



## **Team Science/Multi-Project Pilot Awards Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)**

This Notice of Funding Opportunity Announcement (NOFO) is to support multi-project pilots designed develop preliminary data for larger NCI multi-project (P01/P50/U54 etc.) type submissions. PI(s) are required to submit a Statement of Intent (rolling call) which will be reviewed by Massey's Executive Committee and select applicants will be invited to submit a full application within eight weeks.

### **Purpose**

- This mechanism is meant to encourage the development of team-based initiatives by providing support for linked Multi-Project applications (e.g., P50, P01, U54).

### **Investigator Eligibility**

- Only applications submitted by well-established multiple principal investigator (MPI) teams are eligible. The contact PI of the pilot must be an NCI Cancer Center Support Grant (CCSG)-eligible Research Member (please verify with Massey Administration before applying by contacting Alex Haynes, haynesa4@vcu.edu).
- Effort between MPIs from must be comparable and well defined in multiple projects and all MPIs must contribute to the overall project in similar magnitude.
- An individual may submit only one application as PI or MPI per year. An individual is allowed to be a co-investigator, consultant, or mentor on multiple submissions.
- A faculty member currently funded in the role of PI or MPI by a Massey pilot research award is not eligible to submit an application to this opportunity unless their current award will end by the scheduled start date.

### **Award Information**

- Applications must include Multiple Principal Investigators Teams. At the time of Letter of Intent (LOI) submission, well-established scientific teams and projects are expected, with an anticipated NCI/NIH submission timeline within 12-24 months of receipt of Massey pilot funds.
- An Internal Advisory Board (IAB) must already be established and have met at least once prior to LOI submission. A Letter of Support is required from the IAB Chair summarizing feedback from their latest meeting.
- In addition to scientific progress, it is expected that there will be significant progress in the administration and organization of the planned extramural grant application throughout the duration of this award. The release of year 2 funds will be contingent on the following being accomplished during year 1 of funding:
  - Pre-application consultation meeting with the NCI/NIH.
  - Convening of an External Advisory Board and submission of their report
  - Presentation on progress with Massey Executive Committee.
- Total awards are dependent upon available funding. The number of awards and the award amount may increase or decrease each year dependent upon the budget and philanthropic funding available in any given year.

- It is expected that all proposals will consult and include a biostatistician from the Massey-supported Biostatistics Shared Resource as part of the proposal. Their role is to assist with design and statistical methods. 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.

### **Funding Limits**

- An applicant PI can request up to \$200,000 (\$100,000 per year).
- Second year funding is contingent on submission of a written progress report and a 12-month progress presentation

### **Award Period**

- The proposed award period for the Team Science Pilot is up to 24 months.

### **Letter of Intent (LOI) Submission Guidelines**

- A LOI must be submitted for the Team Science/Multi-Project Pilot. LOIs will be reviewed by the Massey Executive Committee within a month of receipt. The Team Science/Multi-Project Pilot LOI must include the following items:
  - Project Abstract (1-page) – *Uploaded to Submittable*
  - Specific Aims (1-Page) – *Uploaded to Submittable*
  - MPI Biosketches – *Uploaded to Submittable*
  - A Letter of Support is required from the Internal Advisory Board IAB Chair summarizing feedback from their latest meeting. – *Uploaded to Submittable*
  - A Letter from a biostatistician attesting that the applicant team has consulted with them regarding the proposal to assist with design and statistical methods if applicable. For biostatistical support, please contact Dr. Nolan Wages at wagesn@vcu.edu, or visit the Massey Biostatistics Shared Resource – *Uploaded to Submittable*

### **Submission Guidelines**

Following the submission of the LOI, if the Massey Executive Committee agrees to move forward with the application request the MPIs are required to provide the following documents.

- 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. 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
  - 2. 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. Explain the importance of the problem or critical barrier to progress in the field that the proposed project addresses.
        2. Explain the importance of the problem or critical barrier to progress in the field that the proposed project addresses.
        3. Describe 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. Explain 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. Explain any refinements, improvements, or new applications of theoretical concepts, approaches/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. Discuss potential problems, alternative strategies, and benchmarks for success anticipated to achieve the aims.
3. If the project is in the early stages of development, describe any strategy to establish feasibility, and address the management of any high-risk aspects of the proposed work.
4. All applicants are expected to seek the support of the Massey Biostatistics Shared Resource in the design and statistics methods to be employed. Please indicate who will be providing biostatistical support. Contact Dr. Nolan Wages at [wagesn@vcu.edu](mailto:wagesn@vcu.edu) to schedule a consultation.
5. Massey's Office of Community Outreach and Engagement (COE) is available to assist all applicant teams with identifying and facilitating the involvement of a Community Champion with their project, if desired. If you would like assistance from the Office of COE, please submit a request in a timely manner at the following website <https://redcap.vcu.edu/surveys/?s=JW8EWLM8LTTKWKER> or you may also contact via email at [CancerChamps@vcu.edu](mailto:CancerChamps@vcu.edu) Please allow 24-48 hours for a response and at least 2-5 business days to identify a Community Champion.

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

**3. Multi-PI Leadership Plan (1-page maximum)**

For Team Science Grants a leadership plan is required. The rationale for choosing a multiple PI approach should be described, including the added benefit of this approach. The governance and organizational structure of the leadership team and the research project should be described, including communication plans, process for making decisions on scientific direction, and procedures for resolving conflicts. Each PI must bring key scientific knowledge and responsibilities. The roles and administrative, technical, and scientific responsibilities for the project or program should be delineated for the PIs, including responsibilities for human or live vertebrate animal subject studies as appropriate.

**4. Plan of Subsequent Funding (1-page maximum)**

Discuss how the findings from your pilot will be used to write a proposal for subsequent NCI/NIH funding. In this regard, applicants should list potential aims for a NIH proposal. This section is an important criterion for award selection. MPIs must include a detailed timeline for submission and meeting Year 2 contingencies outlined above: 1) Pre-application consultation meeting with the NCI/NIH; 2) Submission of an External Advisory Board report; and 3) Presentation on progress with Massey at an Executive Committee Meeting.

## 5. Massey Shared Resource Utilization (1-page maximum)

Describe Massey shared resource usage. Project(s) are highly encouraged to use at least one Massey Shared Resource. If no shared resources are utilized for the project, please include a page stating not applicable.

*Massey Supported Shared Resources:*

- Bioinformatics
- Biostatistics
- Cancer Mouse Models
- Flow Cytometry
- Microscopy
- Proteomics
- Tissue and Data Acquisition and Analysis
- Transgenic/Knockout Mouse
- Lipidomics / Metabolomics

## 6. Compliance Documents(s)

Include all applicable compliance approvals need on the cover sheet (e.g., animal, IRB). Funds will not be allocated and no aspect of the project can begin (including non-human subject research components) without documentation of required approvals.

**Note: Appendix materials are not allowed unless specifically requested above.**

**7. Budget and Budget Justification**— The applicant should use the budget table provided on the submittable platform. 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:

- Salary support for research staff
- Research supplies
- Per diem charges for patients if part of a clinical study, not reimbursable by standard payment terms
- Stipends for community champion/advocate participation
- Technical assistance
- Graduate student/postdoctoral stipends if relevant to the project with a detailed justification
- Domestic/foreign travel necessary to carry out proposed project based on institutional travel policies
- Computational services
- Other expenses such as laboratory and shared resource fees, pathology, imaging, etc.
- Consultant costs
- Equipment/technology with the intent to design, test, or facilitate a new device and non-office equipment necessary to carry out the proposed project. Requests over \$5,000 must include a detailed justification.
- Publications costs not to exceed \$4,000 across the total project period

### Non-allowable expenditures include:

- PI or other faculty salary expenses
- Secretarial/administrative personnel salary support
- Office equipment and supplies
- Computer and equipment maintenance fees
- Tuition
- Travel and/or registration/related fees for conferences
- Travel not essential to carrying out the proposed research
- Purchasing and binding of periodicals and books
- Dues and membership fees in scientific societies
- Faculty recruiting and relocation expenses
- Administrative or institutional charges for services normally considered overhead (e.g. space rental, utilities, building maintenance)
- Non-medical or personnel services to patients
- Sub-contracts to institutions not affiliated with Massey Comprehensive Cancer Center
- Pre-award costs

## **Terms of Award**

- Acceptance of funds implies a firm commitment to provide a brief verbal/email check-in progress report quarterly (financial and scientific) by the deadline outlined in the Notice of Award (NOA) and subsequently, a written annual update for a five-year follow-up period. Awardees who do not reply to the five-year follow-up requests will jeopardize their eligibility for future Massey awards.
- MPIs must spend on their Massey assigned index within 60 days of receipt of the Notice of Award or funding may be rescinded and will require a written explanation for the delays addressed to Massey Senior Leadership.
- All awards must have appropriate institutional compliance approvals (e.g., IRB, IACUC) within 90 days of receipt of the NOA and before funds will be allocated. Restrictions may be applied for expenditures prior to receiving compliance approvals.
- Following the initial 60-days Massey expects that the grantee will completely utilize the full amount of funding during the term of the award and are required to meet regularly with the Massey Post-Award and Administrative Teams.
- Projects are expected to be completed within the specified budget period. Projects will be monitored quarterly for scientific progress and expenditures, and the PI will be expected to account for any inactivity in any given quarter.
- A No Cost Extension is highly discouraged and will only be considered under exceptional circumstances and **must be requested no later than 60-day before the end of the project period**. All unspent funds at the end of the grant period will be returned to the Massey.
- All awards, publications, and presentations must acknowledge Massey Comprehensive Cancer Center as specified in the NOA.
- Acceptance of funds implies a firm commitment to provide the Massey leaders access to meet the team, give talks to the public, and tours of your facilities. Access to your laboratory will be facilitated by Massey Administration.

## **Review Process**

Applications will be evaluated and scored according to:

- Scientific merit using NIH guidelines for scoring. Please note that the Massey review is run similar to an NIH study section and while its score drivers are similar, there is an important distinction: This Massey funding mechanism exists to support projects that need vital data to become competitive for an NCI/NIH multi-project or similar award. For this reason, an **IMPORTANT** score driver in the Massey review is the potential for future funding. It is the MPI Team's job to lay out how the Massey funds will ensure a competitive future application. One page is dedicated to this purpose and that page is carefully evaluated during the Study Section meeting and by Massey Senior Leadership when making funding decisions.
- Potential for achieving high-impact results on an accelerated timeline when compared to the traditional pace of cancer research.
- Alignment with Massey priorities outlined in the current Strategic Plan.

## **Questions**

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