

## Pilot Research Funding to Support Community-Engaged Research in Persistent Poverty Communities: A Focus on Be Well™ Acres Homes

The NCI recently funded the **Acres Homes Cancer Prevention Collaboration (Acres Homes CPC)**, a collaboration of The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, The UTHealth School of Public Health, The University of Texas Austin and Be Well™ Acres Homes to develop and conduct **obesity-related** cancer research and control in persistent poverty areas (defined as a census tract in which 20% or more of the population is below the federal poverty line based on 1990 and 2000 decennial censuses and 2007-2011 and 2015-2019 American Community Survey 5-year estimates). [Be Well Acres Homes](#) is an initiative of MD Anderson in collaboration with more than 30 community organizations and residents in Acres Homes. The Acres Homes Collaborative's research focuses on the Acres Homes neighborhood in Houston. The Acres Homes CPC is pleased to announce an opportunity to apply for funding to support innovative and impactful research in persistent poverty census tracts.

**NATURE AND PURPOSE OF THIS REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS:** Identify and fund community-engaged research projects that apply knowledge and methods from multiple disciplines to significantly address multilevel barriers to cancer prevention in the context of social needs and persistent poverty with the goals of 1) exploring innovative transdisciplinary research ideas that focus on **obesity-related** cancer prevention and control in the context of persistent poverty, and 2) encouraging researchers to focus their expertise on the development of effective cancer prevention and control projects in persistent poverty areas.

The **Acres Homes CPC** is seeking **Pilot Projects** that are innovative and groundbreaking with the potential to accelerate the elimination of the effects of persistent poverty, focusing on cancer prevention and control. Projects may include but will not be limited to needs assessment of those living in persistent poverty census tracts, hypothesis-generating research related to the risk factors of **obesity-related** cancer, and pilot testing community-based interventions to address barriers and improve cancer prevention, early detection, and quality of life and cancer survivorship.

Preference will be given to projects that plan to engage an organization participating in Be Well Acres Homes. Awardees of the Pilot Projects will receive support related to conducting community research as a part of the Acres Homes CPC Engagement Core. This will include training on best practices in community research, warm connections to organizations working within Acres Homes, opportunities to help recruit for studies, and support from the Be Well Communities™ team throughout the project period. Additionally, the Research and Methods Core will support pilot awardees with comprehensive consultative research and statistical support. Specific questions about the work conducted through Be Well Acres Homes will be outlined in the webinar, in office hours during the month of July, and on an ongoing basis at [bellwellcommunities@mdanderson.org](mailto:bellwellcommunities@mdanderson.org).

**WEBINAR:** Join us for a webinar on July 12 from noon – 1:00 p.m., discussing the grant application process and sharing information about Be Well Acres Homes. Use this link to join:

<https://mdacc.zoom.us/j/81165235251?pwd=Mzk1eklyNlp6RjJlVWEzMzc3eVZadz09>

Webinar ID: 811 6523 5251 Passcode: 497453.

**APPLICATIONS ARE DUE BY 5PM CST ON AUGUST 21, 2023**

**Late and/or incomplete applications will not be reviewed.**

### Applicants Must Submit:

✓ *A complete electronic copy* (PDF, with all documents in one file) via email to [mdlubin@mdanderson.org](mailto:mdlubin@mdanderson.org) no later than 5:00 p.m. on the due date.

A complete packet includes [All Application Forms](#).

Notification of awards will be made in fall 2023.

Please direct any questions to: Mickie Lubin [mdlubin@mdanderson.org](mailto:mdlubin@mdanderson.org) or Rybecca Kirkpatrick [RGKirkpatrick@mdanderson.org](mailto:RGKirkpatrick@mdanderson.org)

# APPLICATION GUIDELINES AND INSTRUCTIONS

Individual awards are up to \$75,000 total over a one-year period. The **Acres Homes CPC** anticipates it will award up to 3 pilot awards in FY24.

Funds are provided by MD Anderson and subject to the specific requirements of this unique collaborative funding mechanism. Proposed budgets should only include direct costs. Funds not expended during the award period cannot be carried forward and will be swept back to the program.

When the application is ready for submission, email an electronic copy in PDF format with all documents combined in one file to [mdlubin@mdanderson.org](mailto:mdlubin@mdanderson.org).

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## Eligibility

Applications will be accepted from MD Anderson, UTHealth, School of Public Health or UT Austin faculty at the level of Instructor or above regardless of tenure status at the time of the submission deadline.

Eligible applicants may submit only one **Pilot Project** application per review cycle.

## **Full Submission – Due - August 21, 2023**

Full Submissions are detailed in the Application Components section.

## Review Criteria

- **Overall Impact:** likelihood for the project to move us towards our shared goal of addressing issues related to persistent poverty:
  - Significance
  - Investigator(s) Innovation
  - Approach
  - Collaboration
  - Environment

Awards will be made based on a combination of scientific merit, feasibility, responsiveness to community needs, and **Acres Homes CPC** priorities.

**Acres Homes CPC** Leadership reserves the right to alter the award amount at any time.

## Funding Duration

Pilot awards are limited to \$75,000 total over a one-year period.

## Acres Homes CPC Support

Awardees of the Pilot Projects will receive support related to conducting community research as a part of the Acres Homes CPC Engagement Core. This will include training on best practices in community research, warm connections to organizations working within Acres Homes, opportunities to help recruit for studies, and support from the Be Well Communities team throughout the project period. Additionally, the Research and Methods Core will support pilot awardees with comprehensive consultative research and statistical support. Specific questions about the work conducted through Be Well Acres Homes will be outlined in the webinar, in office hours during the month of July, and on an ongoing basis at [bewellcommunities@mdanderson.org](mailto:bewellcommunities@mdanderson.org).

## Budget

PIs should ensure the budgets and justifications, when considered together, adequately describe support for the proposed research.

The budget and justification must clearly show where the funds will be allocated. Any pre-award requirements associated with the budget, institution-specific or grant-specific forms, and approvals should be managed through each institution as customary.

You may request up to \$75,000 for research-related purposes.

- Option 1: Up to \$50,000 should be budgeted through April 30, 2024; the remaining \$25,000 should be budgeted from May 1, 2024 thru September 30, 2024.
- Option 2: Budget the \$75,000 through April 30, 2024; \$0 budgeted from May 1, 2024 thru September 30, 2024.

**No cost extensions will not be allowed. Unused funds will be swept and returned back to MD Anderson.**

Effort: State effort for all personnel, including PI. Effort should be listed in calendar months. (*Example: 50% effort = 6 months*)

Allowable expenditures include:

- Salaries (Professional, Administrative, Faculty, Classified, Educational) and Fringe Benefits: must reasonably reflect the percentage of time actually worked on the project
- Project supplies, services, and minor equipment
- Participant support
- Patient care – contingent upon meeting compliance with applicable institutional and sponsor requirements
- Subcontracts
- Travel employee must be working on the grant supported project in order for expenses and reimbursement to be covered from that source and comply with the Fly America Act

Unallowable expenditures include:

- Advertising (Advertising for recruitment of employees or human subjects is allowable)
- Alcoholic Beverages
- Entertainment costs (including meals with inadequate substantiation of a business purpose)
- Goods or services for personal use of employees (including gifts)

### **Budget Justification**

The budget for all personnel positions (including PI and collaborators), equipment items  $\geq$  \$1,000, and individual supply items  $\geq$  \$2,000 should be itemized and justified in detail. Requests for computers must be thoroughly justified and are subject to approval. Anything not included or justified in the original budget may not be approved for payment at a later date.

### **Application Components**

Applicants must submit the following using the templates provided for this funding program:

1. Investigator Information and Abstract (1 page)
2. Principal Investigators Certification (1/2 page)
3. Lay Language Summary (1/2 page)
4. Responsiveness to Community Priorities (1/3 page)
5. Community and Investigator Collaboration (1/3 page)
6. Plans to Seek Extramural Funding (1/3 page)
7. Budget (2 pages: Budget Option #1 \$50,000 thru April 2024 + \$25,000 thru September 2024 **OR** 1 page: Budget Option #2 \$75,000 thru April 2024 + \$0 thru September 2024)
8. Budget Justification (1 page)
9. Principal Investigator NIH Biographical Sketch (5 pages each PI)
10. Project Plan (4 pages – see appendix)
11. Multiple PI Plan (1 page – see appendix, if applicable)
12. MDA Requirements:

#### **MD Anderson RFA Faculty:**

One (1) page letter of support from the Department Chair or supervising faculty member stating 1) the specifications of discretionary funds that will be used to cover the RFA's salary for budgeted effort, 2) protected time will be given for the project, 3) the applicant's project is truly independent (not an extension or subproject of the supervising faculty member), and 4) supervising faculty member's current & pending support.

## Length of Application and Pagination

- Applications exceeding page limits will be returned.
- All pages must be typed using Arial or Helvetica 11-point font size or larger; 1/2-inch side, top, and *bottom margins*; and numbered at the bottom. The font restrictions also apply to the reference section.

## Signatures

- The applicants must sign the Principal Investigator Certification on page 2 of the application.
- The applicants' Department Chair or Supervisor (if appropriate) should review and sign the application form at the bottom of page 1.

## Copies for Submission

A final electronic copy (PDF with all documents in one file) should be sent via email to [mdlubin@mdanderson.org](mailto:mdlubin@mdanderson.org) no later than 5:00 p.m. on the due date.

## Notification of Review Outcome

**Acres Homes CPC** Leadership will notify applicants of review outcome via email.

## Award Set-up

Following notification of an award, investigators should work with their institutional staff for guidance on award setup and compliance issues that must be addressed.

Applications involving human subjects or human tissues, animals, or biohazardous materials **must have** the appropriate committee (Institutional Review Board, Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee, Institutional Biosafety Committee) approval(s) prior to an award of funds. An IRB reliance agreement should be sought between the institutions for collaborative work.

All awardees must comply with the institutional Conflict of Interest Policy at MD Anderson ([UTMDACC Policy ACA0001](#)) and/or UTHealth ([HOOP 94](#) Research Conflicts of Interest [HOOP 221](#) Institutional Conflicts of Interest [HOOP 20](#) Conflict of Interest, Conflicts of Commitment and Outside Activities) and/or UT-Austin Conflict of Interest policies.

**Funds will not be released until all compliance issues involved with the research are approved. Upon receiving all required approvals, the PIs should notify the Acres Homes CPC Leadership or their designee so release of funds can be approved.**

## Reports from Awardees

Recipients of this funding will be expected to submit written 1-2-page progress reports every quarter to include progress towards aims, barriers encountered, plans for the next quarter, and plans for publication and seeking extramural funds for a larger project informed by the pilot project outcomes. The **Acres Homes CPC** Developmental Core will have close collaboration with investigators to quickly understand barriers to progress and help address these.

All investigators will be asked to provide an oral progress report at 6 months and at the end of year 1.

The final report on the use of the funds and the outcome of the project must be submitted within **3 months after** the end of the award period. A standardized report form will be sent to awardees before the end of the award period.

## Acknowledgements

In all publications of findings derived by the use of these funds, the following acknowledgment must be included: "This work was supported by a grant from The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, Acres Homes Cancer Prevention Collaboration (and subcontracted institutions)". This support should be acknowledged by the grantee in all public communication of work resulting from this grant, including scientific abstracts (where permitted), posters at scientific meetings, press releases or other media communications, and Internet-based communications.

For biosketch purposes, this award should be referred to as "Acres Homes Cancer Prevention Collaboration."

## APPENDIX

### Instructions for Preparing the Project Plan

(Limit: up to four (4) pages, not including references)

**Specific Aims:** Introduce the topic and specifically reference the relevance of the proposed research to cancer prevention; state what is known about the topic, and state what is not known (the gap in knowledge as related to the objective of your overall proposal). State the central hypothesis that you propose to test or the purpose of the overall proposal. It should be related to the gap in knowledge. List the Specific Aims by which you will test the hypothesis or accomplish your purpose. State your long-term goal. Identify the aspect—central hypothesis or one of the specific aims—for which you must develop preliminary data and explain why it is critical. Briefly elucidate the next step in your research and how these funds will assist you in reaching that step. Include plans to seek extramural funding to support next steps.

**Significance/Relevance:** Briefly sketch the background of the proposal and critically evaluate existing knowledge. Describe the importance of the preliminary data to the success of the proposal. The preliminary data you expect to develop using the **Acres Homes CPC** funds.

**Innovation:** Identify and fund projects that apply knowledge and methods from multiple disciplines to significantly address multilevel barriers to cancer prevention in the context of social needs and persistent poverty.

**Approach:** Describe the study design and the procedures to be used to accomplish the specific aims of the work described in the proposal. Describe the protocols to be used and tentative sequence of the investigation. Describe how the data will be analyzed and interpreted. Describe new methodology and its advantage over any existing methodology. Discuss the potential difficulties and limitations of the proposed procedures and alternative approaches to achieve the aims. Discuss any relevant considerations for conducting this project in a persistent poverty community. Point out any procedures, situations, or materials that may be hazardous to personnel and the precautions to be exercised. Include a brief description of physical resources available if appropriate including the nature of access to and availability of any existing data.

**Collaboration:** Cite names, departments, and institutions/organizations of collaborating investigators and community organizations. Provide reasons for collaboration and percent effort involved. Please include information about the type of organization that would be well suited to serve as a partner on this project. The Engagement Core will work to match projects with appropriate partner organizations as possible.

**Dissemination:** Projects that are data based should include a plan for providing the data back to the community. How will data be shared? For example, this might include presentations to the steering committee or relevant community organizations, preparation of reports in lay language, etc.

**References:** Cite published literature to substantiate contentions, with either citation numbers in parentheses or as superscripts, and provide the complete references in a reference list at the end of the Research Plan.

### Instructions for Preparing the Multiple PI Plan

(Limit One (1) page)

The Multiple PI Plan (“Plan”) should include the following: a rationale for choosing a multiple PI approach should be described. The governance and organizational structure of the leadership team and the project should be described, including communication plans, process for making decisions on project direction, and procedures for resolving conflicts. The roles and administrative, technical, scientific, and clinical and/or community responsibilities for the project or program should be delineated for the PIs and other collaborators. If budget allocation is planned, the distribution of resources to specific components of the project or the individual PIs must be delineated in the Plan.

## INVESTIGATOR INFORMATION AND ABSTRACT

Principal Investigator: _____	Academic Rank: _____
Institution: _____	Tenure Status: <input type="checkbox"/> Tenure/Tenure Track
Department: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Non-tenure: <input type="checkbox"/> Research Faculty Appointment <input type="checkbox"/> Clinical Faculty Appointment
Application Title: _____	
Date: _____	Extension: _____ Unit: _____
Check one: <input type="checkbox"/> New application <input type="checkbox"/> Revised application	Amount Requested: _____

**Abstract of Proposed Research** – Limit to this space. **Do not alter this form.**

Department Chair or Division Head Name:	Signature:
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## PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR CERTIFICATION

### Principal Investigator Certification

As Principal Investigator of this research proposal, I certify that the information provided is correct and complete to the best of my knowledge. If awarded financial support for this research proposal, I agree to:

1. Accept responsibility for the scientific and technical conduct of this research project, and, as required, provide a progress and final reports, in accordance with the instructions.
2. Acknowledge this grant as a source of support in publications. The preferred citation is "Supported by a grant from The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, Acres Homes Cancer Prevention Collaboration."

Principal Investigator Name	Signature	Date

## LAY LANGUAGE SUMMARY

Describe, in two or three sentences, the relevance of this research to the **social needs and context of persistent poverty** for individuals and/or communities. This applies for all proposals even those where the relevance may be further into the future and dependent on subsequent studies. It is advisable, in this section, to be as succinct as possible and to use plain language that can be understood by a general, lay audience.

Limit to this space. **Do not alter this form.**

## RESPONSIVENESS TO COMMUNITY PRIORITIES

Describe, in two or three sentences, how this study is responsive to the community priorities

Limit to this space. **Do not alter this form.**

## COMMUNITY AND INVESTIGATOR COLLABORATION

If applicable, describe how the proposed study addresses community and investigator collaboration.

Limit to this space. **Do not alter this form.**

## PLANS TO SEEK EXTERNAL PEER-REVIEWED FUNDING

Briefly describe future plans to use the results of the proposed study to seek extramural funding. Be as specific as possible in identifying potential future funding sources and mechanisms.

Provide specificity on the planned steps to seek extramural funding; include funders targeted for external peer-review funding (e.g., NCI, CPRIT, PCORI, etc.); provide a timeline to support plans to seek external peer-review funding.

Limit to this space. **Do not alter this form.**



## Budget #1: up to \$75,000 October through April

PERSONNEL					
NAME	Role on Project	Cal Mo Effort on Project	<i>DOLLAR AMOUNT REQUESTED (omit cents)</i>		
			<i>Year 1</i>		<i>Total</i>
			<i>Salary Requested</i>	<i>Fringe Benefits</i>	
	PI				
SUBTOTALS					

		<i>Year 1</i>	<i>Total</i>
<b>TOTAL Salary + Fringe</b>			

CONSULTANT COSTS	Not Eligible for Support		
EQUIPMENT (itemize)			
Totals			
SUPPLIES (itemize)			
Totals			
TRAVEL, PATIENT CARE COSTS, PARTICIPANT SUPPORT			
OTHER EXPENSES (itemize)			
Totals			
CONSORTIUM/CONTRACTUAL COSTS		Not Eligible for Support	
TOTAL DIRECT COSTS FOR PROJECT			

## Budget #2: up to \$50,000 October through April

Budget #2: up to \$50,000 October through April					
PERSONNEL	Role on Project	Cal Mo Effort on Project	<i>DOLLAR AMOUNT REQUESTED (omit cents)</i>		
NAME			1 Year		Total
			Salary Requested	Fringe Benefits	
	PI				
SUBTOTALS					

		<i>Year 1</i>	<i>Total</i>
<b>TOTAL Salary + Fringe</b>			

CONSULTANT COSTS	Not Eligible for Support		
EQUIPMENT (itemize)			
Totals			
SUPPLIES (itemize)			
Totals			
TRAVEL, PATIENT CARE COSTS, PARTICIPANT SUPPORT			
OTHER EXPENSES (itemize)			
Totals			
CONSORTIUM/CONTRACTUAL COSTS	Not Eligible for Support		
TOTAL DIRECT COSTS FOR PROJECT			

## Budget #2: up to \$25,000 April through September

PERSONNEL		Cal Mo Effort on Project	<i>DOLLAR AMOUNT REQUESTED (omit cents)</i>		
NAME	Role on Project		1 Year		Total
			Salary Requested	Fringe Benefits	
	PI				
SUBTOTALS					

		<i>Year 1</i>	<i>Total</i>
<b>TOTAL Salary + Fringe</b>			

CONSULTANT COSTS	Not Eligible for Support		
EQUIPMENT (itemize)			
	Totals		
SUPPLIES (itemize)			
	Totals		
TRAVEL, PATIENT CARE COSTS, PARTICIPANT SUPPORT			
OTHER EXPENSES (itemize)			
	Totals		
CONSORTIUM/CONTRACTUAL COSTS	Not Eligible for Support		
TOTAL DIRECT COSTS FOR PROJECT			

## Budget Justification

A written justification is required for each personnel position, even if no salary is budgeted. Itemized detailed justification is required for **equipment items  $\geq$  \$1000 and any individual supply categories  $\geq$  \$2000**. Requests for computer equipment must be thoroughly justified and are subject to approval. Anything not included or justified in the original budget may not be approved for payment at a later date.

## PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR NIH BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

(replace this page with the biosketch pages)

Maximum 5 pages as per NIH guidelines

<https://grants.nih.gov/grants/forms/biosketch.htm>

## Project Plan

**Refer to “Instructions for Preparing the Project Plan”  
which can be found in the appendix of the Application Guidelines**

*(Replace this page with Project Plan pages)*