

American Cancer Society Institutional Research Grant (ACS IRG) Pilot Awards 2026 Request for Applications (RFA)

A. Overview

Timeline:

Date of Announcement:	July 14, 2026
NEW REQUIRED: Statement of Intent Due by 4pm CST:	August 13, 2026
Application Due by 4:00 pm CST:	September 10, 2026
Anticipated Award Decision Date:	November 30, 2026
Pilot Project Start Date:	January 1, 2027

Assumptions:

- These pilot awards are made possible by the American Cancer Society Institutional Research Grant received by Washington University in St. Louis (WashU) with Jason Weber, PhD as PI.
- Awards are dependent upon scientific merit. The number of awards may increase or decrease each year dependent upon scientific merit of the projects submitted for review.
- Up to **four** projects will be awarded up to **\$40,000 each (direct costs) for one year/non-renewable**.

B. Purpose

- Support the development of new investigators to conduct new independent cancer research.
- Foster direct relationships between funded institutions and the local American Cancer Society chapter.
- Support research by newly independent investigators in areas of special interest to the Society.

C. Eligibility

- **As of January 1, 2027 (date of award), applicants must be either:**
 - tenure track-bound or clinical track-bound Instructors at WashU, AND
 - **NEW:** within three (3) years of their initial appointment (*on or after January 1, 2024*)*
 - OR**
 - tenure track or clinical track Assistant Professors at WashU, AND
 - within six (6) years of their first independent research or faculty appointment at any institution (*on or after January 1, 2021*).
 - Postdoctoral fellows, research track investigators, and senior, tenured faculty members are not eligible to apply.
- ***NEW:** One award will be reserved for a meritorious project from an Instructor who began their position within three (3) years from January 1, 2027.
- Individuals who have previously received this award and individuals who already have independent, national competitive research grant funding from the NIH* (e.g., K99, R00, R01, R03, R21), ACS, NSF, Veterans Administration, etc. are not eligible.
 - * **As long as the applicant meets all other criteria, holders of personnel awards such as the NIH K series (except K99/R00), are eligible to receive pilot project money from the IRG.**
- Applicants who are not Siteman Cancer Center (SCC) members must apply for membership at the time of submission. Awards will be contingent upon acceptance of the applicant as a member. Membership review will be expedited as necessary. More information regarding the application process and benefits can be found on the [SCC Membership Information website](#). Questions regarding membership should be directed to sitemanmembership@wust.edu.

- Recipients of IRG pilot project grants are **not required to be U.S. citizens**. However, any applicant for IRG pilot project funding who is not a U.S. citizen must hold a visa that will allow them to remain in the U.S. long enough to complete the IRG pilot project and provide SCC with the appropriate documentation at the time of submission.

D. Required Statement of Intent (SOI) and General Application Guidelines

These are internal awards and are NOT submitted through the Office of Sponsored Research Services (OSRS).

NEW: SOI Guidelines:

- Submission of the Statement of Intent (SOI) form is required and due by 4pm CST on the due date listed on Page 1. The SOI form can be accessed via the ACS IRG page on Siteman's website or by [clicking here](#). The SOI is not formally reviewed and approval to submit a full application is automatic.

Application Guidelines:

- The required application forms can be found on the [SCC ACS IRG website](#).
- The completed application must be submitted through [proposalCENTRAL](#), an online submission website, by 4:00 pm CST on the due date listed on Page 1.
- This funding opportunity can be found on proposalCENTRAL under "Siteman Cancer Center".
- Late or incomplete applications will not be accepted. If you do not have a proposalCENTRAL account, you will need to access the website and create one for your submission.
- Applicants should use 11-point Arial font. Single spaced text is acceptable and there should be space between paragraphs.
- Applicant should type their name (Last Name, First Name) in the top left corner (header) of each page where indicated.
- It is best to **combine all pages into one document** and **print to PDF** versus saving to PDF. The applicant is responsible for reviewing the final document in proposalCENTRAL and ensuring no errors occurred in uploading.

E. Required Application Components

1. **Siteman Cancer Center ACS IRG Cover Sheet** ([Download from website](#) – Updated July 2026)
 - ACS and SCC require a description of your research project written in plain language. The purpose of the summary is to provide a clear overview of the research in straightforward, non-technical language to be shared with donors, the general public, and the media. Provide investigator information, as well as your mentor's name. It is important that applicants fully complete each section.
 - The Becker Library offers a variety of services and resources to assist applicants with making written materials easier to understand. For more information, visit the Becker Health Literacy and Communication webpage at: <https://becker.wustl.edu/services/health-literacy-communication/>.
2. **Application for a Pilot Project Grant** ([Download from website](#) – Updated July 2026)
 - **Biographical Information**
 - Be sure to complete the "Verification of Applicant Eligibility by Department Chair" section and include your department chair's signature as required on the first page of the biographical information form page.
 - "Other Research Support" should include ALL research support available to the applicant (including federal, non-federal, institutional, private industry, etc., currently funded, and pending). Other support information must include sponsor, sponsor's project number (if applicable), title of project, dates of award, percent effort, direct costs, and goal of project. If applicable, please note any overlap in support with this application.
 - **Project Title and Abstract (300-500 words)**
 - **Research Plan/Description of Research Proposed (Strict 6 page maximum)**

- Please paginate the research plan at the bottom of each page. The following headings and page limits are suggested:
 - Specific Aims (limit 1/2 page): State concisely the hypothesis to be tested and the specific aim(s) to be achieved during the grant period. The aims must be reasonable to achieve during the one-year period of grant support.
 - Background and Preliminary Investigations (limit 1.5 pages): Discuss the pertinent research findings that have been described in the scientific literature and how this proposal will add to these results. Also, discuss any preliminary data obtained by the applicant that are relevant to this proposal.
 - Experimental Design and Methods / Tables and Figures (limit 4 pages): Concisely present the experimental design and the methods to be used to accomplish the specific aims. Indicate how the results will be interpreted and how they will lead to future investigations. Well-documented experimental methods and standard procedures may be described very briefly or referenced, but novel experimental approaches should be described in more detail. Be sure to include any tables or figures relevant to your proposal (formerly in the appendix) in this section as well.

3. Budget Proposed

- The budget should be completed with as much detail as possible. A list of allowable expenditures can be found on the following page. A budget justification should be provided with detailed information regarding expenditures. Budgets may not exceed a total of \$40,000 in direct costs. Indirect costs are not allowable.

4. Appendix

- References (2 page maximum; authors may be abbreviated, reference titles optional)
- Letters of Support: Applicants must submit two letters of support - one from their department chair and one from their mentor.
 - Note: These support letters must clearly show the applicant has the appropriate training, ability, and time available to complete the proposed project.
- Biographical Sketch of Applicant - may submit the new SciENCv Common Form OR the previous NIH Biosketch format to satisfy this requirement.
- Approval Letters
 - Copies of submitted regulatory application forms (PRMC) or approval letters from myIRB or Human Research Protection Office (HRPO - *see note below regarding human research studies*), Radiation Safety Committee, Animal Studies Committee (*see note below regarding animal studies*), etc. if applicable.

Human Research Studies Note: All cancer-related research involving human subjects needs approval by the Human Research Protection Office (HRPO) and must first be reviewed and approved by the SCC Protocol Review and Monitoring Committee (PRMC). Approval by the PRMC and the HRPO must be obtained before any of the awarded funds will be made available and before the research can commence. Protocols must be submitted to the PRMC office on or before the submission deadline in order for applications to be reviewed by the ACS IRG Committee. Applicants are strongly advised to contact the SCC Protocol Development office (protocoldevelopment@wustl.edu) several weeks prior to the application deadline for assistance with submission of research protocol information to PRMC and HRPO. Any application submitted without prior human research protocol submission to the PRMC will not be reviewed. Regardless of delays incurred due to the PRMC/HRPO review process, there will be no extensions made on the terms of the grant.

Animal Studies Note: Please include an approved protocol from the animal studies committee, or a draft of your planned submission and an expected approval date. Animal approvals must be in place prior to the funding start date of January 1, 2027.

Budget Guidelines:

Expenditures Allowed:

- Research supplies and animal maintenance
- Technical assistance
- Domestic travel when necessary to carry out the proposed research program
- Publication costs, including reprints not to exceed \$500
- Costs of computer time
- Special fees (pathology, photography, etc.)
- Stipends for graduate students and postdoctoral assistants if their role is to promote and sustain the project presented by the junior faculty member
- Equipment costing less than \$2,000
- Registration fees at scientific meetings

Expenditures Not Allowed:

- Salary of Principal Investigator
- Secretarial/administrative salaries
- Student tuition and/or fees
- Foreign travel; (special consideration will be given for attendance at scientific meetings held in Canada or Mexico)
- Honoraria and travel expenses for visiting lecturers
- Per diem charges for hospital beds
- Non-medical services to patients (patient travel to a clinical site or patient incentives are allowable expenses)
- Construction, renovation, or maintenance of building/laboratory
- Books and periodicals
- Office and laboratory furniture
- Office equipment and supplies including laptop computers
- Rental of office or laboratory space
- Recruiting and relocation expenses
- Dues and membership fees in scientific societies
- Indirect costs

F. Terms of the Award

- Awardees will apply for membership at Siteman Cancer Center, attend WashU research seminars designated for career development throughout the year, and identify a research mentor through a letter of support at the time of application.
- Awardees must participate in the annual Siteman Cancer Research Symposium (generally held in the Fall) as a presenter (either podium or poster). This event features cancer research from all departments and all types of research, including basic, preclinical, clinical, and public health projects. Abstracts are encouraged from Instructors, Assistant Professors, and Associate Professors, as well as undergraduate students, predoctoral trainees, postdoctoral scholars, and fellows.
- **NEW:** No funding will be released prior to receipt of appropriate institutional compliance approvals (e.g. PRMS, IRB, IACUC, etc.). **Projects without necessary regulatory approvals in place 180 days following receipt of the Notice of Award will be reviewed by SCC leadership.** This may result in a change of award terms or forfeiture of ACS IRG funding. No aspect of the project can begin (including non-human subject research components) without documentation of all required approvals.
- The awardee will be expected to meet with their mentor periodically during the year of the award to review potential topics for grant proposals, review grant proposals, critique investigators' manuscripts, discuss techniques for recruitment of physicians, students, and postdoctoral scientists to their studies, and discuss personal and career advice, including how to balance conflicting obligations. Awardees who have difficulty identifying and/or securing a mentor will contact Dr. Jason Weber for assistance.

- Awardee shall notify SCC Administration (Steve Baer, steve.baer@wustl.edu) of each funded invention made by awardee within thirty (30) days after the disclosure of the funded invention to WashU's Office of Technology Management (OTM).
- The ACS requires interaction between the local ACS office and awardees. Awardees may be asked to allow local ACS staff and/or volunteers to tour their laboratories and/or may be asked to speak about their research at local meetings. Acceptance of this award means that you agree to participate in activities or interactions through direct request from the ACS or via participation in local events.
- Awardees will be required to submit to SCC a brief annual progress report describing the results of their work, as well as related publications, funding, and interactions with the local ACS office. Annual reports are required for five years, post-award.
- Awardees are strongly encouraged to attend at least one Plain Language Training session offered by the Center for Health and Science Communication at the Bernard Becker Medical Library. We want all SCC investigators to have the tools they need to clearly communicate the purpose and, ultimately, the accomplishments of their work with a broad audience, including sponsors, donors, and the general public.
- Publications, presentations, and/or posters related to or resulting from this award must acknowledge institutional and grant support from the Institutional Research Grant from the American Cancer Society.
- It is understood that the principal investigator, by the act of accepting this award, agrees to abide by the American Cancer Society's Institutional Research Grant Policies, including the Society's Patent Policy and Intellectual Property Rights policy, and failure to comply with such policies or with any other terms in connection with the grant may result in the suspension or cancellation of grant funding. ACS IRG policies can be downloaded from the [ACS IRG webpage](#).

G. Review Process

All applications will be evaluated by the ACS IRG Review Committee members. Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Significance: Does this study address an important cancer research problem? If the aims of the application are achieved, how will scientific knowledge be advanced? What will be the effect of these studies on the concepts or methods that drive this field? Would you consider this project translational research?
- Potential: If this project is successful, would it likely lead to external peer-reviewed funding? This is an important criterion in determining whether a project will be funded.
- Approach: Are the conceptual framework, design, methods, and analyses adequately developed, well-integrated, and appropriate to the aims of the project? Does the applicant acknowledge potential problem areas and consider alternative tactics?
- Innovation: Does the project employ novel concepts, approaches or method? Are the aims original and innovative? Does the project challenge existing paradigms or develop new methodologies or technologies?
- Investigator: Is the investigator appropriately trained and well suited to carry out this work? Is the work proposed appropriate to the experience level of the investigator? Is the investigator likely to continue cancer research? Will the investigator have the appropriate time to commit to this project?
- Environment: Is the mentor a suitable advisor for this project? Does the scientific environment in which the work will be done contribute to the probability of success? Are there necessary facilities available? Do the proposed experiments take advantage of unique features of the scientific environment or employ useful collaborative arrangements?

For any questions, please contact:

Steve Baer

Program Manager, Alvin J. Siteman Cancer Center

Email: steve.baer@wustl.edu