



REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

ACGT – Edward Netter Memorial Investigator Award in Cell and Gene Therapy for Pancreatic Cancer Research (2024)

Abstract Deadline: June 1, 2024 at 11 am (EST) (Step 1)
Invitation to Submit Application: July 15, 2024
Deadline for Completed Application: September 15, 2024 at 11 am (EST) (Step2)
Finalists Selected: November 15, 2024
Award: December 2024

Date of Issue: April 15, 2024

PROGRAM GUIDELINES

PURPOSE

Alliance for Cancer Gene Therapy, Inc. (ACGT) funds research aimed at furthering the development of cell and gene therapy approaches for the treatment of patients with cancer.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Pancreatic cancer is an aggressive disease that is predicted to become the second leading cause of cancer-related death worldwide by 2030. The overall 5-year survival rate is approximately 10%. Pancreatic cancer typically presents late with locally advanced or metastatic disease, and there are limited effective treatments available.

This award is for those conducting **cell and gene therapy research** specifically in **pancreatic cancer** including, but not limited to, the following areas:

- Reversing the immunosuppressive microenvironment characteristic of pancreatic cancer to achieve a robust immune response utilizing cell or gene therapies targeting neuronal populations, myeloid cells, or immunosuppressive lymphoid cells.
- Resolving key challenges limiting cell trafficking and infiltration including antigen presentation defects, tumor heterogeneity and genomic instability, and tumor micro-environment factors.
- Approaches that focus on myeloid cells, cancer-associated fibroblast populations, regulatory T-cells, or relevant immune effectors.
- Synthetic engineering approaches enabling delivery of T cells into immune-excluded pancreatic tumors to enhance T-cell therapies.
- Advancements in CAR or CAR T design including armored CARs, inclusion of chemokine and cytokines, costimulatory domains, multi-antigen targeting, etc.

- Novel approaches using less commonly tested immune cell types including transfection with tumor-specific T-Cell Receptors, Gamma-Delta T cells, Tumor Infiltrating Lymphocytes, Natural Killer cells, iPSC-derived cells, as autologous or allogeneic cells.
- Combination approaches that leverage cell and gene therapy alongside other immunotherapy approaches such as checkpoint inhibitors, systemic cytokines, or bispecific antibodies.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Candidates for the **ACGT – Edward Netter Memorial Investigator Award in Cell and Gene Therapy for Pancreatic Cancer Research** must hold an MD, PhD, or equivalent degree and **must** be tenure-track or tenured faculty.

ACGT will also consider applications from investigators who are working with biotechnology companies to advance clinical assets for pancreatic cancer. The biotech company must have a formal relationship to work on the proposed project with an academic investigator at an accredited school.

ACGT recognizes that there may be other excellent researchers not on a tenure-track, or not at medical schools or research centers, **but this is an eligibility requirement for application**. The investigator must be conducting original research as an independent faculty member. ACGT has no citizenship restrictions; however, research supported by the award must be conducted at academic medical centers or research centers located in the United States or Canada.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

The award provides up to a maximum of \$500,000 distributed over 2-3 years, inclusive of a maximum of 10% indirect costs. The funds may be used at the recipient's discretion for salary, technical assistance, supplies, animals or capital equipment, but may not support staff who are not directly related to the project, e.g. secretaries or administrative assistants. Purchase of equipment is not allowed in the final year of the grant. Continued support is contingent upon submission and approval of a non-competitive renewal application each year.

APPLICATION PROCEDURES

There is a two-step process for submitting applications electronically via **proposalCENTRAL**, an outside service provider hosted by Altum. Access is available using links provided in the ACGT website, www.acgtfoundation.org or directly through the proposalCENTRAL website at: <https://proposalcentral.altum.com/Login.asp>.

A candidate must submit the following by the required deadlines:

- **Step 1:** A pre-application Letter of Intent (LOI), which includes an abstract of the proposed research and a current biographical sketch, must be submitted by the deadline (**June 1st, 2024 at 11 am (EST)**) through the proposalCENTRAL platform. The LOI/abstracts will then be reviewed by the ACGT Scientific Advisory Council and its approved reviewers. Those selected will be invited by **July 15, 2024**, to submit full applications.
- **Step 2:** For those invited to submit full applications, a completed electronic application, including templates and a Signed Administrative and Signature Page(s) scanned and attached to the front of the completed application template, must be submitted by the deadline (**September 15, 2024 at 11 am (EST)**) through the proposalCENTRAL platform.

NOTE: A paper copy submission is NOT required.

INSTRUCTIONS

Instructions for completing the application are available on ACGT's website under Research Grants and also through the proposalCENTRAL website.

CUSTOMER SUPPORT

If you have any questions regarding the online application, please contact proposalCENTRAL Customer Support by e-mail at pcsupport@altum.com or at (800) 875-2562 x 227 (toll-free) or (301) 916-4557 x 227.

REVIEW PROCESS

Each applicant's LOI/abstract of the proposed project is reviewed by members of the ACGT Scientific Advisory Council and its approved reviewers. All applicants will be evaluated on the basis of scientific and technical merit and corresponding fit with the research objectives of the grant. Based on the review of the LOI/abstracts, certain applicants will be invited to submit a full application for consideration. These applications are then peer reviewed by experts in the field, with the highest scores determining the pool of finalists from which the ACGT Scientific Advisory Council and its approved reviewers make their final recommendations to ACGT's Board of Directors for final approval.

INSTITUTIONAL POLICIES

Grant funds will be disbursed following execution of a grant agreement between the grantee institution and ACGT. The following items will be covered in ACGT grant agreements with grantee institutions:

- Overhead of up to 10% is included in the awarded amount. The **ACGT – Edward Netter Memorial Investigator Award in Cell and Gene Therapy for Pancreatic Cancer Research** grant will support research projects with two to three-year time frames for completion, with annual non-competitive renewal applications.
- Grantees and their affiliated institutions are required to submit periodic progress reports to ACGT. In addition, they are expected to share their research findings with the scientific community in a timely fashion through presentation at professional meetings and publication in scientific journals.
- ACGT will request acknowledgment of the grant in any presentations and/or publications by the investigator(s) and/or institution(s).
- **ACGT will receive a reasonable royalty return, including, but not limited to, license fees on inventions and improvements made by investigators on research supported by its grants and/or investments.**
- The grantee institution will agree (i) to indemnify ACGT solely with respect to claims relating to the award of a grant and (ii) that all research supported by ACGT will be conducted in accordance with all applicable state and Federal laws, rules and regulations.
- Awards to an institution will terminate when the principal investigator departs from the grantee institution and can be re-initiated at an alternate institution subject to ACGT approval.
- Should grantees and/or their affiliated institutions fail to meet policies, procedures and/or ongoing requirements of the grant, ACGT reserves the right to rescind annual follow-on grant awards.

RESPONSIBILITY OF THE GRANTEE INSTITUTION

An application for a grant must bear the signature of an official authorized to sign for the institution, **acknowledging the above policies.**

PROGRAM INQUIRIES

For application information, policies and procedures, and general information, please contact blavery@acgtfoundation.org