

PEDIATRIC CANCER RESEARCH FOUNDATION

RESEARCH GRANT MANUAL

2026 REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS



Institutional Priorities Overview

The Pediatric Cancer Research Foundation's (PCRF) [vision](#) is to make it possible for all children facing childhood cancers to beat their disease and achieve their full potential so they can live happy, healthy, productive futures. Achieving this vision requires both honoring the progress we've made and addressing the obstacles that stand before us.

To drive meaningful change, PCRF is guided by three institutional priorities: **Powering Research, Equitable Care, and Survivorship & Mental Health**. These priorities bring us closer to overcoming pediatric cancer and enhancing the quality of life for all children and families impacted by this disease.

In 2025, PCRF is currently funding over \$2.7 million in research and programmatic support. As we move forward, we remain steadfast in our commitment to changing outcomes for patients and their families through innovative research.

Our investments prioritize the development of more effective therapies with fewer short- and long-term side effects, while also exploring the use of **AI and advanced technologies** to accelerate discovery and improve patient outcomes. In parallel, PCRF continues to expand support for **clinical trials and research that address disparities in care**, ensuring advancements are accessible and effective for children of all ages, backgrounds, and communities.

Looking Ahead: The 2026 PCRF Grant Solicitation

For the **2026 grant cycle**, PCRF will open funding **exclusively for Emerging Investigator Grants**, reflecting our commitment to supporting the next generation of pediatric cancer researchers and strengthening the future research pipeline.

These grants are designed to empower early-career investigators pursuing innovative, high-potential research aligned with PCRF's institutional priorities and focused on improving outcomes for children with cancer.

PCRF plans to **reopen the full grant cycle in 2027**, including **Translational Research Grants, Legacy Researcher Grants**, and additional funding opportunities. This phased approach allows PCRF to continue investing strategically supporting emerging talent now, while preparing for broader research investments in the next cycle.

By investing in early-career investigators today and expanding opportunities in future cycles, PCRF is building a strong, sustainable foundation for progress in pediatric cancer research.

Together, we are transforming possibility into progress and moving closer to a future where every child has the chance to beat cancer and live a full and vibrant life.

Research Grants Manual

The Pediatric Cancer Research Foundation (PCRF) is proud to support four types of research grant categories aligned with our core priorities: Powering Research, Equitable Care, and Survivorship & Mental Health. These focus areas drive decisions on funding groundbreaking research, ensuring equitable access to treatment, and enhancing support for survivors, all with the goal of improving outcomes for children affected by cancer.

Grant categories

For the **2026 grant cycle**, PCRF will **accept Letters of Intent (LOI) exclusively for Emerging Investigator Fellowship Grants**. This focused cycle underscores our commitment to supporting early-career researchers and cultivating the next generation of leaders in pediatric oncology research.

Emerging Investigator Fellowship Grants (up to \$75,000 for one year)

These grants are designed to support Post-Doctoral Fellowships and Clinical Investigator training for emerging pediatric cancer researchers to pursue exciting research ideas.

Applicants must have completed two years of their fellowship or not more than two years as a junior faculty instructor or assistant professor at the start of the award period. These grants encourage and cultivate the best and brightest researchers of the future.

PCRF will not accept grant application without an approved Letter of Intent (LOI). Please refer to the guidelines contained in this document for the specific guidelines.

The **full research grant cycle will reopen in 2027**.

Grant Review Criteria The probability of an advance in prevention, diagnosis or treatment for the near-term

- The novelty of the concept and strategy
- The clarity of presentation
- The overall plan for bringing the research findings to clinical application
- Experience, background, and qualifications of the investigators
- Adequacy of resources and environment (facilities, patients, etc.)

Collaborations

PCRF awards are intended to leverage the power of collaboration through multi-institutional, interdisciplinary approaches that address the greatest barriers to improving outcomes for infants, children, and adolescents suffering from cancer. As one institution or researcher cannot possess the necessary expertise in all steps of a particular project, collaborations among a team of investigators, consortia, and/or partnerships with industry are strongly encouraged and will be reviewed favorably.

Eligibility Criteria

- PCRF only funds non-profit institutions and they must be located in the US.
- PCRF does not fund for-profit organizations.
- PCRF does not have citizenship requirements for our investigators. However, the Principal Investigator needs to be employed by a non-profit U.S. institution that has an

affiliation with a hospital.

- Legacy Researcher Grant and Translational Grants require the applicant to be a PhD and/or MD.
- Emerging Investigator applicants must have completed two years of their fellowship, or not more than two years as a junior faculty instructor or assistant professor at the start of the award period.

Funding/Reports

Allowable Costs

- Personnel costs (including salary and fringe benefits) are limited to a base salary at or below the NIH Salary Cap, which is currently \$225,700 per year.
- Supplies
- Travel (restricted to nominal travel costs)
- Other expenses

Unallowable Costs

- PCRF does not typically fund equipment costs. If you are planning to request equipment in your application budget please contact the Rachael Kerchner at rkerchner@pcrf-kids.org prior to submission.
- Subawards are prohibited.
- No indirect costs will be funded. Funds awarded shall be used solely for the purposes specified in the application submitted for consideration and in strict compliance with the budget submitted with the application.

Resubmission Policy

Applicants may resubmit an application that advanced to the full proposal stage in a previous RFA cycle but was not selected for funding. The LOI must be marked as a resubmission within the ProposalCentral site. If invited to submit a full application, applicants will be asked to include a cover letter that addresses reviewer comments and outlines specific revisions. Resubmissions will compete with new proposals for funding consideration.

Grant Cycle/Payments

PCRF's grant cycle is based on a calendar year. All awards will be activated in January of the year following the application. PCRF does not allow delays in the start date of the awards.

A Letter of Agreement (LOA) will be uploaded into the deliverables section of ProposalCentral by PCRF. This document will require the signatures of both grantee and sponsoring institution.

Grant payments will be made upon final execution of the LOA and per the payment schedule outlined in the LOA. Typically, a payment equal to 50% of the award amount per year will be disbursed once the LOA has been signed. Another 45% will be disbursed upon review and approval of the mid-year reports as indicated in the LOA. PCRF will withhold 5% of the award amount each year until the required reports have been reviewed and approved by PCRF.

All payments will be made via wire transfer to the controller or other fiscal officer for the institution as indicated in the application. The institution will be responsible for disbursing the funds to the grantee in accordance with the approved budget.

Letter of Intent

PCRF requires the submission of a Letter of Intent (LOI). Researchers not previously funded by the foundation are typically eligible for funding at a lower level, up to \$75,000, aligned with the Emerging Investigator Fellowship level. PCRF will only fund one grant, per award type.

Selected researchers will be invited to submit a grant application via Proposal Central. Please refer to the deadlines on the PCRF website for the specific timeline for submission.

Page limitation

The Letter of Intent (LOI) should be no more than two pages in length (not including references and biosketch).

Institutional information and criteria

Provide the name of the Institution, Principal Investigator and their title. An institution may only submit one LOI per award type. Multiple LOIs should not be submitted by the same researcher.

Grant application

Indicate which funding opportunity you are applying for:

- Emerging Investigator Fellowship (up to \$75,000 per year for one year)

Research project

Provide both a Scientific and Lay Abstract. Define Area of research.

Provide a summary of your research proposal, including any preliminary data that supports the hypothesis being tested or the objective.

Address the following questions by stating each question below followed by your answer (LOIs that do not follow this requirement will not be considered):

- How does this proposal fit the institute priorities and objectives of PCRF?
- What need/issue are you addressing?
- Why is your approach novel?
- What outcomes do you hope to achieve?
- What is your proposed timeframe and evidence of the project's ability to produce an impact on patients?
- Why are you and your institution the best equipped to carry out this activity?

Include Principal Investigator's biosketch with submission.

Budget

State the amount of funding you are requesting. Refer to funding guidelines listed in grant categories above.

Deadline to submit

PCRF will accept LOI between February 1, 2026 and April 1, 2026 at 5 PM (PST). All LOIs must be submitted via ProposalCentral. No extension will be granted to this deadline

Application process

All grant applications must be submitted through ProposalCentral once you have received an invitation to submit an application. This invitation will indicate the budget amount you should include in your grant application. Please do not include an amount over what was indicated in your invitation.

Login to ProposalCentral

- Visit <https://proposalcentral.altum.com> and log in as an applicant.
- If you don't know or forget your password, use the 'Forgot Your Username/Password?' link to set/reset.
- Your email will work as your username. *Make sure to use the email where your invitation to apply was sent.*
- Once logged in, click into your Proposals tab.
- The application will be listed. Click the 'edit' button to open the application.
- Once you press the 'Save' button on the application, it will become interactive and you can move between sections.

Application Format

The following information is required to submit a complete application. Numbers correspond to the application sections that appear on the left side of the online application.

1. *Title Page* - Enter the title of the research project. The title is limited to 150 characters (including spaces). Click “Yes” or “No” if you are submitting the same application you have submitted before.
2. *Download templates and instructions* - This section contains PCRF Grants manual which contains information on the organization, types of funding available, how to submit an application along with all PCRF grant policies and procedures. Click the “Download” button to the left of the description to save the file to your own computer. Any templates will need to be completed, converted to a PDF file and uploaded back into Section 14.
3. *Enable other users access this proposal* - This section allows you to give other users access to your grant application at varying levels of permissions. This is where you would add Sponsored Projects personnel or a Co-PI to give them the necessary access to your application.
4. *Applicant/PI contact information* - Complete the required information for the applicant. You can edit your Professional Profile from here to complete the required data.
5. *List Key Personnel other than PI* - Complete the required information for other key personnel on this research proposal other than the PI. This information includes their role and percent effort on the project, contact information, address and describing the key personnel's involvement in the project (250 characters or less including spaces).
6. *Institution and Contacts* – Make sure the correct institution is displayed. Institutional information should automatically populate in this section, then enter information for main contacts at institution including Signing Official, Fiscal Officer, Research Administrator, and Development Officer.
7. *Letters of Reference* (*This only relates to Emerging Fellowship applications*) - Enter the email address of the referee/mentor in the text box. An email will be sent to the referee/mentor with a link to provide a letter of recommendation for your grant application. Once the reference is provided, the response column will display Submitted. The minimum number of responses is 1, the maximum number of responses is 3.
8. *Lay Abstract & Scientific Summary /Area of Research* - In 2,500 characters or less including spaces, provide a lay summary that describes the proposed project (no special characters or formatting) and addresses the public health relevance of this research. Additionally, in 2,500 characters or less, provide a scientific summary of project (no special characters or formatting). To ensure you comply with each of the character limits, it is advised to draft your summary in Microsoft

Word or similar program which can give you a character count. Select a keyword from the list provided or add one as indicated on this page.

9. *Budget Detail (keep in mind that PCRF does not cover indirect costs and subawards are not allowed)* - Enter budget amounts for each grant period, include amounts for personnel costs, supplies and materials, equipment (refer to restrictions and guidelines regarding any equipment request), travel and other expenses. Keep in mind the budget cycle should begin in January each year.
Please be advised the budget(s) should not exceed the amount(s) stated on the invitation to apply.
10. *Budget Summary & Justification* - A summary of the proposed budget appears here (fields are auto-populated per the data entered in Section 9). Enter your budget justification in the text box. Limit responses to 15,000 characters including spaces. Longer responses will be truncated. Please refer to the sample budget justification included in *Section 2 - Download templates and instructions*.
11. *Current and Pending Support* - Add all current, pending and past three years of Support. For each Other Support entry, select if there is overlap with this application and if so provide a description of the overlap. To add your entries, click the “+” button. All entries previously saved in your Professional Profile plus a selection for “N/A” will appear. Please select the applicable support, complete all required entries and save the Support entry. If you do not already have Other Support entered in your profile, click the “Edit Professional Profile” button to open your profile. Click the red “Add” button to add each Support entry. Once you have entered all support, please click the “Return to LOI/Proposal” button to select the entries in your application using the “+” button.
12. *Organization Assurances* - Enter the assurance numbers for your institution. Do not insert the assurance numbers for any collaborating institution in the space. By providing the appropriate information in this section and signing the face page, your organization is declaring that it will comply with PHS policy regarding all human subject, animal welfare and recombinant DNA related to your project.
13. *Publications* - List all of the papers published by the principal investigator in referenced journals within the last 24 months. You may also add up to five additional papers published in the last 25-60 months most pertinent to the proposed project.
14. *Upload Attachments* - Prepare and upload the following documents into your application in PDF format:
 - Signed Signature Page(s): This page will be automatically generated as part of your application. It will have to be printed, signed and uploaded by the appropriate Sponsored Projects or similar office at your institution.
 - Biosketches: A biosketch must be provided for all key personnel. Please use the most recent NIH format. The biosketch should be uploaded in PDF format into this section.
 - *Proposed Research Project* – The research plan should be limited to 10 pages (not including the human and vertebrate animal sections, references,

work environment and resources). Make sure you include the title of the project, hypothesis, specific aims, preliminary studies, research design & methods, human and vertebrate animal sections, references, work environment and resources. When formatting your research project document; a paper size no larger than standard letter paper size (8 1/2" x 11") and at least one-half inch margins (1/2") - top, bottom, left, and right - for all pages.

- Human Subject and vertebrate animal approval letters: Upload all applicable approval letters and informed consent.

15. *PI Data Sheet* - Enter PI Demographics information from professional profile. Click "Edit Profile" to make changes. This information will not be used as part of the review process.
16. *Validation* - Validate the application on ProposalCentral. This is an essential step and checks for required data and attachments. You will not be able to submit your application if all the required information has not been provided. An application that has not been validated cannot be submitted.
17. *Signature Pages* - After successfully passing the validation check and completing all proposal sections, click "Print Signature Pages" and Print Signature Pages with Attachments" to preview your application.
18. *Submit Application* - To submit your Proposal, please click the 'Submit' button. You will be unable to submit if you have not provided all the required information. Any missing information will be listed on the screen. If your submission is successful, you will receive a confirmation message on the screen and a confirmation email will be sent to you confirming your submission.

Grant Review

Scientific peer review is conducted by PCRF's External Review Committee according to the review criteria summarized above. This committee will submit their review and scoring of the grants based on scientific merit to the PCRF Scientific Affairs Committee. Based on these reviews the Scientific Affairs Committee will make recommendations to PCRF Board of Directors. The Board of Directors will determine the number and dollar amount of awards to be funded based on available funding. All applications are considered confidential and are available only to the members of the PCRF administrative personnel, Scientific Affairs and Review Committees. **The external review critiques of applications will not be provided to applicants.**

February: Letter of Intent Submission Request

April 1st: Letter of Intent Deadline

Mid-April: Invitation Notification to Submit Full Grant Proposal

July 1st: Deadline for Full Grant Proposal Submission (no extensions granted)

July – September: External Review Committee Full Grant Submission Review

November: External/Internal Committee Top Proposal Review

December: Top Grant Proposals Selected*

*Awards will be made pending the availability of funds.

January: Approved Grant Proposals Funded

Post Award Policies and Procedures

Reports

Scientific Progress and financial reports are required semi-annually and are due to PCRF 45 days after the end of the period each six months. Reports must be uploaded into the deliverables section of ProposalCentral. At its sole discretion, PCRF may request, more periodic or quarterly progress reports. Reports which are more than thirty (30) days late may result in suspension of funds.

The scientific report must include a one or two paragraph summary written for the lay public. The scientific report should include a description of the accomplishments as they relate to the specific aims included in your grant application. All final reports should include a hyperlink list of all publications referencing PCRF support. Grantees are required to utilize the PCRF progress report face page when submitting these reports which can be found in the deliverables section under templates. Progress reports should be no more than 5 pages in length (not including any references).

The financial report requires signature by an authorized official of the Grantee organization certifying that the expenditures reported are in accordance with the terms and conditions as set forth in the LOA and the policies and procedures set forth in this manual. The final grant payment shall be made only after receipt and approval of both the scientific and financial reports. Any requests for payment made more than ninety (90) days after the conclusion of the grant will not be honored.

PCRF forms located in the deliverables template section must be used for all semi-annual and final reports. All reports should be uploaded into ProposalCentral. Reports submitted via email will not be accepted. The appropriate contact information for the individual responsible for the financial reporting will be required in the space provided in the LOA.

These reports shall be reviewed by the PCRF Scientific Affairs Committee in order to evaluate the research progress of each grantee.

Expenditure of Funds

Funds are to be used only for the purpose described in the grant proposal and in accordance with the approved budget. In no event can the Grantee organization charge an administrative or management fee to this Grant. Rebudgeting will be allowed up to \$500 within the approved cost categories. No rebudgeting is allowed into a new cost category. Any budgetary modifications over \$500 or into a new cost category require PCRF's prior written approval. Requests should be submitted in writing, include a revised budget, justification for this change and be sent to: rkerchner@pcrf-kids.org.

The Grantee shall return to PCRF any unexpended funds:

- At the end of the grant period, or
- If the Principal Investigator terminates his/her relationship with the grantee organization, or
- If the Grantee loses its exemption from Federal income taxes under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.
- If PCRF terminates the award.

If PCRF terminates an award funds charged to the grant that are determined not in accordance with the described purpose of this award or that are not in accordance with the approved budget should be returned to PCRF along with any unexpended funds.

No funds provided by PCRF may be used for any political campaign, or to support attempts to influence legislation by any governmental body.

Expenses charged against this grant may not be incurred prior to the effective date of the grant or subsequent to the termination date and may be incurred only as necessary to carry out the purpose and activities of the approved program and budget.

The Grantee and their institution are responsible for the expenditure of funds and for maintaining adequate supporting records.

Equipment

PCRF defines equipment as an article of tangible nonexpendable personal property having a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost of \$5,000 or more per unit. Unless specifically included in the approved budget equipment costs are unallowable. If approved by PCRF, equipment or property purchased with grant funds, if any, shall be the property of the Grantee so long as it is not diverted from the purposes for which the grant was made and remains under the control of the Principal Investigator. If the Principal Investigator leaves the Grantee organization and/or the use of grant funds is changed without approval, the equipment or property reverts to PCRF at its option.

Reports and Publications

Any publication resulting from this funding should be acknowledged as "Supported by a research grant from the Pediatric Cancer Research Foundation." Any news release by the public relations department or its equivalent at the sponsoring institution related to this funding should be acknowledged as "Supported by the Pediatric Cancer Research Foundation". Reports, materials and articles resulting from this Grant may be copyrighted by the Grantee or by the Principal Investigator, in accordance with the policies of the Grantee toward the goal of obtaining the widest dissemination of such reports, materials and articles. PCRF requires acknowledgement in all publication and reserves the right to use such publications at no cost to PCRF.

Carry Forward Requests

For multi-year awards, the Principal Investigator may request that funds be carried forward into the next budget period. These requests should be submitted in writing with an explanation of why there are unexpended funds, along with a separate budget, and justification for the use of funds. Funds cannot be carried forward between two different award types. Requests should be submitted by an institutional official and sent via email to Rachael Kerchner, Grants Manager, at rkerchner@pcrf-kids.org with the Award ID number and Principal Investigator name included in the subject line *no less than 45 days after the award end date*.

No Cost Time Extensions

No cost time extensions require PCRF prior approval. Requests should be submitted *no less than 30 days prior to the project end date*. Requests must be submitted in writing via email to Rachael Kerchner, Grants Manager at rkerchner@pcrf-kids.org by the

institutional official with the award ID number and Principal Investigator name included in the subject line. These requests should include title of the project, a brief report of progress to date, the balance of funds remaining, an explanation of why the extension is necessary and the requested length of the extension.

Termination of Award

Either party may terminate this agreement by providing three months advance written notice to the other party. PCRF may terminate an award in consultation with the PCRF Board.

Indemnification

Grantee shall indemnify, defend, and hold harmless PCRF and its officers, directors, employees, agents, affiliates, successors and assigns, and contractors (collectively, "Indemnified Party") from and against any and all claims, liabilities, damages, losses, costs, expenses, penalties, fines, interest, demands, actions, suits, settlements, awards and judgments, including without limitation reasonable attorneys' fees and costs, incurred by Indemnified Party arising from or relating to (whether or not alleged by a third party): (a) Grantee's performance of the LOA and the policies and procedures set forth in this manual (collectively, the "Obligations") or breach of any of the Obligations; (b) the intentional misconduct or [grossly] negligent acts or omissions of Grantee, its employees, agents, contractors, or consultants in connection with the performance of the Obligations; or (c) any failure by Grantee, its employees, agents, contractors, or consultants to comply with any applicable federal, state, or local laws, regulations, or codes in the performance of the Obligations. This provision shall survive the termination of this Agreement.

Sale or Transfer of Technology

Should the Grantee sell, license or transfer the technology or intellectual property developed under this Grant, PCRF shall be entitled to compensation paid to the Grantee organization as a result of the sale, license, or transfer. Grantee institution agrees to compensate PCRF 30% of compensation paid to the Grantee organization as a result of the sale, license, or transfer.

Transfers

If a Primary Investigator grantee transfers or terminates from the sponsoring institution during the course of the grant award period, the grant will immediately terminate and can be only be transferred to another institution with the written approval of PCRF's Scientific Committee and Board of Directors. The transfer, if approved, will require a close out financial report from the original institution. The new institution will be required to submit an official request along with a cost category budget to be reviewed and approved by PCRF's Scientific Committee prior to commencement of this research project at the new institution.

Questions and additional Information

If you have any additional questions or need more information after review this manual, please feel free to contact us. Questions related to the grants process should be sent to rkerchner@pcrf-kids.org.