

COVID-19 Response Grant

COVID-19 Response Grant Overview

Created in 2015, the Andy Hill Cancer Research Endowment (CARE) Fund enables Washington State to match up to \$10 million annually to fund cancer research initiatives. The COVID-19 pandemic is having a significant impact on cancer patients and survivors. Additionally, access to cancer prevention and screening services may be limited or unavailable due to the pandemic. To help address these issues and find solutions, the CARE Fund seeks to support research that can be immediately initiated and that focuses on the impact of COVID-19 on outcomes, research, risks, or well-being for cancer patients. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Health services research
- Basic research toward therapeutics, diagnostics, and vaccines
- Behavioral, socio-emotional, and educational well-being
- Clinical, translation, and therapeutic discovery
- Health disparities
- Epidemiology and surveillance
- Information, computing, and communication technology
- Manufacturing, innovation, and entrepreneurship
- Microbiome, immunology, and infection mitigation
- Prevention and screening

The COVID-19 Response Grant Program will provide up to approximately \$100,000 per award to organizations (e.g., companies, universities, research institutions, etc.), local health jurisdictions, and tribal governments or entities in Washington State to support research projects at the intersection of COVID-19 and cancer. At the CARE Fund Board's discretion, promising projects may be awarded more than \$100,000. Additionally, at the CARE Fund Board's discretion, applications may be considered for additional funding should funds become available in the future. The CARE Fund anticipates allocating a total of \$500,000 for this cycle of the COVID-19 Response Grant Program.

Timeline

Call for Proposals Announced	May 14, 2020
Proposal Application Deadline	May, 27 2020
Award Decision	June 24, 2020
Project Support	Up to 1 year from award date

Eligibility Requirements and Program Details

Applicant Eligibility

- Washington State organizations (e.g., companies, universities, research institutions, etc.), local health jurisdictions, and tribal governments or entities in Washington State are eligible to apply for a COVID-19 Response Grant.
- Applicant organization and principal investigator must be: 1) working on a project, 2) able to expand an existing project, or 3) able to rapidly stand up a new project that focuses on an area at the intersection of COVID-19 and cancer, where CARE funding is essential to the project.

Grant Amount and Use of Funds

- Up to approximately \$100,000 per grant award. Promising projects may be awarded more than \$100,000, at the CARE Fund Board's discretion.
- Grants are awarded to institutions.
- Grants must be used solely for research projects in Washington State at the intersection of COVID-19 and cancer.
- Project support is for up to one year from the grant award date.

Reporting Requirements

- Grant recipients must provide brief quarterly progress updates regarding their research for the duration of the award and a final summary of research results at the end of the award.
- Recipients must upload all manuscripts reporting results to a pre-print server upon submission to a peer-review journal.

Application Process

1. Applicants must submit an application as a single file PDF to the CARE Fund at peter@empirehealthfoundation.org by **Wednesday, May 27, 5:00 p.m.** (Application questions are on the [last page](#) of this document).
2. The CARE Fund will review applications for eligibility.
3. An independent expert scientific review panel will review the applications against the review criteria listed below. The panel will provide a score and rating for each application to the CARE Fund Board.
4. The CARE Fund Board will make a funding decision based on the review and recommendations of the review panel. The CARE Fund Board will act in accordance with its Conflict of Interest Policy as well as Chapter 42.52 RCW (Ethics in Public Service) to avoid actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest.

Application Review Criteria

Eligible proposals will be evaluated against each of the following criteria:

Criterion 1. Significance (5 points)

- Significance of the proposed research focus to address an important problem or a critical barrier at the intersection of COVID-19 and cancer.
- Degree to which successful completion of the project will have an extended impact on the selected area of cancer research and healthcare.
- Potential for immediate tangible benefit to patients or populations.
- Strength of the scientific premise for the research project.
- Degree to which the research approach and methodologies are appropriate to meet the proposed goals and objectives.

Criterion 2. Investigator Qualifications (5 points)

- Capability of the team of investigators to provide appropriate expertise and perspectives to accomplish the proposed research.
- Evidence of complementary, innovative cross-disciplinary or multi-sector collaborations that have potential to strengthen the research approach.
- Quality and scope of the Principal Investigator and Applicant Organization's management capacity.

Criterion 3. Approach (10 points)

- Strength and merit of the proposed scientific approach.
- Degree to which the research methodologies and interventions are appropriate to meet the proposed aims.
- Degree to which the proposed research will address cancer disparities (e.g., improving cancer care access, reducing disparities in treatment outcomes, financial toxicity resulting from accessing care), particularly among priority populations (as defined by the [Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality](#)) in Washington State.
- Degree to which the research strategy establishes feasibility and manages risk.
- Clear and appropriate strategy for adhering to any applicable regulations, including protection for human and animal subjects.

Criterion 4. Innovation (5 points)

- Potential for the novelty of the concepts, methodologies, or interventions to refine, improve, or shift current research or clinical practice paradigms.

- Degree to which the proposed research and approach is original or innovative (e.g., utilization of novel theoretical concepts, approaches, or methodologies to shift current research, or clinical practice paradigms).
- Potential of the project to result in transformational research that will extend understanding or open new pathways in cancer care or the cancer research field.

Criterion 5. Research Environment (5 points)

- Potential of the research environment to contribute to the probability of success of the project.
- Potential of the research environment to foster existing or new cross-disciplinary collaborations or partnerships.
- Applicant Organization’s support (e.g., instrumentation, facilities, financial support, and other resources) is adequate for the proposed research.

As applicable for the proposed project, reviewers will evaluate the: protections for human subjects; degree of responsiveness to this announcement; and potential to address cancer disparities when determining scores for scientific and technical merit. In addition to the criteria listed above, the review panel will take into consideration the reasonableness of the proposed budget.

Review Scores and Ratings

The following table summarizes the review criteria and scores:

Review Criteria	Maximum Score
Significance	5
Investigator Qualifications	5
Approach	10
Innovation	5
Research Environment	5
Total Score	30

Applications will be rated using the rating rubric shown below. The rating will concur with the total score and will reflect the overall funding recommendation.

Rating	Description of Rating	Total Score
Recommended	Well-constructed application demonstrating strong scientific merit, significance, innovation, and potential for impact. Investigators of high qualifications in a good research	23–30

	environment with high potential to complete the proposed project.	
Worthy of Consideration	Sufficiently constructed application demonstrating good scientific merit, significance, innovation, and potential for impact. Investigators in a good research environment with potential to complete the proposed project.	18–22
Not Recommended	Application demonstrating major weaknesses that will likely decrease the potential for scientific significance and impact. Investigators may have limited potential to complete the proposed project.	0–17

Intellectual Property

There are not intellectual property rights restrictions or obligations associated with the COVID-19 response grants.

Confidentiality

Information in grant applications is received by the CARE Fund with the understanding that it shall be used or disclosed for the evaluation of applications or as required by law. The CARE Fund holds all applications confidential in accordance with its confidentiality procedures and subject to the public disclosure laws of the state of Washington. All applicants are advised that information provided to the CARE Fund, including an applicant’s proprietary and confidential information, are considered public records under Washington’s Public Records Act, Chapter 42.56 RCW. Generally, public records are subject to disclosure unless an exemption to disclosure applies. Much of the information provided to the CARE Fund may be protected from potential Public Records request disclosure to the extent provided under RCW 42.56.270(29).

The CARE Fund may make use of information contained in applications for purposes of transparency and publicity, including, but not limited to: applicant name; applicant organization; project title; funding amount requested; and applicant profile. For unfunded applications, the CARE Fund will not publicly release the abstract or narrative of the proposed work, budget details, or any identifiers regarding co-applicant organizations, to the extent disclosure of this information might reasonably be expected to result in private loss to the applicant organizations, and as is consistent with public disclosure laws of the state of Washington. If a proposal is funded, the CARE Fund may make public additional information from the application, including, but not limited to: project abstract; funding amount; names and profiles of the investigators or collaborating organizations.

The CARE Fund reserves the right to publicly disseminate information about a grantee's activities through public reports, its website, press releases, speaking engagements, and other public venues. To the extent allowable under Washington State law, the CARE Fund shall not publicly disclose information that has been marked as proprietary or confidential if such information has not been previously disclosed to the public, or other information to the extent that provision of such information would reasonably be expected to result in private loss to the providers of such information.

About the Andy Hill Cancer Research Endowment

Created in 2015, the Andy Hill Cancer Research Endowment (CARE) Fund enables Washington State to match up to \$10 million annually to fund cancer research initiatives. The CARE Fund is built on a public-private partnership model and incentivizes additional investment by matching private or other non-state resources with state funds. With the establishment of the CARE Fund, the state is making a commitment to enrich the cancer research ecosystem with sustained investment to promote cancer research, aimed at improving the quality of life of the people of Washington.

Contact Information

For questions regarding this announcement or application, please contact Peter Choi, at peter@empirehealthfoundation.org.

COVID-19 Response Grant Application

To submit an application, applicants must respond to the following prompts and submit a single file PDF to the CARE Fund at peter@empirehealthfoundation.org by **Wednesday, May 27, 5:00 p.m. (PST)**. [NOTE: Applicants should consider protecting any potential intellectual property or confidential information before disclosing it in the application.¹]

Application should follow NIH font and line spacing guidelines <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/how-to-apply-application-guide/format-and-write/format-attachments.htm#font>.

1. Cover Page (1-page limit). Include the following information:
 - a. Project Title
 - b. Scientific disciplines represented
 - c. Amount of funding requested
 - d. Applicant Organization Name and Address
 - e. Name and contact information for the person who will manage the award
 - f. Principal Investigator Name, Title, Institution, Email Address, Phone number
 - i. List key collaborating investigators, their title and institution
 - g. Project Abstract (100 words)
2. Research Project Proposal (3-page limit, including figures). The project proposal should include, the major research question(s) to be pursued and how it intersects with cancer and COVID-19; proposed research plan; significance; approach; innovation; research environment; feasibility; anticipated short- and long-term impacts in cancer research, clinical interventions, or cancer prevention, including health disparities; collaborations which may need to be developed.
3. Budget Justification (1-page limit)
4. Biosketches (or resumés) for Principal Investigator and Key Collaborators (NIH format)

¹ Proprietary, privileged, confidential commercial, patentable ideas, trade secrets, etc. should only be included in the application to the extent necessary to convey an understanding of the research project proposal. Such information should be clearly marked in the application materials as confidential, proprietary, or privileged information.

All applicants to CARE Grant Programs are advised that information provided to the CARE Fund, including an applicant's proprietary and confidential information, are considered public records under Washington's Public Records Act, Chapter 42.56 RCW. Generally, public records are subject to disclosure unless an exemption to disclosure applies. Much of the information provided to the CARE Fund may be protected from potential Public Records request disclosure to the extent provided under RCW 42.56.270(29). RCW 42.56.270(29) is an exemption in the Public Records Act that applies specifically to records provided in the context of a CARE Fund application and grant implementation. It exempts "Financial, commercial, operations, and technical and research information and data submitted to or obtained by the Andy Hill Cancer Research Endowment program in applications for, or delivery of, grants under Chapter 43.348 RCW, to the extent that such information, if revealed, would reasonably be expected to result in private loss to providers of this information." However, applicants should be aware that their information will be subject to disclosure unless this or another exemption applies.

The applicant may be notified of any public records request regarding their application and be given an opportunity to provide further information specifying why the information should be exempt from disclosure, and an opportunity to assert objections to disclosure and seek a protective order. CARE will determine, in its sole discretion, whether to assert RCW 42.56.270(29) or any other available public records exemption.