



## **2021 Bladder Cancer Research Innovation Award**

**\$300,000 over two years**

### **Letter of Intent Guidelines**

#### **Purpose of Award**

The aim of the 2021 Bladder Cancer Research Innovation Award is to support exceptionally novel and creative projects with great potential to produce breakthroughs in our understanding of bladder cancer. The proposed research may be basic, translational, clinical or epidemiological and must have direct applicability and relevance to bladder cancer. Innovation, either conceptual or technological, is essential.

The award is available to full time, independent investigators who are affiliated with a non-profit academic, medical or research institution within the United States or Canada. Eligible recipients include investigators who have experience in other areas of cancer or biomedical/health science research with promising ideas and approaches that can be applied to bladder cancer research. Projects that are high-risk and high reward, as opposed to incremental in nature, are required. Essential elements of this award mechanism include the following: (i) does the project address an important problem and/or critical barrier to progress in the field of bladder cancer research? (ii) does the project address an area in which there is a significant gap in current knowledge? (iii) is the project highly innovative?

The award is for \$300,000 over two years (\$150,000 per year) for direct research expenses, which may include salary and benefits for postdoctoral or clinical research fellows, and/or research assistants; research/lab supplies; and equipment. The second year of funding is dependent on approval after a one-year progress report has been submitted and reviewed by BCAN.

Proposals will be accepted for creative ideas and innovative approaches that have direct application and relevance to bladder cancer. New ideas and innovative approaches may include, but are not limited to, those that utilize novel theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions. Proposals for innovative projects that lay the groundwork necessary to prepare and submit a competitive research grant application to a major funding agency are encouraged.

Up to two proposals will be funded for the Bladder Cancer Research Innovation Award in 2021. The Awardees are expected to attend the annual Bladder Cancer Think Tank meeting in August 2022 and to present the results of the funded research during the 2023 Think Tank meeting.

## **Application Process**

Interested applicants must submit a Letter of Intent by Wednesday January 13, 2021. The Letters of Intent will be reviewed by members of the Innovation Award Scientific Review Group. Those applicants whose Letters of Intent are deemed most meritorious will be invited to submit full research proposals and compete for the Award. Applicants will be notified of the decision status of the Letter of Intent by Wednesday, March 3, 2021, and the deadline for complete applications will be Wednesday, April 14, 2021. The award decision will be announced in June 2021.

## **Eligibility**

1. Applicant must have a medical and/or doctoral degree (including Ph.D., M.D., D.O., D.D.S, D.V.M, Pharm.D., Sc.D., D.N.S. or equivalent doctoral degree) in the biomedical sciences or in a field applicable to health science research.
2. Applicant must be an independent investigator employed by a non-profit academic, medical or research institution within the United States or Canada. Proof of permanent resident status or a valid work visa is required if the applicant is not an American or Canadian citizen.
3. Employees or subcontractors of for-profit private industry are not eligible for the award but may serve as Collaborators for another applicant.
4. Any individual who currently holds an active BCAN Young Investigator Award or BCAN Bladder Cancer Research Innovation Award may not apply.
5. Investigators may submit only one Letter of Intent for a Bladder Cancer Research Innovation Award and may not apply both for this Award and for a BCAN Young Investigator Award.
6. BCAN will not discriminate based on gender, race, ethnicity, creed, religion, sexual orientation, disability, nationality, age or any other factor irrelevant to the quality of the Letter of Intent.
7. Applications may have co-principal investigators (PI). However, applicants should make the rationale for this choice clear to the reviewers.

## **Letter of Intent Description**

1. The Letter of Intent is limited to 2 pages and must describe the proposed bladder cancer research project, including the Specific Aims; Rationale, Methodology and Approach; Statement of Innovation (describing how the proposed study employs an innovative approach to bladder cancer research, either conceptual or technological); and Statement of Significance and Relevance to bladder cancer. Must be in English. Please follow NIH guidelines:
  - Paper Size: 8.5" x 11"
  - Margins: at least 1/2" all sides.
  - Font: Arial, Helvetica, Palatino, Times New Roman or Georgia at least 11pt (or larger).
2. Relevant references must be attached and are limited to 2 pages.
3. The applicant's biographical sketch ([NIH Form PHS 398](#)) must be attached and is limited to 5 pages. For applications with co-PIs, each PI's bio sketch must be included. Co-investigator bio sketches are not required for the LOI.
4. Scientific abstract is limited to 2000 characters including spaces (approximately 250 words). This abstract must provide a clear, concise and comprehensive overview of the proposed bladder cancer research project.

## **Evaluation Process and Criteria**

Letters of Intent will be reviewed by the Innovation Award Scientific Review Group, comprised of medical experts recognized for their own accomplishments in cancer research and as leaders in the field. Approximately 10 applicants who submit letters of intent will be invited to submit a full proposal.

The Scientific Review Group will also review and score the full applications based on the merits of the research proposals. The Award review process is based on the peer review system utilized by the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Any reviewer with a conflict of interest is excused from voting on a specific application.

The Chair of the Scientific Review Group will present the highest ranked proposals to the Bladder Cancer Research Network Management Committee which will accept the scientific merit scores. The Management Committee will review the ranking of the top applications based solely on those scores and recommend the final Award decision, based on all included criteria specified in the RFA, for approval by the BCAN Board of Directors. Any member of the Management Committee or the BCAN Board of Directors with a conflict of interest is prohibited from voting on the Award decisions.

Evaluation of Letters of Intent and invited Applications will include the following criteria:

1. Investigator: Does the applicant have appropriate experience and training to successfully complete the proposed project? Has the applicant achieved, or have the potential of achieving, a track record of accomplishments to advance the field of bladder cancer research?

2. Innovation: Does the application challenge and seek to shift current research or clinical practice patterns by utilizing novel theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation or interventions? Areas to be addressed include but are not limited to: bladder cancer prevention; bladder cancer detection and diagnoses; understanding tumor development, recurrence and progression; improving therapy and outcomes.
3. Significance: Does the project address an important problem or a critical barrier to progress in the field of bladder cancer research? If the aims of the project are achieved, how will scientific knowledge, technical capability, and/ or clinical practice be improved?
4. Approach: Are the overall strategy, methodology, and analyses well-reasoned and appropriate to accomplish the specific aims of the project? Are potential problems, alternative strategies and benchmarks for success presented? Is the budget fully justified and reasonable in relation to the proposed project?
5. Environment: What institutional support, equipment and resources are available to the applicant and are they adequate to successfully complete the proposed project?

### **Letter of Intent Filing Instructions**

All applicants for the Bladder Cancer Research Innovation Award must submit a Letter of Intent online by Wednesday January 13, 2021 at 5:00 PM U.S. Eastern Time using the proposalCentral website at <https://proposalcentral.altum.com/default.asp?GMID=102>

We will make no exceptions to the Wednesday January 13, 2021 deadline. You will receive a confirmation email once you submit your letter of intent. If you do not receive one, or if you have questions, please contact Bernadette Fitzsimmons at [bfitzsimmons@bcan.org](mailto:bfitzsimmons@bcan.org).

If you have any difficulties registering, logging in, or creating your application, contact proposalCENTRAL Customer Support directly:

Phone: 703-964-5840, Toll-free phone: 1-800-875-2562, Email: [pcsupport@altum.com](mailto:pcsupport@altum.com)

Please note that Proposal Central live customer support is only available from 9am – 5pm U.S. Eastern Time, and plan accordingly.