

STARR CANCER CONSORTIUM



Sixth Grant Competition Request For Applications

Key Dates

RFA Issue date:	January 31, 2012
Letter of Intent deadline:	April 12, 2012
Application deadline:	June 18, 2012, 5pm
Expected award start date:	January 1, 2013

Overview

Through a generous gift from the Starr Foundation, five institutions in New York and Boston formed the Starr Cancer Consortium, a collaborative framework to advance research in new ways that will have an impact on the understanding, diagnosis, prevention or treatment of cancer.

The Starr Foundation renewed its commitment to the Starr Cancer Consortium with a renewal grant of \$50 million over five years starting in 2014. The Starr Foundation also provided an interim grant of \$5 million.

The five institutions participating in the Starr Cancer Consortium (SCC) are the Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard, Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, The Rockefeller University, and Weill Cornell Medical College.

The Starr Cancer Consortium is intended largely to support critical mass, collaborative projects with the potential for transforming impact on the understanding and treatment of cancer, through the development and systematic application of molecular technologies, by investigating cancer biology or addressing important clinical problems. It is aimed at encouraging meaningful and ambitious collaborations between the participating institutions to develop and apply innovative approaches to transform cancer research and ultimately diagnostic and therapeutic strategies.

All projects supported by the Consortium must be collaborative, involving investigators from two or more of the five participating institutions.

This RFA is for the sixth grant competition. Due to the reduced funding of only \$5 million in 2012, five awards at most will be awarded in this competition and only truly exceptional new proposals will be funded. Sixteen awards were funded on average in previous competitions: information on the awards is available at www.starrcancer.org.

Objectives

The objective of this RFA is to solicit proposals for real and new collaborative research across institutions in three areas: technology, disease applications, and basic biology. Note – the collaborating laboratories must be equal partners. The research areas are:

- 1) **Technology**. To drive the development of technology for molecular characterization of cancer through collaborative research among the participating institutions of the Starr Cancer Consortium.
- 2) **Disease Applications**. To apply new molecular technologies in collaborative projects directed at diverse cancers, in the process gaining a deeper understanding of the molecular basis of these cancers and defining new paradigms for cancer research, diagnosis and treatment.
- 3) **Basic Biology**. To accelerate collaborative research of the basic biological mechanisms underlying the development of cancers. The focus must be on critical issues in cancer.

Funds Available

The Starr Foundation's interim grant of \$5 million is available for awards from the sixth grant competition. SCC awards are intended as seed grants to provide data for proposals to other entities. SCC funds should be considered as starter money for ambitious, novel projects, such that after 1 or 2 years of work they will be poised to get funding from other sources. A 20% indirect cost allocation will be allowed from the allocated funds.

Applicants may request a project period of 1 or 2 years. Five awards at most will be awarded in this competition and only truly exceptional new proposals will be funded. Neither revised nor competing project renewals will be considered for funding.

Applications at one funding level will be considered:

\$100,000-500,000 per year in direct costs. Intended to support catalytic projects exploring new areas or approaches, or undertaking pilot studies.

Key Criteria

- 1) **Innovative research**. Truly novel approaches to significant challenges in cancer research.
- 2) **Collaborative**. Meaningful and synergistic collaboration between investigators from at least two institutions who are critical to achieving project aims. Collaborating laboratories must be equal partners.
- 3) **Transforming science**. Potential for transforming impact on the understanding of cancer, and ultimately diagnosis, prevention, or treatment of cancer.
- 4) **Scientific excellence**. Scientific merit as determined by peer review.
- 5) **Application to cancer**. All proposals must have clearly-defined application to cancer.

Eligibility

The PI and Co-PI(s) must have a primary faculty appointment with one of the five participating institutions. In the case of the Broad Institute, senior staff, core and associate members are eligible to apply. Proposals must involve collaboration between investigators from at least two of the five participating institutions. Investigators at all levels are encouraged to apply. Proposed projects may involve further collaborations with investigators at institutions outside the Starr Cancer Consortium, but SCC funding is restricted to those activities occurring within the

participating institutions. PIs who received awards in previous grant competitions are eligible to submit applications to this competition, but their proposals must be very different from the funded research.

Workshops for Scientific Planning

The SCC supports workshops that bring together investigators across the five SCC institutions to brainstorm and explore collaborative opportunities. Investigators are encouraged to organize workshops to develop proposals for this RFA. Information on workshops is available at www.starrcancer.org.

Application Format

Applicants should submit a letter of intent (LOI) prior to submission of proposals. LOIs should be sent as Word or pdf documents to SCC@mskcc.org.

Letter of Intent

LOI must include:

- Project title
- PI and Co-PI(s) names, affiliations and contact information
- Collaborator(s) name(s) and affiliations
- Brief statement of topic and scope

Application

Applicants must use the Starr Cancer Consortium application template. The application template and submission instructions are at www.starrcancer.org.

The application template includes:

- Project title
- Name(s) and institution(s) of PI, Co-PI(s) and Collaborator(s)
- Abstract (Up to 250 words)
- Rationale & Significance / fit with key criteria (Up to 250 words)
- Specific Aims (Up to 250 words)
- Project Description (Up to 3000 words; up to 5 figures or tables)
- Timetable and Milestones
- Statement of What Can Be Accomplished (Up to 250 words)
- References (Literature cited)
- Budget: Modular budget (\$50K increments up to \$500K annual direct costs)
- Budget Justification
- Biographical Sketches of major participants
- Other Support for PI and Co-PI(s)
- Collaboration Description (Up to 500 words)
- Data and Resource Sharing Plan (Up to 250 words)
- Letters of Collaboration with indication of specific commitments
- Certification of Proposal/Conflict of Interest

Appendices are not allowed.

Applicants should contact the Sponsored Programs Office at their institutions (see below) prior to submitting an application. This will facilitate the post-award approval process for those applications selected for funding.

Broad Institute:	Stacey Donnelly, sdonnell@broadinstitute.org
Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory:	Walter Goldschmidts, goldschm@cshl.edu
Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center:	Annmarie Pacchia, sponsorp@mskcc.org
The Rockefeller University:	Marta Torruella, torruem@rockefeller.edu
Weill Cornell Medical College:	Michelle Lewis, mil2006@med.cornell.edu

Review Mechanism

Applications will be reviewed by a Scientific Review Board (SRB) made up of peers from institutions not participating in the Starr Cancer Consortium. Applications will be scored with respect to the Key Criteria described above. The SRB will provide recommendations to the Starr Cancer Consortium Executive Committee. The Executive Committee will make all final funding decisions. There will be one deadline for application to this RFA.

Award Administration

Written review summary statements and funding decisions will be provided to applicants. For each funded proposal, a Research Agreement will be executed by the Starr Cancer Consortium institutions participating in the project, and each institution will ensure regulatory compliance prior to commencement of funding.

Reporting Requirements

- All projects are required to provide an annual written progress report (2 pages).
- Each project's PI and Co-PI(s) are required to attend and present at the annual Starr Cancer Consortium retreat.

Further Information

Any questions concerning this RFA should be addressed to:

Sylvie Le Blancq, Ph.D.
Executive Director
Starr Cancer Consortium
Tel: 212-639-8489
Email: leblancs@mskcc.org