



American Cancer Society Research Programs

The American Cancer Society (ACS) dedicates more money to cancer research than any other private, not-for-profit, non-government funder of cancer research in the United States. Currently, the ACS is supporting investigators at more than 200 leading medical schools, universities, and research institutions across the nation. The ACS research program has 6 components: Extramural Grants, and the 5 programs that make up Intramural Research: Epidemiology, Surveillance and Health Services Research, Economic & Health Policy Research, the Behavioral Research Center, and the Statistics and Evaluation Center.

How does the Society define research?

The American Cancer Society classifies the research and training grants into Areas of Research, a common language developed as a partner with the International Cancer Research Partnership (ICRP) and commonly referred to by the partnership as the [Common Scientific Outline or 'CSO'](#). The CSO is a classification system organized around six broad areas of scientific interest in cancer research:

- Biology
- Etiology (causes of cancer)
- Prevention
- Early Detection, Diagnosis, and Prognosis
- Treatment
- Cancer Control, Survivorship, and Outcomes Research

Information about the [International Cancer Research Partnership \(ICRP\)](#) is provided on their website. On the ICRP website are the detailed definitions of the Areas of Research (or the CSO). You can use the online database to search the ICRP grants by type of cancer and other criteria.

What types of awards does the American Cancer Society make?

Extramural research grants

The American Cancer Society has 7 major types of grants. Each grant application is evaluated by a rigorous peer review system.

Research Grants for Independent Investigators, including:

Research Scholar Grants (RSG) support research projects initiated by investigators in the first 6 years of their independent research careers. Eligibility is extended for 8 years for clinician scientists who remain active in clinical care. Applicants ONLY to the Cancer Control and Prevention Research program may be at any career stage provided the focus of their project is either 1) health policy/health services research or 2) achieving cancer health equity.

Mentored Research Grants, including:

Postdoctoral Fellowships (PF) support the training of researchers who have received their doctoral degree to start training for an independent career in cancer research (including basic, preclinical, clinical, cancer control, psychosocial, behavioral, epidemiology, health services, and health policy research).

Clinician Scientist Development Grants (CSDG) foster the development of clinicians to clinician scientists. Clinician scientists are investigators licensed to provide patient care and trained to conduct research. They pursue research questions across the cancer research continuum of relevance to improving health.

Professor Grants, including

Clinical Research Professor Awards (CRP) support outstanding mid-career investigators who have made seminal contributions in the area of cancer control that have changed the direction of clinical, psychosocial, behavioral, health policy or epidemiologic cancer research.

Research Professor (RP) Awards support outstanding mid-career investigators who have made seminal contributions that have changed the direction of basic cancer research.

International Fellowships, including:

The Audrey Meyer Mars International Fellowships in Clinical Oncology support 1 year of advanced training in clinical training in clinical oncology at participating cancer centers in the United States to qualified physicians and dentists from other countries, particularly countries where advanced training is not readily available.

Mission Boost Grants (MBG) support select current and past ACS grantees specifically for the translation of their research to human testing. There are 2 levels of funding:

The Primary Boost requires the investigator to develop outcome-specific, unequivocal milestones that reduce the risks of studying a new drug, device, or procedure in patients.

The Secondary Boost requires the investigator to have successfully completed the Primary Boost milestones and submitted them to the Extramural Council for permission to move forward with this grant. Secondary MBG studies must involve testing in cancer patients

New Initiatives and Requests for Applications (RFAs), including:

RFA: The Pilot and Exploratory Project Mechanism provides funding for investigators to perform a small pilot or exploratory project whose purpose is to test interventions, develop research methodologies, or explore novel areas of research in palliative care for cancer patients and their families. A condition of funding is a clearly defined plan as to how the investigator will use the results of the project to develop larger, extramurally funded research projects.

RFA: The Role of Health Policy and Health Insurance in Improving Access to and Performance of Cancer Prevention, Early Detection, and Treatment Services supports research that evaluates the impact of the many changes now occurring in the healthcare system with a particular focus on cancer prevention, control, and treatment. Efforts focusing on improving access to care may also impact inequities that contribute to health disparities. Research to be funded by this RFA should focus on the changes in national, state, and/or local policy and the response to these changes by healthcare systems, insurers, payers, communities, practices, and patients.

Health Professional Training Grants (HPTGs) including:

Graduate Scholarships in Cancer Nursing (GSCNP) support students pursuing a master's degree in oncology nursing or a doctorate of nursing practice (DNP).

Doctoral Degree Scholarships in Cancer Nursing support graduate students who are pursuing doctoral study in the field of cancer nursing research and preparing for careers as nurse scientists.

Master's Training Grants in Clinical Oncology Social Work support the training of second-year master's degree students to provide psychosocial services to people with cancer and their families.

Doctoral Training Grants in Oncology Social Work support the training of doctoral students at schools of social work that train people to conduct research relevant to oncology social work.

Physician Training Awards in Cancer Prevention support physician training in accredited preventive medicine residency programs that provide cancer prevention and control research and practice opportunities.

Intramural research programs

The [Epidemiology Research Program](#) conducts and communicates high-quality epidemiologic research to advance our understanding of cancer causes, prevention, and survivorship and, thereby, saves lives from cancer.

The [Surveillance and Health Services Research Program](#) analyzes and disseminates population-based information on cancer occurrence, causes, prevention, and treatment to strengthen the scientific basis for cancer control nationally and globally. In addition to its own independent research, the group also collaborates with other surveillance and health services organizations nationally and internationally and provides scientific expertise to other components of the Society.

The [Behavioral Research Center](#) conducts original behavioral research to modify cancer risk behaviors and improve cancer outcomes and quality of life among cancer survivors, caregivers, and the general population. The BRC also provides behavioral expertise to inform American Cancer Society programs, services, and activities.

The [Statistics and Evaluation Center](#) provides statistical, methodological, survey, and evaluative consulting services to the Society. It also publishes high quality mathematical, statistical, and survey methods research that allows more effective use of patient resources in cancer clinical trials and that result in transparent and validated

models for accurately predicting cancer incidence and mortality.

The [Economic & Health Policy Research Program](#) conducts original research in international tobacco control, with a focus on the economics of tobacco control. Created in 2006, as the International Tobacco Control Research Program, the Economic and Health Policy Research (EHPR) program conducts original and policy-relevant research with a particular emphasis on the economic aspects of tobacco control. EHPR is uniquely capable of translating complex economic concepts into tools for policy change. We build research capacity in low- and middle-income countries in order to generate local-specific research evidence. We are proud of our extensive collaboration with the top investigators and the top research institutions in this highly specialized field.

When did the Society start its research program?

The American Cancer Society awarded its first external research grants in 1946. Intramural research began in the 1950s, when researchers at the Society first began estimating the number of new cancer cases and deaths and produced some of the first evidence linking tobacco smoking to lung cancer.

Where does the Society do its research?

The Intramural Research Department and its 6 constituent research programs are based at the American Cancer Society's National Home Office in Atlanta, Georgia. Most of the Extramural Research Grants are used to fund researchers and institutions across the country.

Why does the Society have a research program?

In 1945, the American Cancer Society recognized that research held the ultimate answers to the prevention, diagnosis, and control of cancer, and so initiated the first non-governmental cancer research program in the United States. The Society's program is unique because the vast majority of our extramural research budget is dedicated to funding investigators at the beginning of their research careers. Strong emphasis is placed on the training and support of the next generation of cancer researchers, and the Society is able to move quickly to fund new ideas or whole new areas of research through our targeted research programs and research opportunity grants.

How does the Society select which extramural research grant applications to fund?

The Society selects which grant applications to fund using a process called external peer review, which uses expert judgment and avoids conflicts of interest. It follows this process:

- Grant applications are ranked on the basis of merit by one of several discipline-specific Peer Review Committees (PRCs), each of which is made up of 12 to 25 scientific advisors, or peers, who are experts in their fields.
- Each PRC also has one or more stakeholders as full voting members of the committee. Stakeholders are people who have been personally touched by cancer and who have a keen personal interest in cancer research.
- The Council for Extramural Grants, a multidisciplinary committee of mid-level and senior scientists, as well as several stakeholders, approves funding based on the PRC reviews, the Society's mission, and the amount of money available.

How much has the Society invested in research?

Since 1946, the Society has invested more than \$4.8 billion in research. The annual total research expenditure has grown from just over \$1 million at its inception to more than \$152 million in 2016.

How many lives have been saved through research?

Since 1971, the number of cancer survivors alive today, more than 15 million, has more than tripled and the 5-year survivorship rate is now 69%. Much of this success can be attributed to research. The 2012 Annual Report to the Nation on the Status of Cancer reports that cancer incidence rates (both sexes combined, all sites combined) have stabilized despite population increases and the aging of the population. Cancer death rates have been declining since 1991 and are now decreasing at an average of 1.5% per year between 1999 and 2008.

What are the results of our research program?

Scientists supported by the American Cancer Society have made great contributions. Here are just 10 of the countless cancer advances we supported.

- Discovering that tumors need blood vessels to grow and spread, which led to the later development of drugs that prevent the formation of new blood vessels.
- Pioneering work in bone marrow transplants
- Furthering knowledge of genes linked to breast cancer
- Laying the groundwork for a new multiple myeloma treatment
- Finding a key driver of the blood cancer chronic myeloid leukemia
- Gaining insights that inspired researchers to investigate and confirm that tamoxifen can treat and sometimes prevent breast cancer
- Investigating new approaches that made it possible for the first targeted cancer therapy to receive FDA approval
- Performing studies that paved the way for the development of the breast cancer drug Herceptin
- Confirming the link between smoking and lung cancer
- Proving that obesity increases risk of premature death and also establishing the link between obesity and death from certain types of cancer

The success of the Society's research program is exemplified by the fact that [47 Nobel Prize winners](#) received grant support from the Society before they were awarded the prize.

How do I find out about the Society's research program?

Visit www.cancer.org/research for more information about Intramural Research and Extramural Research.

Investigators may download and print grant reporting forms, applications, and instructions at [We Fund Forward-Thinking Cancer Research](#).

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1-800-227-2345 or www.cancer.org