



CANCER PREVENTION &
RESEARCH INSTITUTE OF TEXAS

**REQUEST FOR
APPLICATIONS**

RFA R-12-RTR-1

**Recruitment of
Investigators Performing Translational
Research**

FY 2012

Fiscal Year Award Period
September 1, 2011 — August 31, 2012

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RFA VERSION HISTORY

Rev 12/15/11 RFA release

ARCHIVE

1. ABOUT CPRIT

The State of Texas has established the Cancer Prevention and Research Institute of Texas (CPRIT); CPRIT may issue \$3 billion in general obligation bonds over 10 years to fund grants for cancer research and prevention.

CPRIT is charged by the Texas Legislature to:

- Create and expedite innovation in the area of cancer research, thereby enhancing the potential for a medical or scientific breakthrough in the prevention of cancer and 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 this State; and
- Continue to develop and implement the Texas Cancer Plan by promoting the development and coordination of effective and efficient statewide public and private policies, programs, and services related to cancer and by encouraging cooperative, comprehensive, and complementary planning among the public, private, and volunteer sectors involved in cancer prevention, detection, treatment, and research.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CPRIT will foster cancer research in Texas by providing financial support for a wide variety of projects relevant to cancer research. This Request for Applications (RFA) seeks to support investigators performing translational research who have the ability to make outstanding contributions to the field of cancer research, promote inquiry into new areas, foster collaboration, and stimulate growth in the field. CPRIT expects outcomes of supported activities to directly and indirectly benefit subsequent cancer research efforts, cancer public health policy, and especially the continuum of cancer care—from prevention to treatment and cure. To fulfill this vision, applicants may address any research topic or issue related to cancer biology, causation, prevention, detection or screening, treatment, or cure by conducting studies that bridge the gap between mechanistically oriented, laboratory-based cancer research and its ultimate clinical application.

It should be noted that CPRIT's other recruitment RFAs are broad and are open to individuals performing any type of cancer research, including translational and clinical research. However,

this RFA specifically addresses the recognized shortage of investigators doing translational research by providing an opportunity for investigator candidates to be compared more selectively with others on similar career paths and by fostering the careers of such individuals.

3. MECHANISM OF SUPPORT

The State of Texas seeks to attract very promising or established investigators who are or will be making strong contributions to translational cancer research. Successful candidates for this award may be at various stages of their career: Those assuming their first faculty appointment at the level of assistant professor (newly independent investigators), rising stars, and established investigators.

- **Newly independent investigators** (those assuming their first faculty appointment at the level of assistant professor) must have demonstrated academic excellence, innovation during predoctoral and/or postdoctoral/clinical fellowship research training, commitment to pursuing cancer research, and exceptional potential for achieving future impact in the field.
- **Rising stars** will have already launched extremely successful careers and will have quickly demonstrated their capacity to make important contributions with significant impact. They will have shown a marked capacity for both self-direction and motivation of research team members. They will have demonstrated great promise for continued and enhanced contributions to translational research.
- **Established investigators** will be outstanding, experienced research faculty with well-known and well-respected translational research programs.

All of these awards are intended to increase an institution's competitive advantage in negotiations with candidates and to provide scientific and programmatic support for faculty in their area(s) of research.

4. RECRUITMENT OBJECTIVES

The goal of this award is to recruit exceptional faculty to universities and/or cancer research institutions in the State of Texas. All candidates are expected to have completed their doctoral and fellowship training and to have clearly demonstrated truly superior ability as evidenced by their accomplishments during training, proposed research plan, publication record, and letters of recommendation. This CPRIT-supported initiative is designed to enhance innovative programs

of excellence by providing scientific and programmatic support for investigators with a commitment to translational cancer research. 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.

Translational research is difficult to define unambiguously. Appropriate work includes (but is not limited to):

- studies needed to prove that hypotheses generated using *in vitro* or model systems are relevant to diagnosis, prevention, or treatment of human cancer
- preclinical studies needed to evaluate the potential clinical utility of a hit or lead drug prior to clinical trials (including chemistry, evaluation of specificity, pharmacokinetics, toxicology, efficacy in model or *in vitro* systems)
- investigation of research questions in cancer biology using clinical samples, including, for example, studies of the impact of genetics on the development or progression of cancer or studies needed to support the utility of a biomarker to select patients for therapy or to monitor their response to therapy

CPRIT will provide start-up funding for **newly independent investigators** with the goal of augmenting and expanding the institution's community of investigators focusing on translational cancer research. It is expected that candidates will significantly impact the academic institution's overall cancer research initiative. Candidates will be expected to develop research projects within the designated institution. Participation should be appropriate for a newly independent investigator and should foster the development of preliminary data that can be used for the preparation of applications for future independent research project grants to further both the investigator's research career and the CPRIT mission. The institution will be expected to provide a research mentor to work with each recruited newly independent investigator to help design and execute a faculty career development plan consistent with his or her research emphasis.

Having already demonstrated extraordinary accomplishments during their initial years of independent research, **rising stars** represent a unique blend of scholastic aptitude, scientific creativity, and commitment to exploring transformative research through the development of creative ideas with high potential. Funding will be given for exceptional candidates who will develop and utilize new translational research approaches and methods. Candidates are

expected to be approximately at the career stage of a late assistant to late associate professor or equivalent.

Awards to **established investigators** will honor outstanding individuals with proven track records of research accomplishments combined with excellence in leadership and teaching. All candidates should be recognized investigators, held in the highest esteem by professional colleagues nationally and internationally, whose contributions have had a significant impact on their discipline and, likely, beyond.

5. FUNDING INFORMATION

This is a 5-year award with no opportunity for renewal after the term expires, although individuals may apply for other CPRIT funding as appropriate. 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. No annual limits on the number of potential award recipients have been set.

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 to the candidate of 50 percent of the award will be required. The institutional commitment must be of direct benefit to the newly recruited faculty member and must be explained explicitly in the application. Commitments can be made on a year-by-year basis and may be fulfilled by dedicating funds to support salary and fringe benefits for the individual recruited as well as expenses for research activities 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.

Grant funds of up to \$2 million (total costs) for the 5-year period may be awarded to newly independent investigators. Grant funds of up to \$4.5 million (total costs) for the 5-year period may be awarded to rising stars. Grant funds of up to \$7.5 million (total costs) for the 5-year period may be awarded to established investigators.

6. KEY DATES

RFA

RFA release December 15, 2011

Application

Online application opens January 12, 2012, 7 a.m. Central Time

Application due None; continuous receipt

Application review As necessary

Award

Award notification As necessary

Anticipated start date Negotiable

7. ELIGIBILITY

- Applications must be submitted by the president, provost, 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 one institution. If more than one institution wishes to recruit a given candidate, negotiations as to which institution will nominate him or her must be concluded before the nomination is made.
- Candidates who have already accepted a position at the recruiting institution are not eligible for a recruitment award. An investment by CPRIT was obviously not necessary. Such individuals may, however, apply for other CPRIT awards, as appropriate.
- The candidate must have a Ph.D. or a professional medical/dental degree (M.D., D.O., D.D.S., or equivalent) and reside in Texas for the duration of the appointment.
- At the time of application submission, newly independent investigator candidates must not hold an appointment at the rank of assistant professor or above (or equivalent) at an accredited academic institution, research institution, industry, government agency, or private foundation. Newly independent investigator candidates may or may not reside in Texas at the time the application is submitted and may be nominated for a faculty position at the Texas institution where they are completing training. Rising star and established investigator candidates may not be residents of Texas at the time they are nominated for these awards.

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- CPRIT grants will be awarded by contract to successful applicants. Certain contractual requirements are mandated by Texas law or by administrative rules. Although the ability to comply with these contractual requirements is not necessary 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. All statutory provisions and relevant administrative rules can be found at www.cprit.state.tx.us.

8. APPLICATION REVIEW

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 both 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. Applications submitted in response to this RFA will be reviewed on a continuous basis by the CPRIT Scientific Review Council, and council members may seek additional ad hoc evaluations of candidates.

8.1. Confidentiality of Review

Each application review is conducted completely confidentially, and all council members are required to sign nondisclosure statements regarding the contents of the applications. All council members and ad hoc reviewers will be non-Texas residents and operate under strict conflict of interest prohibitions. Under no circumstances should institutional personnel and/or individual candidates initiate contact with any member involved in the review process (with the exception of members of the CPRIT Scientific Review Office), the CPRIT executive director, or any member of the CPRIT Oversight Committee regarding the status or substance of the application. Violations of this prohibition will result in the administrative withdrawal of the application. Any communication regarding the application should be directed to the CPRIT HelpDesk and/or CPRIT's Scientific Review Office.

9. SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

9.1. Online Application Receipt System

Applications will be accepted beginning at 7 a.m. Central Time on January 12, 2012 and must be submitted via the CPRIT Application Receipt System (<https://CPRITGrants.org>). **Only applications submitted at this portal will be considered eligible for evaluation.** Applications may be submitted by the institution's president, provost, or appropriate dean. Submission of an application is considered an acceptance of the terms and conditions of the RFA.

9.2. Application Submission Deadline

This mechanism is not governed by an application deadline. Applications will be reviewed on a continuous basis.

9.3. Application Components

Applicants are advised to follow all instructions to ensure accurate and complete submission of the online application.

9.3.1. Contact Information

Provide all required nominator and candidate identification information.

9.3.2. Recruitment Activities/Institutional Commitment (2 pages)

Describe the recruitment activities, strategies, and priorities that have led to nomination of this candidate. *Make clear the category/level of recruitment involved for the candidate being nominated (newly independent investigator, rising star, or established investigator).* Describe the institutional commitment to the candidate, including total salary, institutional support of salary, endowment or other support, space, a mentoring plan for less experienced investigators, and all other agreements between the institution and the candidate. The institutional commitment must state the total award amount requested. Unless prohibited by policy, the institution is expected to bestow on the newly recruited faculty member the prestige title "CPRIT Scholar in Cancer Research," and the faculty member should be encouraged strongly 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. 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. While clinical scholars may engage in direct patient care activities, at least 70 percent of the candidate's time

must be available for research. Breach of this requirement will constitute grounds for discontinuation of funding.

9.3.3. 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 research activities. Highlight the innovative aspects of this effort, and place it into context with regard to what pressing problem in cancer research will be addressed. This section of the application must be prepared by the candidate.

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 one 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."

9.3.4. Publications

Provide the three most significant publications that have resulted from the candidate's research efforts.

9.3.5. Curriculum Vitae (CV)

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

9.3.6. Current and Pending Support

State the funding source, duration, and title of all current and pending research support held by the candidate.

9.3.7. Letters of Recommendation

Provide three letters of recommendation from individuals who are in a position to detail the candidate's academic and clinical research accomplishments, potential for high-impact research, and ability to make a significant contribution to the field of cancer research. Letters of

recommendation may or may not be submitted on behalf of established investigators. This choice is left to the discretion of the nominating institution.

9.3.8. Descriptive Biography (1 page)

Provide a brief descriptive biography of the candidate, including his or her accomplishments, 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.

9.3.9. Size Limitation of Application Material (5 MB)

The total size of all application components must not exceed 5 MB. Applications that exceed this limit will be returned without review.

Applications that are missing one 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 rejected without review.

10. AWARD ADMINISTRATION

Texas law requires that CPRIT research awards be made by contract between the applicant and CPRIT. Texas law specifies several components that must be addressed by the award contract, including needed compliance and assurance documentation, budgetary review, and terms relating to intellectual property rights. These contract provisions are specified in CPRIT's administrative rules, which are available at www.cprit.state.tx.us.

All CPRIT awards will be made to institutions, not to individuals. Awards made under this RFA are not transferable to another institution.

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 receipt of these reports. Forms and instructions will be made available at www.cprit.state.tx.us.

11. CONTACT INFORMATION

11.1. 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 are not in a position to answer questions regarding the scientific aspects of applications.

Dates of Operation: Available starting December 15, 2011 (excluding public holidays)

Hours of Operation: Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. Central Time

Telephone: 866-941-7146

E-mail: ResearchHelp@CPRITGrants.org

11.2. Scientific and Programmatic Questions

Questions regarding the CPRIT program, including questions regarding this or any other funding opportunity, should be directed to the CPRIT Scientific Review Office:

Telephone: 512-305-8491

E-mail: ResearchHelp@CPRITGrants.org

Web site: www.cprit.state.tx.us