



The UNIVERSITY of OKLAHOMA HEALTH SCIENCES

***American Cancer Society
Institutional Research Grant (ACS-IRG)
at the
Stephenson Cancer Center***

Institutional Research Grant Guidelines

Letter of Intent Deadline:

Wednesday, August 27th by 5:00pm

Full Application Deadline:

Wednesday, October 15th by 5:00pm

Anticipated Start Date:

February 1, 2026

Principal Investigator

Rajagopal Ramesh

Professor of Pathology

Associate Director for Education, Training and Career Enhancement

Jim and Christy Everest Endowed Chair in Cancer Developmental Therapeutics

Presbyterian Health Foundation Presidential Professor

Co-Director, Nanomedicine Program

Director, Small Animal Bioluminescence Imaging Core

Chair, Fellowship Training and Mentoring Program in Pathology

Oklahoma TSET Cancer Research Scholar

Member, NCI-Designated Stephenson Cancer Center

Contents

Overview 3

 Eligibility 3

 Funding Information 3

 Permissible Costs..... 4

Proposal Evaluation..... 4

 Review Criteria..... 4

Awardee Obligations 5

Application Process 6

 Statistical Review of Applications 6

 Additional Approvals 6

Grant Application Instructions 7

 Specific Application Instructions 7

 Grant Sections 7

Overview

The ACS-IRG is a unique source of funding entrusted to Stephenson Cancer Center (SCC) that provides seed money for early-stage faculty interested in cancer-related research. While the grant is administered at SCC, eligible applicants on any University of Oklahoma campus may apply. For additional information, please contact the SCC Office of Cancer Research at SCC-InternalGrants@ouhsc.edu.

Eligibility

The ACS-IRG is intended to provide support for faculty at the start of their academic careers. Junior investigators are faculty who hold the rank of Assistant Professor (Tenure Track and Research Track) and who are eligible to apply as Principal Investigator for grant support from national agencies. Specific eligibility criteria are:

- Full-time faculty member at the Assistant Professor or equivalent level position that holds a Clinical-track or Research-track appointment on a University of Oklahoma Campus.
- Within six years of the first independent faculty appointment.
- No current peer-reviewed nationally competitive grant funding (e.g. NIH R01, DOD, NSF, ACS, etc.). Receipt of career development awards (e.g. NIH K series) is acceptable.
- Institutional commitment for the salary and space required.
- A citizen or non-citizen national of the United States, a lawfully admitted Permanent Resident of the United States (i.e. holds a valid Resident Alien Card or “Green Card”), or lawfully present in the United States as a Temporary Resident under a visa of long enough duration to allow completion of the proposed research. Status must be verified prior to distribution of funds.
- This grant is intended for a single principal investigator. Inclusion of Collaborators are encouraged and allowed. A biosketch of the PI and collaborators should be included. Should an applicant plan to include mentor(s), then their role as a mentor should be included in the mentor’s biosketch.

If you have any questions regarding eligibility, please contact the Office of Cancer Research at SCC-InternalGrants@ouhsc.edu for clarification.

Funding Information

- Up to three awards will be selected for funding for this grant cycle.
- Applicants may request up to \$60,000 in direct costs for a 12-month project. No F&A will be supported.
- Effort for the PI may not be charged directly to the grant. PI effort, in the form of cost share, must be adequate to complete the goals of the application.
- An awardee may request a second year of funding for continuation of the same project. Applications for a second year of funding must include a one-page progress report that summarizes scientific progress and provides a compelling justification for an additional year of funding; a strategy leading to high impact

publications and a competitive national grant application should be outlined. Requests for a second year of funding will be reviewed alongside and will compete with new applications for available funding.

- PI's whose project are selected for funding will be contacted to provide an updated "Other Support". Any application that is selected for federal funding at the time of ACS IRG award decision will be withdrawn from receiving ACS funding.

Permissible Costs

The table below outlines permissible costs:

Costs	
Allowable <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PI effort (cost-shared only) • Research supplies, animals, animal per diems • Technical/scientific support staff salaries • Service fees (e.g. shared resource fees) • Domestic travel with sufficient justification • Registration fees at scientific meetings • Publication costs • Human subject/participant incentives • Items costing less than \$2,000. Items above \$2,000 require specific scientific justification. • Computer purchases must be justified by specific scientific requirements. 	Not allowable <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilities and Administrative Costs • Secretarial/administrative salaries • Tuition • Foreign travel • Books and periodicals • Membership dues • Office and laboratory furniture • Office equipment and supplies • Most computer purchases • Rental of office or laboratory space • Recruiting and relocation expenses • Non-medical services to patients • Per-diem charges for hospital beds • Construction, renovation, or maintenance of buildings/laboratories • Honoraria and travel expenses for visiting lecturers
<p>Salaries for the Principal Investigator and administrative support are not allowed. Salaries for scientific support personnel may be requested. If salaries are not requested or allowed, you should still include the names and effort of all personnel who have significant roles on the project.</p>	

Proposal Evaluation

All accepted applications are reviewed by the ACS-IRG Review Committee. The committee is a diverse group of faculty representing all areas of cancer-related research. All decisions regarding merit and funding are based on the recommendations of the ACS-IRG Review Committee.

Review Criteria

Accepted applications are evaluated for the following:

- Is the proposal relevant to the goals of the ACS – is it cancer-related?
- Does the application address a problem important to Oklahoma, i.e. the SCC catchment area? For example, these could include cancer health disparities (e.g., problems affecting racial and ethnic minorities, rural residents, women, children, elderly, sexual and gender minorities, and persons of low socioeconomic

status in OK), specific cancers of high incidence/mortality in OK, environmental exposures in OK that lead to cancer, or other cancer-related issues specific to OK.

- Is the Principal Investigator a faculty member at the Assistant Professor rank?
- Does the proposal have significant scientific merit?
- Is there potential that this ACS funding will lead to extramural funding?
- Is the budget reasonable for the proposed work?
- Can the work be completed in 12 months?

Awardee Obligations

The ACS-IRG award carries several important obligations and responsibilities. Specifically, award recipients agree to the following:

- Awardees must acknowledge the ACS in any publications or presentations related to their IRG funding by including the statement **“This publication is supported by Institutional Research Grant number IRG-23-1143225-04 from the American Cancer Society.”** In the event that there are multiple sources of support, the acknowledgement should read **“Supported in part by Institutional Research Grant number IRG-23-1143225-04 from the American Cancer Society”** along with references to other funding sources. The Society’s support should also be acknowledged in all public communication of work resulting from the grant, including scientific abstracts, posters at scientific meetings, press releases or other media communication, and internet-based communication.
- For 7 years following award receipt, awardees will complete an annual Pilot Project Progress Report for the Stephenson Cancer Center. These reports are completed via email, average 2-3 pages, and describe: 1) pilot project progress and results; 2) all publications, posters, presentations, abstracts and funding resulting from the IRG-funded project; 3) interactions with the local ACS; and 4) any patents granted or applied for.
- Awardees are required to meet with their designated mentors monthly to monitor the progress of their research either in person, or via conference calls or video conferencing.
- Awardees agree to serve on a future ACS-IRG Review Committee or participate in an ACS activity (e.g., site visit), if requested.
- Awardees may be requested to give a brief presentation on their pilot project results at a future SCC research seminar, Annual Cancer Research Symposium, and participate in the seminar training series.
- Awardees must contact the SCC Office of Cancer Research immediately if they accept funding from another source for ACS-IRG funded research. The same science cannot be funded by more than one funding source and the American Cancer Society guidelines do not allow for scientific overlap of ACS-IRG awards; in these circumstances you will be required to withdraw your ACS-IRG pilot award. Additionally, this program is only eligible to applicants that have not received current peer-reviewed nationally competitive grant funding (e.g. NIH R01, DOD, NSF, ACS, etc.). Receipt of career development awards (e.g. NIH K series) is acceptable.
- Finally, awardees are expected to complete their pilot projects within their approved project period and budget, unless an extension is requested and approved in writing. No-cost extensions are not automatic, and remaining funds cannot be transferred to another account.

Application Process

- The application Face Page must be signed by the applicant and the applicant's Department Chair (electronic signatures are acceptable).
- An application may be revised and resubmitted only once (maximum of two total submissions for the same project). For resubmissions, applicants must include a one-page response to reviewer critiques from the prior submission.
- For competing continuations, applicants must include a one-page progress report and a compelling justification for an additional year of funding that will lead to high impact publications and a competitive national grant application.
- All applications will be administratively reviewed prior to the award to ensure compliance with ACS IRG requirements.
 - OUHSC PIs should work with their designated Proposal Services Team to complete their application and budget forms. OUHSC applicants are not required to route this application. For SCC Members, please work with your Proposal Services Team Member for assistance in completing your application. Please reach out to Proposal Services at SCC-ProposalServices@ouhsc.edu for assistance with the preparation of your application packet and development of your budget and other components; or you can complete a Proposal Request form at this link: [Proposal Request Form](#).
 - OU Norman PIs are required to route their applications or subcontract budgets through the Office of Research Services prior to submission to SCC. All teams that include OU Norman applicants as either a primary applicant or subcontract applicant must provide a signed letter by ORS indicating the application has been reviewed and routed through them.

Statistical Review of Applications

Applications involving statistical data should be reviewed by the SCC Biostatistics and Research Design Shared Resource Core prior to submission to strengthen the quality of the proposed research. Applicants should complete the [Biostatistics Request Form](#).

Additional Approvals

All proposals that involve human subjects or vertebrate animals must obtain all normal institutional approvals (IRB or IACUC). DUE TO THE TIME IT TAKES TO GET THESE APPROVALS, applicants must have submitted the proposal to the IRB/IACUC at the same time or before they submit their ACS-IRG application. Checking the Human Subject box yes (item 3 of face page) or the Vertebrate Animal box yes (item 4 on face page) indicates that the IRB/IACUC process has been initiated.

Note: It is the investigator's responsibility to notify the SCC Office of Cancer Research after IRB/IACUC approval has been received. Funds will not be released until all necessary approvals are received.

Grant Application Instructions

Letter of Intent Instructions

Please complete the short [LETTER OF INTENT FORM](#) by **Wednesday, August 27th by 5:00pm**. The form will include sections to upload the following required documents:

1. Biosketch (NIH Format)
2. Other Support (NIH Format)
3. Eligibility Statement (to be completed in the form)
4. Brief summary of the major goals of the project

This LOI serves to identify and invite eligible applicants to submit a full application. If you are unable to meet this deadline but still wish to be considered, please contact SCC-InternalGrants@ouhsc.edu as soon as possible to provide your project information.

Applicants will be invited to submit a full application.

Full Application Instructions

- Use English, avoid jargon, and define all abbreviations on first use.
- Applicants must use the format provided:
 - Font: must be 11 or 12-point black; use Arial or Times New Roman.
 - Spacing: Documents should be single-spaced with all text visible and within the 0.5 margins.
 - Header/Footer: Please include your last name in the top right corner and project title on the top left corner on each page. Please include page numbers as your footer in the bottom right corner
- Do not include any materials other than those specified in these guidelines.
- Please name your files using the following naming convention:

ACS-IRG 2025_Last name-first name (example: ACS-IRG 2025_Smith-Sara)

Grant Sections

1. Application Package

Please fill out the application template and submit it through our SCC Internal Grant Portal found here: [Application Form](#). The application template can be found on our SCC Website here: [SCC Website](#)

- Face Page and Academic History - Face page must be signed by the PI and department chair.
- Budget Pages - Refer to Funding Information section in this document for allowable and non-allowable costs. If a subaward is included, please include a separate budget for each institution.
- Budget Justification - no page limit - Describe the specific functions of the personnel, consultants, and collaborators. Briefly explain and justify all items requested. This section is critical to the evaluation process. Any item not sufficiently justified may be cut from the project budget. Please include a separate budget justification for each subaward institution.

- Biosketch - per NIH guidelines - Please include a NIH formatted biosketch for the Principal Investigator and all key personnel including collaborators and mentors supporting the project.
- Other Research Support – Please include Sponsor, Project Title, Project Number, PI, Project Dates, Your Effort, Annual Direct Costs, Brief Description of Major Goals) For the PI and any co-investigators, please list their: (1) current active support; (2) applications and proposals pending review of funding; and (3) applications and proposals planned or being prepared for submission. Include all Federal, non-Federal, and institutional research, training, and other grant, contract, and fellowship support at the applicant organization and elsewhere. If effort is part of a larger project, identify the PI/program director and provide the data for both the parent project and the sub-project. All pharmaceutical research projects are to be included. If none, state "none".

2. Response to Reviewer Critiques/Introduction for Competing Renewal - no page limits.

This section does NOT pertain to new applications. If you are submitting a revised application or requesting a second year of funding, please use one page to address the relevant items; revision applications should respond to the reviewer's critiques from the prior application and competing renewals should report project progress and justify the need for continued funding.

3. Description of Research Proposed - 6 pages maximum (Sections A-H below)

Research Plan should answer these questions:

- What do you intend to do?
- Why is the work important?
- What has already been done?
- What is the relevance of the work to cancer and what are the future funding plans for this project?
- How will the work impact cancer in Oklahoma?

A. Abstract

Provide a brief summary of the research, including Background, Objective/ Hypothesis, Specific Aim(s), Study Design and Cancer Relevance. Maximum length 250 words.

B. Project Narrative

Provide a description of your research in laypersons terms; the description should be understandable to the average cancer patient and explain why your project is important. Use only 3-4 sentences for this section.

C. Specific Aims

List the broad, long-term objectives that this research project is intended to accomplish. Clearly state the hypothesis to be tested. Applicants are encouraged to include milestones for each of the specific aims. Maximum length ½ page.

D. Background and Significance

Briefly present the background leading to the present research project, critically evaluating existing knowledge, and specifically identifying the gaps that the project is intended to fill.

E. Preliminary Data

Use this section to provide an account of any relevant preliminary studies to establish the experience of the investigators or support the proposed science.

F. Research Design and Methods

Summarize the study design and experiments that the project will conduct. Make sure to adequately address any statistical concerns.

G. Cancer Relevance and Future Plans

What is the relevance of the work to cancer and what are your future funding plans for this project?

H. Catchment Area Relevance

Specifically, and briefly address the potential relevance of the work to cancer issues prevalent in Oklahoma.

I. References (not included in the page limit)

4. PHS Human Subjects and Clinical Trials Information Form - no page limits

A copy of this form is provided in the application.

5. Other Documents - no page limits

A. Vertebrate Animals

If your project involves vertebrate animals, you must indicate this on the **Face Page**. If using animals succinctly address the following five points.

- Provided a detailed description of the proposed use of the animals. Identify the species, strains, ages, sex, and numbers of animals to be used.
- Justify the use of animals, the choice of species, and the number of animals to be used; the number of animals should be the minimum required.
- Provide information on the veterinary care of the animals involved.
- Describe the procedures for ensuring that discomfort, distress, pain, and injury will be limited to that which is unavoidable in the conduct of scientifically sound research. Describe the use of analgesic, anesthetic, and tranquilizing drugs and/or comfortable restraining devices where appropriate to minimize discomfort, distress, pain and injury.
- Describe any euthanasia method to be used and the reasons for its selection. State whether this method is consistent with the recommendations of the Panel on Euthanasia of the American Veterinary Association. If not, present a justification for not following the recommendations.

B. Consortium Agreements - if applicable

C. Letters of Support

- **Department Chair:** A signed letter of support from the department chair that holds the contact PI's administrative appointment is required.
- **OU-Norman PIs:** An ORS signed letter must be included in this section. OU Norman PIs are required to route their applications or subcontract budgets through the Office of Research Services prior to submission to SCC. All teams that include OU Norman applicants as either a primary applicant or subcontract applicant must provide a signed letter by ORS indicating the application has been reviewed and routed through them.

Terms of Award

1. Project Period: All funds are required to be expended by 12 months. **Requests for no-cost extensions may be considered under limited circumstances.** All requests for a no-cost extension (NCE) must be submitted to SCC at least 45 calendar days prior to the end of the grant. The submission must include a budget for the NCE period, timeline for completion, and progress report. Please work with your grant manager to submit your request to SCC-InternalGrants@ouhsc.edu. Please submit all documents in a single PDF file named "2025-XX_NCE Request-YYYY-MM_Last Name, First Name".
2. Spending flexibility is allowable up to 25% between budget categories. If a budget modification exceeds this threshold or does not meet this threshold but results in a change of scope, please work with your Grant Manager for the current remaining balance and provide the revised budget and justification of change to SCC-InternalGrants@ouhsc.edu.
3. No Indirect Costs are allowed.
4. Documented verification of all institutional assurances are required before commencement of any work on the project.
5. Please notify SCC-InternalGrants@ouhsc.edu if funding is received from another source or if any of the key personnel accepts a position at another institution. The award will not transfer to another institution if the PI leaves the University.
6. The applicant will be required to meet with their program leaders 6 months from the start of the grant to review progress. Additionally, the applicant will be required to meet with their mentors monthly to monitor the progress of their research either in person, or via electronically.
7. In addition, a final progress report will be due 30 days after the conclusion of the project. Please use the NIH progress report format and forms.
 - a. Summarize work accomplished
 - b. Identify any significant problems
 - c. Provide any publications, meeting presentations, abstracts, news highlights
 - d. Provide a list of grant submissions/planned submissions
8. Awardees must acknowledge the ACS in any publications or presentations related to their IRG funding by including the statement "*This publication is supported by Institutional Research Grant number 134128-IRG-23-1143225-04 from the American Cancer Society.*" In the event that there are multiple sources of support, the acknowledgement should read "*Supported in part by Institutional Research Grant number 134128-IRG-23-1143225-04 from the American Cancer Society*" along with references to other funding sources. The Society's support should also be acknowledged in all public communication of work resulting from the grant, including scientific abstracts, posters at scientific meetings, press releases or other media communication, and internet-based communication.
9. A completed annual impact survey form (and interim progress report for active grants) will be required from each funded investigator for 5 years following the completion of the project.
10. The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Policy on Dissemination of NIH-funded Clinical Trial Information establishes the expectation that all NIH-funded awardees and investigators conducting clinical trials, funded in whole or in part by the NIH, will ensure that their NIH-funded clinical trials are registered at, and that summary results information is submitted to, ClinicalTrials.gov for public posting. More information can be found at [NOT-OD-16-149](#)
 - a. **Registration required not later than 21 days after first patient enrollment**