

Request for Proposals
Alliance for Clinical Trials in Oncology Foundation Special Projects Allocation

Announcement Date: January 15, 2021

The Alliance for Clinical Trials in Oncology Foundation (Alliance Foundation) announces a request for proposals to support research focused on addressing high priority research areas defined during the Alliance 2020 Scientific Strategic Retreat.

Background

The Alliance for Clinical Trials in Oncology (Alliance) is a multidisciplinary, multi-institutional research consortium whose mission is to reduce the impact of cancer by uniting a broad community of scientists and clinicians from many disciplines, committed to discovering, validating and disseminating effective strategies for the prevention and treatment of cancer.

Alliance achieves this purpose by:

- conducting high quality multidisciplinary cancer control, prevention, and treatment trials that engage a comprehensive research network;
- furthering our understanding of the biological basis of the cancer process and its treatment, from discovery, to validation, to clinical practice;
- providing a scientific and operational infrastructure for innovative clinical and translational research in academic and community settings.

Every two years, Alliance leaders participate in a scientific strategic retreat, during which a number of research priorities are defined. The goal of these priorities is to focus innovation by Alliance scientific committees on a few strategic areas, with the expectation that attention to these priorities will challenge researchers to move beyond what is currently possible and accelerate the development of new treatments, cancer control approaches, and cancer care delivery results. These strategic priorities generally focus upon fostering engagement of new disciplines or technologies relevant to Alliance research, or upon work to improve the design and implementation of Alliance clinical trials.

Current Alliance Strategic Priorities, announced in November 2020, are the following:

- 1) Address health disparities by increasing accrual of minority and vulnerable population members to Alliance research protocols, and by assessing the impact of the Social Determinants of Health (including financial toxicity) on outcomes in Alliance trials.

- 2) Expand Alliance portfolio in implementation science (including de-implementation)

Use implementation science approaches to understand the optimal ways to utilize virtual technology and other responses to COVID-19 to improve clinical trials execution

Incorporate implementation science approaches to improve clinical outcomes for cancer patients

- 3) Develop methods to enhance awareness of and effective utilization of data and banked biospecimens

Oversight and prioritization, enhanced bioinformatics participation, data harmonization; don't forget PRO, QOL and other data generated by secondary analyses, feedback to prospective study design

- 4) Expand Alliance capability to support molecular, biomarker driven studies, including imaging, such as:

Oversight and prioritization, additional funding, biostatistics/bioinformatics support, productive partnerships, cross-trials harmonization of data (including consent, PROs, QOL) and prospective biospecimen collection

- 5) Develop and implement a strategy to engage and support early career investigators from all relevant disciplines with particular emphasis on researchers from URM groups

Increase opportunities for participation in Alliance research that bring value to early career investigators

Include leadership development and broadening recognition of leadership success beyond conventional academic credit

Proposal Requirements:

- Principal Investigator (contact PI) must be an Alliance member in good standing
- Proposal must address one of the five current Alliance Strategic Priorities
- Proposal Specific Aims must be achievable in a two-year timeframe, and if selected for funding it is expected that the work will be completed within two years following funding
- If the proposed work involves NCI-supported research, approval by the appropriate NCI committees may be required before final approval and funding of the project

Proposal Format:

Specific Aims: 1 page maximum

Research Plan: 2-3 pages maximum

Relevance to Alliance Strategic Priority: 1 page maximum

Qualifications of Research Team: 1 page maximum

Sustainability Strategy: 1 page maximum

Budget

References

Review Criteria:

The following questions will be used by the review panel to assess the suitability of the proposed work and to assign priority for funding:

- How well does the proposal address the relevant Strategic Priority?
- Is the Alliance an appropriate environment for execution of the proposed research?
- Does the work involve collaboration across two or more Alliance institutions?
- Is the work achievable within the two year timeframe?
- Is the research team qualified to conduct the proposed research?
- If the end result of the research is to set up a new research initiative or program, how will this new effort be sustained once the initial funding is completed?

Funding Source, Funding Amounts, and Reporting Requirements:

The funding for this RFP is provided by the Alliance Foundation, a 501(c)3 not-for-profit corporation whose purpose is to support the mission of the Alliance for Clinical Trials in Oncology.

A total of \$1,000,000 is allocated for this RFP. Individual proposal budgets are limited to a maximum total cost of \$200,000, of which no more than 15% can be allocated to indirect costs. Proposals for projects requiring less than the maximal amount are also welcome.

Successful applicants will be required to provide yearly progress reports to the Alliance Foundation, detailing scientific progress and funding allocation.

Proposal Due Date and Submission Information:

Proposals must be submitted by April 1, 2021 and sent to:

Suzanne George, MD
c/o Katie Kamb
Alliance for Clinical Trials in Oncology Foundation
kkamb@bwh.harvard.edu

Announcement and Funding Date:

PIs of successful proposals will be notified by May 15, 2021, with funding available upon confirmation of Institutional Review Board approval of the proposed work (if required), and completion of agreements between relevant research parties and the Alliance Foundation.