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Funding Opportunities



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2026 Request for Proposals for Aging & Cancer Grants

Program Overview

The Samuel Waxman Institute for Aging & Cancer at the Mark Foundation for Cancer Research, in partnership with the American Cancer Society (ACS),

aging in cancer. Applications addressing solid tumors and/or blood cancers are encouraged. Proposals must justify the partnership through synergistic scientific aims. Awards from previous years can be found **here**.

The incidence of cancer and cancer-related mortality increases dramatically in individuals over the age of 50. Despite the increasingly urgent public health concern associated with this trend, the mechanisms driving the age-associated increase in cancer risk remain poorly understood. Growing evidence indicates that age-related changes in the immune system play a central role in promoting cancer development and progression.

To address these challenges, the Samuel Waxman Institute for Aging & Cancer has established a near-term goal to better understand the molecular mechanisms governing aging in epithelial, stromal, and immune cells that influence cancer initiation, growth, and resistance to therapy. Through increasing this understanding, the Institute hopes to drive the development of safer and more effective treatments and prevention strategies leading to longer, healthier lives with less cancer. Additionally, the Institute has established a long-term goal of building AI-enabled clinical algorithms to predict biological aging and cancer onset and progression.

Research supported by this program will advance our understanding of the rising incidence of cancer due to aging, with a special emphasis on the role of inflammaging and immunosenescence as common drivers of aging and cancer. Example topics include but are not limited to:

- Identifying **actionable biomarkers** (inflammatory molecules, immune cells, etc.) that link **aging and cancer risk**, including in younger individuals with early onset cancers and those with genetic predispositions, and **underlying mechanisms**.
- Dissecting the effects of the **aging tumor microenvironment** (e.g., inflammation, immune system, senescent cells) on **tumorigenesis, progression, and treatment response**.
- Investigating how progression of **age-related clonal hematopoiesis, myeloid skewing, or emergency myelopoiesis** promotes hematological malignancies (including chronic myelomonocytic leukemia) or solid tumors, and/or causes therapeutic resistance.
- Establishing the effects of **tumors and cancer therapies** in **organismal aging**, including the identification of biomarkers and therapeutic strategies to minimize or prevent cancer-induced aging.
- Providing preclinical and mechanistic validation for **aging-specific, anticancer therapeutic approaches** based on strategies targeting inflammation or senescence, or nominated from clinical trial data segregated by age.
- Supporting **exploratory clinical trials** to treat or prevent cancer in older or high-risk individuals, including **correlative analyses** from clinical samples derived from relevant trials. We encourage collaborations with biopharma or other funding sources to accelerate the proposed work.

Projects are encouraged to incorporate **patient samples, datasets, and/or experimental models that can be stratified by age** (e.g. aged animal models, models of premature aging, cellular models derived from young versus aged individuals...). For example, applicants may be interested in leveraging the GAINS (Genetic and Aging Influences on Neoplastic Susceptibility) pilot initiative at The Jackson Laboratory that explores the use of spontaneous

We have established a partnership with the American Cancer Society (ACS) to support collaborations with ACS investigators and provide access to data and biospecimens from the CPS-II and CPS-3 longitudinal cohorts (visit **Population Science | American Cancer Society** for more information). To discuss potential collaborations, please visit **Are You Interested in Being a Research Partner or Using CPS-3 Data? | American Cancer Society** or contact cohort.data@cancer.org and include “Aging and Cancer collaboration” in the subject line to ensure a prompt response.

Institutional Eligibility

Open to non-profit academic/research institutions worldwide.

- The “host institution” is the institution of the Principal Investigator (PI) on the application.
- Co-Principal Investigators (Co-PI) must be from a different institution.
- The term “institution” will be interpreted broadly – for example, a medical school and academic department at the same university will be considered the same institution.

There is no requirement to include a US-based institution as part of the team.

Investigator Eligibility

There are no restrictions on citizenship or geography.

Applicants must have an independent faculty appointment (tenure-track or equivalent) at a non-profit academic/research institution.

Collaboration teams must consist of one principal investigator (PI) at the host institution and one co-principal investigator (co-PI) at a different institution. We encourage teams that bring together individuals with distinct expertise (e.g. a cancer investigator and computational expert, a cancer investigator and an aging expert who has not previously worked in the cancer field, or experts who study aging in oncology and immunology).

The PI and co-PI must both lead established laboratories currently supported by multi-year independent funding. For example, for US-based applicants, this should be at least one or two NIH/R01. International applicants should similarly demonstrate independent support for their labs.

Investigators who currently hold “Aging and Cancer” awards from the Mark Foundation are not permitted to apply.

The PI and co-PI can only participate in one application, regardless of role.

Award Terms

The award will provide support of up to \$500,000 to a team of two investigators for a term of three years, with \$200,000 provided in Years 1 and 2 and \$100,000 in Year 3. Ideally, the distribution should be even between the two investigators. The host institution will receive the grant funds.

Award recipients will be required to attend an annual scientific event sponsored by the Samuel Waxman Institute for Aging & Cancer.

Letters of Intent must be submitted through the online application system **no later than 5 PM Eastern Time on June 15, 2026**. Registration and email address verification are required. Notifications will be sent from the application system so please be sure these emails are not caught in spam filters.

Letters of Intent are limited to 1 page and should be formatted with 0.5-inch border and 10 font size. They must include:

- Proposal title
- Background
- Key preliminary data
- Premise and rigor of underlying research
- Hypothesis
- Specific aims
- Novelty
- Potential translational impact for aging and cancer

Applicants will also be requested to provide a biosketch (NIH format or similar) and a list of current grants and other funding supporting the lab.

All application materials, including Letter of Intent and biosketch, must be submitted in English.

Invitations for full applications and funding decisions will be based on peer review by a committee of members of the Waxman Institute Scientific Advisory Board, Mark Foundation representatives, and the Scientific Review Committee.

Key Dates:

Application portal opens: **May 4, 2026**

Letters of intent due: **June 15, 2026**

Notification of invitation to submit a full application: **August 2026**

Full applications due: **September 15, 2026**

Notification of award: **October 2026**

Projects and funding start: **January 1, 2027**

Submit all inquiries to grants@themarkfoundation.org.

[Apply Here](#)

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