



AACR-Debbie's Dream Foundation Career Development Award for Gastric Cancer Research

2023 Program Guidelines and Competitive Letter of Intent Instructions

American Association for Cancer Research

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PROGRAM GUIDELINES

PROGRAM SUMMARY

The AACR-Debbie's Dream Foundation Career Development Award for Gastric Cancer Research represents a joint effort to encourage and support junior faculty to conduct gastric cancer research and to establish a successful career path in this field. The research proposed for funding may be basic, translational, clinical, or epidemiological in nature and must have direct applicability and relevance to gastric cancer. Priority will be given to specific areas such as gastric cancer disparities, biomarkers and clinical decision making, implementation studies, and novel therapies. Projects may focus on any form of gastric cancer.

This award provides \$200,000 over two years for expenses related to the research project, which may include salary and benefits of the grant recipient, collaborators, postdoctoral or clinical research fellows, graduate students (including tuition costs associated with graduate students' education and training), or research assistants; research/laboratory supplies; equipment; publication charges for manuscripts that pertain directly to the funded project; and other research expenses. Indirect costs are **not** an allowable expenses.

LETTER OF INTENT DEADLINE

January 19, 2023, at **1:00 p.m.** U.S. Eastern Time

APPLICANTS NOTIFIED OF DECISION STATUS OF LETTER OF INTENT

March 2023

FULL APPLICATION DEADLINE (*for those invited to apply based on the Letter of Intent*)

April 20, 2023, at **1:00 p.m.** U.S. Eastern Time

NOTIFICATION OF AWARD

June 2023

GRANTS RECEPTION AND DINNER AT THE AACR ANNUAL MEETING

Grant recipient must attend the Grants Reception and Dinner to formally accept the grant. Grant funds may be used to support the grantee's registration and attendance at this Annual Meeting.

In the event of unforeseen scheduling changes, the grantee will be contacted regarding alternative arrangements.

START OF GRANT TERM

July 2023

APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Applicants must have a doctoral degree (PhD, MD, MD/PhD, or equivalent) in a related field and not currently be a candidate for a further doctoral degree.

At the start of the grant term on July 2023, applicants must:

- Hold a faculty position with the title of assistant professor, instructor, research assistant professor, or the equivalent.
 - If eligibility is based on a future position, the applicant must contact the AACR's

Scientific Review and Grants Administration (the AACR's SRGA) at grants@aacr.org before submitting their Letter of Intent for information on additional verification materials/signatures which may be required.

- Have completed their most recent doctoral degree **within the past 11 years** from the start of the grant term (the formal date of receipt of doctoral degree is the date the degree was conferred, as indicated on their diploma and/or transcript).
 - Applicants with a medical degree must have completed their most recent doctoral degree or medical residency - **whichever date is later** - within the past 11 years from the start of the grant date.
- Have independent laboratory space as confirmed by their institution.
- Work at an academic, medical, or research institution anywhere in the world.
 - There are no citizenship or geographic requirements. However, by submitting a Letter of Intent for this grant, an applicant applying from an institution located in a country in which they are not a citizen or a permanent resident assures that their visa status will provide sufficient time to complete the project and grant term at the institution from which they applied.

An exception to the 11-year window may be granted for parental leave or other well-justified leave from research for pressing personal or family situations of generally less than 12 months' duration. Applicants whose experience exceeds the maximum of 11 years but who believe they are eligible must contact the AACR's SRGA **before** submitting a Letter of Intent to verify their eligibility.

Applicants must be AACR **Active** members. Nonmembers interested in this grant opportunity must submit a satisfactory application for AACR Active membership by the Competitive Letter of Intent (LOI) deadline. **Nonmembers** can apply for membership [online](#). **Members** can renew their membership through [myAACR](#) to bring their membership current. You will need your logon (email address) and password to access the member portal. If you require assistance logging in, please submit a [help form](#). **Lapsed** members must be members in good standing by the LOI deadline and should contact the Membership Department at membership@aacr.org for assistance.

Investigators may submit only **one** Letter of Intent for the AACR-Debbie's Dream Foundation Career Development Award for Gastric Cancer Research but may concurrently apply for other AACR grants. However, applicants are expected to accept the first grant they are awarded.

Current AACR Grantees may apply only if their current grant ends before the start of the grant term of this funding opportunity i.e., grant start date, and must be up to date with all reporting requirements to be considered eligible. Please contact the AACR's SRGA for confirmation before submitting a Letter of Intent.

Employees or subcontractors of a U.S. government entity or for-profit private industry are not eligible. Employees or subcontractors of a U.S. government entity or for-profit private industry may serve as Collaborators, but no grant funds may be directed toward these individuals.

Investigators who are currently, or have been, a Principal Investigator on a substantial independent research award (e.g., an NIH R01 award, DP2 award, DP5 award, MIRA award, or the equivalent) are **not** eligible. Qualified investigators are invited to apply for AACR grants for independent investigators.

Postdoctoral or clinical research fellows or the equivalent who are working under the auspices of a

scientific mentor are not eligible to apply. Qualified fellows are invited to apply for an AACR Fellowship.

All applicants with questions about eligibility should contact the AACR's SRGA at grants@aacr.org **before** submitting a Letter of Intent.

RESEARCH PROJECT CRITERIA

Proposed research projects may be basic, translational, clinical, or epidemiological in nature, and must have direct applicability to gastric cancer. Priority will be given to specific areas such as gastric cancer disparities, biomarkers and clinical decision making, implementation studies, and novel therapies. Projects may focus on any form of gastric cancer.

COMPETITIVE LETTER OF INTENT DESCRIPTION

An AACR Competitive Letter of Intent, also referred to as a Letter of Intent, is an application tool designed to identify the projects with the greatest scientific potential and alignment with the Program Guidelines without requiring applicants to first submit a full application. A Letter of Intent is not written as *correspondence* to the Scientific Review Committee, but instead follows a prescribed template that gathers information summarizing the proposed research project. Letters of Intent have also been called "pre-applications", "concept papers", or "letters of inquiry" by other funders.

Letters of Intent are peer-reviewed by the Scientific Review Committee. A limited number of applicants whose Letters of Intent are deemed most meritorious will be invited by the committee to submit full applications.

The Letter of Intent for the AACR-Debbie's Dream Foundation Career Development Award for Gastric Cancer Research is limited to two pages and must provide a clear, concise, and comprehensive overview of the proposed work. Relevant references must be attached and are limited to two pages.

The Letter of Intent must be accompanied by:

- Scientific Abstract (limited to 3,000 characters including spaces, which should provide a brief summary of the proposed research project)
- Applicant's Biographical Sketch
- Applicant Checklist

EVALUATION OF COMPETITIVE LETTERS OF INTENT AND INVITED APPLICATIONS

The Scientific Review Committee that will peer-review the Letters of Intent and invited full applications is comprised of senior researchers and physician-scientists respected for their own accomplishments in gastric cancer research and viewed as leaders in the field. The President of the AACR will appoint the members of the Scientific Review Committee.

The Committee will consider the following criteria when reviewing Letters of Intent and invite full applications:

- **Investigator.** What training and experience does the applicant have to ensure successful implementation of the proposed project? Does the applicant have demonstrated capacity to carry out independent research? Is there evidence that the applicant is developing a successful track record in this field of research or that they could make a career commitment to this field?
- **Significance.** Is the scientific and technical merit of the proposed project of significance? Is the proposed project of high quality, and what potential does it have to advance this field and benefit patients?
- **Approach.** Are the overall strategy, design, and methodology well-reasoned and appropriate to accomplish the specific aims of the project within the grant term? Are potential problems, alternative strategies and benchmarks for success presented? Is the budget justified and reasonable in relation to the proposed project? *(The budget-related question will be used to evaluate only the invited full applications for this opportunity.)*
- **Institutional Environment.** What evidence is provided of institutional commitment for the scientific development of the applicant? What support, equipment, and resources will be available to the applicant and are they adequate to successfully complete the proposed project? *(This criterion will be used to evaluate only the invited full applications for this opportunity.)*

The Committee will consider each year's applicants independently, without regard to the topics covered in previously funded proposals or to the institutions of the previous grantees.

TOBACCO INDUSTRY FUNDING AND CONFLICTS OF INTEREST STATEMENT

Scientific investigators or health professionals who are funded by the tobacco industry for any research project are not eligible for any AACR grant. Grantees who accept funding from the tobacco industry for any research project during the term of an AACR grant must inform the AACR of such funding, whereupon the AACR grant will immediately be terminated.

Tobacco industry funding is defined for purposes of AACR grant applicants and recipients as money provided or used for all or any of the costs of any research project, including personnel, consumables, equipment, buildings, travel, meetings and conferences, and operating costs for laboratories and offices. It is not defined as money provided or used for meetings or conferences that do not relate to any particular research projects.

Tobacco industry funding includes: funds from a company that is engaged in or has affiliates engaged in the manufacture of tobacco produced for human use; funds in the name of a tobacco brand, whether or not the brand name is used solely for tobacco products; funds from a body set up by the tobacco industry or by one or more companies engaged in the manufacture of tobacco products.

The following do not constitute tobacco industry funding for the purposes of this policy:

- Legacies from tobacco industry investments (unless the names of a tobacco company or cigarette brand are associated with them)
- Funding from a trust or foundation established with assets related to the tobacco industry but no longer having any connection with the tobacco industry even though it may bear a name that (for historical reasons) is associated with the tobacco industry

LETTER OF INTENT INSTRUCTIONS

LETTER OF INTENT PROCEDURES

The AACR requires applicants to complete an online Letter of Intent submission by **1:00 p.m.** U.S. Eastern Time on Thursday, **January 19, 2023**, using the ProposalCentral website at <https://proposalcentral.com>.

In order to submit a complete Letter of Intent, applicants need to enter information directly into the online submission platform as well as upload a number of documents. The following instructions provide details about information that needs to be entered and the materials that need to be uploaded. The section numbering corresponds to this Letter of Intent Instructions and the online ProposalCentral Letter of Intent submission platform.

Information to be Entered Directly into ProposalCentral	Letter of Intent Instructions Section	ProposalCentral Section
Project Title and Acknowledgement of Reading the Terms and Conditions	1. Title Page	1) Title Page
Applicant Information	4. Applicant	4) Applicant
Institution and Contact Information	5. Institution & Contacts	5) Institution & Contacts
Scientific Abstract	6. Scientific Abstract	6) Scientific Abstract

Templates	Letter of Intent Instructions Section	ProposalCentral Section
Letter of Intent Template	7.A. Letter of Intent Documents	7) Letter of Intent Documents

Additional Materials	Letter of Intent Instructions Section	ProposalCentral Section
Applicant’s Biographical Sketch	7.B. Letter of Intent Documents	7) Letter of Intent Documents
Applicant Checklist	7.C. Letter of Intent Documents	7) Letter of Intent Documents

Required E-Signatures	Letter of Intent Instructions Section	ProposalCentral Section
Application Signature Page(s)	9) Signature Page(s)	9) Signature Page(s)

GETTING STARTED IN ProposalCentral

If you are a new user of ProposalCentral, click the “Need an account?” link and complete the registration process. After logging in, complete your Professional Profile before starting a Letter of Intent.

If you are already registered with ProposalCentral, access the site and log in with your Username and Password. If you have forgotten your login information, click on the “Forgot Your Password?” link.

To start a Letter of Intent, select the “Grant Opportunities” tab. A list of grant opportunities will be displayed. The list of applications can be filtered for just this organization by clicking “Filter by Grant Maker” at the top and selecting “American Association for Cancer Research” in the drop-down menu. Find the **“AACR-Debbie’s Dream Foundation Career Development Award for Gastric Cancer Research”**

and click the blue "Apply Now" button in the "Apply" column.

If you have any difficulties registering, logging in, or creating your Letter of Intent, contact ProposalCentral Customer Support at: 800-875-2562 (Toll-free U.S. and Canada), +1-703-964-5840 (Direct Dial International), or by email at pcsupport@altum.com. See the ProposalCentral [FAQ](#) section, for additional information.

LETTER OF INTENT FORMAT

The following information is required to submit a complete Letter of Intent. Numbers correspond to the sections found on the left side of the ProposalCentral website.

- 1. TITLE PAGE.** Enter the title of the research project. The title is limited to no more than 75 characters (including spaces). Do not use abbreviations. A project title must be entered and saved before additional sections may be accessed.

Terms and Conditions of the Grant. In order to ensure that the applicant is informed of the terms and conditions of the grant should they be selected as a recipient, applicant must acknowledge that they have read the Terms and Conditions and have shared them with their institution by typing in their name and date in the box provided.

The terms and conditions of this grant may be modified or amended by the AACR prior to execution of the Grant Agreement. In addition, the grant recipient's institution may only request revisions to sections VII.F.; XII.; XIII.F.; and XIV.A. of the Grant Agreement prior to execution. Only in special circumstances will revisions be considered to sections other than those noted above.

- 2. DOWNLOAD TEMPLATES & INSTRUCTIONS.** The Program Guidelines and Competitive Letter of Intent Instructions document, Terms and Conditions, Applicant Checklist, and the Letter of Intent template, can be downloaded from this page. Applicants are required to use the Letter of Intent template.

See Section 7 of the Letter of Intent Instructions for how to complete and upload the template. This Letter of Intent also requires an additional attachment for which a template is not provided (Applicant's Biographical Sketch).

- 3. ENABLE OTHER USERS TO ACCESS THIS PROPOSAL.** Optional.
- 4. APPLICANT.** Enter information for the applicant. Applicants must include their contact information, including e-mail address, phone number, mailing address, and AACR membership information.

Applicants are also strongly encouraged to have an ORCID iD and include this identifier with their application.

- 5. INSTITUTION & CONTACTS.** Enter information regarding the applicant's institution and signing official. The Signing Official designated in this section will receive an email with login instructions to provide their e-signature outlined in Section 9.

NOTE: For those invited to submit a full application, the application process will require a Letter of Reference from a nominator and endorser (if necessary). A nominator must be the applicant's

department chair, division head, or dean. If the nominator is not an active, emeritus, or honorary member of the AACR, information for an endorser who is an active, emeritus, or honorary member of the AACR must also be provided.

- 6. SCIENTIFIC ABSTRACT.** The abstract is limited to 3,000 characters (including spaces) and should provide a brief summary of the proposed research project.

If funded, this Abstract will become public information; therefore, do not include proprietary/confidential information.

From the lists provided, select the research areas that are most applicable to this project (*select no more than two*) and indicate how you found out about this grant opportunity.

7. LETTER OF INTENT DOCUMENTS.

Formatting Instructions. Applicants must adhere to the following instructions in completing the templates. Failure to observe type size specifications and page limits will result in the return of the Letter of Intent without review.

- Type size. Must use 12-point Times New Roman for the text, and no smaller than 9-point type for figures, legends, and tables.
- Single-spaced text. Single-spacing is acceptable, and space between paragraphs is recommended.
- Margins. The page margins must be no less than 0.75 inches on each side.
- Page numbering. The Narrative must be numbered consecutively; do not use section designations such as “3A” or “3B”.
- Tips and techniques for inserting images in documents.
 - Reduce the file size of documents with images by “inserting” the image (as opposed to “cutting” and “pasting”). Save graphical images as JPG or GIF files. Insert the image into the document by selecting “Insert – Picture – From File” from the MS Word menu.
 - Insert only GIF or JPG graphic files as images in your Word document. Other graphical file formats are either very large or difficult to manipulate in the document.
 - Do not insert Quick Time or TIFF objects into your document.
 - Anchor the images that you embed in your document.
 - Once you have anchored the inserted image, you can format text to wrap around the image.
 - Do not edit your images in Word. Use a graphics program.
 - Do not embed your images in tables, text boxes, and other form elements.
 - Do not add annotations over the images in Word. Add annotations to the images in a graphics program.

When a template is provided, the template MUST be used. Prepare and upload the following documents into your application in portable document format (PDF):

A. Letter of Intent. Applicants are required to use the Letter of Intent template available from the ProposalCentral website. The information must be presented in this order:

- I. Letter of Intent Narrative.** Limited to two pages, including figures and tables. The References section does not count against this page limit. Enter project title in the header. The information must be presented in this order and include these subheadings: (A) Specific

Aims; (B) Rationale, Preliminary Data, Methodology, and Approach; (C) Significance and Statement of Relevance.

- II. References.** Limited to two pages. AACR reference style follows that of the [Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts Submitted to Biomedical Journals](#). Note that the *Uniform Requirements* specify that, for articles with more than six authors, the names of the first six authors must be listed, followed by “et al”. For articles with six or fewer authors, all authors must be listed.

- B. Applicant's Biographical Sketch.** Applicants are required to use the Non-fellowship Biosketch template available to download from the [NIH's Biosketch Format Pages, Instructions and Samples](#). Please refer to the Instructions and Non-fellowship biosketch sample under **Biographical Sketch Format Page (non-fellowship)**. The biographical sketch must be in English.

Note: For those invited to submit a full application, collaborators are allowable. However, co-Principal Investigators are **NOT** permitted. You will have the opportunity to provide Letter(s) of Collaboration and the Biosketch(es) of these collaborators at the full application stage.

- C. Applicant Checklist.** To ensure each applicant's eligibility, the checklist is required for all applicants. The checklist **MUST** be downloaded from the ProposalCentral site, completed, and signed by all required parties. Electronic/digital signatures are permitted. These signatures transmitted by electronic means shall have the same force and effect as original signatures. Please note that if eligibility is based on a future position, the position must be confirmed at the time of application, and **CANNOT** be contingent upon receiving this grant.

The **signed** Applicant Checklist must be uploaded to your online Letter of Intent in the Letter of Intent Documents section.

Uploading the attachments into your submission. Once you have converted your attachments to PDF files, the next step is to upload the files to your online Letter of Intent. *Only PDF attachments are permitted for this Letter of Intent submission.*

- Open your online Letter of Intent and go to the section for attaching files. Click the blue “Attach Files” button.
- Select the appropriate type of attachment from the drop-down list.
- Enter your own description of the file in the “Describe Attachment” field.
- Click on the “click here to browse” link to select the file from your computer or drag and drop. Click on the “Upload and Continue” button. You will get a confirmation message on your screen that the file was uploaded successfully. You will also see that your file is now listed in the “Current list of uploaded attachments” section of the screen. Clicking the “Back” or “Upload and Return” button allows you to go back to the main page of this section where the uploaded documents should now be listed. **Click the download icon next to the file name to open and view your uploaded documents.** To delete the file, click on the trashcan icon to the right under the “Delete” column.

In the section for attachments, all the required attachments are listed in the middle of the screen, just below where you upload your files. This list of required attachments helps you track completion and uploading of your required attachments. Once you upload a required attachment, that attachment type will be removed from the required list and will be displayed in the “Current list of

uploaded attachments”.

If you wish to modify the attached file, make the revisions to your **original** file on your computer, convert the file to PDF, and use the same process above to attach the new file. **Delete any previously submitted versions of the file before submitting your Letter of Intent.**

SUBMITTING COMPLETE LETTER OF INTENT

- 8. PI DATA SHEET.** Please verify the applicant gender, race, and ethnicity. This is automatically populated based on the applicant's Professional Profile within ProposalCentral. Changes to the selections on this screen will be reflected in your Professional Profile. The information is handled separately from the application and will not be provided to the Scientific Review Committee.
- 9. SIGNATURE PAGE(S).** Use the “Print Signature Pages” button to download the Signature Pages. Signatures are only required on the first page. This page can be printed, original signatures obtained, and then uploaded to your online application. Electronic/digital signatures are also permitted and shall have the same force and effect as original signatures. Do not upload the Application Contacts, Scientific Abstract, and Budget pages with the signed Signature Page.

NOTE: Data entered in the online application are automatically included in the Signature Pages. If information is missing in the Signature Pages, it could be because you have not entered the information in one of the online application sections **OR** the information is not required for this grant program. If the institution's Employer Identification Number (EIN) is not completed on the Signature Page, please request your institution to provide that information in their ProposalCentral profile.

While the “Print Signature Pages” option allows applicants to download the Signature Page, Application Contacts, and Scientific Abstract, the AACR **strongly encourages** applicants to also use the “Print Signature Pages with Attachments” option. This option can be used if your institution wishes to review the full Letter of Intent but also should be used by the applicant to ensure that the Scientific Abstract does not cut-off in this view and that your attachments loaded properly.

Excessive spacing in your Scientific Abstract (e.g., line breaks between paragraphs) can cause the abstract to not fully appear in the Signature Page view, even if under the 3,000 character limit. You may want to further edit your Scientific Abstract prior to submission if it does not fully appear. In addition, errors may occur when the uploaded PDF files are assembled by the system. Please check to ensure that all pages of every document included appear in the “Print Signature Pages with Attachments” option. If you are having any issues with this option, please contact ProposalCentral customer support at: 800-875-2562 (Toll-free U.S. and Canada), +1-703-964-5840 (Direct Dial International), or by e-mail to pcsupport@altum.com.

- 10. VALIDATE.** Validate the Letter of Intent on ProposalCentral. This is an essential step. A submission that has not been validated cannot be submitted. “Validate” checks for required data and required attachments. You will not be able to submit if all the required data and attachments have not been provided.

11. SUBMIT. After successfully passing the validate check, click the **“Submit”** button. An e-mail will be sent to you confirming your submission.

Once your Letter of Intent is submitted you may view it by selecting “Submitted” from the “Proposal Status” drop-down menu under the ‘Proposals’ tab, then clicking the “View” button under the Edit column. The status column will show “Submitted” and the date submitted. You may need to refresh your browser screen after submitting the Letter of Intent to see the updated status.

CHANGES TO YOUR LETTER OF INTENT

Withdrawal of Letter of Intent. Please advise the AACR promptly, in writing, should you decide to withdraw your Letter of Intent for any reason. Your correspondence must include your name, the grant opportunity to which you applied, the project title, and the reason for withdrawal.

Change of Address. Notify the AACR of any changes of address, e-mail, or phone number, following the submission of a Letter of Intent. Include your name and the ProposalCentral identification number. The e-mail address provided with your Letter of Intent will be used for all official communication about your submission including the recipient selection results. Your Professional Profile in ProposalCentral must be kept up to date.

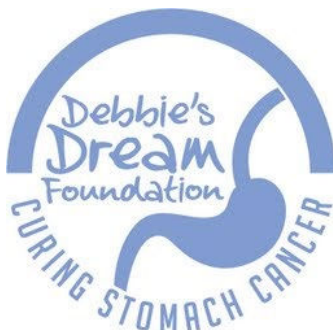
Change of Institution or Position. If you change your institution or professional position, contact the AACR to determine whether your Letter of Intent is still eligible for review.

INQUIRIES

Inquiries or technical issues regarding ProposalCentral and the online application process should be directed to customer support at: 800-875-2562 (Toll-free U.S. and Canada), +1-703-964-5840 (Direct Dial International), or by e-mail to pcsupport@altum.com.

Inquiries about the program guidelines, eligibility requirements, and Letter of Intent materials can be directed to the AACR's Scientific Review and Grants Administration department at grants@aacr.org.

MORE ABOUT THE PARTNERS



Debbie's Dream Foundation: Curing Stomach Cancer is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to raising awareness about stomach cancer, advancing funding for research, and providing education and support internationally to patients, families, and caregivers. DDF seeks as its ultimate goal to make the cure for stomach cancer a reality. DDF was the first stomach cancer organization and now has 27 chapters in the US, Canada, and Germany with thousands of supporters and volunteers. DDF helps patients worldwide through a free Patient Resource Education Program (PREP), a Clinical Trials Matching Service, and a Support Community. DDF has a world renowned Medical Advisory Board; hosts free education events internationally; advocates for increased federal funding for stomach cancer research; and directly funds research. For more information about DDF, visit www.DebbiesDream.org.



Founded in 1907, the American Association for Cancer Research (AACR) is the world's first and largest professional organization dedicated to advancing cancer research and its mission to prevent and cure cancer. The AACR has more than 150,000 members in 129 countries and territories around the world; over 31% percent of members live outside the United States. Twenty percent of AACR's international members are located in countries with emerging economies. The AACR offers seven categories of membership to support each aspect of our members' professional development and enhancement in cancer research. In support of the professional development of early-career investigators, no annual dues are required for Associate membership. The AACR marshals the full spectrum of expertise of the cancer community to accelerate progress in the prevention, biology, diagnosis, and treatment of cancer by annually convening more than 30 conferences and educational workshops, the largest of which is the AACR Annual Meeting with more than 22,500 attendees. In addition, the AACR publishes 10 prestigious, peer-reviewed scientific journals and a magazine for cancer survivors, patients, and their caregivers. The AACR funds meritorious research directly as well as in cooperation with numerous cancer organizations. As the Scientific Partner of Stand Up To Cancer, the AACR provides expert peer review, grants administration, and scientific oversight of team science and individual investigator grants in cancer research that have the potential for near-term patient benefit. The AACR actively communicates with legislators and other policymakers about the value of cancer research and related biomedical science in saving lives from cancer. For more information about the AACR, visit www.AACR.org