Focused Interactive Groups (FIGs) for the Development of Large, Programmatic Grant Applications

APPLICATION GUIDELINES

Objective
The primary purpose of this award mechanism Focused Interactive Groups (FIGs) for the Development of Large, Programmatic Grant Applications is to assist groups of Cancer Center investigators in the development of cancer-relevant collaborative projects that will be competitive for extramural funding as large multi-PI R01, P01 or SPORE grants or other similar sized extramural grant opportunities. Pilot projects must be a multidisciplinary collaboration between two or more Cancer Center members that links together existing areas of research strength and expertise within the Cancer Center and focuses on a problem that is related to the strategic goals of the Center and its research programs and clinical working groups. Projects may be across the full spectrum of research areas (basic, translational, pre-clinical/clinical, and population-focused research) and should have the ultimate goal of improving prevention, detection and treatment of cancers that impact the multi-ethnic populations served by the UNM Comprehensive Cancer Center (UNMCCC). While proposals should make maximum use of the unique technologies and capabilities available at the UNMCCC through its shared resources and affiliated centers (i.e. STMC, CMD), applicants are also encouraged to identify and engage with collaborators at other cancer centers and institutions, who strengthen the project by bringing critical complementary expertise, capabilities and/or resources that are not available within the UNMCCC. Applicants should include a plan and timeline for submitting an application to one or more specific extramural grant funding mechanisms that will be based upon data generated with the support of the pilot grant.

Eligibility
All UNMCCC members in good standing are eligible to apply and encouraged to form collaborative teams. These teams may include other UNM faculty, scientists at our affiliated institutions (LRRI, Sandia and Los Alamos National Laboratories), faculty at other academic institutions and community partners.

Key Dates
Applications will be accepted on a continuous basis.

Terms of Funding
The maximum annual budget for a FIG pilot grant will be $200,000 per project unless approved in advance following discussion with Dr. Alan Tomkinson and/or Dr. Cheryl Willman. It is envisioned that 2-3 years of funding may be required to develop competitive multi-PI grant applications. Applicants are encouraged to submit multi-year budgets tied to specific milestones/deliverables. Expenditures may begin at any time after the official start date, but generally, all funds should be expended within one year of receipt. It is envisioned that partial funds from the original multi-year budget will be made available to researchers with additional funds released upon successful meeting of milestones (key preliminary data, publications and submitted grant applications). In addition to reporting when specific milestones are reached, successful applicants are required to submit a 1-2
page progress reports every 6-months as well as a 2-3 page final report within 30-days of completing the project and must provide written and/or verbal updates to the UNMCCC as requested about any publications and/or grants resulting from the pilot grant support for up to 5 years from the pilot project end date.

The number of awards will depend on quality of applications and the availability of funds.

**Allowable Costs**

All funds requested must be justified based on involvement in a specific research project and linked to a planned grant application (with a specific date of submission indicated). Funding is available for salaries and fringe benefits of post-doctoral fellows, students, technicians, and other non-faculty project personnel costs. Laboratory supplies and other related research non-personnel expenses are appropriate. Funds can be requested to support studies at other institutions but cannot be used for faculty salary support, the purchase of large equipment, travel to scientific meetings (local research travel and travel to meet with external collaborators is allowed), office furniture and equipment, and/or computers.

**Application Components & Submission Process**

Proposals should be submitted electronically with all of the components listed below in one PDF to UNMCC-PilotProgram@salud.unm.edu. A complete application includes the following components:

1. **Face Page** (2 pages). Complete the application’s face page (see template Application Face Page) and be sure to include a 100 to 150-word abstract typed in 11-point Arial font.

2. **Collaborative Project Proposal** (5-page limit). Provide an outline of the proposed collaborative proposal, including details on the team members and what each brings to the proposal. The proposal should include milestones/deliverables and a timeline relating the milestones/deliverables to planned applications to specific extramural grant mechanisms. Literature cited is not included in the 5-page limit.

3. **Budget and Budget Justification**. The application must include a detailed budget and budget justification using the PHS 398 form pages for each of the requested projects.

4. **Biographical Sketches** (new NIH format). Provide bio-sketches in NIH specific format for the PI of each project and other key members of the projects. Modified personal statements are not necessary for this application.

* Proposals involving human subjects and/or animals must have approval from the School of Medicine HRRC and IACUC prior to funding.

**Application Review Process**

The applications will be reviewed by an ad hoc committee composed of UNMCCC Senior Leaders, Program Leaders, and UNM Faculty with appropriate expertise to evaluate the research project. The review criteria will be:

(i)  Scientific merit using NIH categories; significance, impact, research plan, and track record of applicant(s).

(ii) Cancer relevance

(iii) Alignment of the proposed research with the overall goals of the UNMCCC and its research programs

(iv) Potential for success in securing future peer-reviewed funding for the project.

The review committee will make recommendations for funding to the Cancer Center Director. Upon completion of review, applications selected for funding will be scheduled to meet with the Cancer Center Director and/or other key Senior Leaders to develop milestones for the project and determine the funds needed to reach the first milestone.
**Award Management & Change in Status of Awardee**

All funds must be spent within the 12-month project period; unused funds will be returned to the Cancer Center. If an award is terminated for non-compliance or lack of progress, remaining balances will be returned to the Cancer Center. Award of additional requested funds is contingent upon receipt of progress reports and approval by Cancer Center Senior Leadership. Awards are not transferable and will be terminated once an awardee notifies the institution that they are leaving.

**Expectations of Award Recipients**

Recipients of these awards are expected to actively participate in UNMCCC activities such as seminars, research program and clinical working group meetings, and relevant retreats. All correspondence, such as required progress reports requested updates, should be sent to UNMCC-PilotProgram@salud.unm.edu.

Additionally, recipients are expected to appropriately acknowledge the pilot funding. *All material derived from the research supported by UNMCCC funding that is published or presented must carry a statement that credits the Cancer Center Support Grant P30CA118100 and Shared Resources, where appropriate. Additionally, all publications that result from these awards must abide by the NIH Public Access Policy and obtain a valid PMCID.* Publications that cite the Cancer Center Support Grant funding will be included in progress reports to NCI.

Any questions about this pilot grant program should be directed to Alan Tomkinson, Associate Director, Basic Research (atomkinson@salud.unm.edu).