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CANCER PREVENTION & RESEARCH  
INSTITUTE OF TEXAS

# **REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS**

## **RFA R-16-RRS-1**

### **Recruitment of Rising Stars**

**Please also refer to the Instructions for Applicants document,  
which will be posted on June 22, 2015**

**Application Receipt Dates:**

June 22, 2015-June 20, 2016

**FY 2016**

Fiscal Year Award Period

September 1, 2015-August 31, 2016

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## RFA VERSION HISTORY

Rev 6/22/15 RFA release

Rev 9/11/15 Revised Section 5 – Eligibility

- Revised language to indicate that a candidate who has already accepted a position at the recruiting institution prior to the time that the Scientific Review Council recommends the candidate for a recruitment award is not eligible for a recruitment award. Also clarification was added indicating that “if a position is offered to the candidate during the period following the Scientific Review Council’s recommendation but prior to the Oversight Committee’s final approval, the institution does so at its own risk. There is no guarantee that the recruitment award will be approved by the Oversight Committee.”

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## **1. ABOUT CPRIT**

The state of Texas has established the Cancer Prevention and Research Institute of Texas (CPRIT), which may issue up to \$3 billion in general obligation bonds to fund grants for cancer research and prevention.

CPRIT is charged by the Texas Legislature to do the following:

- Create and expedite innovation in the area of cancer research and in enhancing the potential for a medical or scientific breakthrough in the prevention of or cures for cancer;
- Attract, create, or expand research capabilities of public or private institutions of higher education and other public or private entities that will promote a substantial increase in cancer research and in the creation of high-quality new jobs in the state of Texas; and
- Develop and implement the Texas Cancer Plan.

### **1.1. Research Program Priorities**

The Texas Legislature has charged the CPRIT Oversight Committee with establishing program priorities on an annual basis. These priorities are intended to provide transparency in how the Oversight Committee directs the orientation of the agency's funding portfolio. The principles and priorities of the Scientific Research program will guide CPRIT staff, peer reviewers, and the Scientific Review Council on the development and issuance of program-specific Requests for Applications (RFAs) and the evaluation of applications submitted in response to those RFAs. The program priorities for research adopted by the Oversight Committee include funding projects that address:

- A broad range of innovative, investigator-initiated research projects;
- Prevention and early detection;
- Rare and intractable cancers, including childhood cancers;
- Cancers of importance in Texas;
- Computational biology and analytic methods; and
- Infrastructure Development

## **2. RATIONALE**

The aim of this award mechanism is to bolster cancer research in Texas by providing financial support to attract individuals whose work has outstanding merit, who show a marked capacity for self-direction, and who demonstrate the promise for continued and enhanced contributions to the field of cancer research (“Rising Stars”). Awards are intended to provide institutions with a competitive edge in recruiting the world’s best talent in cancer research, thereby advancing cancer research efforts and promoting economic development in the state of Texas. The recruitment of outstanding scientists will greatly enhance programs of scientific excellence in cancer research and will position Texas as a leader in the fight against cancer. Applications may address any research topic related to cancer biology, causation, prevention, detection or screening, or treatment. However, special consideration will be given to candidates with research programs addressing CPRIT’s priority areas for research. These include Prevention and Early Detection; Computational Biology and Analytic Methods; Intractable Cancers (brain, lung, liver, pancreas) and Rare Cancers (<15,000 new cases per year), including Childhood, Adolescent and Young Adult Cancers; Population Disparities and Cancers of Particular Importance in Texas (e.g., liver, cervical and lung).

## **3. RECRUITMENT OBJECTIVES**

The goal of this award mechanism is to recruit exceptional faculty to universities and/or cancer research institutions in the state of Texas. Having already demonstrated extraordinary accomplishments during their initial years of independent research, Rising Stars represent a unique blend of scholastic aptitude, scientific rigor, and commitment to exploring transformational research through the development of creative ideas with high potential.

Candidates who have not historically worked in cancer research but are proposing creative hypotheses and research plans for this field are encouraged to apply. Similarly, candidates pursuing original and potentially high-impact basic science programs that have the potential to be translated toward clinical investigations or provide “proof of principle” are also encouraged to apply. It is expected that the candidate will contribute significantly to and have a major impact on the institution’s overall cancer research initiative. Funding will be given for exceptional candidates who will continue to develop new research methods and techniques in the life,

population-based, physical, engineering, or computational sciences and apply them to solving outstanding problems in cancer research that have been inadequately addressed or for which there may be an absence of an established paradigm or technical framework.

Ideal candidates will have specific expertise in cancer-related areas needed to address an institutional priority. Candidates are expected to be approximately at the career level of a late assistant/early associate professor or equivalent. This funding mechanism considers expertise, accomplishments, and breadth of experience vital metrics for guiding CPRIT's investment in that person's originality, insight, and potential for continued contribution. Relevance to cancer research and to CPRIT's priority areas are important evaluation criteria for CPRIT funding.

Unless prohibited by policy, the institution is also expected to bestow on the newly recruited faculty member the prestigious title of "CPRIT Scholar in Cancer Research," and the faculty member should be strongly encouraged to use this title on letterhead, business cards, and other appropriate documents. The title is to be retained as long as the individual remains in Texas.

#### **4. FUNDING INFORMATION**

This is a 5-year award and is not renewable. Grant funds of up to \$4,000,000 (total costs) over a 5-year period may be requested. Exceptions to this limit will be entertained only if there is compelling written justification. Annual allocations of this award are at the discretion of the awardee, as long as the total award does not exceed \$4,000,000. The award request may include indirect costs of up to 5% of the total award amount (5.263% of the direct costs). CPRIT will make every effort to be flexible in the timing for disbursement of funds; recipients will be asked at the beginning of each year for an estimate of their needs for the year. Funds may not be carried over beyond 5 years. In addition, funds for extraordinary equipment needs may be awarded in the first year of the grant if very well justified.

**Grant funds may be used for salary support of this candidate but may not be used to construct or renovate laboratory space.** Consistent with the statutory mandate that the recipient institution demonstrate that it has funds equivalent to one-half of the total grant award amount dedicated to the individual recruited, a total institutional commitment of 50% of the total award will be required. The institutional commitment can be made on a year-by-year basis and may be fulfilled by demonstrating funds dedicated to salary support and endowment for the

individual recruited as well as expenses for research support, laboratory renovation, and/or relocation to Texas. Grant funding from other sources that the recruited individual may bring with him or her to the institution may also be counted toward the amount necessary for the institutional commitment. No annual limit on the number of potential award recipients has been set.

**Note:** Depending on the availability of funds, nominations submitted in response to this RFA during the current receipt period may be announced and awarded either in the current fiscal year (prior to August 31) or in the first quarter of the next fiscal year (starting September 1).

## 5. ELIGIBILITY

- The applicant must be a Texas-based entity. Any not-for-profit institution that conducts research is eligible to apply for funding under this award mechanism. A public or private company is not eligible for funding under this award mechanism.
- Candidates must be nominated by the president, provost, vice president for research, or appropriate dean of a Texas-based public or private institution of higher education, including academic health institutions. The application must be submitted on behalf of a specific candidate.
- A candidate may be nominated by only 1 institution. If more than 1 institution is interested in a given candidate, negotiations as to which institution will nominate him or her must be concluded before the nomination is made. There is no limit to the number of applications that an institution may submit during a review cycle.
- A candidate who has already accepted a position at the recruiting institution prior to the time that the Scientific Review Council recommends the candidate for a recruitment award is not eligible for a recruitment award, as an investment by CPRIT is obviously not necessary. No award is final until approved by the Oversight Committee at a public meeting. However, in recognition of the timeline involved with recruiting highly sought-after candidates who are often considering multiple offers, CPRIT's academic research program staff will notify the nominating institution of the Scientific Review Council's recommendation following the Review Council meeting. If a position is offered to the candidate during the period following the Scientific Review Council's recommendation

but prior to the Oversight Committee's final approval, the institution does so at its own risk. There is no guarantee that the recruitment award will be approved by the Oversight Committee.

- The candidate must have a doctoral degree, including MD, PhD, DDS, DMD, DrPH, DO, DVM, or equivalent, and reside in Texas for the duration of the appointment. The candidate must devote at least 70% time to research activities. Candidates whose major responsibilities are clinical care, teaching, or administration are not eligible.
- At the time of the application, the candidate should hold an appointment at the rank of assistant or associate professor tenure-track or tenured (or equivalent) at an accredited academic institution, research institution, industry, government agency, or private foundation not primarily based in Texas. The candidate must not reside in Texas at the time the application is submitted.
- An applicant is eligible to receive a grant award only if the applicant certifies that the applicant institution or organization, including the nominator, any senior member or key personnel listed on the grant application, or any officer or director of the grant applicant's institution or organization (or any person related to 1 or more of these individuals within the second degree of consanguinity or affinity), has not made and will not make a contribution to CPRIT or to any foundation specifically created to benefit CPRIT. Prior to final approval of an award, the candidate must provide the same certification.
- An applicant is not eligible to receive a CPRIT grant award if the applicant nominator, any senior member or key personnel listed on the grant application, or any officer or director of the grant applicant's institution or organization is related to a CPRIT Oversight Committee member. Prior to final approval of an award, the candidate must provide the same certification.
- The applicant must report whether the applicant institution or organization, the nominator, or other individuals who contribute to the execution of the proposed project in a substantive, measurable way, whether or not the individuals will receive salary or compensation under the grant award, are currently ineligible to receive federal grant funds or have had a grant terminated for cause within 5 years prior to the submission date of the grant application. Prior to final approval of an award, the candidate must provide the same certification.



CPRIT grants will be awarded by contract to successful applicants. Certain contractual requirements are mandated by Texas law or by administrative rules. Although applicants need not demonstrate the ability to comply with these contractual requirements at the time the application is submitted, applicants should make themselves aware of these standards before submitting a grant application. Significant issues addressed by the CPRIT contract are listed in [Section 10](#) and [Section 11](#). All statutory provisions and relevant administrative rules can be found at [www.cprit.state.tx.us](http://www.cprit.state.tx.us).

## 6. RESUBMISSION POLICY

Resubmissions will not be accepted for the Recruitment of Rising Stars award mechanism. Any nomination for the Recruitment of Rising Stars that was previously submitted to CPRIT and reviewed but was not recommended for funding may not be resubmitted. If a nomination was administratively rejected prior to review, it can be resubmitted in the following cycles.

## 7. RESPONDING TO THIS RFA

### 7.1. Application Submission Guidelines

Applications must be submitted via the CPRIT Application Receipt System (CARS) (<https://CPRITGrants.org>). **Only applications submitted through this portal will be considered eligible for evaluation.** The applicant is eligible solely for the grant mechanism specified by the RFA under which the grant application is submitted. Candidates must be nominated by the institution's president, provost, vice president for research, or appropriate dean. The individual submitting the application (nominator) must create a user account in the system to start and submit an application. Furthermore, the Authorized Signing Official (ASO), who is the person authorized to sign and submit the application for the organization, and the Grants Contract/Office of Sponsored Projects Official, who is the individual who will manage the grant contract if an award is made, also must create a user account in CARS.

Applications will be accepted on a continuous basis throughout the remainder of FY16. In order to manage the timely review of nominations, it is anticipated that applications submitted by 11:59 p.m. on the 20th day of each month will be reviewed by the 15th day of the following month. For an application to be considered for review during the monthly cycle, that application

must be submitted on or before 11:59 p.m. CPRIT will not extend the submission deadline. During periods when CPRIT does not receive an adequate number of applications, the review may be extended into the following month. **Submission of an application is considered an acceptance of the terms and conditions of the RFA.**

## **7.2. Application Components**

Applicants are advised to follow all instructions to ensure accurate and complete submission of all components of the application. Please refer to the *Instructions for Applicants* document for details that will be available when the application receipt system opens.

Submissions that are missing 1 or more components or do not meet the eligibility requirements listed in [Section 5](#) will be administratively withdrawn without review.

### **7.2.1. Summary of Nomination (2,000 characters)**

Provide a brief summary of the nomination. Include the candidate's name, organization from which the candidate is being recruited, and also the department and/or entity within the nominator's organization where the candidate will hold the faculty position.

### **7.2.2. Institutional Commitment (2 pages)**

Describe the institutional commitment to the candidate, including total salary, institutional support of salary, endowment or other support, space, and all other agreements between the institution and the candidate. **The institutional commitment must state the total award amount requested.** Provide a brief job description for the candidate should recruitment be successful. This information should be supplied in the form of a letter signed by the applicant institution's president, provost, or appropriate dean.

The letter of institutional commitment must demonstrate the organization's commitment to bringing the candidate to Texas. The following guidelines should be used when outlining the institutional match in the letter. This information may be provided as part of paragraph text or as a tabular summary that states the approximate amounts assigned to each item.

**Start-up Package:** Complete details including salary and fringe benefits, dedicated personnel, amounts for equipment and supplies, and/or infrastructure that will be offered to the candidate as part of the recruitment award.

**Endowment Equivalents:** The principal of an endowment may not be included as part of the institutional match, but endowment income over the lifetime of the award may be included.

**Rent:** Amount for recovery of occupying facility space (ie, “rent”) is not a permitted institutional commitment item.

### **7.2.3. Letter of Support from Department Chair (1 page)**

Provide the letter of support from and signed by the chair of the department that the candidate is being recruited to. The following information should be included in the letter:

**Recruitment Activities:** The letter should provide a description of the recruitment activities, strategies, and priorities that have led to the nomination of this candidate.

**Caliber of Candidate:** The letter should include a description of the caliber of the candidate and justification of the nomination of the candidate by the institution.

#### **Description of Candidate Duties and Certification of 70% Time Commitment to Research.**

While scholars may engage in direct patient care activities and/or have some administrative or teaching duties, at least 70% of the candidate’s time must be available for research. Breach of this requirement will constitute grounds for discontinuation of funding. The certification that 70% time will be spent on research must be included.

### **7.2.4. Curriculum Vitae (CV)**

Provide a complete CV, and list of publications for the candidate.

### **7.2.5. Summary of Goals and Objectives**

List very broad goals and objectives to be achieved during this award. **This section must be completed by the candidate.**

### **7.2.6. Research (4 pages)**

Summarize the key elements of the candidate’s research accomplishments and provide an overview of the proposed research by outlining the background and rationale, hypotheses and aims, strategies, goals, and projected impact of the focus of the research program. Highlight the innovative aspects of this effort, and place it into context with regard to what pressing problem in cancer will be addressed. **This section of the application must be prepared by the candidate.**

**References cited in this section must be included within the stated page limit. Any appropriate citation format is acceptable; official journal abbreviations should be used.**

Candidates for CPRIT Scholar Awards must include the following signed statement at the end of this section. **Applications that do not contain this signed statement will be returned without review.** “I understand that I do not need to have made a commitment to <nominating institution> before this application has been submitted. However, I also understand that only 1 Texas institution may nominate me for a CPRIT Recruitment Award, and this is the nomination that I have endorsed. Requests to change the recruiting institution during the recruitment process are inappropriate.”

### **7.2.7. Publications**

Provide the 5 most significant publications that have resulted from the candidate’s research efforts. Publications should be uploaded as PDFs of full-text articles. Only articles that have been published or that have been accepted for publication (“in press”) should be submitted.

### **7.2.8. Timeline (1 page)**

Provide a general outline of anticipated major award outcomes to be tracked. Timelines will be reviewed during the evaluation of annual progress reports. If the application is approved for funding, this section will be included in the award contract. Applicants are advised not to include information that they consider confidential or proprietary when preparing this section.

### **7.2.9. Current and Pending Support**

State the funding source, duration, and title of all current and pending research support held by the candidate. If the candidate has no current or pending funding, a document stating this must be submitted.

### **7.2.10. Research Environment (1 page)**

Briefly describe the research environment available to support the candidate’s research program, including core facilities and training programs, and collaborative opportunities.

### **7.2.11. Descriptive Biography (Up to 2 pages)**

Provide a brief descriptive biography of the candidate, including his or her accomplishments, education and training, professional experience, awards and honors, publications relevant to

cancer research, and a brief overview of the candidate's goals if selected to receive the award.

**This section of the application must be prepared by the candidate.** If the application is approved for funding, this section will be made publicly available on CPRIT's website.

Candidates are advised not to include information that they consider confidential or proprietary when preparing this section.

**Applications that are missing 1 or more of these components, exceed the specified page, word, or budget limits, or do not meet the eligibility requirements listed above will be administratively withdrawn without review.**

## **8. APPLICATION REVIEW**

### **8.1. Review Process**

All eligible applications will be evaluated and scored by the CPRIT Scientific Review Council using the criteria listed in this RFA. Applications may be submitted continuously in response to this RFA but will generally be reviewed on a monthly basis by the CPRIT Scientific Review Council. Council members may seek additional ad hoc evaluations of candidates. Scientific Review Council members will discuss applications and provide an individual Overall Evaluation Score that conveys the members' recommendation related to the proposed recruitment.

Applications approved by Council will be forwarded to the CPRIT Program Integration Committee (PIC) for review, prioritization, and recommendation to the CPRIT Oversight Committee for approval and funding. Approval is based on an application receiving a positive vote from at least two-thirds of the members of the Oversight Committee. The review process is described more fully in CPRIT's Administrative Rules, Chapter 703, Sections 703.6–703.8.

The decision of the Scientific Review Council not to recommend an application is final, and such applications may not be resubmitted for a recruitment award. Notification of review decisions are sent to the nominator.

#### **8.1.1. Confidentiality of Review**

Each stage of application review is conducted confidentially, and all CPRIT Scientific Review Council members, Program Integration Committee members, CPRIT employees, and Oversight Committee members with access to grant application information are required to sign

nondisclosure statements regarding the contents of the applications. All technological and scientific information included in the application is protected from public disclosure pursuant to Health and Safety Code §102.262(b).

Individuals directly involved with the review process operate under strict conflict-of-interest prohibitions. All CPRIT Scientific Review Council members are non-Texas residents.

**By submitting a grant application, the applicant agrees and understands that the only basis for reconsideration of a grant application is limited to an undisclosed conflict of interest as set forth in CPRIT's Administrative Rules, Chapter 703, Section 703.9.**

Communication regarding the substance of a pending application is prohibited between the grant applicant (or someone on the grant applicant's behalf) and the following individuals—an Oversight Committee member, a Program Integration Committee member, or a Scientific Review Council member. Applicants should note that the CPRIT Program Integration Committee comprises the CPRIT Chief Executive Officer, the Chief Scientific Officer, the Chief Prevention Officer, the Chief Product Development Officer, and the Commissioner of State Health Services. The prohibition on communication begins on the first day that grant applications for the particular grant mechanism are accepted by CPRIT and extends until the grant applicant receives notice regarding a final decision on the grant application. Intentional, serious, or frequent violations of this rule may result in the disqualification of the grant applicant from further consideration for a grant award.

## **8.2. Review Criteria**

Applications will be assessed based on evaluation of the quality of the candidate and his or her potential for continued superb performance as a cancer researcher. Also of critical importance is the strength of the institutional commitment to the candidate. Recruitment efforts are not likely to be successful unless there is a strong commitment from CPRIT and the host institution. It is not necessary that a candidate agree to accept the recruitment offer at the time an application is submitted. However, applicant institutions should have some reasonable expectation that recruitment will be successful if an award is granted by CPRIT.

Review criteria will focus on the overall impression of the candidate, his/her proposed research program, and his/her long-term contribution to and impact on the field of cancer research.

Questions to be considered by the reviewers are as follows:

**Quality of the Candidate:** Has the candidate demonstrated extraordinary accomplishments during his or her initial years of independent research? Does the candidate show promise of making important contributions with significant impact to basic, translational, clinical, or population-based cancer research in the future? Has the candidate demonstrated strong self-direction, motivation, and commitment for transformative cancer research?

**Scientific Merit of Proposed Research:** Is the research plan comprehensive and well thought out? Does the proposed research program demonstrate innovation, creativity, and feasibility? Will it have a significant impact on the field of cancer research? Will it expand the boundaries of cancer research beyond traditional methodology by incorporating novel and interdisciplinary techniques?

**Relevance of Candidate's Research:** Is the proposed research likely to have a significant impact on reducing the burden of cancer in the near term? Does the research contribute to basic, translational, clinical, or population-based cancer research?

**Research Environment:** Does the institution have the necessary facilities, expertise, and resources to support the candidate's research? Is there evidence of strong institutional support? Will the candidate be free of major administrative/clinical responsibilities so that he or she can focus on maintaining and enhancing his or her research program? Will the candidate be provided with adequate professional development opportunities to grow as a leader?

## 9. KEY DATES

### RFA

RFA Release

June 22, 2015

### Application Receipt and Review Timeline

Application Receipt System opens, 7 AM CT	Application Receipt	Anticipated Application Review	Application Closing Date
June 22, 2015	Continuous	Monthly by the 15 <sup>th</sup> day of the month	June 20, 2016

## 10. AWARD ADMINISTRATION

Texas law requires that CPRIT grant awards be made by contract between the applicant and CPRIT. CPRIT grant awards are made to institutions or organizations, not to individuals. Awards made under this RFA are not transferable to another institution. Award contract negotiation and execution will commence once the CPRIT Oversight Committee has approved an application for a grant award. CPRIT may require, as a condition of receiving a grant award, that the grant recipient use CPRIT's electronic Grant Management System to exchange, execute, and verify legally binding grant contract documents and grant award reports. Such use shall be in accordance with CPRIT's electronic signature policy as set forth in Chapter 701, Section 701.25.

Texas law specifies several components that must be addressed by the award contract, including needed compliance and assurance documentation, budgetary review, progress and fiscal monitoring, and terms relating to revenue sharing and intellectual property rights. These contract provisions are specified in CPRIT's Administrative Rules, which are available at [www.cprit.state.tx.us](http://www.cprit.state.tx.us). Applicants are advised to review CPRIT's Administrative Rules related to contractual requirements associated with CPRIT grant awards and limitations related to the use of CPRIT grant awards as set forth in Chapter 703, Sections 703.10, 703.12.

Prior to disbursement of grant award funds, the grant recipient organization must demonstrate that it has adopted and enforces a tobacco-free workplace policy consistent with the requirements set forth in CPRIT's Administrative Rules, Chapter 703, Section 703.20.

CPRIT requires award recipients to submit an annual progress report. These reports summarize the progress made toward the research goals and address plans for the upcoming year. In addition, fiscal reporting, human studies reporting, and vertebrate animal use reporting will be required as appropriate. **Continuation of funding is contingent upon the timely receipt of these reports.** Failure to provide timely and complete reports may waive reimbursement of grant



award costs and may result in the termination of the award contract. Forms and instructions will be made available at [www.cprit.state.tx.us](http://www.cprit.state.tx.us).

## **11. REQUIREMENT TO DEMONSTRATE AVAILABLE FUNDS**

Texas law requires that prior to disbursement of CPRIT grant funds, the award recipient must demonstrate that it has an amount of funds equal to one-half of the CPRIT funding dedicated to the research that is the subject of the award. The demonstration of available matching funds must be made at the time the award contract is executed and annually thereafter, not when the application is submitted. Grant applicants are advised to consult CPRIT's Administrative Rules, Chapter 703, Section 703.11 for specific requirements regarding the demonstration of available funding.

## **12. CONTACT INFORMATION**

### **12.1. HelpDesk**

HelpDesk support is available for questions regarding user registration and online submission of applications. Queries submitted via e-mail will be answered within 1 business day. HelpDesk staff members are not in a position to answer questions regarding scientific aspects of applications.

**Dates of operation:** June 22, 2015 onward (excluding public holidays)

**Hours of operation:** Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday, 7 AM to 4 PM central time  
Wednesday, 8 AM to 4 PM central time

**Tel:** 866-941-7146

**E-mail:** [Help@CPRITGrants.org](mailto:Help@CPRITGrants.org)

### **12.2. Scientific and Programmatic Questions**

Questions regarding the CPRIT Program, including questions regarding this or other funding opportunities, should be directed to the CPRIT Senior Program Manager for Research.

**Tel:** 512-305-8491  
**E-mail:** [Help@CPRITGrants.org](mailto:Help@CPRITGrants.org)  
**Website:** [www.cprit.state.tx.us](http://www.cprit.state.tx.us)

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