



**Melanoma Research Foundation Breakthrough Consortium (MRFBC)
Request for Proposals (RFP)
Young Investigator Research Team Award to Advance the Field of
Translational Immuno-Oncology
2021**

Generously funded by a grant by Bristol Myers Squibb (BMS)

GRANT OVERVIEW:

NIH funding has not kept pace with research needs and consequently it is becoming harder for young scientists to be trained and continue to stay in the research field. This is occurring at a time when great advances have been made in understanding the biology of melanoma and developing landmark treatments, including immunotherapy. While immunotherapies have extended to other cancers, melanoma remains the tumor where many combinations are first tested and where the biology of response and resistance is first explored. Junior scientists are needed to enter research to continue and even accelerate the pace of discovery and improve patient outcomes. To encourage these investigators to not only stay engaged in melanoma research focused on immuno-oncology, but also foster institutional cross-collaborations, the MRFBC is offering a 2-year young investigator team award of up to **\$150,000 per year** (\$300,000 total).

The goals of the MRFBC-BMS Young Investigator Translational Immuno-Oncology Team Science Award include 1) to help identify and support the next generation of melanoma scientists and 2) to focus on either improving clinical outcomes for patients with melanoma being treated with immuno-oncology agents or advancing the scientific understanding of immuno-oncology and the role of the immune system in melanoma. Additional details, including eligibility information, the review process, award administration, application materials and deadlines are provided below.

Please visit www.melanoma.org for additional information on the MRF/ MRFBC and to learn more about our research grant program. All questions or concerns regarding this RFP as well as the rest of the MRF's Research Grant Program can be directed to the MRF Science Officer at research@melanoma.org or by calling 800-673-1290.

ELIGIBILITY & REQUIREMENTS:

- Applicants must hold a PhD or MD degree or equivalent.
- In addition to the Principal Investigator (PI), at least two co-Principal Investigators (co-PI)s must be identified. If the grant is focused on a rare, niche population, involvement of additional co-PIs and/or institutions is encouraged.
- Grant submissions must involve collaborations from at least two different institutions. Please note: for the sake of this grant, the Harvard Network (Harvard Medical School, Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, Massachusetts General Hospital and the Broad Institute) will be considered as one institution. Further, the PI must be from a MRFBC institution. Additional institutions may include non-MRFBC sites, although involvement of additional MRFBC sites would only serve to strengthen a grant application. A list of the MRFBC institutions can be found on the MRF website at <https://melanoma.org/research-science/scientific-initiatives-2/mrf-breakthrough-consortium-mrfbc/>.
- The proposed PI and all co-PIs MUST be either a postdoctoral fellow with less than five years of postdoctoral experience at the time the grant will be awarded OR have a title equivalent to a research associate/scientist, instructor or assistant professor at the time of the grant submission. Please note: although the PI and the co-PIs must be junior faculty, additional members of the research team may be senior faculty members.
- PIs, as well as co-PIs, are *each* required to have at least one mentor; the mentors' biosketches must be included in the application.
- Applications must be focused on either improving clinical outcomes for melanoma patients being treated with immuno-oncology agents or advancing the scientific understanding of immuno-oncology



and the role of the immune system in melanoma. With respect to types of melanoma, grants could focus on cutaneous or rare subtypes such as ocular, mucosal, and/or pediatric melanoma.

- Proposed research cannot be identical to a currently awarded MRF grant.
- Applicants are eligible to respond to other MRF RFPs, as long as the research proposals are significantly different.
- Proposed research must comply with all applicable National Institutes of Health (NIH) animal and human welfare guidelines.
- Applicants are encouraged to discuss any eligibility questions with the MRF Science Officer prior to submitting an application.

REVIEW PROCESS, AWARD ADMINISTRATION & REPORTING:

The application submission deadline is **March 15th, 2021**. Each application will be reviewed by a minimum of two non-conflicted scientists. Reviewers will focus on six key areas: scientific significance, the investigative team, innovation, approach, environment and integration among team members. Reviewers will use the NIH scoring system which ranges from 1 (Excellent) to 9 (Poor). Reviewers will be sought from the national pool of reviewers used for grant review including the MRFBC, the MRF Scientific Advisory Committee and the Community United for Research & Education of Ocular Melanoma (CURE OM), enriched by experts in subtype of melanoma if relevant. Reviewers will be polled regarding potential conflicts of interest prior to selection. The highest scoring applications will be discussed on a final review conference call and subjected to a vote by Committee. Award decisions will be made by **June 30th, 2021**. Upon acceptance of the award, the PI and the Institution will be required to sign an award letter accepting all of the MRF's terms and conditions. Only the institution of the primary investigator will be required to sign the award letter, as the MRF contract will be with the lead site only. The lead site will be responsible for dispersing any funds to the participating team sites.

Awards will cover research conducted over a two-year period. Funds will be disbursed two times each year for a total of four payments over two years. A no-cost extension of one year may be permitted with sufficient justification from the PI and approval from the MRF Science Officer. Requests for a no-cost extension must be made within 30 days of the award period expiration.

Awardees will be expected to provide status updates at the biannual MRFBC meetings typically held in conjunction with SMR and ASCO. In addition, interim financial and scientific progress reports are to be submitted to the MRF no later than 30 days prior to the end of the grant's first year. Final financial and scientific reports, detailing all activities during the award period, are to be submitted to the MRF within 60 days of the end of the award period (even if a no-cost extension is requested). The report form requests summaries and outcomes on the research, presentations, publications, patents, clinical trials, new collaborations and/or new research funding pursuant to the proposed research. Acknowledgment of support from the MRF & BMS must accompany any published report using data or findings from research conducted under this award. Any intellectual property identified pursuant to this work remains solely within the institution.

APPLICATION MATERIALS:

- Completion of application cover page (included)
- Research project proposal (6 page maximum), to include:
 - Title
 - Scientific Abstract (3,000 characters max including spaces)
 - Lay Abstract (3,000 characters max including spaces)
 - Specific Aims
 - Background, rationale and significance
 - Preliminary data
 - Experimental design and procedures
 - References (references are not counted in the 6 page limit)
- Budget (\$150,000 per year for two years). Please note:
 - Budget information must be provided for both years of the award.



- Only direct costs are allowed.
- Cost of living adjustments for personnel or non-personnel costs are not allowed.
- When calculating salaries, use actual costs - not the salary allowed by the NIH salary cap.
- Requests for major equipment will be closely scrutinized and should be carefully justified, and should not exceed 15% of the total (two year) budget.
- Allowable travel expenses for meetings and research purposes – including to international meetings – are capped at \$2,000 per project year.
- Brief justifications must be provided for each budget item.
- PI, Co-PI(s) and Mentor Biosketches using the NIH Biosketch Form (Rev 03/20) which MUST include information about confirmed, relevant funding sources (Section D of the biosketch).
- Letters of Support: a letter of support from your institution is required; a letter from the PI's mentor would be sufficient. Additional letters of support are allowed.

APPLICATION DEADLINE:

Applications will be accepted beginning January 4th, 2021 and ending on **March 15th, 2021 at 5:00 PM ET**. All components of the application (cover page, proposal, budget, biosketch, and letter(s) of support) should be scanned and emailed **as one PDF document** to the Science Officer at research@melanoma.org. An application consisting of multiple attachments will not be accepted.

Decisions will be made and sent out via email on or before June 30th, 2021. Funds will be disbursed once all required paperwork is submitted to the MRF.



MRFBC-BMS

Young Investigator Research Team Award to Advance the Field of Translational Immuno-Oncology

Application Check List

✓ Please use this list as a guide to be sure you have submitted all necessary documents.

Complete the application cover page with signed certified applicant statement (included).

Complete the Research Project Proposal:

Typed text should be in **Times New Roman 11pt font size** and is not to exceed the **6 page maximum**. The 6 page max does not include references. The research proposal should include the following: **Title, Scientific Abstract, Lay Abstract, Specific Aims, Background/ Rationale/ Significance, Preliminary Data, Experimental Design and Procedures, and References.**

Budget (\$150,000 per year for two years)

PI and Co-PI(s) Biosketches

Biosketches of each Mentor

Institutional Letter(s) of Support (a letter of support from the PI's mentor would be sufficient)

All components of the application (cover page, proposal, budget, biosketch and letter(s) of support) should be scanned and emailed **as one PDF document** to the Program Director at research@melanoma.org. An application consisting of multiple attachments will not be accepted.



MRFBC-BMS

**Young Investigator Research Team Award to Advance the Field of
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Application Cover Page**

Project Title: _____

Principal Investigator (PI) Name: _____

PI Position Title: _____ **PI Institution:** _____

PI Address: _____

PI Phone Number: _____ **PI Email Address:** _____

PI Mentor: _____

Co-PI #1*: Name: _____ **Institution:** _____ **Mentor:** _____

Co-PI #2*: Name: _____ **Institution:** _____ **Mentor:** _____

**Add additional lines as needed*

Additional Key Personnel* (Add additional lines as needed):

Name: _____ **Name:** _____

Role: _____ **Role:** _____

Institution: _____ **Institution:** _____

Participating MRFBC Institution(s): _____

Human Subjects: ___ Yes ___ No; If Yes, Human Subjects Assurance #: _____

IRB Status: _____ **IRB Date:** _____

Vertebrate Animals: ___ Yes ___ No; If Yes, Animal Welfare Assurance #: _____

IACUC Status: _____ **IACUC Date:** _____

Recombinant DNA: ___ Yes ___ No; If Yes, Status: _____ Date: _____

CERTIFIED APPLICANT STATEMENT:

I certify that the statements herein are true, complete and accurate to the best of my knowledge. I am aware that any false, fictitious, or fraudulent statements or claims may subject me to criminal, civil, or administrative penalties. I agree to accept responsibility for the scientific conduct of the project and to provide the required progress reports if a grant is awarded as a result of this application. A typed name will serve as the applicant signature.

Applicant Signature: _____

Date: _____