AACR GERTRUDE B. ELION CANCER RESEARCH AWARD

2024 Program Guidelines and Competitive Letter of Intent Instructions

American Association for Cancer Research
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Last Updated: January 4, 2024
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PROGRAM GUIDELINES

PROGRAM SUMMARY
With generous support from GlaxoSmithKline, the AACR Gertrude B. Elion Cancer Research Award represents a joint effort to encourage and support tenure-eligible junior faculty. The research proposed for funding must focus on cancer etiology, diagnosis, treatment, or prevention and may be basic, translational, or clinical in nature.

The award provides a one-year grant of $225,000 for expenses related to the research project, which may include salary and benefits of the grant recipient, postdoctoral or clinical research fellows, graduate students (including tuition costs associated with graduate students’ education and training), and research assistants; research/laboratory supplies; equipment; travel; publication charges for manuscripts that pertain directly to the funded project; and other research expenses.

The recipient of the 2024 AACR Gertrude B. Elion Cancer Research Award is required to give a presentation of their research in a mini-symposium at the AACR Annual Meeting 2025.

LETTER OF INTENT DEADLINE
March 4, 2024, at 1:00 p.m., U.S. Eastern Time

APPLICANTS NOTIFIED OF DECISION STATUS OF LETTER OF INTENT
April 2024

FULL APPLICATION DEADLINE (for those invited to apply based on the Letter of Intent)
June 3, 2024, at 1:00 p.m., U.S. Eastern Time

NOTIFICATION OF AWARD
July 2024

ANNUAL GRANTEE RECOGNITION EVENT
Grant recipient must attend the Annual Grantee Recognition Event during the AACR Annual Meeting 2025 or similar recognition event to accept their grant. Grant funds may be used to support the grantee’s registration and travel to this event.

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

START OF GRANT TERM
August 1, 2024

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 August 1, 2024, applicants must:
- Hold a tenure-eligible appointment (or equivalent, if institution does not follow a tenure system) at the rank of assistant professor (appointments such as research assistant professor, adjunct assistant professor, assistant professor research track, visiting professor, or instructor are not
eligible. Applicants cannot be tenured or under consideration for a tenured academic position at the time of the application. Applicants that have progressed to associate professor appointments are also not eligible.)

- 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.
- If the future position is at a different institution than the applicant’s current institution, the applicant must contact the AACR’s Research and Grants Administration Department (AACR’s RGA) at grants@aacr.org before submitting their application for information on additional verification materials/signatures that may be required.

- Have completed their most recent doctoral degree within the past 11 years (i.e., degree cannot have been conferred before August 1, 2013; 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 (or equivalent) - whichever date is later - within the past 11 years.
- Work at an academic, medical, or research institution anywhere in the world.
  - There are no citizenship or geographic requirements. However, by submitting an application 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 the 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 should contact the AACR’s RGA before submitting an application to verify their eligibility.

**AACR is obligated to comply with U.S. laws and regulations regarding research and related transactions in countries subject to US Government enforcement of economic and trade sanctions for particular foreign policy and national security reasons. If your proposed project involves US Government sanctioned countries subject to restrictions, please contact the AACR’s RGA at grants@aacr.org.**

Applicants must be AACR Active members in good standing (dues paid for the current year). Please be informed that AACR offers reduced membership due rates for applicants from countries with emerging economies based on the World Bank listing. Nonmembers interested in this grant opportunity must submit a satisfactory application for AACR membership by the Letter of Intent (LOI) deadline. Nonmembers can apply for membership online. Please review the Membership Categories for the category that best fits your qualifications. Nonmembers must obtain a statement of support from a nominator with is an Active AACR member in good standing (dues paid for the current year).

Nonmembers requiring assistance with finding a nominator may email membership@aacr.org and include your geographical location to receive a list of members in your area to contact for nominations. For more information check the membership FAQ. Members can renew their membership through myAACR. 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 application for the AACR Gertrude B. Elion Cancer Research Award but may concurrently apply for other AACR grants. However, applicants are expected to accept the first grant they are awarded.

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. For the purpose of this grant, a substantial independent research award is defined as a grant that offers at least $250,000 (direct) per year for more than three years and must have undergone a peer-review process by active researchers and physician-scientists. Qualified investigators are invited to apply for AACR grants for independent investigators.

Current AACR Grantees may apply only if their current grant ends before the start of the grant term of this funding opportunity i.e., August 1, 2024, and must be up to date with all reporting requirements to be considered eligible. Please contact the AACR’s RGA for confirmation before submitting a Letter of Intent.

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 RGA at grants@aacr.org before submitting a Letter of Intent.

RESEARCH PROJECT CRITERIA
Proposed research projects may focus on any topic related to cancer etiology, diagnosis, treatment, or prevention and may be basic, translational, or clinical in nature.

COMPETITIVE LETTER OF INTENT DESCRIPTION
An AACR Competitive 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 which 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 Gertrude B. Elion Cancer Research Award is limited to two pages and must describe the proposed research project, including the Specific Aims; Rationale, Preliminary Data, Methodology, and Approach; Statistical Analysis Plan; and Significance and Statement of Relevance. Relevant references must be attached and are limited to two pages.
The Letter of Intent must be accompanied by:

- Lay and Scientific Abstract (limited to 3,000 characters including spaces, which should provide a clear, concise, and comprehensive overview of the proposed research project)
- Applicant’s Biographical Sketch
- Applicant Checklist

EVALUATION OF COMPETITIVE LETTERS OF INTENT AND INVITED APPLICATIONS

Letters of Intent and full applications will peer-reviewed by a Scientific Review Committee comprised of senior researchers and physician-scientists respected for their own accomplishments in cancer research and viewed as leaders in the field.

The Committee will consider the following criteria when reviewing Letters of Intent and invited 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 cancer 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 eventually 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 there an appropriate statistical analysis plan in place to rigorously assess the impact of the data? Is the budget fully justified and reasonable in relation to the proposed project? (*The budget-related question will be used to evaluate invited full applications.*)

- **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 invited full applications.*)

The Committee will consider each year’s applicants independent of previously funded proposals or institutions of 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 **March 4, 2024**, using the ProposalCentral website at [https://proposalcentral.com](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 the section number of the Letter of Intent Instructions and the online ProposalCentral Letter of Intent.

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**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 (gray 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 Gertrude B. Elion Cancer Research Award**” 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 must also include their medical license information.

   Applicants are 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.

   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 AACR, information for an endorser who is an active, emeritus, or honorary member of AACR must also be provided.

6. **ABSTRACTS.**
   A. **Lay Abstract.** Limited to 3,000 characters (including spaces), which provides a clear, concise, and comprehensive overview of the proposed research project in language suitable for a non-scientific audience. Do not use abbreviations unless absolutely necessary.

   B. **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, these Abstracts 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*), select the tumor site that is most applicable to this project (*select only one*), 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):

   - **[Template Link]**
   - **[Template Link]**

   Please refer to the template instructions for specific details and requirements.
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. Must describe the proposed innovative cancer research project and include the Specific Aims; Rationale, Preliminary Data, Methodology, and Approach; Statistical Analysis Plan; and 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, this 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 Letter of Intent Electronic/digital signatures are also permitted and shall have the same force and effect as original signatures. Do not upload the Letter of Intent Contacts and Abstracts with the signed Signature Page.

NOTE: Data entered in the online Letter of Intent submission are automatically included in the Signature Pages. The following signature page fields will remain blank until the full application process: Dates of Proposed Project, Proposed Budget, Human Subjects, Vertebrate Animals, Recombinant DNA, and Biohazards. If information is missing in the Signature Pages, it could be because you have not entered the information in one of the online 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, Letter of Intent Contacts, and Abstracts, 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 that your attachments loaded properly.

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 Research and Grants Administration department at grants@aacr.org.
MORE ABOUT THE PARTNERS

GSK is a science-led global healthcare company with a special purpose: to help people do more, feel better, live longer. For further information please visit www.gsk.com/about-us.

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 54,000 members in over 131 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 researchers, 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 ten 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.