

Dear friends and colleagues

The Cancer Prevention and Research Institute of Texas (CPRIT) has now released more details on their program of new grant awards for FY2010. They have also released a description of the Policies and Procedures that will cover the administration of these awards. With this information in-hand we are in a better position to address some of the questions you have raised about our institutional plans for managing CPRIT proposals and awards. I have attached the CPRIT Policies and procedures Guide as well as some additional information on key FAQ's released by CPRIT last week. You can obtain more detailed information from the CPRIT website (www.cprit.state.tx.us) as well as our UTHSC-H that carries updates on CPRIT information relevant to HSC researchers (<http://www.uth.tmc.edu/research/CPRIT/CPRIT.html>).

Among some of the key considerations are the following:

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

The legislature has allocated \$150 million for FY2010 and \$300 million for each of the subsequent 9 years for CPRIT funding opportunities. This unprecedented level of funding for a state - supported biomedical research program is likely to represent a major source for new research funding for many of our institution's researchers and research programs. I should point out that these programs place a major emphasis on the support for innovative ideas for new ways to approach both the basic biology as well as the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of cancer. The 9 current opportunities are as follows:

Current Funding Opportunities (with fixed deadlines)

Individual Investigator Research Awards: This RFA is for innovative research proposals addressing critically important questions that will significantly advance knowledge of the causes, prevention, and/or treatment of cancer, with an award up to \$1 million annually for 4 years. Deadline – October 8, 2009

High Impact/High Risk Research Awards: This RFA is for relatively short-term high-impact/high-risk projects that are innovative, developmental, or exploratory in nature targeting new avenues of cancer research, with an award up to \$200,000 over 24 months. Deadline – October 8, 2009

Open Funding Opportunities (on-going, no deadline)

Recruitment of First-Time, Tenure-Track Faculty Members: This RFA seeks to support emerging investigators with the ability to make outstanding contributions to the field of cancer research. The candidate may or may not reside in the State of Texas at the time of the application.

Recruitment of Rising Stars: This RFA solicits applications to recruit outstanding investigators who are at a relatively early stage in their career to the State of Texas. The candidate must not reside in Texas at the time the application is submitted.

Recruitment of Established Investigators: This RFA is designed to attract outstanding senior research faculty with established cancer research programs to academic institutions in Texas. The candidate must not reside in Texas at the time the application is submitted.

Anticipated Funding Opportunities (pre-RFA)

Multi-Investigator Research Awards (Pre-RFA): This RFA supports the creation of integrated programs of collaborative and cross-disciplinary research among multiple investigators.. The maximum performance period is 5 years, with no set maximum award amount.

Research Training Awards (Pre-RFA): This RFA is intended to (1) attract outstanding predoctoral (Ph.D. or M.D./Ph.D.) and postdoctoral candidates committed to pursuing a career in basic or translational cancer research, (2) expand the skills and expertise of candidates to promote the next generation of investigators and leaders in cancer research, (3) position trainees for independent research careers, and (4) support the development of high-quality, innovative, and creative research.

Evidence Based Prevention Programs and Services: This RFA is intended for relatively short-term (up to 24 months) projects that would provide services aimed toward prevention and reduction of the risk of cancer before treatment is needed (primary prevention), early detection and diagnosis of cancer (secondary prevention), and improving the lives of those living with the disease (tertiary prevention).

Health Promotion, Public Education, and Outreach Programs: This RFA is intended for education and outreach efforts that have the potential to demonstrate change in the behaviors that can prevent or reduce the risk of cancer or improve the quality of life for survivors within a relatively short timeframe (2-3 years).

PROGRAM GUIDELINES

The Policies and Procedures Guide (attached) includes a lot of important information for those of you considering applying to this program. Among some of the key features are the following:

Deadlines: in this 1st year of the program, CPRIT is separating the deadlines for the submission of the investigator-initiated research awards (both the high risk and investigator awards are due October 8, 2009) from the large multi-investigator Center proposals, the training grants and the prevention grants (estimated deadline March 1, 2010). In subsequent years, all these categories will have deadlines twice each year (September and February). The recruitment awards will be handled on a rolling basis without specific deadlines.

Triaging: There is a cap on the number of high impact /high-risk proposals each institution can submit (based on NCI funding). We have already reviewed candidate proposals for this award and have selected the PI's for the two UTHSC_H applications. There will be no cap on the other categories of proposals each institution can submit. However there will be a triage process conducted by CPRIT in which all proposals will be subject to administrative screening for adherence to the guidelines. Proposals will also be subject to scientific pre-screening by the panel chairs for general responsiveness to the terms of the RFA. Proposals judged to be either non-adherent to the guidelines or not responsive to the goals of CPRIT will be triaged without committee review. This means proposals will need to be correctly developed and will have to propose novel and important research ideas that are likely to have a real impact on cancer research or cancer prevention programs.

Eligibility; Researchers from academic HSC are obviously eligible for the award. Proposals can include collaborations and sub-contracts from other researchers from within Texas or outside. However all CPRIT funds have to be expended within Texas.

Budgets – Direct and Indirects: the RFA's include the planned caps on budgets for the different categories of awards (they are generally very generous awards). For "research" proposals, institutional indirects are capped at 5% however there are liberal allowances for "direct" expenses associated with the conduct of the specific project (see Policies and Procedures Guidelines). Investigators will need to consider carefully the opportunities for recovering both the direct and indirect costs of individual research projects. There are no indirects on cancer prevention and health promotion awards.

Matching: The CPRIT legislation requires that institutions receiving CPRIT awards certify that they have funds to the level of 50% of the CPRIT award that will be applied in the following year to the general area of research addressed in the CPRIT award. The match requirement and the ability of the institution to meet the match will be determined after the proposal has been recommended to the CPRIT Board for funding. This means that institutions such as the HSC-Houston will have to determine whether, after the CPRIT review and selection procedures are complete, the institution has sufficient funded research in the general area of the proposed award to meet the match requirements. If we do, we can accept the award, if we don't, we will have to decline the CPRIT award. The Policies and Procedures Guide deals with this issue, the sources of funding eligible for match etc in great detail. One critical issue that is not addressed is

the way that the match requirement can be met for proposals that include collaborations between investigators from different institutions.

Duration of Awards: The different CPRIT RFA's have different durations, some as long as 5 years. The total funding for the entire award is "booked" against the funding available in the year the award is made. This means that each year CPRIT will be starting with a fresh pool of funding (typically \$300 million) to consider new proposals for funding.

Submission of applications: All CPRIT proposals will have to be submitted electronically through the Office of Sponsored Projects using our usual grant proposal submission procedures.

This new funding program promises to be a valuable resource for UTHSC-H investigators interested in cancer research. Please let me know if my staff and I can answer any questions you may have about this new research program.

Best wishes,
Peter

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