC PI Eligibility

- PIs and Co-PIs must be full-time, tenure track or tenured faculty at UT Health SA in residence at the time of application.

### MCC Budget Considerations

Funds **can** be used for the following:

- Salary (plus associated fringe benefits) may be requested for non-faculty support staff, including post-docs.
- Equipment essential for the project (maximum \$10,000, including computer hardware)
- PI or Co-PI travel to relevant scientific meetings (maximum \$1,500)
- Consumable laboratory supplies; animal purchase and per diem;
- MCC, TAMU, or other core facility fees
- Consultation fees (maximum \$5,000)
- Computer time; software
- Publication / presentation expenses;
- Costs related to human subject enrollment and management (listed as "Patient Care Costs" on budget page)

Funds **cannot** be used for the following:

- Facilities and Administrative (F&A, indirect cost) expenses will not be reimbursed.
- Support the salary of the PI or faculty-level collaborators. Although the PI (and Co-PI/Co-I, if applicable) should be listed in the personnel section of the summary page, there is no minimum effort requirement.

## TAMU Requirements

### TAMU PI Eligibility

- PIs and Co-PIs must be full-time, tenure track or tenured faculty at TAMU (all TAMU schools and colleges are eligible) in residence at the time of application.
- It is the PI's responsibility to ensure all team members are eligible and not exceeding application limitations.
- Applicants submitting a proposal closely related to a project previously funded must demonstrate that the new application is substantially different from the prior award.

### TAMU Budget Considerations

Funds **can** be used for the following:

- Salaries and/or wages for faculty, postdoctoral fellows, graduate and undergraduate students. However, if a faculty member does request funded effort, each faculty member is limited to no more than 1 summer month of effort. This limitation is in place to encourage increased student support. *For most T/TT faculty, 1 summer month is the equivalent of 1/9th of your base annual academic salary contract amount.* [Fringe benefits](#) are paid centrally and should be excluded from the budget worksheet.
- Materials and supplies (any item with a cost of less than \$5,000/unit; must be justified as needed for project success)
- Expenses for field work, data collection, archival research, training, educational purposes and/or presentations on research, creative or scholarly activities directly related to the proposed project
- Consultant fees
- Contracts for activities outside of TAMU (must be clearly and convincingly described as necessary for successful execution of the proposed project)
- Domestic travel (data collection, conference presentation, meeting with a collaborator). Travel

must adhere to TAMU guidelines.

- If faculty summer salary is proposed, identify that separately from the regular labor proposed.

Funds **cannot** be used for the following:

- Fringe benefits
- Equipment (unit cost of \$5,000 and useable life of greater than one year)
- International travel
- Non-TAMU employee travel
- Stipends, scholarships and/or tuition
- Indirect costs (F&A) costs
- Payment of salaries to non-TAMU personnel
- Refreshments. Includes food/refreshments for participants, business meals. Excludes meals while on travel.
- Hosting conferences, workshops or seminars
- Travel to visit program officer