Request for Fellowship Proposals for Award Year 2026
December 15, 2025

Overview of Funding Opportunity
The UC Cancer Research Coordinating Committee (CRCC) is a systemwide, faculty-directed cancer research program that provides competitive intramural research awards for topics in any discipline that address any aspect of cancer, including its origins, detection, prevention and cure. Funding for this opportunity is provided through 33 bequests to UC for cancer research.

CRCC Fellowships support mentored research spanning all areas from basic research to applied clinical and community-based research. Research must be directly relevant to cancer. Relevance and impact should be articulated in relation to theoretical and/or practical problems in cancer in any discipline, and may include the likely impact of the research on communities disproportionately at risk or afflicted by cancer. The CRCC funds meritorious research in any discipline with high relevance to and impact on cancer prevention, education or treatment. The CRCC is particularly interested in projects in public health and/or population sciences, including those addressing cancer health disparities and community-based awareness.

The CRCC Fellowship provides one-year grants to predoctoral students and one- or two-year grants to Postdoctoral Scholars pursuing cancer research on the 10 UC campuses. Predoctoral students must have advanced to candidacy and have an anticipated graduation date 12-18 months after the award start date. Postdoctoral Scholars must be within the first three years of their postdoctoral appointment at the award start date. Mentors must be full-time, independent faculty on one of the 10 UC campuses.

The award term is September 1, 2026 through August 31, 2027 for one-year awards and September 1, 2026 through August 31, 2028 for two-year awards. General program information regarding the CRCC may be found on the website: http://ucop.edu/research-initiatives/programs/crcc/.

This Request for Proposals (RFP) contains information regarding due dates, eligibility and exclusion criteria, budget guidelines, application components, and the review process and program contacts. Letters of Intent (LOIs) and applications must be submitted in compliance with this RFP and instructions.

Proposals must be submitted through the PI's campus Office of Research (C&G or SPO). The PI is responsible for obtaining all required signatures and following campus proposal submission procedures.

Key Dates:

RFP Release:	Monday, December 15, 2025
Letter of Intent Due (**required**):	Thursday, January 22, 2026 (**12 pm NOON Pacific Time**)
Notification of LOI Decision:	by Wednesday, February 11, 2026
Full Proposal Due:	Thursday, April 2, 2026 (**12 pm NOON Pacific Time**)
Notification of Review Outcome:	Tuesday, June 30, 2026 (expected)
Award Start Date:	September 1, 2026

Predoctoral Fellowship Award
1. <u>Maximum total direct costs</u>: $80,000
2. <u>Stipend, tuition and fees amount per year</u>: $75,000
3. <u>Duration</u>: 1 year
4. <u>Allowable direct costs</u>:
   a) Stipend, tuition and fees: The fellowship will provide $75,000 that must be budgeted to cover full student tuition and fees, with the remaining funds to be paid as a monthly stipend to the student. Documentation of the institution's tuition and fees structure should be included in the budget justification.
   b) Institutional allowance: The applicant may request an institutional allowance to help defray the cost of expenses such as health insurance, medical liability or other special insurance, courses and educational materials, research supplies, project-related travel, and travel to scientific conferences. These costs will be covered up to $5,000 per year. The institutional allowance is a fixed amount, and the institution is not required to account for these expenses on an actual cost basis.
5. <u>Requirements</u>:
   a) The proposal must reflect the predoctoral applicant's own original dissertation research and is expected to enhance the individual's potential to develop into a productive, independent scientist in cancer research. The project must not replicate the aims of any existing grants or applications held by the applicant's advisors or mentors.
   b) The applicant must be enrolled in a doctoral program at UC at the time of application submission. Predoctoral fellows must remain in good standing, enrolled full-time (not in absentia status) throughout the fellowship, and engage full-time in the proposed research.
   c) Eligibility ends if the awardee successfully defends their dissertation and completes their degree requirement before the funding period concludes.
   d) When a predoctoral applicant has multiple mentors, one must be identified as the primary mentor for programmatic purposes. This individual should be designated as the dissertation advisor in SmartSimple, while others are listed as research advisors.

Postdoctoral Fellowship Award
1. <u>Maximum total direct costs</u>: $95,000 for one year or $190,000 for two years
2. <u>Salary/benefits amount per year</u>: Up to $90,000
3. <u>Duration</u>: 1 year or 2 consecutive years
4. <u>Allowable direct costs</u>:
   a) Salary/benefits: Salary and benefits must adhere to the Postdoctoral Scholar (PX) Experienced-based Salary scale and comply with all applicable Provisions of the PX Collective Bargaining Agreement. The mentor is responsible for supplementing salary and benefits if the Postdoctoral Scholar's salary level exceeds the awarded amount.
   b) Institutional allowance: The applicant may request an institutional allowance to help defray the cost of expenses such as professional development, research supplies, project-related travel, and travel to scientific conferences. CRCC will cover up to $5,000 per year for these costs. The institutional allowance is a fixed amount, and the institution is not required to account for these expenses on an actual cost basis.
5. <u>Requirements</u>:
   a) The proposal must reflect the Postdoctoral Scholar's own original research project that builds upon their prior experience and furthers their development as a productive,

independent scientist in cancer research. The project must not replicate the aims of any existing grants or applications held by the applicant's advisors or mentors.

b) The applicant must have secured a full-time position in one of the following titles by full application submission: Postdoctoral Scholar Employee/Fellow/Paid-Direct. Per the Collective Bargaining Agreement between the United Automobile, Aerospace, and Agricultural Implement Workers of America (UAW) Local 4811, and the University of California, this is a represented position.

c) The applicant must be employed by the applicant's institution in one of the above-mentioned titles no later than the award start date. Postdoctoral Scholars must remain full-time trainees throughout the fellowship.

d) Eligibility ends when a Postdoctoral Scholar accepts and begins a non-mentored staff or faculty-level role, even if this occurs before the funding period concludes.

e) When a Postdoctoral Scholar has multiple mentors, one must be identified as the primary mentor for programmatic purposes. This individual should be designated as the research advisor in SmartSimple, while others should be listed as mentors.

Overview of the Application and Selection Process

The LOI is a requirement for the application process. The LOI submission deadline will be strictly enforced, and no application may move forward without an approved LOI. Applicants must submit their LOIs using the online SmartSimple application system. LOIs will be reviewed for eligibility and completeness, compliance with program requirements, and alignment with program priorities. The CRCC may invite only a subset of applicants to submit full proposals. No feedback or comments will be provided on the LOI.

Only those with approved LOIs will be provided access to submit a full application in SmartSimple. Full proposals must be submitted online and in accordance with the instructions, templates and guidelines provided in SmartSimple and must conform to the requirements of this RFP. It is the applicant's responsibility to check the program website for any updates or clarifications prior to submitting the full proposal.

Full proposals undergo a competitive peer review and ranking process by the CRCC and are scored on merit and cancer relevance/impact, mentorship/training, and applicant qualifications, as outlined herein. Program funding varies on a year-to-year basis, but it is expected that $2 million will be available. Funding decisions are based on ranking and availability of funding and are final.

Eligibility and Exclusion Criteria

Adherence to eligibility requirements will be evaluated at the LOI stage, as well as during the full proposal review. Please review these criteria and the attached FAQs (Appendix 1). If questions about eligibility remain, please direct them to UCRI@ucop.edu.

1. Eligible Principal Investigators (PIs): Proposals must be submitted by a full-time predoctoral student or Postdoctoral Scholar at one of the 10 UC campuses who serves as the PI for the award. Predoctoral students must be enrolled in a degree program (PhD, MD/PhD or equivalent); Postdoctoral Scholars must have a doctoral degree (PhD, MD or equivalent) at the time of award start. PIs must have identified and consulted with a mentor who is committed to

their training and who is an independent faculty member employed 100% time on UC-administered payrolls at a UC campus. Awarded proposals will be administered by the campus department or unit identified in the proposal. A letter from the PI's mentor is required at the full proposal stage for verification of the applicant's appointment, percent time employed, and (for predoctoral students) anticipated graduation date.

2. <u>Proposal Eligibility</u>: Each applicant may submit only one proposal per year.

3. <u>Exclusion Criteria</u>: Applicants who have previously received Research Grants Program Office (RGPO) funding must be in compliance with all reporting requirements to be eligible to receive CRCC funding.

Budget Guidelines
1. <u>Budget Request</u>: The maximum award request is $80,000 for predoctoral students and $190,000 for Postdoctoral Scholars. All budget line items must directly support the research, training, and dissemination activities in the proposal and must be justified in relation to the scope of work. Costs to supplement other awards are not allowed.

2. <u>Duration of a Grant</u>: Grants are awarded for a one- or two-year period, September 1, 2026 through August 31, 2027 or September 1, 2026 through August 31, 2028, respectively. The CRCC expects that the funds provided will be used for one or two full years of research, training, and dissemination by the PI. The CRCC will not provide funds for a partial year of research. The funds may not be transferred to another researcher. The PI should not accept the award if there is a likelihood of leaving the University of California within the award period.

3. <u>Overlap</u>: CRCC funds may not be used to support overlapping projects. **Overlap** is defined as research that is substantially the same as research described in a pending or funded proposal. See FAQ #7.

4. <u>Allowable Costs</u>: CRCC funds may be used to support the applicant's salary, stipend, tuition and/or fringe benefits. Travel expenses are allowed only for the PI for conference travel to present research results and/or data collection directly related to the proposed research.

5. <u>Non-allowable Costs</u>: The following costs may not be charged to a CRCC Fellowship award: salary support for faculty, regular or visiting academic (either research or teaching) staff, clerical assistance; subcontracts; clinical trials; patient care costs; office supplies, books, periodical subscriptions; patent execution costs; membership fees; fundraising costs. CRCC grants do not provide indirect cost recovery.

Letters of Intent: Components, Review and Selection
All applicants must submit an LOI using SmartSimple. LOI instructions are available online in SmartSimple and *Appendix 2* of this document. LOIs must be submitted by the deadline listed on page 1.

The LOI must include the following information:

1. PI name, title, departmental and campus affiliation, and PI ORCID;
2. PI biosketch: <u>Not to exceed five (5) pages</u>. Please use the NIH fellowship template. Include intended career goals and career trajectory in the Personal Statement;
3. Mentor biosketch: <u>Not to exceed five (5) pages</u>. Please use the NIH template with the following modifications: list current and pending grants; if applicable, describe the need for funding to support the trainee (applicant PI) in the Personal Statement. Only upload the primary mentor's biosketch. If the applicant has more than one mentor, additional mentors may be added when the full proposal is submitted;
4. Abstract (2400 characters/~350 words): Provide a brief description of the proposed scope of research and activities and how they will prepare the applicant for a career in cancer research (this is the body of the "Letter of Intent"; do <u>not</u> submit a separate letter);
5. Specific Aims (2400 characters/~350 words): Describe the aims to be accomplished during the award period, including methods to be used;
6. Cancer Relevance and Impact: Briefly describe the project's relevance to and impact on cancer prevention, education or treatment;
7. Topic/Discipline: Applicants are asked to select the topic or discipline most closely aligned with their research; and
8. Common Scientific Outline Code: Applicants are asked to code their research according to the [Common Scientific Outline (CSO)](#) classification system.

LOIs must include required elements and will be evaluated for eligibility to submit full proposals in accordance with the criteria outlined in the Eligibility and Exclusion Criteria section above. LOIs will be evaluated for responsiveness to this RFP in three areas: 1) eligibility and completeness; 2) compliance with program requirements; and 3) alignment with the program goals and funding priorities. The CRCC may invite only a subset of applicants to submit full proposals. Information provided in the LOI will also be used to assist in planning for the full review. <u>All applicants will be notified of the LOI outcome, but no feedback or comments on the proposed research will be provided</u>.

Full Proposal: Content, Review and Selection
Proposals must adhere to all the requirements to be forwarded to the peer review stage. Applicants selected to submit a full proposal will be notified in February. Instructions for the full application will be made available in early February 2026 in SmartSimple. *Proposals must be submitted through the PI's campus Office of Research (C&G or SPO). The PI is responsible for obtaining all required signatures and following campus proposal submission procedures. The PI should contact the appropriate office as soon as an invitation to advance to full proposal is received.*

Scope and Content of the Full Proposals
The full proposal must include the following components and use the templates provided (<u>maximum</u> page length indicated for each section must be strictly adhered to):

1. <u>Abstract</u> (2400 characters/~350 words): The abstract should be appropriate for a general scholarly audience. Avoid disciplinary jargon or technical language specific to a single field. The abstract is not counted in the 4-page limit.

2. <u>Proposed Research Plan</u> (4-page limit, not including literature cited): Identify the research activities and scholarly contributions of the proposed research, including the innovative components that will advance scholarship in cancer research. The plan should be written for a general scientific audience and must include a description of the lab facilities, data, or resources that the applicant will use, and explain the importance to the applicant's career development as a cancer researcher.

   The scope of the proposal should be suitably limited such that completion in one or two years is a reasonable expectation. The narrative must emphasize what the PI expects to accomplish with the CRCC funds, including a timeline and expected outcomes.

   CRCC funds are intended to support research <u>clearly</u> and directly related to cancer and are not intended for support of general biological or other health research. Proposals should articulate their cancer relevance and impact in relation to theoretical and/or practical problems in cancer in any discipline. Relevance and impact may also include the likely impact of the research on communities disproportionately at risk or afflicted by cancer.

   Applicants may include up to 1 additional page (not included in the 4-page limit) for literature cited.

3. <u>Mentoring Training Experience</u> (1 page): The mentor should describe their history of mentoring predoctoral students or Postdoctoral Scholars, including number of trainees and their current positions, if known.

4. <u>Mentoring Plan/Training Plan</u> (1 page): The proposal must include a detailed training plan developed in consultation with the applicant's mentor, describing the specific training and mentorship activities, including any courses, workshops and/or professional development opportunities to supplement the research. Describe how the mentorship and training will prepare the applicant for a career in cancer research. Include a timeline and frequency of mentor-trainee meetings.

5. <u>Itemized Budget and Justification</u>: Provide an itemized budget for the proposed activities in accordance with the allowable costs and budget guidelines. A budget justification that describes significant project expenditures is also required. The budget should include *direct costs only (no indirect costs are allowed)*.

6. <u>Other Support</u>: Please use the provided template. Identify all current and pending grants and fellowships that the applicant has applied for or has been awarded that provide direct financial support to the PI during the project period. Include direct costs only. For each grant or fellowship, describe any scientific relationship that exists between that grant and the proposed CRCC project and, specifically, how they differ. Do not include the mentor's grants.

7. <u>Additional Attachments</u> *(all required unless otherwise noted)*:
   a) PI biosketch: <u>Not to exceed five (5) pages</u>. Please use the NIH fellowship template. Include intended career goals and career trajectory in the Personal Statement.
   b) Mentor biosketch: <u>Not to exceed five (5) pages</u>. Please use the NIH template with the

following modifications: list current and pending grants; if applicable, describe the need for funding to support the trainee (applicant PI) in the Personal Statement. If the applicant has more than one mentor, include only biosketches of mentors involved in the research.

c) Human subjects, animals or biohazards: Indicate anticipated IRB or IACUC review requirements and, if applicable, provide a summary of any human subjects or animal use issues.

d) Letters of reference: Three blinded letters of reference are required, describing the applicant's qualifications and capacity for a career in cancer research. One letter must be from the primary mentor; the other two must be from individuals who are not involved in the research project. Do not submit more than three letters; letters from individuals involved in the research project will be redacted from the application. The mentor's letter should also include: 1) a statement of commitment to serve as an advisor to the applicant for the duration of the award and provide mentorship and training as outlined in the Mentoring Plan/Training Plan, 2) assurance of access to equipment and available resources to support the applicant's research project, and 3) the following verifications. For predoctoral students, include a statement verifying the applicant PI's status as a full-time predoctoral student at UC, their advancement to candidacy, and anticipated or confirmed date of graduation. For Postdoctoral Scholars, include a statement verifying the applicant PI's status as a full-time Postdoctoral Scholar, including position title (Postdoctoral Scholar Employee/Fellow/Paid-Direct), and their initial or anticipated UC appointment date in the mentor's lab. Applicants with more than one mentor may submit a joint letter or a letter from the primary mentor. Letters may not exceed one page each.

Proposal Review and Scoring Criteria
The review process is competitive and the CRCC will evaluate proposals based on the scoring criteria and program priorities. Committee members are faculty drawn from the University of California system with a wide variety of expertise. Review assignments will be made to ensure a fair and balanced review and to address conflicts of interest.

Proposals receive a combined score based on specific consideration of the following:

1. Research Excellence and Cancer Relevance and Impact: The results of the proposed research should make a significant advance in scholarship and (for predoctoral applicants) enable degree completion. The research plan should be appropriate for the level of the applicant, clearly relate to their research plan, and be feasible in the proposed timeframe. Reviewers will also assess the project's relevance and impact on cancer prevention, education or treatment; and the extent to which it will prepare the applicant for a career in cancer research.

2. Strength of Training, Supervision, and Mentorship: The quality and engagement of the mentor and endorsement of the proposed research and training plan, and level of supervision should be evident. The strength of the training and mentorship plan should ensure the student or Postdoctoral Scholar receives adequate time and supervision to complete their project/degree and has access to all necessary resources. This includes the extent of structured opportunities to engage with other scientists, trainees, and with experts and programs in place at the campus. Reviewers will also assess the extent to which the training

and mentorship will prepare the applicant for a career in cancer research.

3. <u>Qualifications of the Applicant and Quality of Academic Preparation</u>: The applicant's academic record should demonstrate their potential to conduct successful research and (for predoctoral students) enable degree completion, and include evidence of strong, appropriate preparation for the research through both coursework and prior research or training. Important criteria include the extent to which the applicant demonstrates the likelihood of success and academic productivity.

In making funding recommendations, reviewers also consider:

1. <u>Alignment with CRCC Topics of Interest</u>: Special consideration will be given to applications in public health and/or population sciences, including cancer health disparities and community-based awareness.

2. <u>Additional Considerations</u>: a) Considerations related to human subjects, animal use or biohazards, and the proposed compliance plan; and b) the PI's concurrent research or fellowship support and the mentor's need for funding to support the trainee.

Final Selection
The final determination of awards will be made based on a rank-ordered list of proposals approved by the CRCC and available funding. Funding decisions are not subject to appeal.

Upon nomination for funding, applicants will be required to provide updated Other Support information and meet other pre-funding criteria. *Abstracts of funded proposals will be made publicly available.* Funded proposals must comply with all relevant UC, state, and federal research policies and PIs are required to submit a progress report at the end of the fund year, and final report of research outcomes in four years. Publications and other dissemination resulting from research supported by the CRCC must acknowledge CRCC support in the publication.

Research Program Oversight
The CRCC is administered under the auspices of UC Research Initiatives (UCRI) in the Research Grants Program Office (RGPO) at the UC Office of the President. Funded proposals will be assigned to a program officer who will serve as the primary program contact.

Additional Information
Please review the CRCC Application Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) document appended as [Appendix 1](#).

For questions on program scope and priorities, please contact: UCRI@ucop.edu.

For administrative questions regarding the application process and for technical questions related to use of SmartSimple, please contact: RGPOGrants@ucop.edu.

Attachments

Appendix 1: Frequently Asked Questions
Provides additional information for applicants

Appendix 2: Instructions for Submission of Letters of Intent
Provides detailed steps for LOI preparation and submission

Appendix 2A: Project Personnel Roles – Definitions, Guidelines, and Biosketch Requirements
Provides definitions of allowed roles

Appendix 3: Procedure for Administration of CRCC Fellowships
Provides information on post-award administration of funds

Appendix 4: Other RGPO Policies and Pre-Award Requirements
Provides compliance guidelines that will be required of all proposals nominated for funding

Updated Program Announcements, FAQs and RFP clarifications (if any), and applicant webinar information will be posted on the CRCC page of the [UCRI website](). To ensure LOI and proposal submissions meet all program requirements, PIs and grant administrators are strongly encouraged to check the website for any program updates prior to submission:
http://ucop.edu/research-initiatives/programs/crcc/index.html

Appendix 1:
CRCC Fellowship Grants
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
Version Dated: December 1, 2025

Please reference the Request for Proposals (for Award Year 2026) for program requirements

This document is a supplement to the Cancer Research Coordinating Committee (CRCC) Request for Proposals (RFP) and is intended to provide additional guidance to applicants. Based on questions we receive, it may be updated and applicants are responsible for checking the CRCC website for updates.

Letters of Intent (LOIs) are due Thursday, January 22, 2026 at 12:00 NOON Pacific Time
Full Proposals are due Tuesday, April 2, 2026 at 12:00 NOON Pacific Time

<u>**How to Apply**</u>:
All application materials must be submitted online via SmartSimple. On the SmartSimple home page (*https://rgpogrants.ucop.edu*), log in to your account (or create one if you are a new user), click "Available Funding Opportunities," and then select "CRCC 2026 – Fellowships." **Applicants are required to submit an LOI as the first step in the application process**. The full proposal materials are available only after approval of the LOI. Additional instructions regarding LOI submission are in *Appendix 2* of the RFP dated December 1, 2025.

<u>Eligibility</u>

1. **Can a Masters student apply?**
   The predoctoral fellowship is only open to students enrolled in doctoral (or equivalent) programs. Students enrolled in terminal Masters programs are not eligible.

2. **Are clinical researchers eligible?**
   Clinical researchers are eligible provided they meet the criteria described in question 1.

3. **Can CRCC funds be used to conduct clinical trials?**
   No, CRCC funds cannot be used to fund clinical trials or pay for patient care costs.

4. **How should I develop and write my research plan?**
   The predoctoral student or Postdoctoral Scholar applicant is the PI and author of the proposal, and should take primary responsibility for developing the detailed research plan. You are expected to incorporate guidance from your mentor in developing the scope of the research to ensure it fulfills the degree requirements of your department. Proposals written by the mentor on your behalf will receive low priority.

5. **Do I have to be a US citizen to apply?**
   No. U.S. citizenship is not required to receive a CRCC Fellowship; however, finalists must be legally authorized to work in the United States.

6. **Can a UC faculty member serve as mentor to more than one applicant?**
   Yes, a UC faculty member may have more than one mentee (fellowship applicant) apply in a particular year.

7. **Does overlapping funding from another fellowship or research position affect the eligibility or amount of this fellowship?**
   If you have other overlapping fellowship funding, this award amount may be reduced as part of the review of Other Support. If you are a predoctoral applicant and have questions about tuition and fees, please check with your campus Graduate Division or Graduate Dean's Office. Tuition, fees, and policies may change from year to year subject to the Regents of the University of California, and campuses may differ.

Proposal Submission and Application Guidelines

8. **Does the LOI need to be submitted through the campus Contracts & Grants or Sponsored Projects Office?**
   No, LOIs do not need to be submitted through the C&G or SPO. A signature from an institutional signing official is not required for LOI submission.

9. **I missed the deadline to submit an LOI, can I still submit a full proposal without the LOI?**
   No. Unfortunately, we are unable to accept LOIs after the deadline, and only approved LOIs may proceed to the full proposal stage.

10. **Can I submit more than one LOI?**
    No. Only one LOI per applicant PI is allowed.

11. **Who is my campus signing official?**
    Your full proposal must be submitted through your campus Contracts & Grants / Sponsored Projects Office. Most campuses require a minimum of 5 working days in advance of the proposal submission deadline to review and submit the proposal. The signing official is the individual who is authorized to act for your UC campus and will electronically submit your full application on your behalf. For help identifying the correct individual in your campus Contracts & Grants / Sponsored Projects Office, you may contact your department administrator. Please adhere to all campus-specific instructions and timelines for submitting your proposal to obtain approval before the proposal submission deadline in the RFP. In accordance with your campus guidelines, you may be asked to add any required campus administrators to the "PI assistant" role on your proposal.

12. **Do I have to get permission from my campus to submit a proposal?**
    Yes. The completed proposal is submitted by the campus Contracts and Grants (C&G) Office or Sponsored Projects Office (SPO).These signatures are not required at the LOI stage. The PI is responsible for obtaining all required signatures and following campus proposal submission procedures for full proposal submission.

13. **My LOI was accepted for full proposal submission. Is the LOI binding or can I make changes?**
The LOI should fairly present your research topic and proposed activities. Updates and adjustments may be made to the proposed scope and abstract when the full proposal is submitted. Once the LOI is approved, the PI cannot be changed in the full proposal. All full proposals are reviewed again for eligibility. Proposals that diverge dramatically from the LOI such that they no longer meet the program guidelines may not be forwarded for review.

Allowable Costs and Fellowship Budget

14. **Is the predoctoral fellowship paid as a UC Graduate Student Researcher (GSR) appointment?**
No, the predoctoral fellowship provides $75,000 annually to cover student tuition and fees, with the remaining funds to be paid as a monthly stipend to the student. An additional $5,000 is allocated as an institutional allowance.

15. **Can the award funds be used for anything other than the approved budget?**
No. Please see the Budget Guidelines in the RFP for allowable costs. Any unobligated or unexpended funds remaining at the expiration or termination of this award must be returned to UCOP within 90 days of the end of the approved fellowship period. Extensions beyond the approved award end date are not allowed.

Review and Selection

16. **How will I know if my LOI is accepted?**
All PIs who submit an LOI will receive an email by the Notification of LOI Decision date indicated in the RFP. You may log in to SmartSimple at any time after submitting your LOI to review its status. PIs with approved LOIs will automatically be given access to the full application materials in SmartSimple.

17. **I still have questions. Who can I consult for further information?**
For programmatic questions related to the research scope, your award or future funding opportunities, please contact: UCRI@ucop.edu. For questions related to the administration of a grant or reporting procedures, please contact: RGPOGrants@ucop.edu.

Please check our [website](#) for updates to this document and other program announcements.

UC Cancer Research Coordinating Committee
Appendix 2: Letter of Intent Submission Instructions
2026 Fellowships
Version dated: December 1, 2025

The University of California (UC) Office of the President is pleased to provide applicant instructions for submission of a Letter of Intent (LOI) to the *2026-27 Cancer Research Coordinating Committee (CRCC) Awards Request for Proposals* released on December 1, 2025. Submission and approval of a LOI is required to submit a full proposal to this Request for Proposals (RFP). LOIs must be submitted electronically **by January 22, 2026 before 12:00 noon Pacific Time in the SmartSimple system**. We encourage early submission of LOIs. Please note: LOIs will not be accepted after the deadline.

OVERVIEW OF ONLINE LOI SUBMISSION PROCESS
The LOI must be submitted through SmartSimple at *https://rgpogrants.ucop.edu*. Applicants may submit LOIs via the online system any time between December 1, 2025 and January 22, 2026. The LOI submission must be **completed** (not merely initiated) by the 12:00 noon PT deadline. Therefore, plan ahead in preparing your submission.

Step 1: Applicant Registration with SmartSimple
Applicant Principal Investigators (PIs) must register as users of SmartSimple to submit an LOI and complete a proposal at *https://rgpogrants.ucop.edu*.

All Users Accessing SmartSimple for the First Time:
1. When accessing SmartSimple for the first time, all users should click the **"Register Here"** button under **"Principal Investigator Registration"** and follow the instructions to enter your institution, name, and contact information.
2. All University of California campuses are in the system; be sure to enter "University of California" in the search box to find the campus.
3. Your user account will then be created. You will receive an email with instructions to create a password and complete your account profile. Once you have completed this step, skip to Step 2: LOI Preparation.
4. If you see a pop-up message indicating that an account with your email address already exists, return to the main login page (*https://rgpogrants.ucop.edu*), and click the **"Forgot Password"** link. You will receive an email with a link and instructions to reset your password. **If you do not receive the password reset email within one hour, please contact us using the contact information at the end of this document. Make sure to check your spam or junk folder.**
   a. If you need to change the institution that your existing account is associated with, please email us at *RGPOGrants@ucop.edu*.

Returning Users*: Applicants who have previously registered with SmartSimple or are returning to complete an in-progress LOI should enter their username and password under **"Login"** and click the "**Login**" button on the SmartSimple homepage.
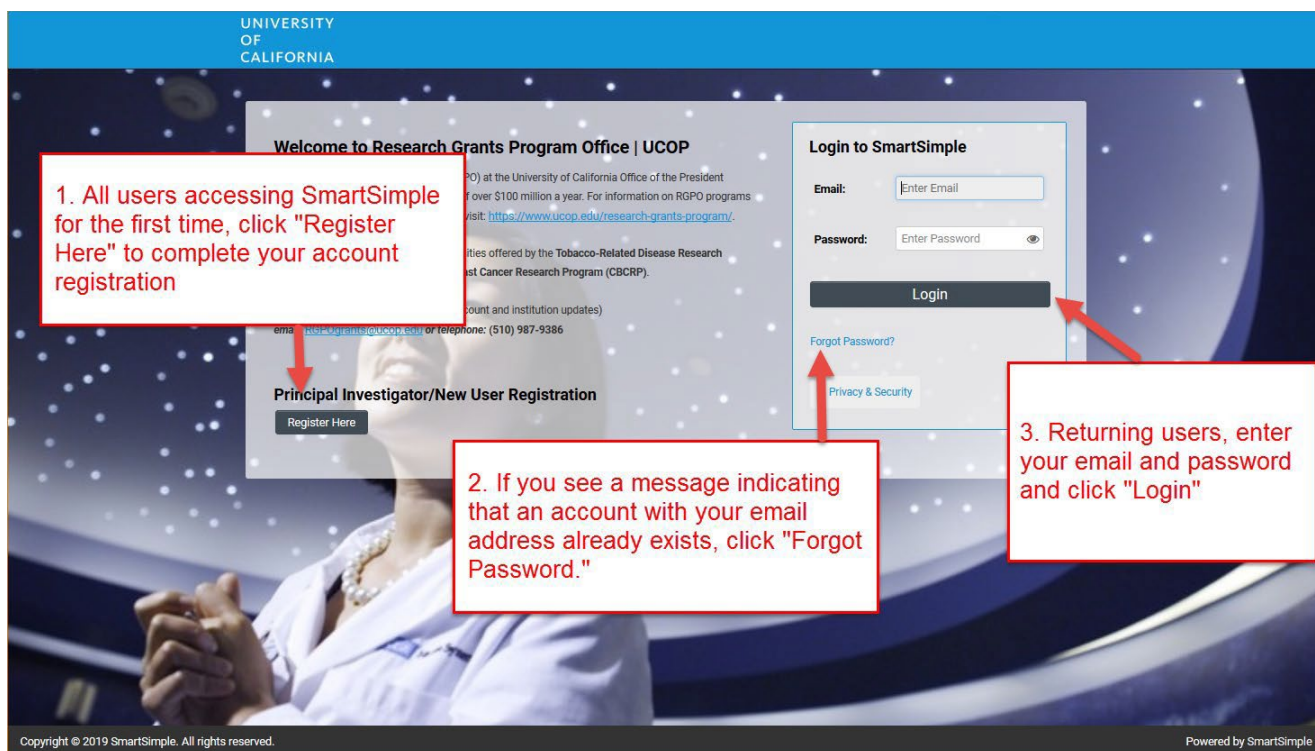
Step 2: LOI Preparation and Submission
1. Once logged into the system, click on "**Available Funding Opportunities.**"
2. Find the row for the award type you are interested in, then click **"Apply."** You will then be taken to the Eligibility Check.
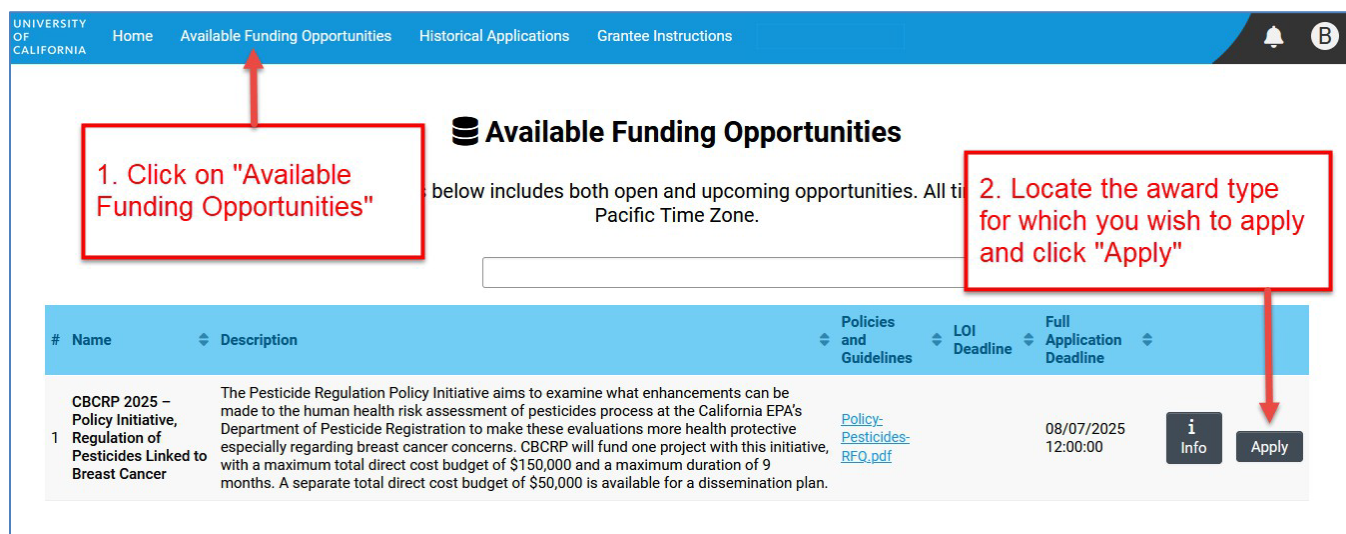
3. Complete the Eligibility Check and click **"Submit."**
   - The Eligibility Check contains a question regarding applicant eligibility. You must provide an answer to acknowledge that you meet all eligibility criteria listed. Upon submitting a "Yes**"** response, you will be able to start the LOI process. If your answer is "No," you are not eligible to apply.

Predoctoral Applicants—

> **ⓘ Eligibility Check**
> Before starting an application, please answer the following questions to make sure this is the right program for you.

Does your current academic appointment meet ALL of the following criteria?
1) You are a full-time pre-doctoral student enrolled in a degree program at a University of California campus;
2) Your mentor is a full-time independent faculty member at a University of California campus;
3) You have consulted with your mentor and your mentor is committed to your training.

○ Yes ○ No

[✓ Submit]

Postdoctoral Applicants—

> **ⓘ Eligibility Check**
> Before starting an application, please answer the following questions to make sure this is the right program for you.

Does your current academic appointment meet ALL of the following criteria?
1) You are a full-time post-doc at a University of California campus or will be by the award start date;
2) Your mentor is a full-time independent faculty member at a University of California campus;
3) You have consulted with your mentor and your mentor is committed to your training.

○ Yes ○ No

[✓ Submit]

4. Review the Helpful Tips, and click **"Continue"** to begin your LOI.

> **ⓘ Instructions**
> By clicking the Continue button below, you will begin your application.
>
> 1. **Helpful Tip #1:** As you work on your proposal, remember to frequently click the Save Draft button at the bottom of the application page. Any changes you make to the application will not be retained until you click the Save Draft button, so we recommend you click it often while working on your proposal.
> 2. **Helpful Tip #2:** You will be required to upload PDF files during this process. If your file name has special characters within it (e.g. period, dash, etc), the file may not upload properly. Remove all special characters from your file names before attempting to upload them.
>
> [⊕ Continue]

5. Once in the LOI interface, you will see two options on the left sidebar: Main and Notes.
   - **Main:** Click this tab to access each section of the LOI. Detailed instructions for each section are provided below.
   - **Notes:** Click this tab to create Notes for your LOI. Click **"+"** to add a new Note. Any Notes stored here are for the applicant's reference only and will not be reviewed by program staff. Please make sure to include all

relevant project information in the LOI sections under the Main tab.

6. In the "**Main"** tab**,** complete each section of the LOI and submit by the deadline. Please see below for detailed descriptions of each section. Note: Be sure to save your work often by clicking **"Save Draft."** You can access your LOI in later visits for additional work by selecting **"Open"** under **"In Progress Applications"** on the Home screen.

STEP BY STEP: DETAILED DESCRIPTIONS OF EACH LOI SECTION

1. Additional details for each section of the online LOI submission form are provided below. To begin the LOI, please select **Apply** or, if you have already started the LOI submission process and would like to make changes or complete your submission, select **"Open"** under **"In Progress Applications"** on the Home screen.

2. The LOI sections: **Title Page, Applicant/Principal Investigator, Project Information, Project Contacts, Budget, and Signature Page,** can be completed in any order and in any number of sessions prior to the deadline. You can move between sections by clicking directly on the section headings, or by clicking the "NEXT >" text at the bottom of the screen. Required fields are denoted with a red asterisk (*****). **Note:** Please be sure to save your work periodically or after each entry.

3. As you move through each section using the horizontal navigation bar, instructions are always available for download at the top of the page. If clicking on the applicant instructions moves you out of your LOI, the back button will not return you to the LOI submission. To return, go to the Home screen and select **"Open"** under **"In Progress Applications."**

4. Click the **"Preview"** button at any time to view, save, or print a pdf version of your LOI.

LOI Section: Title Page

- **Project Title:** Please enter the project title here (100 characters or fewer
  including spaces).
- **Project Duration (Year):** Using the drop-down menu, select the duration of the project. Refer to the call for applications for the award term. *You must enter this information before you can enter the amount requested on the Budget tab.*
- **Project End Date:** Please enter the project end date here, one year after the award start date.
- Predoctoral Applicants – **What is your graduation date (confirmed or anticipated)?:** Please enter your confirmed or anticipated graduation date.
- Postdoctoral Applicants – **Please specify date of initial or anticipated UC post-doctoral appointment:** Please enter the date of your initial UC post-doctoral appointment. Your initial date is the date at which you began or will begin your post-doctoral training in the mentor's lab. For applicants who have had two-year appointments that were subsequently extended, the initial date is the date of first appointment in the mentor's lab.

LOI Section: Applicant/Principal Investigator

Applicant/Principal Investigator information will be auto-populated from the "My Profile" section of your SmartSimple account. Please review this section for accuracy. To make changes to this information, click on your name in the upper right corner of the page, and select "My Profile." Save your changes. Return to the LOI by selecting **"Open"** under **"In Progress Applications"** on the Home screen. You can also go directly to the "My Profile" page in your account to make changes at any time.

LOI Section: Project Information

- **Lay Abstract:** An abstract is required. In the textbox provided, concisely summarize the proposed project. This abstract is limited to 2,400 characters including spaces (approximately 350 words) and should be written in a manner that is appropriate for a general scholarly audience. Information must be entered as text only (scientific notations, special characters, fonts, and other rich-text formatting cannot be saved or displayed). The abstract is non-confidential, and may be published or circulated by the Program.
- **Cancer Relevance and Impact:** Please describe the project's relevance to and impact on cancer prevention, education, or treatment. The description should be no more than 2400 characters in length (approximately 350 words) to avoid truncation.
- **Topic/Discipline:** Please select from the drop-down the topic or discipline that most closely aligns with your research.
- **Specific Aims:** Please describe the specific aims for this project. Your description should be no more than 2400 characters in length (approximately 350 words) to avoid truncation.
- **CSO Research Type(s) and Sub-Type(s):** Please select the CSO Types and corresponding Sub-Type(s) that best represent your project.

LOI Section: Project Contacts

- **Project Personnel:** You **MUST** add all project personnel, including the Principal Investigator of the project. Click **"Enter Project Personnel."** A separate window will open. Using the **"+"** button, enter the names and details of all project personnel. Add rows until you have added all project personnel. Click **"Save"** to save your changes. Click **"Close"** to return to the full application.
    - **Role on Project:** For each personnel, select their role on the project from the drop-down list. IMPORTANT: See *Appendix 2A* for the list of allowed roles on CRCC awards.
    - **PI/Co-PI column**: For single PI awards, please select the Principal Investigator on the project from the drop-down menu in this column. The predoctoral student or postdoctoral scholar is the Principal Investigator.
    - **Upload Personnel Biosketches**: Once you close the Project Personnel window and return to Project Contacts tab, you will see a display of your Personnel. Click **Save Draft**, then click the **Upload** button to upload the biosketch of the person named in the first row, and repeat the biosketch upload process for each Personnel listed. Then click "**Save Draft**" to display a link to the biosketch that you uploaded. *Biosketches are required at the LOI stage.*

LOI Section: Budget

- **Amount Requested:** Enter the estimated total amount requested (direct cost) for the project period. Click **"Save Draft,"** and the system will calculate the total amount requested. This amount is an estimate only and is not binding. If your LOI is approved, you may adjust the amount(s) in the full application stage. Hint: You must first select the "project duration" on the Title Page in order for the system to display the budget line(s) per project period.

LOI Section: Signature Page

All applicants must certify that that the statements provided in the LOI are true, complete, and accurate to the best of the applicant's knowledge. The applicant is aware that any false, fictitious, or fraudulent statements or claims may subject me to criminal, civil, or administrative penalties. The applicant agrees to accept responsibility for the scientific conduct of the project and to provide the required progress reports if a grant is awarded as a result of this application.

- **Applicant Signature: Check the box to certify the information in your LOI.**

- **Signee:** Type your full name into the field.
- **Date:** Select date on which you have signed the LOI. *(Tip: click "Save Draft" after you've selected the date.)*

Review your LOI: Preview button
Click the "Preview" button (upper left corner) to view, print, or save your LOI submission as a PDF.

Submit your LOI
Click the "**Submit LOI**" button to submit your LOI to the program. If you decide not to submit the LOI and no longer want to be considered for this funding opportunity, you may wish to withdraw your LOI. Clicking on **"Withdraw"** will completely remove the LOI record from your account. In lieu of "Withdraw" you can choose not to submit a completed LOI.

Confirming Status of Your Submitted LOI
Following the submission of an LOI to SmartSimple, applicants will receive an email confirming receipt of the application. The email confirmation typically arrives within a few minutes (the length of time may be greater near the submission deadline). If you do not receive the SmartSimple confirmation email within an hour of your submission, please contact us using the contact information provided at the end of this document. You can also confirm the status of your LOI submission by going to your SmartSimple home page, under the **"Home"** link in the upper right corner and clicking on **"Submitted/Under Review Applications."**

Questions and Technical Support

Should you have any questions regarding your application, please contact:

- UC Research Initiatives at *UCRI@ucop.edu* regarding program scope, priorities, and eligibility.
- Research Grants Program Office at *RGPOGrants@ucop.edu* regarding application and pre/post-award procedures, and technical questions regarding SmartSimple.

For the most up-to-date application and review cycle information refer to the following website: *http://ucop.edu/research-initiatives/programs/crcc/*

Appendix 2A:
Project Personnel Roles – Definitions, Guidelines, and Biosketch Requirements
Version Dated: December 1, 2025

The Cancer Research Coordinating Committee (CRCC) Fellowship allows the following roles.

Role on Project	Definition	Biosketch Required?
Applicant Principal Investigator	The Applicant Principal Investigator (PI) is the applicant predoctoral student or Postdoctoral Scholar and lead investigator on a grant. They execute the research project, serve as the project's main contact, and are responsible for providing progress and other reports to RGPO.	Yes
Dissertation Advisor	For predoctoral applicants, the Dissertation Advisor is the primary mentor. The Dissertation Advisor is the UC faculty member who will serve as the supervisor and advisor to the predoctoral Applicant PI for the duration of the Fellowship, and who will devote adequate time and effort to ensure the Fellow receives the support necessary to complete the research project and to progress to degree.	Yes
Research Advisor	For Postdoctoral Scholar applicants, the Research Advisor is the primary mentor. The Research Advisor is the UC faculty member who will serve as the supervisor and advisor to the postdoctoral Applicant PI for the duration of the Fellowship, and who will devote adequate time and effort to ensure the Fellow receives the support necessary to complete the research project. For predoctoral student applicants, the Research Advisor may serve as a secondary advisor, providing additional guidance and support alongside the Dissertation Advisor.	Yes
Mentor	For Postdoctoral Scholar applicants, the Mentor is a UC faculty member who may serve as a secondary advisor, providing guidance and support alongside the Research Advisor.	Yes

A Role on Project must be selected for each individual listed in the Project Personnel table in SmartSimple, which can be found on the Project Contacts tab of the application. Other roles that you may see as options in SmartSimple may not be used for CRCC awards.

Note that all required biosketches are uploaded directly to the Project Personnel table at the letter of intent stage.

Appendix 3:
Procedure for Administration of CRCC Fellowships

I. Restrictions on the use of a Cancer Research Coordinating Committee (CRCC) Fellowship:
   A. The following expenses may <u>not</u> be charged to a CRCC grant account:
      1) Salary items for: Faculty; supplementation of regular or visiting academic personnel salaries; clerical assistance or consultants; individuals in the Professional Research Series
      2) Subcontracts
      3) Clinical trials
      4) Costs for patient care
      5) Office, duplication and communication expenses
      6) Periodical subscriptions
      7) Preparation and publication of textbooks
      8) Books not needed for completion of the research
      9) Patent execution costs
      10) Membership fees
      11) Indirect cost recovery

   B. The following expenses may <u>not</u> be charged to a CRCC grant account unless they have been specifically approved in the application budget:
      1) Equipment purchases and expenses for equipment maintenance and service contracts
      2) Personal computers, computer hardware and/or software
      3) Consultant expenses; if approved, expenditures must be made within California

   C. Budget changes of any amount require prior approval from CRCC program staff. No funds may be transferred into the equipment budget line item unless prior approval from the CRCC is obtained. Some budget changes may require a formal budget change request per the *RGPO Grants Administration Manual*.

II. Questions regarding the use of CRCC grant funds for a particular expense should be directed to RGPOGrants@ucop.edu.

III. No additions will be made to the award amount for unanticipated increases in salaries or benefits; budget modification requests must be made in accordance with I.C. above.

IV. The CRCC expects that the funds provided will be used for a full one or two years of research by the Principal Investigator. The CRCC will not provide funds for a partial year of research. The funds may not be transferred to another researcher. The Principal Investigator should not accept the award if there is a likelihood of leaving the University within the award period.

V. Equipment authorized by CRCC must be purchased prior to the last 120 days of the term of the grant. All equipment or inventorial items of a permanent nature which are purchased under a research grant shall become the property of the University department or appropriate administrative unit as soon as the grantee's need for them has passed.

VI. The CRCC will not consider requests for funds to meet overdrafts incurred on Cancer Research funds.

VII. All scientific publications and other products from this research must acknowledge the funding support from University of California, with specific reference to the Cancer Research Coordinating Committee and the referenced grant ID number. Publications based on funding received from this award are subject to the University's Open Access Policy. To facilitate compliance with this requirement, publications may be uploaded to the CRCC repository on eScholarship: https://escholarship.org/uc/ucri_crcc.

VIII. Awards are made for one or two years only unless specifically noted in the final award letter. No funds may be expended beyond the approved end date. No Cost Extensions are not allowed for CRCC Fellowship Grants. CRCC grant funds remaining at the end of the approved award period must be returned to the UC Cancer Research Coordinating Committee account from which it was transferred by the local campus Accounting Office at the end of the award (within 120 days of the end of the approved performance period). Return of funds instructions will be provided at award closure.

IX. The Principal Investigator is responsible for the timely submission of progress and fiscal reports, the 4-Year Outcomes Report, and any other reports as requested.

The progress and financial reports must be submitted 90 days after the expiration of the award to UC Research Initiatives in accordance with instructions provided by RGPOGrants@ucop.edu. In addition, CRCC grant recipients are required to submit an outcomes report documenting the outcomes and impact of the research grant 4 years after the award start date. Instructions for completing and submitting reporting forms will be provided at a future date.

Questions about any of these provisions should be addressed to RGPOGrants@ucop.edu.

Last updated: November 19, 2025

Appendix 4:
Other RGPO Policies and Pre-Award Requirements

The following relevant policies and requirements for awards made by the UCOP Research Grants Program Office (RGPO) apply to all proposals nominated for funding. These requirements are outlined in the formal "pre-funding" notification that will be sent to applicants nominated for funding by the peer review and ranking process, and this appendix may not include <u>all</u> pre-award requirements.

Condition of Award for UC Faculty
In accordance with University of California policy, investigators applying from a UC campus must submit proposals through their campus contracts and grants office ("Policy on the Requirement to Submit Proposals and to Receive Awards for Grants and Contracts through the University," Office of the President, December 15, 1994"). Investigators from other UC locations or from the national laboratories should apply through their institution's contracts and grants office. Investigators with a joint or multi-location appointment should consult the eligibility guidelines in the RFP to determine through which location they are eligible to apply.

Human Material and Animal Subjects
Approvals for use of human subjects and material, animals, and toxic substances are not required at the time of application. When such approvals are applicable to the research, applicants must apply to the appropriate board or committee as soon as possible in order to expedite the start of the research, and you must do so within 30 days of notification that an award has been offered. Applicants may formally request an extension of this deadline if justified by specific circumstances of the research. All reasonable efforts must be made to obtain appropriate approvals in a timely fashion. Projects that do not obtain the necessary approvals in a timely manner may have their funding reduced or withdrawn.

For multicampus collaborations with research requiring IRB approval, the *Memorandum of Understanding* governing reliance across the UC campuses allows an IRB at any of the UC campuses to rely upon the review and approval (or determination of exemption) of human subject research by an IRB at another UC campus. Each campus IRB can assist with any questions related to taking the lead or relying on other UC campus IRB reviews. Please note that each study location is still responsible for obtaining other applicable ancillary approvals such as Conflict of Interest, Radiation Safety, etc. Contact your Campus IRB Reliance Coordinator for more information about the UC IRB reliance process.

Publications Acknowledgement and Open Access
All scientific publications and other products from a RGPO-funded research project must acknowledge the funding support from UC Office of the President, with reference to the specific funding program (e.g., CRCC, MRPI, LFRP) and the assigned grant ID number.

RGPO is committed to disseminating research as widely as possible to promote the public benefit. All publications based on funding received from RGPO are subject to the *University's Open Access Policy*. To assist the RGPO in disseminating and archiving the articles, the grantee institution and all researchers on the grant will deposit an electronic copy of all publications in the

[UC Publication Management System](#), UC's open access repository promptly after publication. Notwithstanding the above, this policy does not in any way prescribe or limit the venue of publication.

Deposition of Equipment and Supplies at the End of the Grant

Equipment purchases made by projects funded by the research program must be made by UC campuses and are the property of the UC Regents. Special permission must be sought in advance to purchase equipment for a non-UC campus or entity. In the rare event it is approved, the disposition of the equipment must follow RGPO rules.

Appeals of Funding Decisions

RGPO strives to resolve issues raised throughout the grantmaking lifecycle from funding decisions to project closeout. Before submitting an appeal or grievance, applicants are encouraged to discuss their concerns with the appropriate program officer or program director.

The only basis on which an appeal regarding the funding decision of a grant application will be considered is in the case of an alleged error in, or violation of the peer review procedures and/or process. Appeals based on substantive disagreement with the peer review evaluation will not be considered. In such cases, applicants may resubmit applications in a subsequent grant cycle.

Applicant appeals must be made to the program within 30 days of the funding notification. If discussions with the program do not satisfactorily resolve an applicant's issue, either the applicant or the program may contact the RGPO Executive Director for resolution. If resolution is not achieved, or if the applicant believes that a violation has occurred that has not been adequately addressed through these efforts, a formal appeal may be filed with the Vice President of Research and Innovation.

Other Requirements

Upon request, awardees must supply the following information or documents:

1. Supply approved indirect (F&A) rate agreements as of the grant's start date and any derived budget calculations.
2. Supply any missing application forms or materials, including detailed budgets and justifications for any subcontract(s).
3. IRB or IACUC applications or approvals pertaining to the award.
4. Resolution of any scientific overlap issues with other grants or pending applications.
5. Resolution of any Review Committee and Program recommendations, including specific aims, award budget, or duration.
6. Modify the title and lay abstract, if requested.

All grant recipients must abide by other applicable pre- and post-award requirements pertaining to Cost Share, Indirect Cost Rates, Monitoring & Payment of Subcontracts, Conflict of Interest, Disclosure of Violations, Return of Interest, Equipment and Residual Supplies, Records Retention, Open Access, and Reporting.

Last updated: 11/14/2024