



REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

2025 Investigator Award in Cell and Gene Therapy for GYNECOLOGICAL CANCER RESEARCH

RFA Opens: March 19, 2025
Abstract Deadline: May 16, 2025, at 11 am (EST)
Invitation to Submit Application: June 27, 2025
Deadline for Completed Application: August 22, 2025, at 11 am (EST)
Finalists Selected: October 17, 2025
Award Approval: November 2025

Date of Issue: March 19, 2025

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

According to the latest American Cancer Society data, the 5-year relative survival rate for most cancers has improved in the last 40 years. The only exceptions are uterine (endometrial) cancer and cervical cancer—whose survival rates have declined. Women younger than age 50 are also almost twice as likely to develop cancer than young men, a gap which has widened since the early 2000s. Gynecological cancers, including ovarian, endometrial and cervical cancers, remain a leading cause of cancer deaths and a major challenge to women’s health worldwide. The mortality rate of ovarian cancer is three times higher than that of breast cancer and it is predicted to increase significantly by the year 2040. The current 5-year survival rate is only 25–47% worldwide, even after aggressive treatment.

This new grant award is for those conducting **cell and gene therapy research** specifically in **gynecological cancers** (ovarian, endometrial, cervical) including, but not limited to, the following research areas:

- Approaches that investigate and manipulate the immunosuppressive tumor microenvironment to achieve a robust immune response utilizing cell or gene therapies targeting regulatory T cells (T-regs), tumor-associated macrophages (TAMs), tumor-entrained neutrophils, and myeloid-derived suppressor cells (MDSCs).
- Identifying predictive biomarkers that will help identify patients who are more likely to respond to cell and gene therapies.

- Resolving key challenges limiting cell trafficking, infiltration and persistence including antigen presentation defects, tumor heterogeneity and genomic instability, and tumor micro-environment factors.
- Approaches that focus on endothelial cells, myeloid cells, cancer-associated fibroblast populations, regulatory T-cells, or relevant immune effectors that regulate the growth, proliferation, and metastasis of cancers
- Gene therapy approaches focused on mutation compensation, immunopotential, expression of neoantigen-reactive TCRs, oncolytic viruses, etc.
- Advancements in CAR T designs including *in vivo* approaches, armored, tandem, and switch CARs, CAR-macrophages, CAR-NK cells, and CARMSCs, the inclusion of chemokine and cytokines, costimulatory domains, multi-antigen targeting, etc.
- Novel approaches using less applied 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 including CARs and oncolytic viruses alongside other immunotherapy approaches such as checkpoint inhibitors, systemic cytokines, or bispecific antibodies.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Candidates for the **ACGT 2025 Investigator Award in Cell and Gene Therapy for Cancer** must hold an MD, PhD, or equivalent degree and **must** be tenure-track or tenured faculty. ACGT will also consider applications from biotechnology companies with an early-stage cell and gene therapy clinical asset for gynecologic cancer. The biotech company must have a formal relationship to work on the proposed project with an academic investigator at an accredited institution. 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 comprehensive progress report each year. Continued support is contingent upon submission and approval of a comprehensive progress report 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 on 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) that includes an abstract of the proposed research and a current biographical sketch must be submitted by the deadline (**May 16, 2025, 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 June 27, 2025**, to submit full applications.
- **Step 2:** For those invited to submit full applications, a completed electronic application, including templates and Signed Administrative and Signature Page(s) scanned and attached to the front of the completed application template, must be submitted by the deadline (**August 22, 2025, at 11 am 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 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 alignment 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 two - three experts in the field, with the highest scores determining the pool of finalists from which the ACGT Scientific Advisory Council and its approved reviewers makes its final recommendations to ACGT's Board of Directors for 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 **2025 Investigator Award in Cell and Gene Therapy for Gynecological Cancers** 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 investigators and/or institutions.
- **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.

*Please note, in collaboration with the Cinelli Family Foundation, ACGT has also issued **a separate RFA for cell and gene therapy for breast cancer available on the [ACGT website](#).***