

## PS-OC (PAR-14-169) Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ): Updated 4/30/14

### **ASSIST - Application Submission System & Interface for Submission Tracking**

**You are strongly encouraged to upload and test your application in ASSIST at least two days prior to the application deadline.** This will allow time to correct any formatting or technical errors. Once the deadline passes (5:00 PM local time on June 9<sup>th</sup>) you will no longer be able to access your application to correct errors.

- ASSIST can be accessed here: <https://public.era.nih.gov/assist/public/login.do>
- Familiarize yourself with ASSIST early.
- Pay attention to the order of the application components to save time and reduce errors.
- ASSIST Resources
  - Instructional Webinar: [http://grants.nih.gov/grants/webinar\\_docs/webinar\\_20130813.htm](http://grants.nih.gov/grants/webinar_docs/webinar_20130813.htm)
  - Online Help: <http://era.nih.gov/erahelp/ASSIST/Default.htm>
- Problems accessing or using ASSIST should be directed to the eRA Commons Help Desk: <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/ElectronicReceipt/support.htm>

### **Budget Questions**

**Q:** What are the required budget allocations for Trans-Network Projects, Center Pilot Projects, and the Education & Outreach Unit?

**A:** The required budget allocations are:

- *Trans-Network Projects* – \$100K/year direct costs (DC) – These funds are restricted for use in supporting collaborations across the Physical Sciences-Oncology Network (PS-ON). Use and allocation of these funds will be decided by the PS-ON Steering Committee
- *Center Pilot Projects* – minimum of \$100K/year DC – These funds are restricted for use in supporting Center Pilot Projects. Individual Centers will have control over the way they use and allocate these funds with concurrence from the NCI Program Director.
- *Education & Outreach Unit* – minimum of \$100K/year DC – These funds are restricted for use in supporting Education and Outreach activities. Individual Centers will have control over the way they use and allocate these funds with concurrence from the NCI Program Director.

### **Center Pilot Project Questions**

**Q:** Does each Center need to have multiple Pilot Projects?

**A:** Centers will have control over the way they use and allocate Center Pilot Project funds. Centers will have flexibility to define their priorities and their own processes for soliciting and reviewing Center Pilot Projects. For example, in a given year a Center could allot \$100K DC on a single pilot project or allot that amount over several smaller projects (e.g., five \$20K pilot projects).

**Q:** With regard to Center Pilot Projects: should we identify specific potential projects or collaborators in the application?

**A:** Specific potential projects could be included, but specific collaborators should not be identified as it could create conflicts of interest. The application should also describe strategies for utilizing the Pilot Projects. For example, Pilot Projects might be geared specifically to testing high-risk, high-reward ideas. Alternatively, Pilot Projects might be geared to developing new technologies. Pilot Projects might also be used as seed funding to develop a larger project that could replace a completed or faltering Research Project within the Center. The application can also include processes for soliciting and reviewing Pilot Project proposals.

### **Trans-Network Project Questions**

**Q:** Do individual Centers/applications need to designate a portion of the budget for Trans-Network Project funds?

**A:** Yes. A portion of the budget for each Center will be committed for Trans-Network Projects; this amount is fixed at \$100K direct costs (DC) per year. Use and allocation of these funds will be decided by the Physical Sciences-Oncology Network (PS-ON) Steering Committee.

**Q:** How should potential Trans-Network Project collaborations be described when the Centers have not been established yet?

**A:** Instead of listing specific Centers that you might collaborate with, describe expertise from your Center that may allow other Centers to test new ideas and/or describe synergistic expertise or approaches that you would utilize from other hypothetical Centers in establishing future Trans-Network projects.

### **Shared Resource Cores Questions**

**Q:** With regard to core availability and training for investigators from other PS-OCs: when written into the application, should this be hypothetical since the other PS-OCs have not yet been established?

**A:** Yes, any description of plans to make cores available to other Centers will have to be general since the other Centers are not yet established. However, if applicable, more specific plans for training internal Center members to utilize the core technologies may be included.

### **Collaboration Questions**

**Q:** When listing potential collaborations, should we identify specific investigators that we would want to work together with on a project?

**A:** Try to avoid this, as it could create potential conflicts of interest. Instead, list strategies for the type of expertise you would utilize for creating collaborations that would tie into your research projects.

### **Center Advisory Committee (CAC) Questions**

**Q:** Should we identify the members of the CAC?

**A:** The first four CAC members (the PD/PI (contact PD/PI for applications with multiple PDs/PIs), one additional physical scientist, and two cancer researchers) should be identified. The NCI Project Scientist will be named after award. External scientific advisors **should not be identified** to mitigate any potential conflicts of interest. Instead, applicants should describe the types of expertise external advisors will have.

**Q:** Can Center Advisory Committee (CAC) members be from outside the Center?

**A:** The CAC will consist of **key Center personnel** and NCI program staff. The five voting members of the CAC should include four key Center personnel (the PD/PI (contact PD/PI for applications with multiple PDs/PIs), one additional physical scientist, and two cancer researchers) and one voting NCI Project Scientist (to be named after award). Additionally, the CAC should include non-voting external scientific advisors. The external advisors should be drawn from experts outside of the Center and be selected to encompass the expertise necessary to provide appropriate guidance to the Center. External advisors **should not be identified** in the application to mitigate any potential conflicts of interest. Instead, applicants should describe the types of expertise external advisors will have.

### **General Application Questions**

**Q:** Can existing Centers re-apply?

**A:** ALL submissions to PAR-14-169 will be Type 1 (New) Applications. This includes currently funded PS-OCs.

**Q:** How many applications are expected and how many Centers are likely to get funded?

**A:** We are unable to comment on the number of applications expected. Because this is a PAR and there are no funds set aside for the program, the number of funded Centers will be heavily dependent on the scores the applications receive. It is likely that the number of funded Centers will be less than the 12 Centers funded under RFA-CA-09-009.

### **Review Questions**

**Q:** When assembling the study section that will review the applications, how will members be identified? How much control will PS-OC Program staff have in determining members of the study section?

**A:** The major criteria for choosing study section members will be based on individuals' expertise in a particular research area relevant to the applications and the lack of a conflict(s) of interest with the applicants. The NCI Scientific Review Officer (SRO) will use keywords from letters of intent and the content of the applications to convene study sections that best represent the applications' research areas.

**Q:** Will study sections be made up of a mix of experts in the physical sciences and cancer biology?

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**A:** Yes. Study sections will include physical scientists and cancer researchers with relevant expertise according to the content the FOA (PAR-14-169) and the applications received.

**Q:** How will NCI address past critiques from applicants that prior study sections included reviewers who were unenthusiastic about the potential impact of physical sciences on cancer research?

**A:** We ask that reviewers not bring external issues to the review and review each application in context of the requirements defined in the FOA (PAR-14-169).

### **Miscellaneous Questions**

**Q:** What insight has NCI gleaned from the 2012 workshops regarding some of the successes and pitfalls of the first phase of the PS-OC program?

**A:** These workshops were primarily science-based on emerging themes within the program as opposed to focusing on the program infrastructure. Therefore we will not comment specifically on the success of the first phase of the program, but the design of the PS-OCs and Physical Sciences-Oncology Network (PS-ON) outlined in PAR-14-169 reflects the lessons learned (both positive and negative) from the first phase.