

Program Announcement

Department of Defense Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs

Breast Cancer Research Program

Postdoctoral Award

Funding Opportunity Number: W81XWH-08-BCRP-POSTDOC

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I. HELPFUL INFORMATION

A. Contacts

1. Program announcement, proposal format, or required documentation: To view all funding opportunities offered by the Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs (CDMRP), perform a Grants.gov basic search using the CFDA Number 12.420. Submit questions as early as possible. Response times will vary depending upon the volume of inquiries. Every effort will be made to answer questions within 5 working days.

Phone: 301-619-7079

Fax: 301-619-7792

Email: cdmrp.pa@amedd.army.mil

2. eReceipt system: Questions related to pre-application components through the CDMRP eReceipt system should be directed to the eReceipt help desk, which is available Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Eastern time.

Phone: 301-682-5507

Website: <https://cdmrp.org>

Email: help@cdmrp.org

3. Grants.gov contacts: Questions related to application submission through the [Grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov/) (<http://www.grants.gov/>) portal should be directed to Grants.gov help desk. Deadlines for proposal submission are 11:59 p.m. Eastern time on the deadline date. Therefore, there is an approximate 3-hour period during which the Grants.gov help desk will NOT be available. Please plan accordingly, as the CDMRP help desk is unable to answer questions about Grants.gov submissions.

Phone: 800-518-4726, Monday through Friday, 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. Eastern time

Email: support@grants.gov

Grants.gov will notify Principal Investigators (PIs) of changes made to this Program Announcement and/or Application Package ONLY if the PI clicks on the “send me change notification emails” link and subscribes to the mailing list on the Opportunity Synopsis Page for this announcement. If the PI does not subscribe and the Application Package is updated or changed, the original version of the Application Package may not be accepted.

B. National Technical Information Service

The technical reference facilities of the National Technical Information Service (www.ntis.gov) are available for the purpose of surveying existing knowledge and avoiding needless duplication of scientific and engineering effort, and the expenditure thereby represented. All other sources also should be consulted to the extent practical for the same purpose.

C. Commonly Made Mistakes

- Not obtaining or confirming the organization's [DUNS number](https://eupdate.dnb.com/requestoptions.asp?cm_re=HomepageB*TopNav*DUNSNumberTab) (https://eupdate.dnb.com/requestoptions.asp?cm_re=HomepageB*TopNav*DUNSNumberTab) well before the proposal submission deadline.
- Not obtaining or confirming the organization's registration with the [Central Contractor Registry \(CCR\)](http://www.ccr.gov/) (<http://www.ccr.gov/>) well before the proposal submission deadline.
- Failing to request "send me change notification emails" from [Grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov/) (<http://www.grants.gov/>).
- Not contacting the appropriate [help desks](#) before the respective deadlines.
- Not completing the pre-application submission before the mandatory pre-application deadline, thereby causing the pre-application to remain in draft status (**NOTE: "Submit" button must be pressed for pre-application to be complete**).
- Using an incorrect Grants.gov application package to submit a proposal through Grants.gov. (**NOTE: Each Program Announcement/Funding Opportunity requires a specific application package.**)
- Uploading attachments into incorrect Grants.gov forms.
- Attaching files in the wrong location on Grants.gov forms.
- Submitting attachments that are not PDF documents, except for the R&R Subaward Budget Attachment(s) Form.
- Exceeding page limitations.
- Failing to submit a proposal 48-72 hours before the deadline so Grants.gov can provide notification of errors and allow for resubmission of application package.
- Failing to submit proposal by the submission deadline.

II. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. Program History and Objectives

The Breast Cancer Research Program (BCRP) was established in fiscal year 1992 (FY92) to promote innovative research focused on eradicating breast cancer. Appropriations for the BCRP from FY92 through FY07 totaled \$2.1 billion. The FY08 appropriation is \$138.0 million (M).

The BCRP challenges the scientific community to design innovative research that will foster new directions for, address neglected issues in, and bring new investigators to the field of breast

cancer research. The BCRP focuses its funding on innovative projects that have the potential to significantly impact breast cancer, particularly those involving multidisciplinary and/or multi-institutional collaborations and alliances. The BCRP encourages risk-taking research; however, all projects must demonstrate solid judgment and rationale.

B. Award Description

The BCRP Postdoctoral Award mechanism was first offered in FY93. Since that time, 1,586 Postdoctoral Award proposals have been received and 525 have been recommended for funding. The Postdoctoral Award enables recent medical or other doctoral degree graduates to obtain the necessary experience to pursue an independent career in breast cancer research. *Candidates for this award should exhibit a strong desire to pursue a career in breast cancer research.*

Under this award mechanism, the postdoctoral trainee is considered the Principal Investigator (PI) and, as such, should write the project narrative with appropriate direction from the mentor. While the PI is not required to have previous experience in breast cancer research, this proposal must focus on breast cancer research. The mentor must possess the appropriate expertise in breast cancer, have current peer reviewed breast cancer funding, and clearly demonstrate a commitment to guiding the PI's research and training.

Postdoctoral Award proposals should either extend the candidate's ongoing research related to breast cancer, or broaden the scope of his or her research to include work that is highly relevant to breast cancer, under the guidance of a designated mentor. Proposals with a multidisciplinary research approach to breast cancer are highly encouraged but not required.

C. Eligibility

As of the proposal submission deadline, the PI should have been in the laboratory in which this research is to be performed for no more than 2 years, and he or she should have a total of less than 4 years of postdoctoral research experience (excluding clinical residency or fellowship training). The PI must successfully complete the requirements for a doctoral or medical degree at the time of award notification (March 2009). Additional information about individual and institutional eligibility may be found in the Application Instructions, Appendix 1.

D. Funding

Funding for a Postdoctoral Award can be requested for up to \$75,000 per year for direct costs for up to a 3-year performance period, plus indirect costs as appropriate. No salary support will be provided for the mentor.

Within the guidelines provided in the Application Instructions, funds can cover:

- Salary/stipend
- Health insurance
- Research supplies
- Equipment

- Training
- Tuition
- Workshops
- Support for multidisciplinary collaborations
- Travel between collaborating institutions
- Travel to scientific/technical meetings

The CDMRP requires attendance at the biennially scheduled 3 1/2-day Department of Defense (DOD) BCRP Era of Hope meeting, which is held to disseminate the results of BCRP-sponsored research.

Training awards usually have a different institutional indirect charge than research awards. Postdoctoral Award applicants are encouraged to check with their institution concerning indirect costs.

The CDMRP expects to allot approximately \$10M of the \$138M FY08 BCRP appropriation to fund approximately 40 Postdoctoral Award proposals, depending on the quality and number of proposals received. Funding of proposals received in response to this program announcement is contingent on the availability of Federal funds for this program.

E. Award Administration

No change in PI will be allowed once the proposal has been submitted. Changes in institution will be allowed only at the discretion of the USAMRMC Contracting Office.

Refer to the Application Instructions, Appendix 5, for general award administration information.

III. TIMELINE FOR SUBMISSION AND REVIEW

Proposal submission is a two-step process consisting of (1) pre-application submission and (2) proposal submission. *Pre-application submission is a required first step.*

- | | |
|--|--|
| • Pre-application Submission Deadline: | 5:00 p.m. Eastern time,
November 19, 2008 |
| • Confidential Letters of Recommendation: | 5:00 p.m. Eastern time,
December 3, 2008 |
| • Proposal Submission Deadline: | 11:59 p.m. Eastern time,
December 3, 2008 |
| • Scientific Peer Review: | January 2009 |
| • Programmatic Review: | March 2009 |

Awards will be made approximately 4 to 6 months after receiving the funding notification letter, but no later than September 30, 2009.

IV. SUBMISSION PROCESS

Proposal submission is a two-step process consisting of (1) a pre-application submission through the [CDMRP eReceipt system \(https://cdmrp.org/\)](https://cdmrp.org/), and (2) a proposal submission through [Grants.gov \(http://www.grants.gov/\)](http://www.grants.gov/).

PIs and organizations identified in the proposal submitted through Grants.gov should be the same as those identified in the pre-application. If there is a change in PI or organization after submission of the pre-application, the PI must contact the eReceipt help desk at: help@cdmrp.org or 301-682-5507.

Submission of the same research project to different award mechanisms within the same program or to other CDMRP programs is discouraged. The Government reserves the right to reject duplicative proposals.

A. Step 1 – Pre-Application Components and Submission

The pre-application consists of the components discussed below. All pre-application components must be submitted electronically through the [CDMRP eReceipt system](https://cdmrp.org/) by **5:00 p.m. Eastern time on the deadline date**. Refer to the Application Instructions for detailed information.

- Proposal Information
- Proposal Contacts
- List of Individuals Providing Letters of Recommendation
- Collaborators and Conflicts of Interest (COI)
- LOI Narrative

B. Step 2 – Proposal Components and Submission

Proposal submission will not be accepted unless the pre-application process is completed by the pre-application deadline. Proposals must be submitted electronically by the Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR) through Grants.gov (www.grants.gov). No paper copies will be accepted.

Each proposal submission must include the completed Grants.gov application package of forms and attachments identified in www.grants.gov for the US Army Medical Research Acquisition Activity (USAMRAA) program announcement. In addition to the specific instructions below, please refer to the Application Instructions for detailed requirements of each component.

The package includes:

- 1. SF-424 (R&R) Application for Federal Assistance Form**
- 2. Attachments Form**

- Attachment 1: Project Narrative (6-page limit)

The PI must describe his or her career goals, the breast cancer research training program, and the proposed research project. While showing evidence of appropriate direction from the mentor, Postdoctoral Award proposals must be written by the trainee as PI and author. Describe the proposed project using the following outline:

- **PI's Career Goals:** Describe the PI's career goals and how the proposed training will promote the PI's career development in breast cancer research or patient care. Discuss the PI's career/research plans after the completion of this award.
- **Breast Cancer Research Training Program:** Describe the training plan, including a timeline, coursework, laboratory techniques, conferences, seminars, journal clubs, teaching responsibilities, and/or clinical responsibilities. Explain how the training plan will advance the PI's development as a breast cancer researcher. Describe the mentor's background and experience in breast cancer research, and how the mentor will assist the PI in developing his or her career. Describe how the training plan is supported by the environment, including a description of ongoing breast cancer research at the institution. Include information on training or collaborations with other investigators.
- **Research Project:** Describe the proposed project, including background, hypothesis/rationale/purpose, objectives, and methods. Discuss the relevance of this research to the PI's career goals, and how it is relevant to one or more critical issues in breast cancer. Preliminary data is not required.

The six-page limit of the Project Narrative is inclusive of any figures, tables, graphs, photographs, diagrams, chemical structures, pictures, pictorials, cartoons, and other relevant information needed to judge the proposal.

- Attachment 2: Supporting Documentation
 - References Cited
 - Acronyms and Symbol Definitions
 - Facilities & Other Resources
 - Description of Existing Equipment
 - Publications and/or Patent Abstracts (5-document limit)
 - Letters of Institutional Support
 - Letters of Collaboration (if applicable)
 - Transcripts
- Attachment 3: Technical and Public Abstracts
- Attachment 4: Statement of Work (SOW)

- Attachment 5: Impact Statement
State how the training program and the proposed work will have an impact on fostering the PI's expertise and future independent career in breast cancer research.
- Attachment 6: Statement of Eligibility
- Attachment 7: Federal Agency Financial Plan (if applicable)

3. Research & Related Senior/Key Person Profile (Expanded Form)

- PI Biographical Sketch (four-page limit)
- PI Current/Pending Support
- Key Personnel Biographical Sketches (four-page limit each)
 - A biosketch of the PI's mentor is required.
- Key Personnel Current/Pending Support
 - Current/Pending Support for the PI's mentor is required.

4. Research & Related Budget Form

- Budget Justification

5. Research & Related Project/Performance Site Location(s) Form

6. R&R Subaward Budget Attachment(s) Form (if applicable)

Confidential Letters of Recommendation (two-page limit): In addition to the completed Grants.gov application package of forms and attachments, Postdoctoral Award proposals also require the submission of three confidential letters of recommendation by the individuals (including the primary mentor) designated during the pre-application process. The PI should monitor whether the letters have been received; however, the PI is not permitted or able to view these letters. If confidential letters of recommendation cannot be submitted by the individuals named in the pre-application, the PI should contact the CDMRP eReceipt help desk at help@cdmrp.org or 301-682-5507.

Confidential letter of recommendation from the mentor. One letter must come from the PI's primary mentor, describing his or her commitment to the PI's training, career development, and mentorship. The mentor's letter of recommendation should describe:

- The PI's potential to become a successful and productive breast cancer researcher;
- The mentor's commitment to the training, career development, and mentorship of the PI, including details of the mentor's proposed interactions with the PI during the PI's training;
- The mentor's experience in conducting breast cancer research, evidence of current funding in breast cancer, and record of training other postdoctoral fellows;
- The relevance of the proposed research project to training the PI in breast cancer;

- The PI's proposed research training program, including descriptions of the training environment, experience with laboratory techniques, conferences, and journal clubs, and how it will facilitate the PI's career development as a successful breast cancer researcher;
- The degree to which the PI participated in the idea development and proposal preparation.

Two additional confidential letters of recommendation. The remaining two letters should describe the PI's unique qualifications and accomplishments that highlight his or her potential for success in pursuing a career in breast cancer research. Specifically, each letter should offer the writer's perspective on:

- The PI's qualifications, characteristics, and achievements,
- The PI's potential for productivity and desire for establishing a successful career in breast cancer research,
- The relevance of the proposed research project to training the PI in breast cancer,
- The suitability of the mentor and training environment for providing the PI with a solid foundation in breast cancer research.

Refer to the Application Instructions, Section II.B., for additional information regarding submission of the letters of recommendation.

V. INFORMATION FOR PROPOSAL REVIEW

A. Proposal Review and Selection Overview

All proposals are evaluated by scientists, clinicians, and consumer advocates using a two-tier review process. The first tier is a scientific peer review of proposals against established criteria for determining scientific merit. The second tier is a programmatic review that compares submissions to each other and recommends proposals for funding based on scientific merit and the overall goals of the program. Additional information about the two-tier review process used by the CDMRP may be found at <http://cdmrp.army.mil/fundingprocess>

The peer review and programmatic review processes are conducted confidentially and anonymously to maintain the integrity of the merit-based selection process. Each tier of review requires panelists to sign a non-disclosure statement attesting that proposal and evaluation information will not be disclosed outside the panel. Violations of the nondisclosure statement can result in the dissolving of a panel(s) and other corrective actions. Correspondingly, institutional personnel and PIs are prohibited from contacting persons involved in the proposal review process to gain protected evaluation information or to influence the evaluation process. Violations of this prohibition will result in the administrative withdrawal of the institution's proposal. Violations by panelists or PIs that compromise the confidentiality or anonymity of the peer review and programmatic review processes may also result in suspension or debarment of their employing institutions from Federal awards.

The Government reserves the right to review all proposals based on one or more of the required attachments or supporting documentation (e.g., Innovation Statement or Impact Statement).

B. Review Criteria

1. Peer Review: All proposals will be evaluated according to the following criteria, which are listed in decreasing order of importance.

- **Principal Investigator**
 - How the PI's achievements (as reflected by academic performance, awards, honors, and previous funding) indicate a potential for a successful career in breast cancer research.
 - How the PI's stated career goals demonstrate a strong personal commitment to pursuing a career as a breast cancer researcher or clinician.
 - How the letters of recommendation support the PI's high potential for success and dedication to a career in breast cancer research.
 - Whether the PI meets the appropriate eligibility requirements.
- **Mentor**
 - How the mentor has demonstrated experience in the field of breast cancer, and whether the mentor has current funding in breast cancer research.
 - How the mentor's background, qualifications, research program, committed resources, and available time support his or her ability to supervise the PI's training and research project.
 - How the mentor's training achievements, as reflected by his or her previous trainees' career achievements and areas of interest, indicate the potential for successful training of the PI in breast cancer research.
 - Whether the mentor's letter of recommendation indicates a high level of commitment to training the PI.
 - Whether the quality of the proposal suggests that the mentor provided appropriate guidance in its preparation.
- **Training Program and Environment**
 - How the training program focuses on breast cancer research.
 - How the individualized training program will augment the PI's expertise.
 - How well the training will prepare the PI for an independent career in breast cancer research.

- How the scientific environment is appropriate for the proposed training and research.
- How the training and research requirements are adequately supported by the availability of and accessibility to facilities and resources (including collaborative arrangements).
- **Impact**
 - How the training program and research project will have an impact on the PI's expertise in breast cancer research or patient care.
- **Research Strategy and Feasibility**
 - How the scientific rationale supports the project and its feasibility, as demonstrated by a critical review and analysis of the literature, the presentation of preliminary data, and/or logical reasoning.
 - How well the hypotheses or objectives, aims, experimental design, methods, and analyses are developed and integrated into the project.
 - How well the PI acknowledges potential problems and addresses alternative approaches.
- **Budget**
 - How the budget is appropriate for the proposed research.

2. Programmatic Review: Criteria used by programmatic reviewers to make funding recommendations that maintain the program's broad portfolio include:

- Ratings and evaluations of the peer reviewers,
- Programmatic relevance,
- Relative impact,
- Program portfolio balance,
- Adherence to the intent of the award mechanism.

Scientifically sound proposals that best fulfill the above criteria and most effectively address the unique focus and goals of the program will be identified by Integration Panel members and recommended for funding to the Commanding General, USAMRMC.

VI. COMPLIANCE GUIDELINES

Compliance guidelines have been designed to ensure the presentation of all pre-applications and proposals in an organized and easy-to-follow manner. Scientific peer reviewers expect to see a consistent, prescribed format. Failure to adhere to formatting guidelines makes documents difficult to read, may be perceived as an attempt to gain an unfair competitive advantage, and may result in pre-application or proposal rejection. ***Pre-applications or proposals missing required components as specified in the Program Announcement/Funding Opportunity may be administratively rejected.***

The following will result in administrative rejection of the entire proposal:

- Project Narrative exceeds page limit.
- Project Narrative is missing.
- Budget is missing.
- FY08 BCRP Integration Panel (IP) member(s) is named as a collaborator or participant in the proposal.
- FY08 BCRP IP member(s) is found to be involved in any capacity in the pre-application and proposal processes including, but not limited to, concept design, proposal development, budget preparation, and the development of any supporting document.

A list of the FY08 BCRP IP members may be found at <http://cdmrp.army.mil>.

For any other sections of the pre-application or proposal with a defined page limit, pages exceeding the specified limit will be removed and not forwarded for scientific peer review.

Material submitted after the submission deadline, unless specifically requested by the Government, will not be forwarded for scientific peer review.

Proposals that appear to involve any allegation of research misconduct will be administratively withheld from further consideration pending institutional investigation. The institution will be requested to perform an investigation and provide those findings to the Grants Officer for a determination of the final disposition of the application.