

Melanoma Research Foundation (MRF) Breakthrough Consortium Request for Proposals (RFP) Pilot Translational Award

GRANT OVERVIEW:

The Melanoma Research Foundation's Breakthrough Consortium (MRFBC) is releasing this RFP to fund a **one-year pilot proposal for \$50,000 to focus on immune checkpoint inhibitor (ICI) resistance.**

The approval of the first immune checkpoint inhibitor for melanoma in 2011 revolutionized melanoma patient care. Over the next decade, inhibitors that blocked the immune checkpoint cascade (CTLA-4, PD1/PDL1, etc) became standard of care in the treatment of melanoma patients resulting in markedly improved OS rates. However, even with immunotherapy treatments, "approximately 70% of patients still experience disease progression within 5 years. This includes both de novo (primary) resistance in 30-50% of patients and an additional 20-30% with progression after initial benefit (secondary resistance)" [CCR 2021 May15; 27(10): 2678-2697]. As such, the focus of this pilot award is to encourage translational research into the elucidation of biomarkers, insights into the mechanisms, and/or possible alternative treatments for ICI resistance.

As this is a pilot award, preliminary data is not required. Successful applications will emphasize novel, innovative translational proposals focused on any aspect of ICI resistance. This grant is not to support a clinical trial; however, this award could support correlative or bioinformatic work that accompanies a clinical trial. 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 MRFBC and/ or to learn more about the MRF's 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 Program Director at research@melanoma.org or (800) 673-1290.

ELIGIBILITY & REQUIREMENTS:

- Applications must propose translational work focused on any aspect of ICI resistance. Please note: this grant is not to support the conduct of a clinical trial; however, it could support correlative or bioinformatic work that accompanies a clinical trial.
- Applications proposing multicenter collaborative efforts are encouraged.
- Applicants must hold a PhD or MD degree or equivalent at the time of the submission.
- Applicants can be post-doctoral and/or research fellows, research associates/ scientists, instructors, or professors (either assistant, associate, or full) at the time of submission. Both tenured and non-tenured track faculty are encouraged to apply.
- Any associate or full professors that apply MUST include a more junior faculty member (at any level) as part of the application.
- The grant applicant (PI) must be from a MRFBC institution. Co-PIs/ key personnel may be from non-MRFBC sites. 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/>.
- American citizenship is not required.
- The proposed research must be conducted in a non-profit research organization, medical institution, or educational institution located either in the United States or abroad.
- Proposed research cannot be identical to a currently awarded MRF grant.
- 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 prior to submitting an application.

REVIEW PROCESS, AWARD ADMINISTRATION, & REPORTING:

The application submission deadline is **February 14th, 2022**. Each application will be reviewed by a minimum of two non-conflicted scientists. Reviewers will focus on five key areas- scientific significance, the investigative team, innovation, approach, and the environment. 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 by the MRF Scientific Advisory Committee, CURE OM Initiative, and Breakthrough Consortium and enriched for additional experts as needed. 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 the Committee. Award decisions will be made on or around **March 18th, 2022**. 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.

Awards will cover research conducted over a one-year period. Funds will be disbursed as one payment.

A final financial and scientific progress report must be submitted to the MRF 60 days following the end of the award period. If a no-cost extension is requested, then an interim and a final financial/ scientific progress report will be required. 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 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)
- Scientific abstract (3,000 characters max including spaces)
- Lay Abstract (3,000 characters max including spaces)
- Research project proposal (2 page maximum), to include:
 - Title
 - Specific Aims
 - Background, rationale, and significance
 - Preliminary data (not required, but can be included if available)
 - Experimental design and procedures
 - References (references are not counted in the 2 page limit)
- Budget (\$50,000 for one year). Please note:
 - Only direct costs are 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 budget.
 - Allowable travel expenses for meetings and research purposes – including to international meetings- are capped at \$2,000.
 - Brief justifications must be provided for each budget item.
- PI and Co-PI(s) 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; additional letters are allowed.

APPLICATION DEADLINE:

Applications will be accepted until **February 14th, 2022 at 5:00 PM ET**. Decisions will be made and sent out via email on or before March 18th, 2022. Funds will be disbursed once all required paperwork is submitted to the MRF.

Melanoma Research Foundation (MRF) Breakthrough Consortium

Pilot Translational Award

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).

Scientific Abstract (3,000 characters max including spaces)

Lay Abstract (3,000 characters max including spaces)

Complete the Research Project Proposal:

Typed text should be in **Times New Roman 11pt font size** and is not to exceed the **2 page maximum**. The 2 page max does not include references. The research proposal should include the following: **Title, Specific Aims, Background/ Rationale/ Significance, Preliminary Data (if available), Experimental Design and Procedures, and References.**

Budget (\$50,000 for one year)

PI and Co-PI(s) Biosketches

Institutional Letter(s) of Support

All components of the application (cover page, abstracts, proposal, budget, biosketch(es), 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.



Melanoma Research Foundation (MRF) Breakthrough Consortium

Pilot Translational Award Application Cover Page

Project Title: _____

Principal Investigator (PI) Name: _____

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

PI Address: _____

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

Co-PI (if relevant): Name: _____ **Institution:** _____

Additional Key Personnel, if an associate/ full professor ensure a more junior faculty member is included below (Add additional lines as needed):

Name: _____ **Name:** _____

Role: _____ **Role:** _____

Institution: _____ **Institution:** _____

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: _____