

STARR CANCER CONSORTIUM



Fourth Grant Competition

Request For Applications

Key Dates

RFA Issue date:	October 6, 2009
Letter of Intent deadline:	December 18, 2009
Application deadline:	February 11, 2010, 5pm
Expected award start date:	August 1, 2010

Overview

Through a generous gift from the Starr Foundation, five institutions in New York and Boston have 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 five participating institutions in the Starr Cancer Consortium 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 fourth grant competition. Sixteen, fourteen and seventeen applications were selected for funding from the first, second and third competitions, respectively; information on the awards is available at www.starrcancer.org.

Objectives

The objectives of this RFA are to solicit proposals for collaborative research in three areas: technology, disease applications, and basic biology:

- 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 gift is \$20M per year for 5 years. The Starr Cancer Consortium (SCC) intends to commit these funds over the course of the 5-year Consortium to balance support between new proposals and renewals. 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. The total funding for this RFA will be determined by the scientific quality of the proposals, and their fit with the RFA key criteria. A 20% indirect cost allocation will be allowed from the allocated funds.

Applicants may request a project period of 1 or 2 years. Competing project renewals for one additional year of funding will be considered, but it is expected that the majority of Starr Cancer Consortium funding will be directed towards supporting new projects. Only exceptional competing project renewals will be funded.

Applications at two funding levels will be considered:

- 1) ***Category A:*** \$100,000-500,000 per year in direct costs. Intended to support catalytic projects exploring new areas or approaches, or undertaking pilot studies.
- 2) ***Category B:*** Greater than \$500,000 per year in direct costs. Intended to support projects of sufficient scale and scope to address major cancer research challenges. These projects must have already achieved initial proof-of-principle, and be supported with significant preliminary data.

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.
- 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 appointment with one of the five participating institutions. Proposals must involve collaboration between investigators from at least two of the five participating institutions. Junior faculty investigators are encouraged to apply. Proposed projects may involve further collaborations with investigators at institutions outside the Starr Cancer Consortium, but Starr 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 to SCC@mskcc.org. In response to LOIs for Category B proposals, the Executive Committee may request further information prior to full proposal submission.

Letter of Intent

LOI must include:

- Project title
- PI and Co-PI(s) names, affiliations and contact information
- Collaborators' names and their affiliations
- Indicate if this is a new application, a revised application, or a renewal application
- Brief statement of topic and scope (not required for competing project renewal applications)
- Level of funding requested

Application

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

The application template for new and revised applications 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)
- *For revised applications* - a response to the review summary statement and a description of what has been changed (Up to 300 words)
- Project Description (Up to 3000 words) Up to 5 figures or tables for Category A and up to 10 for Category B proposals
- Timetable and Milestones
- Statement of What Can Be Accomplished (Up to 250 words)
- References
- Budget:
 - Category A: Modular budget (\$50K increments up to \$500K annual direct costs)
 - Category B: Detailed budget
- Budget Justification
- Biosketches 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

The application template for competing project renewals includes:

- Project title
- Name(s) and institution(s) of PI, Co-PI(s) and Collaborator(s)
- Abstract, Rationale & Significance, Specific Aims from the original application
- Progress Report and Justification (Up to 1000 words)
- Project Description for Renewal Year (Up to 2000 words)
- References
- Budget for Renewal Year:
 - Category A: Modular budget
 - Category B: Detailed budget
- Budget Justification
- Biosketches of major participants
- Other Support for PI and Co-PI(s)
- Collaboration Description (Up to 500 words)

Appendices are allowed only for Category B proposals. Appendices may not be embedded in the text of the application. They must be separate documents. Appendices are restricted to materials directly relevant to the proposal such as data collection instruments or clinical protocols.

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:	David Widmer, sponsorp@mskcc.org
Rockefeller University:	Marta Torruella, torruem@rockefeller.edu
Weill Cornell Medical College:	Barbara Pifel, blp2001@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. New and revised applications will be scored with respect to the Key Criteria described above. Competing project renewals will be scored with respect to progress and justification. 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. The next retreat is scheduled for September 20-21, 2010 at Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory.

Further Information

Any questions concerning this RFA should be addressed to:

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Executive Director
Starr Cancer Consortium
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