Massey Comprehensive Cancer Center
Virginia Commonwealth University
American Cancer Society
Institutional Research Grant (ACS-IRG)

Massey Comprehensive Cancer Center (Massey) announces the availability of the American Cancer Society Institutional Research Grant (ACS-IRG) for early-stage investigators at Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) and Virginia State University (VSU) to conduct cancer-related research projects.

Investigator Eligibility

- Only early-stage faculty members are eligible for an ACS-IRG pilot award. Early-stage Investigators are faculty within six years of their first independent faculty appointment or equivalent (e.g., Assistant Professor, Research Assistant Professor). An individual who is currently an Instructor/Postdoctoral Trainee, but will be appointed as an Assistant Professor by the award date is also eligible (a letter from the Department Chair is required).
- The applicant does not have to be a tenure track faculty member.
- The applicant must be an independent investigator.
- Investigators who have already received a peer-reviewed national research grant are not eligible to apply ($250,000+/year). NIH and other types of Career Development awards do not count as peer-reviewed national research grants for this purpose.
- Citizens, non-citizen nationals, and permanent residents of the United States and its possessions or territories are eligible. Recipients are not required to be US citizens; however, they must hold a visa that will allow them to remain in the US long enough to complete the ACS-IRG pilot project.
- Investigators who have previously been funded through the ACS-IRG and who have not obtained national funding for their research may request an additional year of ACS-IRG funding. In order to obtain the second-year funding, the research must be performed on the same project. New specific aims can be proposed, but it must be a continuation of the original project with the same title. The ACS-IRG review committee will require and review a progress report when considering the application for continued funding.
- Each applicant is required to consult with a biostatistician as part of the proposal to assist with design and statistical methods if applicable. Please contact Dr. Nolan Wages (wagesn@vcu.edu), director of the Massey Biostatistics Shared Resource, as soon as possible or visit the Biostatistics Shared Resource.
- The Office of Community Outreach and Engagement is readily available to assist research investigators who would like to engage a community champion in the development of their proposal. Community engagement is increasingly being required by external funding agencies and is highly recommended. Please contact (engagemassey@vcu.edu) to set an appointment for your consultation.

Research Project Criteria

- The ACS-IRG funds innovative cancer research projects that have the potential for future peer-reviewed funding.
- Research projects currently funded through a national research grant will not be accepted.
- A letter must be provided from a mentor who will provide guidance for the proposed research.

Funding Limits

An applicant PI can request up to $50,000 for their project.

Award Period

- The proposed award period for the ACS-IRG grant will be one year. If awardee receives external funding, ACS-IRG funding must be relinquished by external funding award date.

Submission Guidelines

- Funding Opportunity Announcement Release Date (September 28, 2026).
- Applicants should submit a non-binding letter of intent (LOI) by (November 1, 2026). This will assist the administration in preparing for reviewer assignments. Please use the LOI form provided via the submittable platform.
- All completed applications will be due on January 15, 2027
- All applications must include the items below, in order as listed.
- All applications must be submitted using the Submittable platform.
- The application PDF uploads should be formatted in 11 pt. Arial font (main text); 9pt. Arial font (figures, legends and tables).

1. **ACS-IRG Cover Page and Required Forms**
2. **Biosketches**— Use NIH Biosketch. Include any present or recently completed research support. Include biosketches of collaborators and mentors. Guidelines can be found on the NIH website (http://grants.nih.gov/grants/forms/biosketch.htm) - uploaded as a PDF to Submittable
3. **Research Strategy**
    a. Specific Aims—*Limit 1 Page (Uploaded as a PDF to Submittable)*
    b. Research Strategy—*Limit 6 Pages (Uploaded as a PDF to Submittable)*
        i. Significance
            1. Identify the importance of the problem or critical barrier to progress in the field that the proposed project addresses.
            2. Describe whether the prior research that served as the key support for the proposed project is rigorous?
            3. Identify how the proposed project will improve scientific knowledge, technical capability, and/or clinical practice in one or more broad fields.
            4. Identify how the concepts, methods, technologies, treatments, services, or preventative interventions that drive this field will be changed if the proposed aims are achieved.
        ii. Innovation
            1. Describe how the application challenges and seeks to shift current research or clinical practice paradigms.
            2. Describe any novel theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation or interventions to be developed or used, and any advantage over existing methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions.
            3. Describe any refinements, improvements, or new applications of theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions.

iii. Approach

1. Describe the overall strategy, methodology, and analyses to be used to accomplish the specific aims of the project. Include how the data will be collected, analyzed, and interpreted.
2. Describe and address the potential problems.
3. Describe any strategy to establish feasibility, and address the management of any high-risk aspects of the proposed work if the project is in the early stages of development.
4. Address any procedures, situations, or materials that may be hazardous to other research associates and identify the precautions to be taken.
5. Describe the preliminary studies, data, and or experience pertinent to this application.
6. Identify the potential problems, alternative strategies, and benchmarks for success anticipated to achieve the aims. Include a description of future directions for your research, as well as a project timeline.

iv. Environment

1. Describe how the scientific environment in which the project will be completed will contribute to the probability of success.
2. Describe how the project benefits from unique features of the scientific environment and/or subject populations?

c. Literature Citations *(Uploaded as a PDF to Submittable)*

4. **Budget and Budget Justification**— The applicant should use the budget table provided. Please include a separate budget justification PDF document with written justification for each category of expenses. (See Allowable and Non-allowable expenditures below). Budget Justifications can be uploaded as a PDF to Submittable.

Allowable expenditures include:	**Non-allowable expenditures include:**
▪ Research supplies and animal maintenance ▪ Technical assistance ▪ Domestic travel, when necessary to carry out the proposed research program ▪ Publication costs, including reprints ▪ Costs of computer time ▪ Special fees (e.g., pathology, photography) ▪ 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. Special justification is necessary for items exceeding this amount, and permission must be obtained from the Society's Extramural Grants Department for the purchase of such equipment. ▪ Registration fees at scientific meetings	▪ Secretarial/administrative salaries ▪ Investigator/faculty salary support ▪ Student Tuition &Fees ▪ Foreign travel; however, special consideration will be given for attendance at scientific meetings held in Canada or Mexico ▪ Books and periodicals ▪ Honoraria and travel expenses for visiting lecturers ▪ Per-diem charges for hospital beds ▪ Non-medical services to patients ▪ Construction, renovation, or maintenance of buildings/laboratories ▪ Office and laboratory furniture ▪ Office equipment and supplies ▪ Rental of office or laboratory space ▪ Recruiting and relocation expenses ▪ Membership dues ▪ Sub-contracts to institutions not affiliated with Massey Comprehensive Cancer Center

5. **Mentor Letter**— Please provide a letter of support from the mentor outlining their qualifications and prior mentor experience. Mentors should outline a plan that describes the nature of the supervision and mentoring that will occur during the proposed project period. Mentor letters can be uploaded as a PDF to Submittable.
6. **Progress Report**— For those applicants who are submitting for a second year of funding, include a progress report from year one. Progress Reports can be uploaded as a PDF to Submittable.

7. **Resubmissions**— There is no limit in the number of times that a grant may be resubmitted as long as the PI remains eligible. All investigators who resubmit a previous application must include a description of revisions made based on the feedback received (maximum 1 page). Resubmission feedback can be uploaded as a PDF to Submittable.

Submission Details

The deadline for submitting a completed ACS-IRG application is midnight on **January 15, 2027.**

Questions can be addressed to **Alex Haynes, Manager of Membership and Research Data Analyst, at haynesa4@vcu.edu or 305-915-4200.**