The USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center has available funds from the American Cancer Society (ACS) Institutional Research Grant (IRG) to provide funding up to $30,000 for beginning cancer research projects.

The primary purpose of these grants is to serve as “seed” money to permit the initiation of promising new projects or novel ideas by junior faculty. Support of investigators who have a competitive national research grant or who have received prior support from the American Cancer Society Institutional Research Grant is not permitted. Projects in any area of cancer research – basic, clinical, epidemiological, and behavioral, etc. - will be considered.

Allocations are made by the Cancer Center Director based upon the recommendations of the Scientific Review Committee of the Cancer Center after its review of each application. Review of proposals takes approximately six to eight weeks.

Awards are made for a one year period. Anticipated start date of funding is March 1, 2019.

Please submit electronic version of your application (one PDF file) to Sarah Olivo at olivo_s@med.usc.edu no later than 5PM PST on Monday, December 31, 2018.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENT:

1. Principal Investigator must be a USC junior faculty member who is within the first six years of independent faculty appointment.

2. Principal Investigator must not have an active or prior competitive national research grant (e.g. NIH K99/R00, R03, R01, R21, DOD, etc.) and must not have received prior support from the ACS-IRG (exception see #3 below). Recipients of career development (K) awards solely intended for salary are eligible.

3. Recipients of prior ACS-IRG funding may apply for a one-year competitive renewal for a second year of funding for the same project. To be considered, please submit (a) a new proposal with cover letter requesting/justifying a renewal; (b) a budget and budget justification; and (c) a progress report.

4. Revisions/Resubmissions – Revised applications are accepted. However, applicants submitting revised applications are required to address the previous submission critiques in detail. The response to the critiques does not count towards the page limits for the revised application. Please follow the same border and font constraints as the revised application and specify if the application is a resubmission.

5. Recipients of IRG pilot project grants are not required to be United States (U.S.) citizens. However, any applicant for IRG pilot project funding who is not a U.S. citizen must hold a visa that will allow him or her to remain in the U.S. long enough to complete the IRG pilot project and provide USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center with the appropriate documentation at the time of submission.
6. IRB/IACUC Approvals – Please note that ACS-IRG funding will not be released without IRB and/or IACUC approval(s), if applicable to your project.

FORMATTING THE APPLICATION

a. American Cancer Society (ACS) Forms
The submitted version must be on American Cancer Society forms and be easily readable considering that the local ACS-IRG Reviewers are reading many applications.

b. Page Length
See individual page instructions. Please use single-spaced text throughout the application.

c. Type size, Margins, and Page Numbering
Use ARIAL font, no less than 11 point type. A 9-point Arial font type may be used for figures, legends, and tables. The margins of your text should be at least 1/2 inch all around. All pages must be consecutively numbered on the upper right hand corner (do not use page designations such as "4A" or "4B")

PREPARING THE APPLICATION

a. Face Page
Complete Face Page form. Please note: your departmental chair must provide signature for the “Verification of Applicant Eligibility by Department Chair”.

b. Biographical Sketch
Complete ACS-IRG biographical form included in the template.

c. Abstract
Complete ACS-IRG form included in template. Provide a brief (300-500 words) summary of the research, including Background, Objective/Hypothesis, Specific Aim(s), Study Design, and Cancer Relevance. The final sentence of the abstract should summarize the focus and cancer relevance of the project in non-specific terms.

d. Description of Research Proposed
Five (5) single-spaced pages maximum (including tables, figures, graphs) are allocated for this section. The requested information should be under the following headings:

   A) Specific Aims
   B) Methodology
   C) Significance and Relevance to Cancer, and
   D) Future Directions and Funding Prospects

Please note that References (limited to two pages) do not count towards the 5 page limit. No appendices allowed.

e. Budget/Budget Justification
Complete Budget Proposed form. See ACS-IRG Expenditures allowed/not allowed listed below. Provide details on the proposed budget and justifications for the project period. Allocations are restricted to a maximum of $30,000 direct costs for one year only. List percentage of effort for ALL individuals who will be involved in the project under personnel, even if no funding is requested. Indicate if cost sharing will be provided from other funding sources in order to complete the project and provide source of funding and amount. One additional page for budget justification may be included. Indirect costs are not allowable.
ACS EXPENDITURES ALLOWED

- Research supplies and animal maintenance
- Technical assistance
- Domestic travel when necessary to carry out the proposed research program
- Publication costs, including reprints
- Costs of computer time
- Special fees (pathology, photography, etc.)
- Stipends for graduate students and postdoctoral assistants if their role is to promote and sustain the project presented by the junior faculty member
- Equipment costing less than $2,000. (Special justification is necessary for items exceeding this amount)
- Registration fees at scientific meetings

ACS EXPENDITURES NOT ALLOWED

- Salary of principal investigator (IRG Chair or pilot project recipient)
- Honoraria and travel expenses for visiting lecturers
- Secretarial/administrative salaries
- Student tuition and student fees including graduate and undergraduate; however, tuition is an allowable expense for the principal investigator of a Mentored Research Scholar Grant.
- Foreign travel (special consideration given for attendance at scientific meetings held in Canada)
- Books and periodicals except for required texts for coursework in the approved training plan for Clinician Scientists Development Grants.
- Membership dues
- Office and laboratory furniture
- Office equipment and supplies
- Rental of office or laboratory space
- Recruiting and relocation expenses
- Non-medical services to patients (travel to a clinical site or patient incentives are allowable expenses)
- Construction, renovation, or maintenance of buildings/laboratories

f. Additional Information

On a separate page at the end of your application, please include a statement as to how your research or study is independent from your mentor at USC.