AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY

CATALYST AWARD

INSTRUCTIONS FOR SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION

Program Contacts:

ACS Applicants should contact their program office directly.

NCI applicants may contact Doug Hurst, PhD at doug.hurst@cancer.org

AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY, INC.

Extramural Discovery Science Department

Website: https://www.cancer.org/research/we-fund-cancer-research.html

MISSION

The **American Cancer Society's** mission is to improve the lives of people with cancer and their families through advocacy, research, and patient support, to ensure everyone has an opportunity to prevent, detect, treat, and survive cancer.

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GUIDANCE AND PROPOSALCENTRAL APPLICATION SECTIONS

1. GENERAL INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS

a. Applicant use of generative AI tools: An applicant is responsible for all content in their application, including any content generated using an AI tool or large language model. The applicant should appropriately credit an AI tool used in the development of their application and appropriately cite the source of the content whenever possible. Applicants should follow any guidelines or regulations in place at their institution, and the use of AI tools cannot conflict with the ACS Guidelines for Research and Peer Review Integrity in the Standard Grant Policies document.

b. This is an invite-only process, meaning the opportunity is not publicly posted on ProposalCentral. Following discussion with an EDS program office, eligible applicants will be given access to the application materials directly from EDS.

- The application will be created in the PI's ProposalCentral account and can be found in the "proposals" tab after logging in.
- Click on "edit" to access the application materials.
- **Note:** If the applicant is a new user of ProposalCentral, use the "forgot your password?" function in combination with the email address used to contact you to access the account.

c. Enable Other Users to Access this Proposal: To assist in the development and submission of the application, applicants may allow others (e.g., institutional administrators, collaborators, etc.) to view, edit, or submit the proposals by following these steps in ProposalCentral:

- Click the "Enable Other Users to Access this Proposal" section in the menu on the left.
- Add the e-mail address of the User at the bottom and click the Find User button.
- Select the appropriate access level from the drop down in the "Permissions" column and click the "Accept Changes" button. The possible access levels are:
    - **View:** View only; cannot change any details.
    - **Edit:** Can view and change information in the application; cannot submit the application or view the "Enable Other Users to Access this Proposal" screen.
    - **Administrator:** Can view, edit, and submit the application; can give access rights to others on the "Enable Other Users to Access this Proposal" section.

d. Technical Assistance: Detailed information is available through tutorials provided on the ProposalCentral login page. If you have problems accessing or using the electronic application process, click on "Help" or contact ALTUM Customer Service at pcsupport@altum.com or 1-800-875-2562.

2. FORMATTING THE APPLICATION

Applicants must adhere to the following format instructions:

- Insert Principal Investigator (PI) name in the header for each template of the application.
- Type size: Use 12-point Times New Roman or 11-point Arial as the minimum font size for the text of the application. A 10-point Times New Roman or 9-point Arial font type may be used for figures, legends, and tables.
- Application documents may be single- or double-spaced (if single spacing, enter a space between paragraphs).
- Margins: ≥ 0.5 inches all around unless a form with different margins is supplied in the Application Templates.

- **NIH Biosketches:** Use the current NIH format for all NIH Biosketches. If the NIH has modified the NIH biosketch, applicants may use the newly modified template, or the template provided in ProposalCentral.

3. TITLE PAGE SECTION

a. Project Title: Do not exceed 150 characters, including spaces.
Note: The title will truncate after 81 characters on the formatted PDF title page displayed in ProposalCentral.

b. Selection of Funding Agency
Select ACS, NCI, or both where you initially submitted your high scoring but unfunded grant proposal. The Catalyst award application should be based on this previously submitted proposal.

c. Project Budget and Project Period
When the budget section is completed, the total will be automatically displayed on the title page. Use May 1, 2026, as the start date; grants are awarded for 1 year.

4. APPLICANT/PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR INFORMATION

Some (or all) of the required information from your Professional Profile may already be displayed. If any information is outdated, ***stop*** and update the Professional Profile before completing this section and submitting an application. Please keep all contact information current.

- **Citizenship Status:** On ProposalCentral under "Professional Profile", indicate your current citizenship status and country of citizenship. Note: US citizenship is not required to submit an application and is not evaluated by reviewers.
- **Degree and Independent Position Dates:** Under Professional Profile, indicate the date (months and year) your terminal degree was awarded and when your first independent faculty position (or equivalent) began, if applicable. See "Guidelines for Independence" in the Catalyst Award policies for more information on independent positions.
- **Space:** If applicable, indicate the approximate area of independent research space provided by your institution to support your research program, along with the name of the department head who can verify this commitment. You must insert a value for square footage under Professional Profile, even if that number is zero.
- **ORCID Identifier:** ORCID provides a persistent digital number that you own and control, and that identifies you from every other researcher. Please provide an ORCID identifier if you have one. To add the ORCID ID, click Professional Profile and connect/register for an ID. Once connected, return to your proposal, and click Save.
- **Current Funding:** Under the Applicant/PI Section of the application, enter the number of active R01 or R01-equivalent awards that the applicant is the PI of, including co- or multi-PI awards. See the Catalyst Award policies for a definition of R01-equivalent awards.

5. INSTITUTION AND CONTACTS

Provide the requested information for the PI's sponsoring institution and institution officials.

- **Institutional Official:** Indicate the name and address of the official authorized to sign for the institution. Institutional Officials may electronically sign the application if required by the institution, but this is not required by ACS for submission. The PI must give the Institutional Official access to the application for e-signing to be completed.
- **Technology Transfer Officer (TTO):** Indicate the name and email address of the TTO. The TTO is responsible for **technology** transfer and other aspects of the commercialization of research that takes place at a **university**. The TTO will be responsible for reporting all IP updates to the ACS should the project be awarded funding.

- **Department Chair:** Indicate the name, department, and email address of the Department Chair. The electronic signature of the Department Chair is not required by the ACS

6. KEY PERSONNEL

Add personnel associated with the application and included in the budget and justification by entering their email address. Select the role that corresponds most closely with the person's contribution to the project (see definitions below).

Key Personnel: Defined as individuals who contribute to the scientific development or execution of a project in a substantive and measurable way (whether or not they receive salaries or compensation under the grant). Key Personnel are personnel that give >0% effort to the project, even if they are not being compensated. Enter the required information for each Key Person, including their designated role. **The PI is always considered Key Personnel, but do not list them under Key Personnel on ProposalCentral.**

Key Personnel can include individuals at the doctorate, master's, or baccalaureate level (such as postdoctoral fellows, graduate students, and research assistants) if they meet this definition.

Key Personnel are required to designate >0% effort, even if they are not being compensated.

REQUIRED SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS FOR NAMED PERSONNEL

This table provides information about the documents required in the application for each personnel class.

Personnel	Designated "Key"	Biosketch	"Other Support" Documentation	Included in Budget & Justification	Letters
Principal Investigator	Yes[a]	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A
Co-Investigator	Yes	Yes	Yes[b]	Yes[c]	Letter of Agreement/Support[b]
Collaborator	Yes	Yes	Yes[b]	Yes[c]	Letter of Agreement/Support[b]
	No	No	No	No	
Consultant	Yes	Yes	Yes, if paid[b]	Yes, if paid[c]	Letter of Agreement/Support[b]
	No	No	No	Yes, if paid	
Other	No	No	No	Yes	No

[a] The PI is always considered Key Personnel but supporting documents should **not** be duplicated in the Key Personnel section on ProposalCentral.

[b] For postdoctoral fellows, technicians, and graduate students, supporting documents are not required.

[c] If Key Personnel are not being paid, enter $0 for the amount requested; percent effort is required. Note that the percent effort indicated on the budget tool in ProposalCentral can be different than the requested compensation.

Key Personnel Roles and Definitions

The **Principal Investigator** assumes the authority and responsibility to direct the project. The ACS does not permit applications to be directed by multiple Principal Investigators.

A **Co-Investigator** is a vital scientific contributor at the same or a different institution, often bringing a needed expertise to the research team. This person commits some level of measurable effort to the project and is therefore Key Personnel, whether compensated or not.

A **Collaborator** plays a lesser role in the scientific development and execution of the project than co-investigator. Depending on the role and amount of effort, a collaborator may be designated as Key Personnel and may be compensated.

A **Consultant** provides expert advice, most often for a fee. If the consultant contributes to the scientific development or execution of a project substantively and measurably, he or she should be designated as Key Personnel.

Other personnel are defined as individuals who are compensated for their contribution to the project but are not considered Key Personnel (e.g., student assistants, technical staff).

7. GENERAL AUDIENCE SUMMARY

Provide an overview of the proposed Catalyst award and an overview of the original proposal. This summary should be written for a lay audience, including donors and the general public, to fully appreciate the "big-picture perspective" of the proposal. Avoid the use of jargon. Describe how the project may ultimately contribute to the control of cancer. Explain how the successful completion of the proposed work will lead to a better understanding of the disease or improve our ability to prevent, detect, and treat cancer. Do not include proprietary or confidential information, as the general audience summary may be made available to the public.

8. PROJECT CODING – CANCER TYPE SELECTION

Select the type(s) of cancer of relevance to the project; up to 5 cancer types may be selected. Donors often have an interest in funding specific types of cancer research. Your selection of project codes permits identification of proposals for consideration of donor-driven special funding. This information also assists ACS in communicating our research portfolio to the public and is not used for funding decisions.

9. ASSURANCES AND CERTIFICATION

All activities involving human subjects and vertebrate animals must be approved by the appropriate institutional committee before an application approved for funding can be activated, but approval is not required for application submission. Compliance with current US Department of Health and Human Services and ACS guidelines for conflict of interest, recombinant DNA, and scientific misconduct is also required.

Vertebrate Animals: Every proposal involving vertebrate animals must be approved by an Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC), in accordance with Public Health Service Policy on Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals before a grant can be activated. Enter the date of the most recent IACUC approval in the space provided.

All research supported by the ACS (including subcontracted activities) involving vertebrate animals must be conducted at performance sites covered under an approved Animal Welfare Assurance. It is the responsibility of the institution to immediately report to the ACS any action, including recertification or loss of IACUC approval, that is pertinent to the work described in the grant application.

Human Subjects: All proposed research projects involving human subjects must be approved by an Institutional Review Board (IRB) at an institution approved by the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) of the US Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). Enter the institution's Assurance of Compliance number(s). Copies of the DHHS policy, assured status, and assurance numbers may be obtained from OHRP. Definitions and further clarification can be found at the NIH Office of Extramural Research website.

Submission of Approval Documentation: If institutional review of human or vertebrate-animal subjects has not been finalized before the submission date of the application, you must indicate that approval is pending on the certification page and give the appropriate institutional reference numbers, if available. The Institutional Official who signs during the grant activation process is responsible for confirming that approval has been granted for the research to begin. Failure to comply may result in withholding of payments and/or cancellation of funding. For record keeping

purposes, certification of the approval, clearly labeled with the assigned ACS application number, must be uploaded to ProposalCentral within 3 months of grant activation.

If a grant is funded, it is the responsibility of the institution to immediately report to the ACS any action, including recertification or loss of IRB approval, which occurs during the term of the award that is related to the research described in the grant application.

10. PI DATA SHEET

The PI demographic information is for use by the Extramural Discovery Science department. While "prefer not to disclose" is an option, we ***strongly encourage*** all applicants to specify their gender, race, ethnicity, and sexual orientation. We use this information for statistical purposes to understand the diversity of our applicant pool. We are committed to investing in a diverse research workforce and this data enhances our ability to develop inclusive policies and new funding opportunities to address current limitations. This information is not accessible to peer reviewers and is not considered at peer review. By sharing this information with us, you help the American Cancer Society track our progress in DEI and identify areas that need improvement.

11. APPLICATION SUBMISSION AND REQUIRED E-SIGNATURES

- All application attachments, including the Appendix, **must be uploaded as .pdf documents.**
- Validate the application on ProposalCentral. An application that has not been validated cannot be electronically submitted.
- Applications must be electronically submitted on ProposalCentral by 11:59 PM ET on the specified deadline date. If the deadline falls on a weekend or holiday, applications will be accepted the following business day.
- The applicant's electronic signature is required on the Signature Page. The e-signature of the Institution Signing Official and the Department Head are optional but available for use should the institution require them. To e-sign an application, the signees must be included in the application Contacts in ProposalCentral.
- Technical questions regarding the electronic application process should be directed to Altum at https://ProposalCentral.com/ or 1-800-875-2562.

Note: After submission, you will not be able to make any changes to the forms or upload any modifications to the files.

APPLICATION MATERIALS

Download (from ProposalCentral Section 2. Download Templates) and complete the templates offline. Then upload the completed templates as the designated attachment type on ProposalCentral in Section 9. Application Sections.

1. RESEARCH PLANS AND JUSTIFICATION OF SUPPORT

In no more than two pages, describe how you will utilize the funds to sustain your research program and position future grant applications for successful funding. Describe how the funds will be used to support the unfunded project and extend the project until additional funding is secured. Include details regarding how the funds will be used to improve the likelihood of funding in the next submission, which may include experiments designed to response to critiques from reviewers. The rationale for these funds should be clearly articulated. We encourage the inclusion of a timeline and/or plan for securing research funds. References, if included, are not counted toward the page limit.

2. REVIEWER CRITIQUES/SUMMARY STATEMENT

Upload the full reviewer critiques/entire summary statement from the most recent submission. For NIH applicants, the entire summary statement **including the cover page with the score percentile** must be submitted.

3. BIOSKETCH OF APPLICANT

Complete the NIH Biosketch template, following the formats and instructions provided by the NIH. The Biographical Sketch may not exceed 5 pages. **Note:** If the NIH has modified the NIH biosketch, applicants may use the newly modified template, or the template provided in ProposalCentral.

4. PI OTHER SUPPORT

Applicants should ensure that they include all requested items listed below, especially when modifying Other Support documents that were prepared for other funding agencies.

The ACS does not require applicants and Key Personnel to sign their Other Support document.

Provide the following information separately for the PI (Key Personnel Other Support can be uploaded in the appendix):

A. Current Support. List all current funding from intramural and extramural sources (e.g., institutional awards and grants from for-profit and not-for-profit agencies, including other grants from the ACS). Provide for each award:

a. Source of funds
b. Grant number
c. Project title
d. Inclusive dates of approved or proposed project. For example, in the case of NIH support, provide the dates of the approved or proposed competitive segment.
e. Total **direct** costs
f. Role (e.g., PI, co-PI, co-I, etc.) and percent effort or person-months. For an active project, use person months, even if unsalaried for the current budget period. Classify person-months as academic, calendar, and/or summer.
g. An outline of the goals of the project in a brief paragraph.
h. A clear indication of overlap and differences between this grant and the proposed study. If necessary, include an explanatory letter in the Appendix.

B. Pending Support. List all pending applications for funding from intramural and extramural sources (e.g., institutional awards and grants from for-profit and not-for-profit agencies, including other grants from the ACS).

a. Source of funds
b. Project title
c. Inclusive dates of approved or proposed project. For example, in the case of NIH support, provide the dates of the approved or proposed competitive segment.
d. Total **direct** costs
e. Role (e.g., PI, co-PI, co-I, etc.) and percent effort or person-months. Classify person-months as academic, calendar, and/or summer.
f. An outline of the goals of the project in a brief paragraph.
g. A clear indication of overlap and differences between this grant and the proposed study. If necessary, include an explanatory letter in the Appendix. In such cases, you may

accept only one award if both are approved for funding. The ACS does not negotiate partial funding of grants with overlapping specific aims.

Please notify the Scientific Director if a pending extramural grant is funded during the peer review process since this could affect the feasibility of the PI's proposed effort (for cases of no scientific overlap) and possibly eligibility (for cases of scientific overlap).

C. Institutional Support. The following information should only be included on the Principal Investigator's Other Support document:

a. A description of any start-up funds provided by the institution to the applicant. If an applicant has received start-up funding from a source outside their institution, this should be included here as well, or appropriately marked as start-up funding in the current support section.
b. Details of the institutional commitment to support the applicant's salary.
c. The current term of the applicant's appointment.

5. BUDGET

Budget categories are provided below. Use the budget module in ProposalCentral to complete the budget. Use a start date of May 1, 2026.

Note: We've modified how subcontract budgets are collected. Subcontract information will be entered directly in the Detailed Budget section in ProposalCentral instead of uploading a separate template.

Subcontracts. If any portion of the proposed project is to be carried out at another institution, add a subcontract, enter the name of that institution, and select the years associated with the subcontract. Under each category (Personnel, Equipment, Supplies, Travel, Miscellaneous) within the detailed budget section, include any budgeted items associated with the subcontract and select the subcontract from the dropdown menu on the right to tag the item. Include the subcontract(s) in the budget justification section.

Subcontracts for the research project may be with public or private institutions, provided they do not violate ACS policies. Subcontracts involving a contractor residing outside the borders of the United States are not permitted, unless the applicant can document that it is not feasible to have the work performed within the United States. The primary institution is responsible for disbursing funds to the subcontracting institution.

Administrative pages: A Letter of Agreement between institutions pertaining to the subcontract should be included in the Appendix.

Personnel. Names and positions of all Key Personnel must be individually listed, and the percent effort for all key persons should be entered. Details of contractual arrangements with Key Personnel should be provided in the Budget Justification section. If the individual has not been selected, please list as "vacancy."

Personnel may receive salary support up to a maximum that equals the NIH salary cap, prorated according to their percent effort on the project. If a Key Person is not receiving salary, you can request $0 for salary, but their percent effort is still required. Their effort and contribution to the project should be outlined in the Budget Justification even if they are not being compensated.

The costs to the institution for employee fringe benefits should be indicated as a percent of the employee's salary. The amount of fringe benefits requested must be prorated to the salary requested. For example, if 10 percent of an individual's annual salary is requested, then no more than 10 percent of that individual's annual cost for fringe benefits can be requested.

Notes:

- See above for definitions of Key Personnel.
- The Society does not cover the costs of student tuition or fees for graduate or undergraduate students.

Equipment

- **Permanent equipment.** Defined as items of nonexpendable property with a purchase cost per unit that equals or exceeds $5,000 with a useful life of more than one year. List separately and justify the need for each item of permanent equipment. Note: the cost of permanent equipment is not included in the direct cost total used to calculate indirect costs.
- **Small or expendable equipment.** Defined as expendable property with a purchase cost per unit that is less than $5,000 and/or that has a short service life (<1 year). Note: Equipment that equals or exceeds $5,000 with a useful life of more than one year is not included in the direct cost total used to calculate indirect costs.
- **General purpose equipment.** Equipment such as computers used primarily or exclusively in the actual conduct of the proposed scientific project are considered direct costs and may be included in the direct cost total used to calculate indirect costs. Computers or other general-purpose equipment that will be used on multiple projects or for personal use are not allowable expenditures.

Supplies. List any materials or supplies that might be needed for the planned activities. Group supplies into major categories.

Travel. List expenses related to travel costs. Travel expenses should be appropriate and related to the ACS research award.

Miscellaneous Expenditures. List specific amounts for each item. Examples of allowed expenditures include publication costs and special fees (e.g., pathology, computer time and scientific software, and equipment maintenance).

Indirect Costs. Indirect costs cannot be claimed.

Total Amount Requested. The budget total should not exceed $150,000 for the 1-year project period.

6. BUDGET JUSTIFICATION

Provide budget justification on the template provided in ProposalCentral. Justify all items costing over $5,000, as well as your needs for personnel, supplies, travel, and other miscellaneous items. If the budget includes a request for funds to be expended outside the United States or its territories, include an explanation of why such costs are essential for the successful conduct of the project, and why there are no alternatives. Provide details of contractual arrangements with key personnel in this section. Budget justification for subcontracts should be included in this section as well. The PI's effort should be included even if the PI is not being compensated through the award.

7. STATEMENT OF INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

The Department Chair, or equivalent, should provide the following information for the Principal Investigator only:

- A description of any start-up or bridge funds provided by the institution to the applicant. If any start-up funds have been provided from an extramural source, this should be included here as well.

- Details of the institutional commitment to support the applicant's salary and research program.
- The current term of the applicant's appointment.

8. COMPLIANCE STATEMENTS

Human Subjects

For applicants performing **research with non-human subjects**, check the box that most appropriately describes your research.

Note: See the Department of Health and Human Services Office of Research Protection Subparts B-D for additional protections for vulnerable populations.

http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/policy/populations/index.html

Selection of study population. When conducting research on humans, provide the rationale for selecting your target population. Include the involvement of children, minorities, and especially vulnerable populations such as neonates, pregnant women, prisoners, institutionalized individuals, or others who may be considered vulnerable populations or others who may be considered vulnerable populations. The institution is required to ensure IRB approval is obtained for the grant to be activated, and the approval documentation is uploaded into ProposalCentral within 3 months of grant activation.

On the planned enrollment form, estimate the total number of subjects by primary ethnicity and race, race/ethnicity subgroup (if applicable), and gender. Include a rationale for excluding any population. Estimate the planned enrollment based on these calculations.

Also include estimates of the sample distribution by gender, race, and ethnicity (if available). For example, if your sample size is 200, to complete the *total number of subjects* column by race (based on what you know about the population demographics or the existing dataset you plan to analyze), multiply by the estimated percentage.

Estimated percentage of the population by race	Estimated total number of subjects
50% White	100 (200 x 0.50)
49% AA	98 (200 x 0.49)
1% Asian	2 (200 x 0.01)

Potential benefits, risks, and knowledge gained. Succinctly describe the potential benefits and risks to subjects (physical, psychological, financial, legal, or other). Explain why the risks are reasonable in relation to the anticipated benefits, both to research participants and others. Where appropriate, describe alternative treatments and procedures, including the risks and potential benefits to participants.

Research specimens and data. If the proposed research involves biospecimens, explain how the research material will be obtained from living subjects and what materials will be collected. List any specific non-biological data, such as demographic information, and how it will be collected, managed, and protected. Specify who will have access to such data and what measures you will maintain to keep personally identifiable private information confidential.

Collaborating sites. Where appropriate, list any collaborating sites where research on human subjects will be performed and describe the role of those sites and collaborating investigators in performing the proposed research. Explain how data from the site(s) will be obtained, managed, and protected.

Vertebrate Animals

IACUC approval must be obtained before animal work begins. An IACUC approval letter must be uploaded to ProposalCentral immediately upon approval.

Provide your rationale for using live vertebrate animals including the:

1. Necessity for using the animals and species proposed;
2. Appropriateness of the strains, ages, genders of the animals to be used;
3. Justifications for, and appropriateness of, the numbers of animals proposed. When completing the Targeted Enrollment Table, select non-human subjects research and check the box that most appropriately describes your research.

Hazards

Briefly describe whether any materials or procedures proposed are potentially hazardous to research personnel, equipment, and/or the environment. What protections will mitigate such risks? Include biological and chemical hazards, if applicable.

Authentication of Key Biological and/or Chemical Resources

Briefly describe methods to ensure the identity and validity of key biological and/or chemical resources to be used in the proposed studies. These resources may or may not be generated with ACS funds and:

- may differ from laboratory to laboratory or over time;
- may have qualities and/or qualifications that could influence the research data; and
- must be integral to the proposed research.

These may include, but are not limited to, cell lines, specialty chemicals, antibodies, and other biologics. Researchers should transparently report how they have authenticated key resources, so consensus can emerge.

Standard laboratory reagents that are not expected to vary do not need to be included in the plan (e.g., buffers and other common biologicals or chemicals). After reviewers assess the information you provide in this Section, their questions will need to be addressed prior to an award.

In this section, focus only on authentication and/or validation of key resources not described in the parent grant and/or proposed in a new way in the supplement request.

9. APPENDIX

Include any other documentation or information here, including Key Personnel Biosketches and Other Support documentation, and Letters of Support/Agreement from Collaborators. Applicants can also include article preprints or reprints if necessary. Please keep this section as short as possible.

When uploading multiple documents for one appendix (e.g., key personnel letters of support), all completed documents may be combined into a single PDF and uploaded as the designated appendix. Use the “describe attachment” field to specify the information included in each appendix.