

MSK Genomic Instability in Breast Cancer Specialized Program of Research Excellence (SPORE) Career Enhancement Program (CEP) Awards

OBJECTIVE

The aim of this RFA is to identify, train, and develop talented individuals to become successful translational investigators in the fields of breast cancer, DNA repair and genomic instability. The program will support two individuals per year for up to two years per awardee, based on competitive renewal. Awardees will be integrated into the MSK Genomic Instability in Breast Cancer SPORE to monitor their progress and ensure successful outcome of their research projects. The support of the SPORE Career Enhancement Program will enable the recipient to establish a program of successful investigation and prepare them for obtaining independent peer-reviewed funding.

FUNDING

The program will support two individuals per year for up to two years per awardee, based on competitive renewal. The maximum award will be \$50,000 per year. Applicants will be funded for a maximum of two years with funding for the second-year contingent on documented significant progress during the first year of funding.

ELIGIBILITY

Investigators at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, Rockefeller University, and Weill Cornell Medical Center are eligible. Funds from this program may be used to support junior faculty or established investigators who wish to enhance or refocus their careers on translational research relevant to breast cancer. Eligible candidates will include individuals with the following qualifications:

- MD, PhD, or MD/PhD degree. This program does not support predoctoral or postdoctoral fellows. However, advanced postdoctoral or clinical fellows who provide a letter from an institution stating that the candidate will be joining its faculty within the year are eligible for this program.
- Candidates should have presented their work at national scientific meetings and submitted manuscripts for publication in peer-reviewed journals.
- Candidates must have demonstrated a strong aptitude for and interest in biomedical research, as evidenced by experience in the laboratory or other relevant research. Exceptional candidates that do not currently have an active laboratory program may also apply, provided they have a strong scientific/laboratory background, and are working with a laboratory mentor who can provide them with the necessary guidance and resources to develop a hypothesis that can be tested in the clinical setting.
- Demonstrated interest in breast cancer research or with previous research experience in a nationally recognized laboratory devoted to the study of breast cancer, DNA repair and/or genomic instability. Candidates who may be working on cancers that share common genetic or biochemical targets, or that pose analogous experimental or clinical challenges, so that a transition to working on breast cancer would be feasible and advantageous, may also be considered.

- Investigators supported by NCI career development awards (K series) may also be eligible for support through this program. Investigators with previous R01 or equivalent level of funding related to breast translational research are **not eligible**.

PROPOSALS

Proposals cannot be currently funded by an extramural agency or foundation. The budget is limited to \$50,000 per year, direct costs. Indirect costs are not allowed. Applications must be in 11-point Arial. Margins must be at least 0.50 inches wide on all sides of each page. Proposals must be submitted as a single PDF document. The following should be included.

1. Cover Page including applicant's name, staff rank, and amount requested.
2. A 1-page career statement stating applicant's overall career goal and specific career objectives over the next 1 to 5 years.
3. Research Plan (3-page limit) including the following: Title, Specific Aims, Background and Significance, Innovation, and Approach (including Rigor and Reproducibility). Tables and figures are included within the 3-page limit; references do not fall within the limit.
4. Biosketches for all key personnel (NIH-specified format)
5. Estimated Budget. Detailed budget and budget justification will be requested after initial review.
6. Letter of support from primary mentor

Proposals must be submitted electronically to SPORE Coordinator Tiara Williamson (BreastSpore@mskcc.org) by March 3rd, 2025.

REVIEW

Applications will be reviewed and scored by the CEP Committee, which is composed of a diverse pool of experienced individuals with laboratory and clinical expertise. The CEP Co-Directors will assign two reviewers from the CEP Committee (one primary and one secondary reviewer) for each proposal. The initial selection will be based on the following criteria:

1. Scientific merit of the proposed project, including its value for the SPORE program
2. Qualifications of the investigator
3. Qualifications of the mentor
4. Potential of the candidate to make a substantive contribution to translational research relevant to breast carcinoma.

The CEP directors and committee will evaluate and score the applications. Final funding decisions will be made in by this group plus the SPORE Principal Investigators. IRB approval (or waiver) will be required before funding if the study involves human subjects and IACUC approval will be necessary for any projects involving vertebrate animals. KEY DATES Applications are due on February 3rd, 2025. Awards will be announced, and funding will commence in April 2025.

ADDITIONAL BUDGET INFORMATION: Up to \$50K direct costs for one year, may be renewable for an additional year based on review Expenditures allowed:

- Research supplies and animal maintenance.
- Technical assistance.

- Publication costs, including reprints.
- Data analysis.
- Special fees (pathology, photography, etc.).
- Stipends for postdoctoral fellows.

The following expenditures will not be considered:

- Secretary or administrative personnel.
 - Office equipment or supplies.
- Laboratory equipment or computers.
- Tuition.
- Foreign travel.
- Honoraria and travel expenditures.
- Recruitment.
- Patient care charges (requires justification if a clinical trial is proposed).
- Non-medical or personal services to patients.

OBLIGATIONS OF AWARDEES

Authors must cite the MSK SPORE in Breast Cancer (P50 CA247749) in the funding acknowledgements when submitting a manuscript based on research supported, in whole or in part, by this SPORE Career Enhancement Program. Written progress and final reports will be required at the end of each funding period. Any questions regarding this solicitation can be directed to the SPORE Coordinator Tiara Williamson (BreastSpore@mskcc.org).