



Colorectal Cancer Alliance Chris4Life Research Program

2022 Request for Proposals

April 7, 2022

The Colorectal Cancer Alliance (the Alliance) is pleased to announce a Request for Proposals (RFP) for preclinical and clinical translational research with the potential for high impact on prevention, diagnosis, treatment, or survivorship of colorectal cancer. In this cycle, proposals will be accepted for Early Career Investigator Awards and Pilot Awards. The Alliance plans to award at least \$850,000 for new research arising from this RFP.

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Introduction

About Colorectal Cancer

Colorectal cancer (CRC) is the second most deadly cancer with 53,000 deaths and 149,500 diagnoses in the U.S. alone in 2021. Unlike many cancers, colorectal cancer is often preventable through screening and highly treatable when detected early. In part due to the success of screening, the number of new CRC cases and deaths have steadily declined since the turn of the century. Alarming, CRC is being diagnosed in a rising number of young people less than 50 years old. While there has been some progress in recent years, more research is needed to optimize the effectiveness of existing and emerging therapies and to improve the prevention and diagnosis of CRC.

About the Alliance

Founded in 1999, the Colorectal Cancer Alliance (the Alliance) is the leading nonprofit dedicated to colorectal cancer (CRC). In 2010, the Alliance established the Chris4Life Research Program in honor of the late Christine Sapienza and for all the families who are affected by colorectal cancer. The research program is a critical driving force in the mission to end colorectal cancer in our lifetime. The Alliance has already invested nearly \$5 million in colorectal cancer research, including nearly \$3 million as early-stage grants to innovative researchers. Highlighting the return on its investments, two grantees supported with \$400,000 of funding from the Alliance have gone on to receive more than \$6.5 million in federal research funding. Please visit www.ccalliance.org for more information about the Alliance.

Objective: Translational Research

The Alliance is soliciting proposals that focus on translational research. Translation as defined by [NCATS](#) is the “process of turning observations in the laboratory, clinic and community into interventions that improve the health of individuals and the public — from diagnostics and therapeutics to medical procedures and behavioral changes.” Successful proposals will have the potential for applying important basic and preclinical discoveries to the near-term development of clinical trials or studies impacting CRC prevention, diagnosis, and/or treatment.

Proposals for clinical studies are welcome if they have well-defined and clearly articulated hypotheses and should be accompanied by a brief protocol synopsis and timeline with milestones. IRB approval is not required at the time of application but is required before initial payments are made.

Based on its 2021 [Research Investment Strategy](#), the Alliance welcomes proposals in the following areas:

- **New targets and improved therapies:** Innovative early discovery and translational research projects towards novel targets and treatments that lead to cures for ever greater numbers of CRC patients.
- **Diagnosis, prognosis, and response:** Research on novel diagnostic and prognostic approaches to enhance personalized treatment strategies or screening to improve outcomes.



- **Precise and equitable implementation of screening and care:** Development and evaluation of community-advised and evidence-based interventions to overcome racial and other CRC outcome disparities.

Special Emphasis Areas

Special Emphasis Areas: For the 2022 cycle, the Alliance seeks proposals in the following areas, which are focused on current unmet clinical needs in CRC. These areas are of particular interest and will receive special consideration, and can include preclinical, translational, clinical, and/or correlative studies:

- Understanding the causes and improving interventions in young-onset CRC.
- Research to develop and apply logical combinatorial treatment strategies for patients with advanced CRC including combinations of immunologic and/or molecularly targeted agents.
- Studies that elucidate the prognostic and therapeutic value of the microbiome in early- and late-stage disease.
- Investigations to understand the causes and develop interventions to overcome racial and ethnic disparities toward more equitable CRC outcomes.

Timeline

All application deadlines are at 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time. Proposals submitted after the deadline will not be considered.

- **June 9, 2022:** Deadline for Early Career Investigator applicants to submit Applicant Eligibility Checklist.
- **July 25, 2022:** Applications are due for all award mechanisms.
- **Early November:** Awardees notified (Note that the Alliance may adjust the notification date without notice to applicants).
- **January 1, 2023:** Projects start.

Review and Selection Criteria

The following criteria will be used to assess the importance, originality, rigor, feasibility, and degree to which the proposal will lead to rapid clinical benefit.

- **Overall Scientific and Clinical Importance:** Original, innovative, and transformative research approaches with strong scientific rationale and clear capacity to enhance prevention, detection, diagnosis and/or treatment for patients with CRC will be prioritized. Proposals that articulate a clear path to near-term clinical application will be strongly favored.
- **Rigor and Feasibility:** The Alliance seeks outstanding and technically rigorous proposals as determined by peer review. Overall study design, methodology, and analyses must be feasible and appropriate to accomplish specific aims.

- **Investigator/Environment:** Applicant has appropriate training, expertise, and evidence of productivity (inclusive of publications, datasets, code, patents, etc.) to carry out proposed research. Applicant’s institution and department are sufficiently committed to area of research proposed and to the applicant. Equipment and other institutional resources are sufficient to support the applicant. *In the case of Early Career Investigator applicants, the selected Mentor is appropriate to advance applicant’s career and project with evidence of a strong mentorship relationship.*

Weighting of each criterion in the review

	Overall Scientific & Clinical Importance	Rigor & Feasibility	Investigator & Environment	Investigator, Environment & Mentor
Pilot Award	1/3 of score	1/3 of score	1/3 of score	
Early Career Investigator	1/3 of score	1/3 of score		1/3 of score

Applicant Eligibility

General eligibility requirements:

- **Applications from investigators representing diverse and/or historically underrepresented audiences with respect to race/ethnicity, gender, and/or disability are highly encouraged. As an organization with a core value around equity and access,** the Alliance recognizes that diversity and equitable opportunity in the biomedical research workforce is critical for garnering the most innovative, successful, and equitable health outcomes for all.
- **Principal Investigators (PIs) must hold a full-time faculty appointment at the level of Assistant Professor (or equivalent) or above at an academic or other non-profit research institution within the United States.**
- PIs must be able to show clear evidence of an independent research program.
- If previously funded by the Alliance, applicant must be up to date on all reporting requirements.
- Those in pre-doctoral, post-doctoral/fellowship training or research support positions are not eligible to apply.
- Individuals employed by state or federal government agencies may participate in research proposals as non-funded collaborators or contractors but may not apply for Alliance funding.
- Investigators need not be specifically trained in colorectal cancer research; however, they should be working in an environment capable of conducting high-quality research that translates to high-impact colorectal cancer outcomes.
- An investigator may serve as PI on only one proposal submitted to the Alliance for any of the award mechanisms in this cycle.



- Multiple applications will be accepted from a single institution, provided that each application has a different PI and represents a distinct hypothesis.
- Mentors for Early Career Investigator Award applicants may serve as a PI on a separate proposal this cycle; however, that proposal must represent a distinct hypothesis from the Early Career Investigator's proposal.

If there are any questions about eligibility, please contact research@ccalliance.org before submitting an application. Applications from PIs who do not meet the eligibility criteria will not be reviewed.

Types of Awards

Early Career Investigator Award

Applicant Eligibility Checklist is due by 5 p.m. Eastern Time on June 9, 2022

Full proposals are due by 5 p.m. Eastern Time on July 25, 2022

Description: Early Career Investigator Awards aim to attract early career faculty with original ideas into the field of colorectal cancer research, thereby recruiting and supporting the next generation of CRC research leaders. Awardees will be provided funding to accomplish innovative and original, preclinical, translational, and/or early clinical research projects. Early Career Investigators are defined as scientists within the first five years of their first academic faculty appointment. A mentorship commitment from a senior investigator is required.

Term: Two years

Amount: Up to \$75,000 per year for two years (up to \$150,000 total)

Eligibility Requirements:

- **Applicants must be within the first five years of their first independent, full-time academic faculty appointment at the application deadline, at the level of Assistant Professor (or equivalent position). Application must be submitted before the applicant has had five full years as faculty.**
- Applicants must designate at least one Mentor who is an established investigator at the same institution who will ensure that adequate support and guidance are provided for successful completion of the proposed research project and provide career mentorship.
- Applicants may designate a secondary Mentor who is an established investigator at any institution to provide scientific, medical, or technical guidance.
- Applicants who have secured an independent full-time faculty position commencing by January 1, 2023 will be considered; in this case, a letter from an institutional official or department chairperson confirming the planned date of faculty appointment is required at the time of application.
- Applicants do not have to be on a tenure-track; however, fellows or others who are in training positions are not eligible to apply. Applicants who are in research support positions are not eligible to apply.
- Applicants may serve as PI on only one proposal submitted to the Alliance for any of the award mechanisms in this cycle.



- **All Early Career Investigator applicants must complete and return the Applicant Eligibility Checklist by June 9, 2022. Please email the completed checklist to the Alliance Grants Administrator at research@ccalliance.org.**

Pilot Award

Full proposals are due by 5 p.m. Eastern Time on July 25, 2022

Description: Pilot Awards support senior investigators who propose potentially transformative ideas that do not have extensive preliminary data but articulate a clear hypothesis and translational goals. Resources for such "high-risk, high-reward" projects are important to establish proof-of-concept, which may then leverage additional funding through more traditional avenues.

Term: Two years

Amount: Up to \$50,000 per year for two years (up to \$100,000 total)

Eligibility:

- Applicants must be a senior investigator, past the initial five years of their first academic faculty appointment.
- Applicants must hold a full-time faculty appointment at the level of Assistant Professor (or equivalent) or above.

Application Format and Instructions (all awards)

All applications are due by 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time. Proposals will not be considered after the deadline. Please apply online via [proposalCENTRAL](#) using the document templates and requirements therein. Please carefully follow the instructions in proposalCENTRAL and below. Applications include the following steps and components:

- 1. Title Page:** Enter the project title.
- 2. Templates and Instructions:** Download RFP and templates.
- 3. Enable Other Users to Access this Proposal:** Allow others (e.g., institutional administrators or collaborators) to view, edit, or submit your proposal. Electronic signatures are required to submit the application for submission. The Signing Official from the applicant's institution must be provided at least 'Edit' access on this screen to be able to sign. Please review the Signature Page to confirm the signature roles required and add as appropriate on this page.
PLEASE MAKE SURE TO GRANT ACCESS AHEAD OF TIME TO YOUR INSTITUTION'S SIGNING OFFICIAL TO AVOID ANY LAST-MINUTE ISSUES WITH SIGNING AND SUBMITTING YOUR APPLICATION.
- 4. Applicant/PI:** Key information about the applicant PI.
- 5. Organization/Institution:** Key information about the PI's institution, including name and email address of the signing official who, in addition to the PI, will be contacted if the award is selected for funding

- 6. Key Personnel:** List and provide contact information for key persons. Include everyone **except the applicant** who will contribute to the scientific development or execution of the project in a substantive, measurable way whether they receive salaries or compensation under the grant. For Early Career Investigator applicants, a Mentor from the same institution is required.

Descriptions of Key Personnel roles:

Principal Investigator (PI, required for all applications): This is the applicant for Pilot and Early Career Investigator applications.

Collaborator: Play a lesser role in the thinking and logistics of the project than a Principal Investigator or Co-Investigator. Depending on the role and effort, a collaborator may be designated as Key Personnel (although not required) and may be compensated.

Mentor (required for Early Career Investigator applications only): All Early Career Investigator applicants must designate at least one mentor who is an established investigator at the same institution as the Mentee. Mentors must ensure that adequate support and guidance are provided for successful completion of the proposed research project and provide career mentorship. **Designating at least one Mentor with expertise in CRC research is strongly advised.** Mentor(s) must provide a letter of support for the Early Career Investigator and be designated as Key Personnel.

Consultant: Provides guidance on specific aspects of the research project, as their expertise applies. A consultant may be designated as Key Personnel (although not required) and may be compensated.

Others: Key Personnel may also include (but are not required) people at the master's or baccalaureate level (such as Project Managers, Technicians, Postdoctoral Associates, Fellows, Research Assistants or Graduate Students), if they will contribute to the scientific development or execution of the project in a substantive, measurable way whether they receive salaries or compensation under the grant.

REQUIRED SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS FOR KEY PERSONNEL (KP)					
Personnel	Include in KP Section	Biosketch	Current/Pending Support	Letter of Support	ORCID ID Required
Principal Investigator	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes
Co-Investigator	If applicable	Yes	No	Optional	No
Collaborator	If applicable	Yes, if included as KP	No	Optional	No
Mentor	Yes (Early Career Investigator)	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Project Manager	Optional	Yes, if included as KP	No	No	No
Technician	Optional	Yes, if included as KP	No	No	No
Consultant	If applicable	Yes, if included as KP	No	No	No
Postdoctoral/Fellow	Optional	Yes, if included as KP	No	No	No
Graduate Student	Optional	Yes, if included as KP	No	No	No
Other (such as research asst, etc)	Optional	Yes, if included as KP	No	No	No

7. Data and Renewable Reagent Sharing Plan: To promote rapid research advancement, transparency, reproducibility, and collaboration, the Alliance encourages the open sharing of data and resources generated from its funded awards. Provide information for the types of data and renewable reagents that will be generated as part of the award and how they will be shared. The Alliance has adopted the following **Data Sharing Policy**. *The Alliance will incur costs associated with policy compliance, provided these fees (e.g., article processing charges, data storage) are included in the original grant application budget.*

- The Alliance **recommends** the posting of manuscripts based on or developed under an Alliance Award to a pre-print server ahead of or at the time of journal submission.

- The Alliance **recommends** the posting of research outputs (data, code, software) to public data repositories at the time such research outputs are generated.
 - The Alliance **recommends** that manuscripts based on or developed under an Alliance Award be published in open-access journals.
 - The Alliance **recommends** that all research outputs based on or developed under an Alliance Award (including publications, data, code, and software) be made available with no commercial modification rights (e.g., [CC BY-NC license](#)).
 - The Alliance **requires** that the final, accepted version of any publication based on or developed under an Alliance Award be deposited in PubMed Central so that it is available 12 months after publication.
 - The Alliance **requires** that any data, code, and/or software needed for the independent verification of published research results based on or developed under an Alliance Award be curated and made freely and publicly available at the time of publication.
- 8. Abstracts and Keywords:** Provide a general audience abstract (non-technical) and a technical abstract (2,000 characters maximum each) and keywords. Please note: the general audience abstract will become public if the award is selected for funding, therefore, it should not contain any proprietary information. In addition, **patient advocates will participate in the review so please explain how the proposal could impact patients using plain language that will be understood by those without scientific or medical backgrounds.**
 - 9. Budget Period Detail:** Enter budget details for each award period requested. Please include any costs associated with compliance to the Alliance’s data sharing policy. Awards will not support indirect costs, overhead costs, or other similar institutional charges. Fringe benefits for personnel salaries are allowable. Note that a final payment of \$5,000 will be withheld from the Year 2 award payment and will be distributed by the Alliance upon acceptance of the Final Report.
 - 10. Budget Summary and Justification:** A summary of the budget detail will be shown in this step. In addition, provide sufficient detail for the evaluation of the major portions of the budget that are being requested. If more space is required than is provided in the proposalCENTRAL forms (2,000 characters), applicants may upload the budget justification in document form in step #13.
 - 11. Current and Pending Research Support:** For these Pilot and Early Career Investigator submissions, list all current and pending support for the Applicant only. Any overlap of current or pending support with the proposal must be described and explained. Current and pending support can be added to your Professional Profile on proposalCENTRAL by clicking on the ‘Professional Profile’ tab and going to Step #6: Other Support. To add your entries, please click on the “+” link and all entries previously saved in your Professional Profile will show. Please select the applicable support and save. If you cannot access the proposalCENTRAL profile, please use the template provided in step #2 to upload this information in step #13.
 - 12. Organizational Assurances:** IRB and IACUC approvals, if applicable.

13. Upload Attachments: Upload the following:

- a. Biosketch for PI and Key Personnel:** Please upload an NIH format biosketch for yourself and any Key Personnel. Biosketches for research support staff, students, postdocs and other training positions are not required. Applicants who do not have an NIH biosketch may use the template provided in proposalCENTRAL. Besides publications, the Alliance welcomes the inclusion of research outputs such as datasets, code, patents, and papers posted to preprint servers.
- b. Current and pending research support:** Whenever possible, please enter PI support directly into proposalCENTRAL in the “Current and Pending Support” section (step #11) rather than the template provided for upload. Any overlap of current or pending support with the Alliance proposal must be described and explained.
- c. Project description:** Must be formatted in 11-point Arial font or Times New Roman 12-point font with no less than ½ inch margins. The project description should be 5 pages maximum, inclusive of the following: Background and specific aims, preliminary data, experimental design and methods, statistical plan, figures (which may be embedded within the above sections), and rationale/fit with key criteria, including the potential for clinical impact.
- d. Patient advocate and health equity statement (1 page maximum):** Describe the involvement of patients and/or communities in the proposal’s development and the relevance of the proposed research for patients by addressing the questions below. Refer to PCORI’s patient engagement [rubric](#) for possible ways to engage with patient advocates.
 - i. Describe the problem being addressed, its scope, and the impact your research could potentially have on this patient population with particular attention to historically underserved communities in CRC.
 - ii. If the study is successful, what will be the next steps in moving your research into clinical practice? Describe the potential barriers to accrual and/or retention.
 - iii. How do you plan to engage patient advocates and relevant stakeholders in the design and implementation of your study as well as dissemination of the results?
- e. Literature references:** A list of up to 30 references supporting the project description is allowed, in addition to the 5-page project description.
- f. For Early Career Investigator Award proposals:**
 - i. *Mentor Letter of Support:* Include a letter of support from an established scientific Mentor at the same institution, who is familiar with the applicant and his/her work and will provide guidance and support for the project and the applicant. The Mentor’s letter should confirm that the applicant has an independent research program and include a brief statement about the applicant, the Mentor’s role, mentoring plan, the research environment, and sources of institutional support that the applicant will utilize in conducting the project. Any listed additional Mentor must also provide a letter of support. The Alliance recognizes that unconscious bias can manifest in such support

letters and therefore strongly recommends considering [these](#) or similar guidelines when preparing such letters.

- ii. *Early Career Investigator Applicant Eligibility Checklist*: Required to confirm eligibility. Requires signature of the Department Chair, Division Head, or Dean. Must be returned via email to research@ccalliance.org by June 9, 2022. Please also upload a copy as part of the application.
 - g. For proposals involving clinical trials**: Attach a brief protocol synopsis (5 pages maximum) along with a timeline and milestones, including but not limited to IRB and regulatory approval (if applicable), patient accrual timeline, and timeline for completion of analyses.
 - h. Application checklist**: Please fill out to ensure all application materials are complete and applicant is eligible to apply.
- 14. Statement of Proposal’s Fit Within the Alliance’s Research Strategy**: Provide a brief statement (up to 2000 characters) of how the proposed research project fits within the Alliance’s overall research strategy, which can be found here [New Investment Strategy To Accelerate CRC Research Progress](#). If the work builds on a previously funded project(s), please explain.
- 15. PI Data Sheet**: Please enter your ORCID ID and other requested demographic information. If you do not have an ORCID ID, you can register for one here: <https://orcid.org/register>. Please note that requested demographic information will NOT be used by the Alliance in any way during the selection process. Having such information will help the Alliance better understand its applicant and awardee pool and detect and address any inequities identified.
- 16. Validate**: Check for any missing required information.
- 17. Signature Page(s)**: Before submitting the application, an **electronic signature is required** from both the Applicant/PI and a Signing Official from the applicant’s institution. Type your name in the text box and click the green ‘Sign’ button. A date and time stamp will appear next to the button indicating that the electronic signature was successful. To give the Signing Official access to sign this application, enter their information in Step #3: “Enable other users to access this proposal” and grant them at least “Edit” access.
- 18. Submit**: Please note that no proposals will be able to be submitted past their deadline. Technical support for the on-line application system is not available after 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time or on weekends.

Important Dates

All application deadlines are at 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time. Proposals submitted after the deadline will not be considered.



- **June 9, 2022:** Deadline for Early Career Investigator applicants to submit Applicant Eligibility Checklist.
- **July 25, 2022:** Applications are due for all award mechanisms.
- **Early November:** Awardees notified (Note that the Alliance may adjust the notification date without notice to applicants).
- **January 1, 2023:** Projects start.

Review Mechanism

All proposals undergo a rigorous review process by members of a distinguished Scientific Review Panel comprising experts in diverse fields. The review panel operates under clear objective guidelines. All proposals will be scored according to Alliance review and selection criteria. All awards are contingent upon ratification by the Alliance Board of Directors.

Collaborative Funding Offers

For outstanding Early Career Investigator research proposals as determined by peer review that are deemed fundable, but that are beyond the Alliance's full-funding pay-line, the Alliance may seek co-funding from applicant institutions in order to support these proposals. **The Alliance will reserve up to \$200,000 of its support for the Collaborative Funding program this cycle.** For our Collaborative Funding program, the Alliance will provide two-thirds of the award funds made under this program and each PI's institution will provide the remaining one-third of the relevant budget for that institution. In case of questions, please contact research@ccalliance.org. Pilot Awards are not eligible for Collaborative Funding.

For proposals that meet the above criteria, the Alliance will contact the institutions for this Collaborative Funding offer, and institutions will be asked to verbally decline or accept the offer within 14 days. Signed agreements between the Alliance and the institution will be required within 30 days. Collaborative Funding terms are non-negotiable and relevant awardees are automatically considered for this program.

Award Administration

Award Letter

Upon acceptance of the award, the PI and his/her employing Institution will be required to sign an Award Letter indicating acceptance of the Alliance's Award Terms and Conditions within 30 days, which can be found on the Alliance website bit.ly/crcfunding. Please note, the Alliance Terms and Conditions are non-negotiable. The Alliance must be notified in advance and approve any significant changes in research objectives, key personnel (including transfer to another employee), or budget.

Approvals

The Alliance requires certification through proposalCENTRAL of compliance with Human Subjects and Animal Care Assurance as applicable. In cases where ethical/regulatory approval is required to perform the work, such approvals will be required before initial payments are made. This includes local IRB approvals of clinical trials



supported by Alliance funding. For clinical trials, a timeline and milestones must be included in the application package. Failure to meet these milestones within a reasonable time frame may result in termination of the award.

Multi-Institutional Projects

For projects including key personnel at other institutions, the PI must verify in advance that funds can be transferred from their institution to the collaborating institution. This requirement can be easily met by attaching a letter from the PI's sponsored programs office stating a commitment to comply with this requirement. Sub-award agreements between collaborating institutions must be executed within 60 days of the Alliance's execution of the award agreement with the applicant institution.

Funding

For all proposals, the level and duration of funding may be adjusted by the Alliance as appropriate for the scope of the proposal and the funds available. Partial funding will also be considered to obtain proof-of-principle data. **Awards will not support indirect costs, overhead costs, or other similar institutional charges;** however, fringe benefits for personnel salaries are allowable. **Full-term funding will be contingent upon review of annual progress reports, submission of the final progress report and other oversight activities conducted by the Alliance** in support of innovative ideas with transformative potential. Multi-year support is not automatic for any Alliance award and is conditioned on submission of complete and accurate progress reports, financial reports, and demonstrated progress on the funded proposal.

Alliance Events

PIs will be invited to attend an annual event for the scientific community. PIs are expected to attend and may be asked to present research findings made under their awards at these meetings. The Alliance will cover reasonable travel costs related to participation, and as such, travel for this purpose should not be included within your submitted budget.

Frequently Asked Questions

Eligibility

Q: Who is eligible to apply for a grant?

A: A Doctor of Medicine or Doctor of Philosophy degree is required. Types of researchers for whom this funding would be appropriate include early career researchers at the instructor, scientist, or assistant professor level; senior researchers who have shifted their area of interest toward colorectal cancer research; researchers at any academic level who need seed funding to test an innovative hypothesis; researchers from non-profit institutions, including academic institutions.

Q: Do I need to be a US citizen?

A: Researchers need not be United States citizens. However, research must be conducted in the United States.



Q: I am a researcher at a for-profit institution, can I apply for a grant?

A: Researchers from for-profit institutions will not be considered.

Q: Must PIs have an academic faculty appointment? Is this a hard-and-fast rule?

A: PIs must have a full-time appointment at an academic or non-profit research institution at the level of 'Assistant Professor' (or equivalent) or above; however, a tenure-track appointment is not required. Evidence of independent investigator status and an environment conducive and supportive of colorectal cancer research is required. If there is any doubt or question about a PI's eligibility, please contact the Alliance (contacts provided in this RFP) before an application is submitted. Applications from PIs who do not fit the eligibility criteria will not be reviewed. **To confirm eligibility, Early Career Investigator applicants must complete the Applicant Eligibility Checklist** (see additional FAQs for Early Career Investigator applicants).

Q: Does the Alliance fund investigators and institutions outside of the United States?

A: No. At present, investigators at institutions outside of the United States are not eligible for Alliance funding. However, unfunded consultants or collaborators at or above the level of 'Assistant Professor' or equivalent may be named as co-Investigators regardless of location. Contact the Alliance if there are any questions about eligibility prior to submitting a proposal.

Early Career Investigator Awards

Q: I do not hold the title of Assistant Professor, but I do hold the title of my institution's entry level, full-time faculty position. Am I eligible to apply?

A: Appointments such as research assistant professor, adjunct assistant professor, assistant professor research track, instructor, or lecturer may be eligible to apply as long as your institution considers this an independent, faculty-level position and you have independent lab space. Please verify your eligibility by June 9, 2022, by emailing the signed and completed Early Career Investigator Eligibility Checklist to research@ccalliance.org.

Q: I am within my first five years of an Assistant Professor position, but previously held an entry level full-time faculty position such as research assistant professor, adjunct assistant professor, assistant professor research track, instructor, or lecturer, either at my current institution or at a different institution. Am I still eligible to apply?

A: If you held any independent faculty-level position prior to **July 25, 2017**, then you are not eligible to apply.

Q: I will be past the first five years of my first faculty appointment at the time the project starts. May I apply for an Early Career Investigator Award?

A: Yes, as long as you are within the first five years of your first faculty appointment at the time of proposal submission.



- Q: I will be past the first five years of my first faculty appointment at the time of application but I took time off for personal, family or professional reasons. Does this count against eligibility?
- A: If an applicant took a leave of absence for family or medical leave or other personal or professional reasons, please inquire to the Alliance about eligibility. An appropriately documented leave of absence will not be counted in the five years of eligibility. Leaves of absence may include military service (that does not include research training/experience), family leave, and maternity leave. The Alliance will extend the period of eligibility for a period equivalent to the time away from research.
- Q: I am a Fellow at an academic institution. Am I eligible to apply for the Early Career Investigator Award?
- A: Generally, no, unless the Fellow title is at least equivalent to Assistant Professor position. Those in training positions are not eligible. Only those with a faculty level appointment will be considered. Early Career Investigator Award applicants who do not hold an 'Assistant Professor' title must contact the Alliance to verify their eligibility prior to submitting a proposal (see contact information in this RFP) and complete the Applicant Eligibility Checklist.
- Q: What is the role of the Mentor?
- A: It is expected that Early Career Investigators are independent faculty members and not in training or in research support positions. However, a Mentor is required to help ensure that the Early Career Investigator has the resources they need to successfully carry out the work at their institution.
- Q: I would like to have a Mentor that is not at my institution. Is this allowed?
- A: All Early Career Investigator applicants must have a designated Mentor **at their** institution to help to ensure that the Early Career Investigator has the resources they need to successfully carry out the work at their institution. However, an applicant may have additional mentors within or outside of their institution for other purposes, including providing scientific guidance for the project, but they will not be considered a Mentor for the award.
- Q: Are Mentors of Early Career Investigator applicants allowed to be a PI of an existing Alliance award or award application this cycle?
- A: Yes, however, each research proposal must have a distinct hypothesis and scientific aims.
- Q: Is there a minimum level of effort for the Mentor?
- A: No. Mentors should not be listed as having any percent effort on the award.
- Q: What is the expected level of percent effort for an Early Career Investigator?
- A: There is no specific requirement around percent effort, but the Alliance encourages a minimum of 10% effort on the project.
- Q: I have previously been awarded an Alliance Award. Am I still eligible to apply in this cycle?
- A: Yes.



Collaborative Funding Program

- Q: Is my institution's willingness to participate in the Collaborative Funding Program going to affect my score in this or any future funding cycle?
- A: No. The evaluation by the Review Committee will not be influenced by any collaborative funding considerations. Only those proposals that are deemed outstanding by peer review but fall below the Alliance's pay line for full funding will be considered for the Collaborative Funding Program. The collaborative funding process will be conducted after the scientific review process has been completed.

Application Components

- Q: Do I need to have an ORCID ID?
- A: Yes. The Alliance requires that all applicants provide an ORCID ID. If you do not have an ORCID ID, you can register for one here: <https://orcid.org/register>. More information about ORCID IDs can be found here: <https://orcid.org/>.
- Q: Why is the Alliance collecting demographic information?
- A: The Alliance requests that applicants provide demographic information in proposalCENTRAL; however, this information is NOT required and will NOT be used in any way during the selection process. Having such information will help the Alliance better understand its applicant and awardee pool and detect and address any inequities that exist in the selection process.
- Q: How are proposals submitted? Do I need to send a hard copy?
- A: Hard copies are not needed. All proposals must be submitted electronically via proposalCENTRAL, <https://proposalcentral.com/GrantOpportunities.asp?GMID=260>. ProposalCENTRAL will accept electronic signatures on applications.
- Q: Does the Alliance require the NIH salary cap to be used when calculating salary and fringe benefit requests for the budget?
- A: No, but applicants may use it at their discretion.
- Q: What needs to be included in the "Current and Pending Support" section?
- A: Please submit a listing of all sponsored research support for the effort of the PI that is active or pending (submitted or awarded by a research sponsor but not yet started). Include the name of the title of the project, research sponsor, total annual funding, start and end dates, and percent of committed time. For each project, you must include a statement of overlap or non-overlap with the Alliance proposal. A template is provided in proposalCENTRAL.
- Q: Is the NIH biosketch format acceptable for submission to the Alliance?
- A: Yes, the Alliance encourages you to use your NIH biosketch. You may also use the template provide in proposalCENTRAL.



Additional Information and Contacts

Email questions about this RFP, eligibility, or other issues about the Alliance or its awards to research@ccalliance.org.

Technical questions about the proposalCENTRAL submission system should be directed to their customer support at 800-875-2562 (Toll-free U.S. and Canada), +1 703-964-5840 (Direct Dial International) or by email at pccsupport@altum.com. Support is available from 8:30am-5pm Eastern Time, Monday through Friday.