

**University of Massachusetts Boston & Dana-Farber/Harvard Cancer Center
Partnership to Advance Cancer Health**

REQUEST FOR GRANT APPLICATIONS

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| SPONSOR: | University of Massachusetts, Boston (UMass Boston) – Dana-Farber/Harvard Cancer Center (DF/HCC) Comprehensive Partnership to Advance Cancer Health (CPACH) (U54) Grant |
| FUNDING SOURCE: | Federal |
| AWARD LEVEL: | Seed Grants (up to \$50,000 in direct costs for 6 months) |

The UMB–DF/HCC Partnership aims to develop strong cancer research programs to advance scientific understanding of cancer and its impact across all communities.

The goal of the Partnership is to:

- improve opportunities for students, fellows and scientists in basic and population sciences; and
- develop resources toward improving health for all.

For more information about the Partnership, visit www.umb-dfhcc.org.

IMPORTANT DATES

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| Application Deadline: | January 28, 2026 by 11:59 PM EST |
| Anticipated Award Date: | March 2, 2026 |

OVERVIEW

The purpose of the seed grant program is to award projects that provide support for pioneering research at early stages of development that focuses on cancer sciences. This innovative mechanism is designed for research that can provide preliminary data for preparation of larger applications, such as U54 pilot or full projects or at the R21 or R15 level. Potential fundable projects under this mechanism include, but are not limited to:

- small observational studies to generate hypotheses;
- purchase and analysis of datasets for preliminary analyses;
- conducting metaanalyses for design of future studies; and
- studies that include key experiments that could provide feasibility for larger studies.

All applications must:

- be led by an investigators at UMass Boston and an investigator at DF/HCC;
- focus on an aspect of cancer; and
- result in preliminary data to prepare for larger grant proposals.

APPLICATION INFORMATION

- A. Title Page** (limited to 1 page) including: title of the project, names of investigators from both sides of the Partnership, brief abstract stating why this project is high risk and (potentially) high gain, the 1-2 specific aims, and a proposed timeline for the project.

IRB/IACUC approval: State whether IRB or IACUC approval will be required for completion of the project and, if yes, include the status of IRB/IACUC approval for the proposed project. Note that due to the short duration of this seed grant funding, applications in need of IRB or IACUC approval will have to comply with this requirement expeditiously.

- B. Research Strategy** (limited to 3 pages) including:

- potential impact (high risk/potential high gain)
- scientific rationale based on literature;
- description of how this project relates to the overall priorities of the Partnership;
- Approach; description of experimental methods/study design;
- clear delineation of components of project to be conducted at each institution; and
- description of how the proposed project could lead external funding (i.e. pilot/full project funding from the Partnership or external funding).

- C. Biosketches:** Current NIH biosketches for all Key Personnel using the [PHS 398 Biographical Sketch Format Page](#).

- D. Budget:** The proposed budget should be outlined in direct costs only. DF/HCC and UMass Boston collaborators must complete separate budgets which, when combined, do not exceed the award amount in direct costs. These budgets should be roughly equivalent. Budgets should be submitted on the [NIH 398 Detailed Budget for Initial Budget Period Format Page \(fp4\)](#) and the [PHS 398 Budget for Entire Proposed Project Period Format Page \(fp5\)](#) with detailed budget justifications included. UMB investigators must work with their ORSP DRA to complete the ORSP

workbook and budget justification (NIH template available from your DRA). Please ensure that all salary information is correct and that the DRA has reviewed your budget justification. *No cost extensions will be made available if funds are not spent.*

REVIEW CRITERIA

Applications will be reviewed by a committee and each application will be scored on the following criteria:

Impact: Project is high risk and (potentially) high impact.

Investigators: The PIs, collaborators, and other key personnel have the necessary experience and expertise to accomplish the goals of the proposed research project.

Approach: The overall strategy, methodology, and analyses are well-reasoned and appropriate to accomplish the specific aims of the project within the proposed timeline.

Projects that include opportunity for participation by students and fellows are strongly encouraged.

AVAILABLE RESOURCES

Utilization of the Partnership cores is strongly recommended.

Research Education Core (REC)

The [Research Education Core](#) aims to increase the number of trainees who are interested in cancer/cancer disparities research. This core is available to investigators to assist with strategizing and developing a training plan that suits the nature of their proposal. Additionally, the REC can help investigators identify students to work as part of their research teams. To request an appointment, contact U54REC@umb.edu.

Research Design and Analysis Core (RDAC)

The [Research Design and Analysis Core](#) offers consultation to investigators who would like guidance regarding the design of their proposal. The RDAC can assist with research design, survey and measure development, qualitative research and feedback on quantitative and qualitative project feasibility. Population science and basic science research projects involving statistical analysis must consult with the RDAC to develop a strategy for study design and data analysis. To request an appointment, contact Carol Lowenstein (Carol.Lowenstein@dfci.harvard.edu).

Genomics Core

The [Genomics Core](#) assists investigators who wish to incorporate high-throughput NextGen sequencing studies in their study design. Funds are available to help develop incubator projects responding to this RFA for consideration for pilot or full project funding. To request an appointment, contact Jill Macoska (jill.macoska@umb.edu).

Outreach Core

The [Outreach Core](#) aims to maximize the dissemination and implementation of evidence-based strategies to promote cancer prevention behaviors in faith-based and other community settings, provide training opportunities for students in outreach research, and offer resources and support to new and ongoing research projects. The Outreach Core participates in the NCI National Outreach Network (NON) activities, including cross-cutting activities in biobanking. To request an appointment, contact Shoba Ramanadhan (Sramanadhan@hsph.harvard.edu), Tiffany Donaldson (tiffany.donaldson@umb.edu) and Sara Minsky (sara_minsky@dfci.harvard.edu).

ELIGIBILITY & REQUIREMENTS

- PIs must be appointed as faculty at their respective institutions; post-doctoral fellows are not permitted to serve as PIs on proposals. Research scientists at DF/HCC institutions and research professors at UMB are eligible to serve as PIs.
- Investigators may not a) submit an application if they have received Partnership project funding within the last two years, or b) submit more than one application.
- Investigators affiliated with DF/HCC may apply to become DF/HCC members. To apply for membership, visit www.dfhcc.harvard.edu/membership.

Interested faculty who do not have a UMass Boston or a DF/HCC collaborator may request assistance from the Partnership at u54partnership@umb.edu.

This is a joint application. All materials must be a single PDF file and submitted to the Partnership at u54partnership@umb.edu.