

**The American Cancer Society
Institutional Research Grant (ACS-IRG) Program
at the
Moffitt Cancer Center.**



***Spring 2025 Institutional Research Grant*
GUIDELINES**

Submission Deadline:

Friday, April 18, 2025

4:00PM

Principal Investigator
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Overview

Since 1993, the American Cancer Society-Institutional Research Grant (ACS-IRG) has enabled the Moffitt Cancer Center (Moffitt) to fund the cancer-related pilot projects of 149 junior investigators. The ACS-IRG is a unique source of funding entrusted to Moffitt that provides seed money for young investigators interested in cancer-related research. While the grant is administered at Moffitt, eligible applicants at Moffitt, the University of South Florida (USF) and the Ponce Health Sciences University (PHSU) may apply. Contact Maureen Ahearn, Moffitt, Office of Sponsored Research, Intramural Programs at intramuralprograms@moffitt.org

Eligibility

The ACS-IRG is intended to provide support for faculty just starting their careers. Junior investigators are faculty or staff who hold the rank of Assistant Member, Assistant Professor or equivalent and who are eligible to apply as Principal Investigators for grant support from national agencies.

- Only full-time faculty members at the Assistant Member/Assistant Professor level or equivalent are eligible.
- The PI must have **no active peer-reviewed funding at the time of submission or award**. Recipients of active state and nationally competitive grants (e.g., R01, VA Merit, FIRST R29 or Bankhead Coley) are not eligible. However, holders of personnel grants such as the NIH K series or the ACS's Junior Faculty and Junior Clinical Research Awards are eligible as long as they meet all other criteria and the project proposed does not duplicate other funded work.
- Investigators who have previously been awarded an R21, R01 or equivalent are not eligible.
- Investigators must be independent and have an institutional commitment for the salary and space required.
- Investigators must be within the **first six years** of their initial faculty appointment. Or, in the case of Ponce investigators, within the first 6 years of their faculty research appointment.
- Senior postdoctoral fellows, staff scientists and research associates are not eligible.
- Research Scientists are eligible to apply and must be independent and within two years of a tenure-track appointment. A letter of support from the Department Chair supporting the expectation of a tenure-earning position is required.
- Investigators will be limited to three proposal submissions for the same body of work.
- PI must be a Permanent Resident of the U.S. and must submit notarized evidence indicating Resident Alien Card or "Green Card", I-551, or approval for the issuance of such card as evidenced by an official passport stamp of the U.S. Citizen and Immigration Services or a form I-797.
- PI must be a Non-US Citizen Temporary Resident and must submit evidence of their original work authorization documents(s) including but not limited to, Employment

Authorization Document, unexpired I-94 with endorsement of nonimmigrant status, I-797 Approval Notice issued by U.S. Citizen and Immigration Services, DS-2019 form, I-20 form or any other employment authorization document issued by the U.S. Citizen. **Any applicant for IRG pilot project funding who is not a U.S. citizen must hold a visa that will allow him or her to remain the United States long enough to complete the IRG project.**

If you are a Research Scientist or Research Assistant Professor, your application must contain a letter of support from your Program Leader or Chair (*if based at Moffitt*), or from your Chair (*if based at USF or Ponce School of Medicine*) stating the following:

- The applicant's proposal reflects their own independent work;
- Space and time will be provided for the applicant to perform the project;
- The applicant is on a career path that leads to a fully independent tenure-track position.

Applicants not meeting these requirements will be rejected without review. Additionally, if the proposal score of Research Scientists or Research Assistant Professor is statistically insignificant when compared to other applicants, preference will be given to applicants at the Assistant Member rank.

Individuals whose initial nationally competitive research grant was not renewed may apply for an IRG if they have never received IRG funds before and meet the above criteria.

Funding Information

- Applicants may request up to \$30,000 for a 12-month project.
- Effort for the PI may **not** be charged directly to the grant. PI effort must be in the form of cost-share, minimum effort is 1% and maximum effort is capped at 5%.
- Applications are accepted at least twice per year. Cycle deadlines occur in April and October each year, but an additional cycle may occur in a given year.
- **An awardee may request a second year of funding (up to \$30,000) for a continuation of the same project.** Interested awardees are required to: 1) Prepare a one-page progress report (using the provided pilot project application) to describe their scientific progress (*this does not count against the page limit*), provide a budget, and justify their request for an additional year of funding; 2) Submit their progress report in conjunction with the current cycle's deadline. Requests for a second year of funding will be reviewed by the ACS-IRG Review Committee and will compete with new applications for available funding.
- The competing continuation may be submitted in the cycle 12 months or 18 months from the initial award period. As an example, if an investigator receives an initial award during the April cycle, the competing continuation would be submitted in either the next April cycle (12 month after initial award) or in the following October cycle, or both.
- On average, 3-5 awards are made per funding cycle.

Proposal Evaluation

All accepted applications are reviewed at the ACS-IRG Review Committee Meeting held approximately one month following the application deadline. Its members are a diverse group of faculty from all sites representing all disciplines of cancer-related research. All decisions regarding merit and funding are based on the recommendation of the ACS-IRG Review Committee.

Accepted applications are evaluated for the following:

- **Is the proposal relevant to the goals of the ACS – is it cancer-related?**
- Is the Principal Investigator independent and a faculty member at the Assistant Member rank or equivalent?
- 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?**

Application Form Package and Submission Process

Moffitt Faculty: All applicants must submit their full application through the M-Rain system for internal review and approval.

- a. The PI certified, final, ready to submit application will need to be routed at least three business days prior to the application due date.
 - b. When routing the application use the send email activity to alert Maureen Ahearn of the application.
 - c. There will be no exceptions to the internal due date for the 2025 Miles for Moffitt-Team Science for institutional review.
- **For USF Investigators: Please include a letter of support from Moffitt collaborators/Cores if you are accessing facilities or samples at Moffitt.**
 - **USF and Ponce Investigators:** it is the responsibility of investigators outside Moffitt to work with the support units within their respective institutions to ensure accuracy of budgets and individual institutional approval of the application. *NOTE:* the Moffitt Office of Sponsored Research and M-RAIN is unique to Moffitt investigators and will not be requested of USF or Ponce investigators. Submit your completed application to Moffitt's Office of Sponsored Research at intramuralprograms@moffitt.org as a single PDF file by 4:00 pm of the application due date.
 - 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 introduction pertaining to the second year.

Allowable and Unallowable Costs

Common Research Expenses	
<p>Allowable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PI effort (cost-share, only) should be proportional to effort on the project, minimum effort is 1% and maximum is capped at 5% • Research supplies and animal maintenance • Technical assistance • Domestic travel when necessary to carry out the proposed research program • Registration fees at scientific meetings • Publication costs, including reprints • Shared resources costs • Special fees (pathology, photography, etc.) • Stipends for graduate students and postdoctoral assistants if their role is to promote and sustain the project presented by the junior faculty member • Equipment costing less than \$2,000 (Special justification is necessary for items exceeding this amount and must be included in the proposal budget and justified <u>for specific research purposes</u>) • In special circumstances computer purchases justified for <u>specific scientific purposes</u> may be allowed at the beginning of the award with prior approval. All equipment must be budgeted at <u>the time of the application</u> • Tablets and e-readers for <u>specific scientific purposes</u> and must be justified and budgeted in the application. Data plans, if needed must also be justified. NOTE: Data plan costs for tablets and e-readers are <u>not supported by the Institution</u>. 	<p>Unallowable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilities and Administrative Costs • Secretarial/administrative salaries • Tuition • Travel - Foreign • 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 appropriate budget items for direct costs charged to ACS funds. Cost-share of PI effort is required at a minimum of 1% to show PI involvement in the project and capped at 5%. Salaries for support personnel (i.e., dishwashers, animal caretakers, histopathology technicians, research technicians or associates, and in some instances data management personnel) may be requested. Whether or not salaries are requested, list the names and roles of all personnel who will be involved in the project during the 12-month budget period.</p>	

1. Statistical Review of Applications

Applications involving statistical data should be reviewed by the Moffitt Biostatistics/Bioinformatics Shared Resource Core to strengthen the quality of the proposed research. Applicants should complete the [Biostatistics/Bioinformatics Assistance Form](http://moffittnetapps.moffitt.org/apps/BiostatisticsAssistanceForm/): <http://moffittnetapps.moffitt.org/apps/BiostatisticsAssistanceForm/>

2. Additional Approvals

The ACS-IRG Review Committee review is not considered equal to Moffitt's Scientific Review Committee (SRC) for human studies or IACUC for animal studies. All proposals with science involving humans or animals **must** go through the normal institutional approvals (SRC/IRB or IACUC). **DUE TO THE TIME IT MAY TAKE TO GET THESE APPROVALS, applicants MUST submit the proposal to the IRB/IACUC at the same time they submit their ACS-IRG application.** Failure to initiate these approval processes until after submission can significantly delay the project start date, if funded.

Note: It is the investigator's responsibility to notify Moffitt's Office of Sponsored Research at intramuralprograms@moffitt.org after IRB/IACUC approval has been received to release funds.

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 21-145-25 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 21-145-25 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 Moffitt's Research Administration Department. These reports are completed via email, average 2-3 pages, and describe: 1) pilot project progress and results; 2) all publications 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 Dr. Kenneth Wright, Principal Investigator of the ACS-IRG on a bi-annual basis to discuss the progress of your research.
- Awardees agree to serve on a future 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 Moffitt research seminar and participate in the seminar training series.
- Awardees are required to participate in a formal mentoring program and report progress to the ACS-IRG Program. If an awardee does not have a formal mentor/mentee relationship in place at time of the award, the ACS-IRG program will facilitate an arrangement.
- Awardees must contact Maureen Ahearn, immediately if you have accepted funding from another organization for your ACS-IRG 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 and you are required to withdraw your ACS-IRG pilot award.
- 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.