

## **MD Anderson Cancer Center Sister Institution Network Fund (SINF)**

### **FY20 SINF Application Guidelines**

#### **OVERVIEW**

- Call for Letter of Intent (LOI) for grant applications closes 11:59 pm CST on **January 20, 2020**.
- Invitation for Submission of full proposal from shortlisted LOI applicants opens on January 31, 2020 and closes 11:59 pm CST on **March 16, 2020**.
- Proposals will support **new** research between MD Anderson Cancer Center faculty and MD Anderson Cancer Network® members and/or sister institutions not already engaged in collaborative research.
- Funding will be provided for up to 20 projects.
- For the FY20 funding cycle, we invite the submission of projects focused of the following focus areas:
  - Population-based screening and prevention in low-resourced environments
  - Government/Ministries of Health impact on public health policy
  - Collaborative translational research with near term clinical impact
  - Collaborative clinical trials

#### **ELIGIBILITY**

- All MD Anderson Cancer Center faculty titled as Assistant, Associate, and full Professor are eligible
- MD Anderson Cancer Center nurses with faculty appointments or non-faculty nurses with a faculty mentor are eligible to apply
- Applications must include at least one sister institution/MOU, Cancer Network partner, associate, affiliate or certified member relationship to be eligible. (Please contact [sinf@mdanderson.org](mailto:sinf@mdanderson.org) regarding any questions about an institution's eligibility.)

#### **PREPARING THE APPLICATION**

The deadline for submission of the Letter of Intent (LOI) for grant applications closes 11:59 pm CST on **January 20, 2020**. After review of LOIs, a shortlist of applicants will be invited to submit a full proposal on January 31, 2020 with a submission deadline of 11:59 pm CST on **March 16, 2020**.

#### **LETTER OF INTENT (LOI) REQUIREMENTS**

The Sister Institution Network Fund Review Committee will select the projects for which a full application is requested. Projects will be prioritized based on 1) scientific merit in basic or translational research; 2) the ability to impact prevention strategies and policy that will improve the lives of patients, and 3) collaborations in the planning and implementation of clinical trials. Priority will be given to projects that address issues

germane to ongoing or planned Cancer Network/GAP activities, or to projects that show the potential for advancing our knowledge in preclinical and clinical cancer research, prevention strategies, or policies that have the potential for global impact.

The LOI should be a one-page PDF, follow the format specifications below, and include:

- Name, institution and email of principal investigator(s)
- Clearly stated hypothesis to be tested (one sentence)
- Description of the overall goals and approach of the progress, including specific aims (250 words)
- Rough estimate of budget (up to \$50,000 per year for a maximum 2 years).
- Provide Biosketches for co-PIs (using the template provided in the online submission link, including other support).
- Applicants may submit more than one application, provided that each application is scientifically distinct.
- Deadline for submission of LOI is 11:59 pm CST on **January 20, 2020**.

## **FULL APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS**

Applicants invited to submit full applications will be provided a link for online submission via “Submit @ MD Anderson”. Applicants will be required to create an account and log in using their MD Anderson credentials.

Paper applications that are emailed, dropped off, or mailed to the Office of Research Administration will not be accepted. However, please email [sinf@mdanderson.org](mailto:sinf@mdanderson.org) if you feel you qualify for an exception.

### *Additional submission details:*

- The Error Correction Window for the SINP FY20 application is 48 hours from the March 16, 2020 deadline. The application must be submitted prior to the deadline of March 16, 2020 to allow the applicant to edit.
- In case of an emergency or extreme weather, documentation of your institution closing should be sent along with application, which must be received by 5pm local time on the first business day that the institution reopens.
- Late submissions will not be accepted. There will be no exceptions. Applicants can apply for the next award cycle.

## **SPECIFIC AIMS**

Please include a hypothesis or purpose statement, a brief rationale for the study, the value of collaboration, and then list the Specific Aims of the grant. This is limited to one page, and all text should be in Arial font, size 11- except section headers, which are size 14. Margins: 1” inch on all sides. This page must be uploaded as a PDF in addition to the 2-page PDF Research Plan as described below.

## **THE RESEARCH PLAN**

The Research Plan consists of multiple sections that allow the applicant to describe their research proposal. The **page limit for this document is two (2) pages maximum**. All text should be in Arial font, size 11- except section headers, which are size 14. Margins: 1” inch on all sides. The Research Plan will be reviewed according to NIH criteria (See: Full Application Review below). The guidance below is provided to explain the sections and criteria. Please note Specific Aims statement is separate from the Research Plan.

**Significance:** Briefly sketch the background of the proposal and critically evaluate existing knowledge to provide context. Focus on the importance of the proposed work, and how it will impact the field.

**Investigator(s):** Summarize how the PD/PIs, collaborators, and other researchers are well suited for the project. Demonstrate an ongoing record of accomplishments that have advanced their field(s), and how their

complementary and integrated expertise, leadership approach, governance and organizational structure are appropriate for the project.

**Innovation:** Describe the application challenge and how utilizing novel theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions could shift current research or clinical practice paradigms.

**Preliminary Studies:** Applicants may provide an account of the principal investigators' studies pertinent to the application and/or any other information, which will help to establish the experience and competence of the investigator to pursue the proposed project.

**Approach:** Explain the overall strategy, methodology, and analyses to demonstrate it is well-reasoned and appropriate to accomplish the specific aims of the project. Acknowledge potential problems, alternative strategies, and benchmarks for success. If the project involves clinical research, please briefly list plans for 1) protection of human subjects from research risks, and 2) inclusion of minorities and members of both sexes/genders, as well as the inclusion of children, justified in terms of the scientific goals and research strategy proposed.

**Design and Procedure:** Describe the experimental design and the procedures to be used to accomplish the specific aims of the work described in the application. Focus on experimental design and not on methodological detail. Describe how data will be analyzed and interpreted, including statistical methods where appropriate. 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. Include a brief description of any specialized, non-typical physical resources that may be necessary.

**Environment/Feasibility:** Explain how the scientific environment in which the work will be done contribute to the probability of success. List resources available and needed to conduct the study as outlined, and how the project benefits from the unique features of the scientific environment, subject populations, or collaborative arrangements.

**Relevance to Sister Institution Network/Cancer Network:** Describe how the project directly supports the strategies and focus areas of Cancer Network/Global Academic Programs. Explain how this proposal makes use of one or more Sister Institution or Cancer Network relationship to further the proposed research. If appropriate, identify possible future stages in the proposed work that could include additional members of the network. example, in the first phase a SINF-supported project might identify a biomarker or agent, which in a second phase could be used in clinical investigations in several Sister Institutions.

**References (refer to separate template):** Cite key published literature with either citation numbers in parentheses or as superscripts and provide complete references in a list on a separate page that is *not* included in the Research Plan (the one page template for References is provided). Do not provide the reference in the text. Each reference must include the names of all authors, the name of the journal or book, volume number, page numbers and year of publication. There is no need to cite extensive literature – confine the list to the key papers that provide the background to your proposal.

## **FULL APPLICATION REVIEW & CRITERIA**

All applications will receive an Overall Impact score and brief written critique. The scoring criteria and definitions coincide with the current NIH peer review process, with the range of scores from 1 (best) to 9 (worst). The following NIH criteria will be used to score the Research Plan, in addition to gauging feasibility and relevance to SINF's focus areas. After discussion, each committee member will score the proposals. The Sister Institution Network Fund Review Committee Chair and Co-Chair will review the proposals for final selection.

### **REVIEW CRITERIA:**

Reviewers will consider each of the six review criteria below in the determination of scientific and technical merit, and give a separate score for each:

- Significance
- Investigator(s)
- Innovation
- Approach
- Environment/Feasibility
- Relevance to MD Anderson Cancer Network® and/or Global Programs collaboration

For more detail on these criteria, please visit: <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/peer/critiques/rpg.htm>. The review will result in an overall impact score and a brief written critique that will be communicated to each investigator.

## **NOTICE OF AWARDS, COMMITTEE DECISIONS, EVALUATIONS**

During the Sister Institution Network Fund Review Committee deliberations, all reviews are confidential and anonymous outside of the committee. Communications concerning reviews are done through the SINF Committee Chair. The reviewers are selected from outside of the applicant's department.

Committee actions, which may be reported, include: approved-funded or disapproved. Committee and reviewers' individual ratings and their evaluations will be available in the Office of Research Administration. Applicants disapproved will be formally advised along with application feedback. With the Chair's approval, a full review of the votes pertinent to the application may also be possible.

The Sister Institution Network Fund Review Committee recommendations are presented to the Senior Vice President, Clinical and Academic Network Development who, with the approval of the President, will make a final decision on awardees and amounts of funding. Following the final decision, successful applicants will be notified by the Office of Research Administration of the award amount and the source of funding. Research Finance will also be notified of the award and a company center will be established.

## **INQUIRIES**

For guidelines including application process, review criteria, and FAQs please visit SINF website at <http://www.mdanderson.org/sinf>.

Additional inquiries may be emailed to [SINF@mdanderson.org](mailto:SINF@mdanderson.org)

## SINF APPLICATION PROCESS

