

Request for Proposals: 2023 ALK Positive/LCRF Lung Cancer Research Award on Innovative Therapeutic Strategies to Treat ALK Positive Lung Cancers

1. Program Summary

Lung cancer is responsible for more deaths worldwide than any other cancer, accounting for an estimated 130,180 deaths annually in the United States alone.¹ The last 10-15 years have seen accelerated clinical trials and FDA approvals of targeted therapies for non-small cell lung carcinoma (NSCLC) in part due to advances in molecular profiling of tumors. *EML4-ALK* rearrangements were identified as molecular markers in NSCLC in 2007. Tyrosine Kinase inhibitors (TKIs) targeting ALK alterations were first approved by the FDA in 2011. Subsequently, four additional TKIs for ALK have been approved. Despite this substantial progress, none of these treatments are considered curative. Resistance invariably develops, leaving chemotherapy and clinical trials as the only therapeutic options. Immunotherapy in the form of PD-1/PD-L1 inhibitors has revolutionized the treatment of many forms of lung cancer but has not proven effective in the treatment of most oncogene-driven lung cancers including ALK-positive NSCLC.

Over 500,000 ALK positive NSCLC patients are believed to be living worldwide. Unfortunately, the available drugs are not curative, and thousands of these individuals will die each year. The development of an effective and durable alternative treatment will be addressing a desperate need. This grant mechanism will focus on furthering the development of novel therapies, including immunotherapeutic approaches, for patients with lung tumors harboring ALK translocations.

Work supported through this mechanism will address important mechanistic questions and developmental therapeutics across the care continuum and has the potential to increase survivorship. Given the specific interest in the development of novel therapies that could benefit this group of patients in the relatively near-term, a clinical trial must be associated with the project. In addition, proposals for this grant should include a program of correlative, translational research that will enhance the understanding of ALK-driven lung cancers.

Working in conjunction with ALK Positive Inc., we encourage applications on a wide variety of topics related to ALK-positive lung cancer, including but not limited to the following:

- The proposal must be associated with a clinical trial.
- The trial should investigate novel new treatment approaches (i.e., next generation drugs or agents with novel mechanisms of action), and/or novel combinations. There is a particular interest in the development of effective immunotherapy, but therapy can include targeted agents, antibody-drug conjugates, radiopharmaceuticals, vaccines, cell therapies etc., if there is a reasonably strong rationale supporting the investigation.
- The proposal must have a program of basic and/or translational work associated with the clinical trial. Topics of interest can include but are not limited to mechanisms of resistance, studies on the immune landscape and tumor microenvironment, biology and mechanisms of tumor progression, identification of biomarkers to predict sensitivity to specific therapies, methods for optimizing treatment, etc.
- The proposal must include studies in patients with ALK-driven lung cancer. Other oncogene-driven lung cancers can also be included depending on the focus of the clinical trial/study. For example, if the study is focused on immunotherapy, it could potentially include other patients with oncogene-driven lung cancer in addition to those that are ALK positive; however, there must be a significant

¹ American Cancer Society. Cancer Facts & Figures 2020. Atlanta: American Cancer Society; 2020.

portion of ALK patients included. If the clinical trial has an ALK-specific study arm then funding will be provided only for the ALK specific portion of the trial.

2. Eligibility Criteria

Investigators must be affiliated with a non-profit academic or research institution. An applicant must have a faculty appointment and may have any level of research experience. Trainees are not eligible to apply.

Applicants from US-based and international institutions are eligible to apply and may hold any residency/citizenship status.

3. Budget Requirements

The maximum award amount is \$2,000,000 for a period of three years. Additional budget requirements and considerations include the following:

- Since a clinical trial is required for the project, it is suggested that additional funding be obtained from a funding partner (e.g. Foundation, Pharma, Biotech) to help support the clinical trial costs. The funding partner can provide the majority of support for the clinical trial. The ALK Positive/LCRF grant will be the primary source of funding for the associated research. Additional secondary funding (e.g., for core services support) is also permitted.
- Up to 50% of the grant (i.e., \$1,000,000 over 3 years) may be allocated to support the scientific translational work (e.g., biomarker development) associated with the proposal.
- There is no limit on the amount of salary support that may be requested. However, appropriate justification for all budget items is required. Any salary requests of more than 20% of the total budget must be explicitly justified.
- Any equipment costs must be limited and directly applicable to the research project (i.e., large, general equipment costs are not permitted).
- Direct patient care costs reimbursable by other sources may not be included.
- Travel and publication costs are permitted.
- Up to 10% of the funding from this award may be used to support institutional indirect / facilities and administrative costs.

4. Data Sharing and Open Access Policy

ALK Positive/LCRF are committed to promoting open science by helping to increase access to investigators' findings and improving collaboration and data sharing among the lung cancer research community. Accordingly, it is a condition of ALK Positive/LCRF funding that all peer-reviewed articles supported in whole or in part by ALK Positive/LCRF funds must be made available in the PubMed Central online archive no later than twelve months after publication. In addition, grantees must indicate explicitly in all reports, publications, and other research communications whether the data, methods used in the analysis, and materials used to conduct the research will be made available to any researcher for purposes of reproducing the results or replicating the procedure. At the time of submission of the full proposal, all investigators must indicate if they will or will not make their data, analytic methods, and study materials available to other researchers.

5. Application Instructions and Requirements:

- A. Go to <https://proposalcentral.com/> and login under the "Application Login" section. After logging in, complete your Professional Profile before starting an application. If you are already registered with ProposalCentral, access the site and log in with your Username and Password. If you do not have an account yet, please click on "Need an account?" and follow the instructions.
- B. Click on the "Grant Opportunities" Tab.

- C. A list of applications will be displayed. The list of applications can be filtered for just this organization by clicking “Filter by Grant Maker” at the top and selecting “Lung Cancer Research Foundation” in the drop-down menu. Find the “2023 ALK Positive/LCRF Lung Cancer Research Award on Innovative Therapeutic Strategies to Treat ALK Positive Lung Cancers” and click the “Apply Now” button in the “Apply Column”.
- D. See the deadlines for the LOI stage, if applicable, and the Proposal stage. **All deadlines are in US Eastern Time.** If a document icon is showing, you can click on it to download it. This includes necessary information about the deadline from the grant maker.
- E. Click the link or download the document in the Contact Information column. Clicking the link opens an email to the program administrator. If a document is provided instead, it includes the grant maker contact information.

All applications for funding must be submitted online via Proposal Central. Applicants may only apply for one LCRF grant per grant cycle. Any applications for an extension of a previously awarded grant require resubmission as a new complete application (full proposal) and must include an update describing the progress made during the prior award period. Text should be Arial, Times New Roman, Palantino Linotype, Courier New, Georgia, or Helvetica 11-point font or higher. Margins should not be less than 0.5” on standard letter paper (8 ½” x 11”), and you must verify the margins on the documents that you upload.

The following application components are required for a complete submission:

Full Proposal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Information • Demographics • Eligibility Statement from the Institution • NIH Biosketch • Lay Summary • Specific Aims (one page in length) • Narrative (six-pages maximum): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Background and Significance ○ Preliminary Data ○ Experimental Approach ○ References (not included in page-limit) • Clinical Trial Protocol <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Patient Consent Form ○ Patient Impact Summary (half page in length) • Success Factors (half page in length) • Timeline • Future Plans (half page in length) • Budget • Letter(s) of Support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Cancer Center Director or Chief of Hematology/Oncology ○ co-PI(s) ○ Funding source for clinical trial

Additional Considerations:

- Funding will only be awarded to one PI, not to a team.
- Cancer Center Director or Chief of Hematology/Oncology’s Letter of support should affirm the following statements:
 - The applicant will be officially affiliated with or employed by the institution during the grant period.
 - There is adequate institutional space and equipment to accomplish the proposed project.
 - The applicant’s institution confirms his/her commitment to and provision of institutional space and equipment for the grantee.

6. Timeline

- Full proposal submission deadline: September 1, 2023
- Notification of award: November 2023
- Project start: December 1, 2023

7. Evaluation of Applications

Submissions will be evaluated for sound scientific rationale, study design, feasibility, and creativity/innovation. Similar to an NIH R21 award, reviewers at the full proposal stage will be asked to provide an impact score reflecting their assessment of the likelihood for the project to exert a sustained, powerful influence on the field of lung cancer research.

Application review process:



8. Award Notification and Announcement

All applicants will be notified of their award status by the date specified in the Timeline section above. Regrettably, due to the high volume of submissions, LCRF is not able to provide feedback on LOIs or proposals that are not selected to receive an award.

9. Post-award Reporting Requirements

During the funding period, all investigators are required to submit reports including the following:

Report Type	Due Date
6-month Progress Report	At conclusion of 6 months of funding
Year 1 Annual Report	At conclusion of year one of the grant term
18-month Progress Report	At conclusion of 18 months of funding
Year 2 Annual Report	At conclusion of year two of the grant term
30-month Progress Report	At conclusion of 30 months of funding
Final Report (includes financial summary report)	Within 60 days of conclusion of the grant term

Additionally, a check-in call with the ALK Positive and LCRF is required upon completion of all progress and annual reports.

Awardees are required to share their research progress with the ALK Positive and LCRF supporters as requested.

All reporting is required to be done in ProposalCentral, and additional reports may be assigned when project terms are amended (e.g., in the case of a no-cost extension). Receipt of the second and third year of funding is contingent upon submission and approval of the interim progress report at the conclusion of the first and second years of the grant term.

10. Inquiries

For questions, please contact the LCRF office at grants@lcrf.org or via phone at +1 (212) 588-1580, or if you have any difficulties registering, logging in, or creating your application, contact ProposalCentral Customer Support at: (800) 875-2562 (Toll-free U.S. and Canada), +1 (703) 964-5840 (Direct Dial International).