



VANDERBILT-INGRAM CANCER CENTER

**AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY
INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH GRANT PILOT PROJECT
IRG # IRG-R-25-1501229-66-IRG**

Application Instructions – 2026

DEADLINE: Applications due on November 9, 2026

ELIGIBILITY: Qualified faculty from Vanderbilt University (VU) and Vanderbilt University Medical Center (VUMC) are encouraged to apply for cancer research funds made available through the American Cancer Society (ACS) Institutional Research Grant. The goal of these funds is to support junior faculty in initiating cancer research projects so they can obtain preliminary data that will enable them to compete successfully for national research grants.

American Cancer Society (ACS) awards are intended to support independent, self-directed investigators early in their careers who have *no current national grant support of their own* (e.g. R01, R03, R21, R33, or equivalent; national ACS award; national DOD award). Individuals with career development awards are eligible. Individuals who have received national peer-reviewed research grants that were not renewed and who are still at the level of assistant professor may apply provided they meet the other criteria.

The ACS defines junior faculty as investigators at the rank of assistant professor or equivalent who are eligible to apply as a principal investigator for grant support from national agencies (e.g., NIH, ACS, NSF). The investigator must be within six (6) years of their first independent research or faculty appointment and have a commitment from the institution for salary and space.

Awards to postdoctoral fellows, graduate students and senior faculty are not allowed.

Recipients of IRG pilot grants are not required to be US citizens; however, any applicant who is not a US citizen must hold a visa that will allow him or her to remain in the US long enough to complete the IRG pilot grant.

Applications **must** be submitted on the American Cancer Society form pages. Detailed instructions are listed below.

I. FORMATTING THE APPLICATION

- a) **Readability:** The submitted version should be easily readable as the reviewers are reading many applications. The reviewers' perception may be negatively affected by a poorly written or organized application.
- b) **Type size and Margins:** The entire text of the application (biographical information, tables, progress reports and examples) should be in an easily readable font. Use standard, no less than 11 point type (no more than 15 cpi). The margins of your text should be no less than 0.5".
- c) **Page length:** See individual page instructions. Please use single-spaced text throughout the application.
- d) **Page numbering:** All pages must be consecutively numbered in the upper right hand corner (do not use page designations such as "4A" or "4B").

II. PREPARING THE APPLICATION – REQUIRED SECTIONS OF THE PROPOSAL

a) Face Page/Biographical Information Sheets

If needed, one additional page may be included. You must provide your biographical information on this ACS form page. **Please note:** your departmental chair must provide signature for the "Verification of

Applicant Eligibility by Department Chair” section on Page 1 of this form.

b) Abstract

The ACS requires a brief abstract summarizing the research proposal. The form page for this information follows the Biographical Information sheet.

c) Description of Research Proposed

In addition to the title page, five (5) additional single-spaced pages (including proposal and figures) may be included for this information. The requested information should be organized under the headings of **Specific Aims, Background and Rationale, Preliminary Data (if available), Methods, and References**. *Please note that References do not count towards the page limit.* The proposed experiments should represent a realistic set of goals for a one-year period. The ability of the principal investigator to clearly define and explain an appropriately focused set of specific aims is an important part of the review process. The rationale for critical experiments to obtain preliminary data should be described as well as the procedures necessary to accomplish the stated goals or aims. Any anticipated difficulties and/or essential controls should be outlined. In addition, condensed versions of R01 (or equivalent) grant applications are not likely to be favorably reviewed by the committee.

d) Budget/Budget Justification

This page deals with the proposed budget and justifications for the project period. If you are requesting funding for personnel, include the individual's name, title, VU employee number, percent effort and funding requested. In addition, as the principal investigator, you should indicate the percent effort you will commit and cost share to this project, if funded (NOTE: the PI salary is a non-allowable expense, therefore must be cost shared). One additional page for budget justification may be included. Allocations are restricted to a maximum of \$40,000 total costs for one year only. Indirect costs are not allowed by the ACS. Your home department must cover the indirects charged by Vanderbilt University or Vanderbilt University Medical Center. Information regarding your department's willingness to cover these costs is included at the end of the budget justification. Upon award, you will be asked to provide a cost center number to cover this expense.

ALLOWABLE Expenditures
Research supplies and animal maintenance
Technical assistance
Publication cost including reprints
Domestic travel when necessary to carry out the proposed research
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 (per item). Special justification is necessary for items exceeding this amount, and permission must be obtained from the Society's Extramural Grants Department for the purchase of such equipment
Registration fees at related scientific meetings

NON-ALLOWABLE Expenditures
Secretarial/administrative personnel
Salary of individual awardees (principal investigators)
Student tuition and student fees including graduate and undergraduate
Foreign Travel
Tuition

Honoraria and travel expenses for visiting lecturers
Dues and membership fees in scientific societies
Non-medical or personnel services to patients
Construction or building maintenance
Major alterations
Purchasing/binding of periodicals/books
Office and laboratory furniture; Office equipment and supplies
Rental of office or laboratory space
Recruiting and relocation expenses

e) Cancer Relevance Information

One additional page may be included for the brief description requested in Section IV “Lay Audience Summary”.

f) Research Promotion Form

This form is used to determine your interest in working with the local American Cancer Society to promote your grant and/or research to the medical and general public.

g) Human Subjects/Vertebrate Animals

Please attach one page stating whether or not your proposed research involves human subjects or vertebrate animals and the status of VUMC committee approval.

h) Commitment Letter

Applicants **must** submit a letter with their application from their department chair or division director clarifying their position in the department, division, **or** laboratory. The letter should include a statement regarding the applicant’s availability to apply for extramural support. In addition, without being specific, confirmation of a commitment for salary support and research space should also be included.

i) Revision/Resubmission Instructions

Applicants **must** submit a letter with their revised proposal to the Review Committee that *summarizes* the substantial additions, deletions, and changes in the newly submitted proposal. The letter must also include responses to the criticisms and issues raised in the critiques. Simply rewording the title and specific aims or incorporating minor changes in response to comments in the previous critiques does not constitute a substantial change in scope or content. Changes to the research plan should produce a significant change in direction and approach for the research project. Thus, a new application would include substantial changes in all sections of the Research Plan, particularly the Specific Aims and the Research Design and Methods sections.

**Do not submit a copy of a pending or unfunded grant request. If you wish to include a copy of other requests as supplemental information, you may do so, but keep the request for ACS funds directed to the specific experiments and approaches for which you are requesting funds.*

III. SUBMITTING THE APPLICATION

- a) Please submit a single PDF containing all documentation through the [VICC Internal Funding Application Portal](#). A link to the VICC Pilot Project Application Portal can also be found on the VICC Funding Opportunities web page ([Funding Opportunities | Vanderbilt-Ingram Cancer Center](#)).
- b) Applications not in compliance with format guidelines will be returned for compliance and, if uncorrected, not reviewed.
- c) Applications are due: **Monday, November 9th, by 11:59 pm CST.**

If you have any questions, please contact:

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