



CANCER PREVENTION & RESEARCH
INSTITUTE OF TEXAS

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS
RFA R-16-RTA-1

Research Training Awards

**Please also refer to the Instructions for Applicants document,
which will be posted on March 20, 2015**

Application Receipt Opening Date: March 20, 2015

Application Receipt Closing Date: May 20, 2015

FY 2016

Fiscal Year Award Period

September 1, 2015-August 31, 2016

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. ABOUT CPRIT	4
1.1. RESEARCH PROGRAM PRIORITIES	4
2. RATIONALE	4
3. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES	6
4. FUNDING INFORMATION	7
5. ELIGIBILITY	8
6. RESUBMISSION POLICY	10
7. RENEWAL POLICY	10
8. RESPONDING TO THIS RFA	11
8.1. APPLICATION SUBMISSION GUIDELINES	11
8.1.1. <i>Submission Deadline Extension</i>	11
8.2. APPLICATION COMPONENTS	11
8.2.1. <i>Abstract and Significance (5,000 characters)</i>	11
8.2.2. <i>Layperson's Summary (2,000 characters)</i>	12
8.2.3. <i>Goals and Objectives</i>	12
8.2.4. <i>Timeline (1 page)</i>	12
8.2.5. <i>Resubmission Summary (1 page)</i>	13
8.2.6. <i>Renewal Summary (5 pages)</i>	13
8.2.7. <i>Research Training Plan (15 pages)</i>	13
8.2.8. <i>Publications/References</i>	14
8.2.9. <i>Budget and Justification</i>	14
8.2.10. <i>Biographical Sketches (14-page maximum)</i>	15
8.2.11. <i>Current and Pending Support</i>	15
8.2.12. <i>Institutional Support (3 pages)</i>	16
8.2.13. <i>Previous Summary Statement</i>	16
9. APPLICATION REVIEW	16
9.1. PRELIMINARY EVALUATION.....	16
9.2. FULL PEER REVIEW	17
9.3. CONFIDENTIALITY OF REVIEW	17
9.4. REVIEW CRITERIA.....	18
9.4.1. <i>Primary Criteria</i>	18
9.4.2. <i>Secondary Criteria</i>	20
10. KEY DATES	21
11. AWARD ADMINISTRATION	21
12. REQUIREMENT TO DEMONSTRATE AVAILABLE FUNDS	22
13. CONTACT INFORMATION	23
13.1. HELPDESK	23
13.2. SCIENTIFIC AND PROGRAMMATIC QUESTIONS	23

RFA VERSION HISTORY

Rev 02/20/15 RFA release

CLOSED

1. ABOUT CPRIT

The state of Texas has established the Cancer Prevention and Research Institute of Texas (CPRIT), which may issue up to \$3 billion in general obligation bonds to fund grants for cancer research and prevention.

CPRIT is charged by the Texas Legislature to do the following:

- Create and expedite innovation in the area of cancer research and in enhancing the potential for a medical or scientific breakthrough in the prevention of or cures for cancer;
- Attract, create, or expand research capabilities of public or private institutions of higher education and other public or private entities that will promote a substantial increase in cancer research and in the creation of high-quality new jobs in the state of Texas; and
- Develop and implement the Texas Cancer Plan.

1.1. Research Program Priorities

The Texas Legislature has charged the CPRIT Oversight Committee with establishing program priorities on an annual basis. These priorities are intended to provide transparency in how the Oversight Committee directs the orientation of the agency's funding portfolio. The principles and priorities of the Scientific Research program will guide CPRIT staff, peer reviewers, and the Scientific Review Council on the development and issuance of program-specific Requests for Applications (RFAs) and the evaluation of applications submitted in response to those RFAs. The program priorities for research adopted by the Oversight Committee include funding projects that address:

- A broad range of innovative, investigator-initiated research projects;
- Prevention and early detection;
- Rare and intractable cancers, including childhood cancers;
- Cancers of importance in Texas;
- Computational biology and analytic methods; and
- Building Infrastructure.

2. RATIONALE

The goal of this award is to facilitate the training of the next generation of outstanding cancer researchers to help ensure that a diverse pool of highly trained scientists is available in adequate numbers and in appropriate research areas to address the state's and the nation's basic, population-based, clinical, and translational cancer research needs. Training is expected to be

directed toward building the broad research competence required to ensure that trainees are prepared to assume leadership roles in cancer research. This award supports the training of highly qualified individuals, both predoctoral and postdoctoral, who have the potential to become productive, independent research scientists or physician-scientists and who intend to pursue careers focused on cancer research.

Committed institutional support is required, especially in the form of superb research opportunities, excellent instruction and mentoring, and state-of-the-art facilities. Trainees are expected to be immersed in a highly interactive and supportive didactic and research program that facilitates research and instruction in cancer-related areas that will contribute to innovative approaches to key problems and will help bring novel solutions and potential therapies into practice. The training environment should be enriched by programmatic elements such as seminars from visiting researchers, journal clubs, internal research seminars, videoconferencing with collaborating institutions (if applicable), and attendance at national and/or international scientific meetings. Each supported trainee is expected to identify an appropriate mentor and/or mentor committee that will be responsible for providing critical teaching, advising, and leadership experience.

In addition to support of PhD and postdoctoral research training, potential opportunities include the following:

- Master's degree-level programs to train clinical investigators. Trainees may be in predoctoral (MD/MS) programs or clinical fellowship positions, or they should have just received their first faculty appointment as an instructor or assistant professor.
- Master's degree-level programs to facilitate trainees' pursuit of research careers as high-level laboratory support personnel. When trained, such individuals would be capable of training others in a laboratory with regard to sophisticated technical issues and of performing research with only modest levels of supervision. CPRIT encourages innovative approaches to training such individuals. Programs whose goals are to produce trainees with a conventional master's degree in a relevant biomedical or related science by successful completion of a relatively modest research project are not appropriate.
- Undergraduate summer research internship programs, particularly those directed at underrepresented minorities.

3. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This RFA solicits applications for *integrated institutional research training programs* to support promising individuals who seek specialized training in the area of cancer research. The goals of the Research Training Awards are to attract outstanding predoctoral (PhD or MD/PhD) and postdoctoral trainees committed to pursuing a career in basic, population-based, translational, or clinical cancer research; to expand the skills and expertise of trainees to promote the next generation of investigators and leaders in cancer research; to position most trainees for independent research careers; and to support the development of high-quality, innovative, and creative research that, if successful, could provide the basis for a significant impact on cancer prevention, detection, and/or treatment. Successful applicant institutions are expected to provide trainees with broad access to research opportunities across disciplinary and departmental lines and to maintain high standards for intellectual rigor and creativity.

It is expected that the research training experience will provide the following:

- A strong foundation in research design, methods, and analytic techniques appropriate to the proposed research project;
- The development or enhancement of the supported trainee's ability to conceptualize and think through research problems with increasing independence;
- Experience in conducting, presenting, and publishing independent research;
- Instruction in the responsible conduct of research;
- The opportunity to interact with members of the scientific community at appropriate seminars, scientific meetings, and workshops; and
- A well-conceived career plan to increase the trainee's ability to secure additional support for his or her research.

Individuals from underrepresented racial and ethnic groups, individuals with disabilities, and individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds are especially encouraged to participate in CPRIT's training programs, and a plan for recruiting such individuals is a requirement for this award.

In addition to predoctoral and postdoctoral research training, potential opportunities include master's degree-level programs to train clinical investigators; undergraduate summer research internship programs, particularly those directed at recruitment of underrepresented minorities; and master's degree-level programs to encourage the pursuit of alternative careers in laboratory support positions. *Awards will be made for institutional programs; individual fellowship applications will not be considered.* CPRIT expects outcomes of

supported activities to directly and indirectly benefit subsequent cancer research efforts, cancer public health policy, or the continuum of cancer care—from prevention to treatment and cure. To fulfill this vision, trainees may pursue any research topic or issue related to cancer biology, causation, prevention, detection or screening, treatment, or cure. Each supported trainee and his or her mentor and institution are jointly responsible for planning, directing, and executing the proposed research training program.

Attracting the finest trainees to Texas laboratories and academic institutions is critically important for the local cancer research enterprises, but it is acknowledged that a significant number of those trained in Texas may ultimately seek positions elsewhere.

4. FUNDING INFORMATION

Applicants may request a maximum of \$800,000 in total costs per year for up to 5 years. Requests for funds to support construction and/or renovation will not be approved under this funding mechanism. State law limits the amount of award funding that may be spent on indirect costs to no more than 5% of the total award amount.

Support may be requested as follows for the various types of trainees in an institutional training program:

- **PhD trainees:** May request support for stipend (up to \$28,000 per year, which may be supplemented with other available funds) and benefits and an allowance per trainee of \$1,000 per year that may be used for travel to scientific meetings if the trainee is making a presentation (oral or poster). Funds for tuition may also be requested (to a maximum of \$6,000 per year). Individual trainees may be supported for up to 4 years, but they cannot be supported by this mechanism until it is clear that their mentor and research program are highly relevant to cancer.
- **MD/PhD trainees:** May request support equal to that of Ph.D. trainees (above). Funds may be used only during the time of research training, not during medical school years.
- **Postdoctoral trainees:** May request NIH-scale salary support plus benefits and an allowance per trainee of \$2,000 per year for travel to scientific meetings. Appointments may be made for up to 3 years. Individuals holding PhD, MD/PhD, or MD degrees are eligible for postdoctoral fellowship support provided that the training supported by CPRIT is for research (basic, population-based, translational, or clinical).

Support may also be requested for following types of institutional training programs:

- **Undergraduate summer internship programs:** May request up to \$6,000 per trainee for summer stipend and housing allowance.
- **Master's degree-level programs to support research careers as laboratory support personnel:** May request stipend support (\$28,000 per year) plus benefits. Appointments may be made for up to 2 years. Funds for tuition may also be requested (to a maximum of \$6,000 per year).
- **Master's degree-level programs to train clinical investigators:** May request \$28,000 per year plus benefits if trainees are predoctoral (eg, an MD/MS training program). Funds may not be used while trainees are in medical school. May request \$50,000 per year plus benefits if trainees are clinical fellows or faculty members. It is anticipated that institutions will supplement stipends for trainees at this level. Funds for tuition may be requested (to a maximum of \$6,000 per year).

5. ELIGIBILITY

- The applicant must be a Texas-based institution of higher education or a component of a university system with appropriately accredited degree-granting training programs (if support is requested for training leading to a degree).
- The Principal Investigator (PI) must have a doctoral degree, including MD, PhD, DDS, DMD, DrPH, DO, DVM, or equivalent, and must reside in Texas during the time the research that is the subject of the grant is conducted.
- An institution may submit only 1 new or renewal application under this RFA during this funding cycle. An exception will be made for institutions submitting applications for cancer prevention training; in this case, institutions may submit 1 prevention training program application and 1 additional application in another aspect of cancer research (new or renewal). For the purposes of this RFA, an institution is defined as that component of a university system that has its own president. There must be only 1 PI, but Co-PIs may direct individual components of the overall program described in the application. An institution may apply for as many components of the training program as are appropriate for the institution.

- Trainees with the skills and background necessary to carry out the proposed research training should work with their mentors and other appropriate individuals in the institution to develop individual applications for their own support. These applications are to be submitted to the PI in a form to be determined by the PI and will be evaluated in a manner to be described by the PI.
- All supported trainees must reside in Texas during the time the training program that is the subject of the grant is conducted.
- Trainees may be citizens or noncitizen nationals of the United States or international citizens who hold student visas. All trainees should be officially enrolled in the appropriate training program.
- Excluding summer interns, trainees must have at least a baccalaureate degree and show evidence of both high academic performance in the sciences and keen interest in research in areas of high priority to the participating institution. In addition, trainees who are degree candidates must be enrolled in an accredited program and be sponsored by a mentor for the research component.
- CPRIT funds may be used to supplement funding available from other sources if the pool of trainees is of sufficient size and quality to justify additional support.
- Subcontracting and collaborating organizations may include public, not-for-profit, and for-profit entities. Such entities may be located outside of the state of Texas, but non-Texas-based organizations are not eligible to receive CPRIT funds.
- An applicant is eligible to receive a grant award only if the applicant certifies that the applicant institution or organization, including the PI, any senior member or key personnel listed on the grant application, or any officer or director of the grant applicant's institution or organization (or any person related to 1 or more of these individuals within the second degree of consanguinity or affinity), has not made and will not make a contribution to CPRIT or to any foundation specifically created to benefit CPRIT.
- An applicant is not eligible to receive a CPRIT grant award if the applicant PI, any senior member or key personnel listed on the grant application, or any officer or director of the grant applicant's organization or institution is related to a CPRIT Oversight Committee member.

- The applicant must report whether the applicant institution or organization, the PI, or other individuals who contribute to the execution of the proposed project in a substantive, measurable way, whether or not those individuals are slated to receive salary or compensation under the grant award, are currently ineligible to receive federal grant funds or have had a grant terminated for cause within 5 years prior to the submission date of the grant application.
- CPRIT grants will be awarded by contract to successful applicants. Certain contractual requirements are mandated by Texas law or by administrative rules. Although applicants need not demonstrate the ability to comply with these contractual requirements at the time the application is submitted, applicants should make themselves aware of these standards before submitting a grant application. Significant issues addressed by the CPRIT contract are listed in [section 11](#) and [section 12](#). All statutory provisions and relevant administrative rules can be found at www.cprit.state.tx.us.

6. RESUBMISSION POLICY

Applicants preparing a resubmission must describe the approach to the resubmission. If a summary statement was prepared for the original application review, applicants are advised to address all noted concerns.

Note: An application previously submitted to CPRIT but not funded may be resubmitted once after careful consideration of the reasons for lack of prior success. Applications that received overall numerical scores of 5 or higher are likely to need considerable attention. Applicants may prepare a fresh Training Plan or modify the original Training Plan and mark the changes. However, all resubmitted applications should be carefully reconstructed; a simple revision of the prior application with editorial or technical changes is not sufficient, and applicants are advised not to direct reviewers to such modest changes.

7. RENEWAL POLICY

Applicants preparing a renewal must describe and demonstrate that appropriate/adequate progress has been made on the current funded award to warrant further funding. Publications and manuscripts in press that have resulted from work performed during the initial funded period should be listed in the renewal summary.

8. RESPONDING TO THIS RFA

8.1. Application Submission Guidelines

Applications must be submitted via the CPRIT Application Receipt System (CARS) (<https://CPRITGrants.org>). **Only applications submitted through this portal will be considered eligible for evaluation.** The applicant is eligible solely for the grant mechanism specified by the RFA under which the grant application was submitted. The PI must create a user account in the system to start and submit an application. The Co-PI, if applicable, must also create a user account to participate in the application. Furthermore, the Authorized Signing Official (ASO) (a person authorized to sign and submit the application for the organization) and the Grants Contract/Office of Sponsored Projects Official (the individual who will manage the grant contract if an award is made) also must create a user account in CARS. Applications will be accepted beginning at 7 AM central time on March 20, 2015, and must be submitted by 3 PM central time on May 20, 2015. **Submission of an application is considered an acceptance of the terms and conditions of the RFA.**

8.1.1. Submission Deadline Extension

The submission deadline may be extended for 1 or more grant applications upon a showing of good cause. All requests for extension of the submission deadline must be submitted via email to the CPRIT HelpDesk. Submission deadline extensions, including the reason for the extension, will be documented as part of the grant review process records.

8.2. Application Components

Applicants are advised to follow all instructions to ensure accurate and complete submission of all components of the application. Please refer to the *Instructions for Applicants* document for details that will be available when the application receipt system opens. Submissions that are missing 1 or more components or do not meet the eligibility requirements listed in [section 5](#) will be administratively withdrawn without review.

8.2.1. Abstract and Significance (5,000 characters)

Clearly describe the proposed training program. Explain program goals and provide an outline of the proposed didactic and research training activities and an overview of the institutional infrastructure and commitment. The specific aims of the application must be obvious from the abstract although they need not be restated verbatim from the Research Training Plan. Clearly

address how the proposed program, if successful, will have a major impact on cancer and will increase the number of underrepresented minorities in the field.

Note: It is the responsibility of the applicant to capture CPRIT's attention primarily with the Abstract and Significance statement alone. Therefore, applicants are advised to prepare this section wisely. Applicants should not waste this valuable space by stating obvious facts (eg, that cancer is a significant problem; that better diagnostic and therapeutic approaches are needed urgently; or that the type of cancer of interest to the PI is important, vexing, or deadly). Based on this statement (and the Budget and Justification and Biographical Sketches), applications that are judged to offer only modest contributions to the training of cancer researchers or that do not sufficiently capture the reviewers' interest may be excluded from further peer review (see [section 9.1](#)).

8.2.2. Layperson's Summary (2,000 characters)

Provide a layperson's summary of the proposed work. Describe, in simple, nontechnical terms, the overall goals of the proposed work, the type(s) of cancer research addressed, the potential significance of the results, and the impact of the work on advancing the field of cancer research, early diagnosis, prevention, or treatment. The information provided in this summary will be made publicly available by CPRIT, particularly if the application is recommended for funding. Do not include any proprietary information in the Layperson's Summary. The Layperson's Summary will also be used by advocate reviewers ([section 9.2](#)) in evaluating the significance and impact of the proposed work.

8.2.3. Goals and Objectives

Concisely state the specific goals and objectives to be achieved by the training plan described in the application. Goals and objectives should be listed for each year of the project. These goals and objectives will also be used during the submission and evaluation of progress reports and assessment of project success.

8.2.4. Timeline (1 page)

Provide an outline of anticipated major milestones to be tracked. Timelines will be reviewed for reasonableness, and adherence to timelines will be a criterion for continued support of successful applications. If the application is approved for funding, this section will be included in the award contract. Applicants are advised not to include information that they consider confidential or proprietary when preparing this section.

8.2.5. Resubmission Summary (1 page)

Applicants preparing a resubmission must describe the approach to the resubmission. If a summary statement was prepared for the original application review, applicants are advised to address all noted concerns.

Note: An application previously submitted to CPRIT but not funded may be resubmitted once after careful consideration of the reasons for lack of prior success. Applications that received overall numerical scores of 5 or higher are likely to need considerable attention. Applicants may prepare a fresh Training Plan or modify the original Training Plan and mark the changes. However, all resubmitted applications should be carefully reconstructed; a simple revision of the prior application with editorial or technical changes is not sufficient, and applicants are advised not to direct reviewers to such modest changes.

8.2.6. Renewal Summary (5 pages)

Applicants preparing a renewal must describe and demonstrate that appropriate/adequate progress has been made on the current funded award to warrant further funding. Please provide a brief summary of the progress of the project, results obtained to date, problems/issues encountered and actions taken, and include information about any publications, patents, and/or economic impact. Information provided should be based around the stated specific aims and goals as set forth in the original Scope of Work as approved.

8.2.7. Research Training Plan (15 pages)

Background: Present the rationale behind the proposed training plan, emphasizing how the proposed project will support the development of dedicated investigators in cancer research.

Program Goals: Concisely state the goals and objectives to be achieved by the research training plan described in the application. These need not be fully repeated (as entered in [section 8.2.3](#)), and may only be summarized.

Training Plan: Provide a description of proposed courses/classes, seminars, and opportunities for interaction with other groups and scientists. Describe both formal program requirements and opportunities for professional development. Training in career skills (eg, grantwriting and presentation skills) is strongly encouraged. Elaborate on the research environment and available research facilities and equipment, and discuss the relationship of the proposed research projects to trainees' careers. A training plan must be described for each type of program for which support is requested.

Selection of Trainees and Mentors: Describe the process and major criteria that will be used to select trainees to be supported by this program. Describe the process and major criteria that will be used to select mentors for this program.

PI: Outline the responsibilities of the PI in the overall management, administration, and evaluation of the program. Describe how the PI's scientific background, leadership, and administrative capabilities will enable him or her to coordinate and oversee the proposed research training program. Describe the research training record of the PI and, if applicable, Co-PIs.

Recruitment Plan/Diversity Recruitment: Include a recruitment and retention plan for recruiting trainees from both outside and inside the applicant institution and for attracting trainees from complementary disciplines (eg, from the physical, computational, and engineering sciences) to cancer research. Provide plans for enhancing the diversity of the trainee pool by recruiting from underrepresented groups and a plan for retaining such trainees (**this will be an important factor in the evaluation of the application**). Applications that do not address recruitment and retention will be considered incomplete.

Responsible Conduct of Research: Describe the plan to provide instruction in the responsible conduct of research, including the rationale, subject matter, appropriateness, format, frequency, and duration of instruction. The amount and nature of faculty participation must be described.

8.2.8. Publications/References

Provide a concise and relevant list of publications/references cited for the application.

8.2.9. Budget and Justification

Provide an outline and justification of the budget for the entire proposed period of support.

Allowable costs include trainee stipends (see limits in [section 5](#)), benefits, and travel allowances (as indicated in [section 5](#)). Tuition (up to a maximum of \$6,000 per year) may be included for those in degree-granting programs. The budget should be based on the number of trainee slots requested for each type of training activity. Justification of the number of trainees requested must be compelling and based on the number of exceptionally well-qualified individuals who are likely to be available and who deserve such support as well as funds currently available from other training programs to support them. An appropriate and modest level of salary support may be requested for the PI, Co-PIs, and administrative staff.

In preparing the requested budget, applicants should be aware of the following:

- Equipment having a useful life of more than 1 year and an acquisition cost of \$5,000 or more per unit must be specifically approved by CPRIT. An applicant does not need to seek this approval prior to submitting the application.
- Texas law limits the amount of grant funds that may be spent on indirect costs to no more than 5% of the total award amount (5.263% of the direct costs). Guidance regarding indirect cost recovery can be found in CPRIT's Administrative Rules, which are available at www.cprit.state.tx.us. So-called grants management and facilities fees (eg, sponsored programs fees; grants and contracts fees; electricity, gas, and water; custodial fees; maintenance fees) may not be requested. Applications that include such budgetary items will be rejected administratively and returned without review.
- The annual salary (also referred to as direct salary or institutional base salary) that an individual may receive under a CPRIT award for FY 2016 is \$200,000; CPRIT FY 2016 is from September 1, 2015, through August 31, 2016. Salary does not include fringe benefits and/or facilities and administrative (F&A) costs, also referred to as indirect costs. An individual's institutional base salary is the annual compensation that the applicant organization pays for an individual's appointment, whether that individual's time is spent on research, teaching, patient care, or other activities. Base salary excludes any income that an individual may be permitted to earn outside of his or her duties to the applicant organization.

8.2.10. Biographical Sketches (14-page maximum)

Applicants should provide a biographical sketch that describes their education and training, professional experience, awards and honors, and publications relevant to cancer research.

A biographical sketch must be provided for the PI and, if applicable, the Co-PI (as required by the online application receipt system), and 2 to 5 additional biographical sketches for key faculty members. Each biographical sketch must not exceed 2 pages.

8.2.11. Current and Pending Support

Describe the funding source and duration of all current and pending support for all personnel who have included a biographical sketch with the application. For each award, provide the title and a 2-line summary of the goal of the project.

8.2.12. Institutional Support (3 pages)

Each application must be accompanied by a letter of institutional support from the president or provost indicating support and commitment to the training program. The letter could include, but is not limited to, information about laboratory space, shared laboratory facilities and equipment, funds for curriculum development, support for additional trainees in the program, and initiatives to support recruitment of underrepresented minorities. A maximum of 3 pages may be provided.

8.2.13. Previous Summary Statement

If the application is being resubmitted, the summary statement of the original application review, if previously prepared, will be automatically appended to the resubmission. The applicant is not responsible for providing this document.

Applications that are missing 1 or more of these components, exceed the specified page, word, or budget limits, or that do not meet the eligibility requirements listed above will be administratively rejected without review.

9. APPLICATION REVIEW

9.1. Preliminary Evaluation

To ensure the timely and thorough review of only the most innovative and cutting-edge research training programs with the greatest potential for advancement of cancer research, all eligible applications may be preliminarily evaluated by CPRIT Scientific Research Program panel members for scientific merit and impact.

This preliminary evaluation will be based on a subset of material presented in the application—namely Abstract and Significance, Budget and Justification, and Biographical Sketches. Applications that do not sufficiently capture the reviewers' interest at this stage will not be considered for further review. Such applications will have been judged to offer only modest contributions to the training of cancer researchers and will be excluded from further peer review.

The applicant will be notified of the decision to disapprove the application after the preliminary evaluation stage has concluded. Due to the volume of applications to be reviewed, comments made by reviewers at the preliminary evaluation stage may not be provided to applicants. The preliminary evaluation process will be used only when the number of applications exceeds the capacity of the review panels to conduct a full peer review of all received applications.

9.2. Full Peer Review

Applications that pass preliminary evaluation will undergo further review using a 2-stage peer review process: (1) Full peer review and (2) prioritization of grant applications by the CPRIT Scientific Review Council. In the first stage, applications will be evaluated by an independent peer review panel consisting of scientific experts as well as advocate reviewers using the criteria listed below. In the second stage, applications judged to be most meritorious by the peer review panels will be evaluated and recommended for funding by the CPRIT Scientific Review Council based on comparisons with applications from all of the peer review panels and programmatic priorities. Applications approved by Scientific Review Council will be forwarded to the CPRIT Program Integration Committee (PIC) for review. The PIC will consider factors including program priorities set by the Oversight Committee, portfolio balance across programs, and available funding. The CPRIT Oversight Committee will vote to approve each grant award recommendation made by the PIC.

The grant award recommendations will be presented at an open meeting of the Oversight Committee and must be approved by two-thirds of the Oversight Committee members present and eligible to vote. The review process is described more fully in CPRIT's Administrative Rules, chapter 703, sections 703.6 to 703.8.

Applicants will be notified of peer review panel assignment prior to the peer review meeting dates.

9.3. Confidentiality of Review

Each stage of application review is conducted confidentially, and all CPRIT Scientific Peer Review Panel members, Scientific Review Council members, PIC members, CPRIT employees, and Oversight Committee members with access to grant application information are required to sign nondisclosure statements regarding the contents of the applications. All technological and scientific information included in the application is protected from public disclosure pursuant to Health and Safety Code §102.262(b).

Individuals directly involved with the review process operate under strict conflict-of-interest prohibitions. All CPRIT Scientific Peer Review Panel members and Scientific Review Council members are non-Texas residents.

An applicant will be notified regarding the peer review panel assigned to review the grant application. Peer review panel members are listed by panel on CPRIT's website. **By submitting a grant application, the applicant agrees and understands that the only basis for reconsideration of a grant application is limited to an undisclosed Conflict of Interest as set forth in CPRIT's Administrative Rules, chapter 703, section 703.9.**

Communication regarding the substance of a pending application is prohibited between the grant applicant (or someone on the grant applicant's behalf) and the following individuals: An Oversight Committee Member, a PIC Member, a Scientific Review Panel member, or a Scientific Review Council member. Applicants should note that the CPRIT PIC comprises the CPRIT Chief Executive Officer, the Chief Scientific Officer, the Chief Prevention Officer, the Chief Product Development Officer, and the Commissioner of State Health Services.

The prohibition on communication begins on the first day that grant applications for the particular grant mechanism are accepted by CPRIT and extends until the grant applicant receives notice regarding a final decision on the grant application. Intentional, serious, or frequent violations of this rule may result in the disqualification of the grant application from further consideration for a grant award.

9.4. Review Criteria

Full peer review of applications will be based on primary scored criteria and secondary unscored criteria, listed below. Review committees will evaluate and score each primary criterion and subsequently assign a global score that reflects an overall assessment of the application. **The overall assessment will not be an average of the scores of individual criteria; rather, it will reflect the reviewers' overall impression of the application. Evaluation of the scientific merit of each application is within the sole discretion of the peer reviewers.**

9.4.1. Primary Criteria

Primary criteria will evaluate the scientific merit and potential impact of the proposed training program. Concerns with any of these criteria potentially indicate a major flaw in the significance and/or design of the proposed program. Primary criteria include the following:

Primary Review Criteria for New Applications

Overall Evaluation of Training Potential: What is the likelihood that the training program will serve as a sound foundation to enhance a supported trainee's potential for, and commitment to, a productive, independent scientific research career in a cancer-related field?

Research Training Plan: Will the training plan provide trainees with individualized and supervised experiences that will enable them to develop the research skills needed to be independent researchers or physician-scientists? Is the training plan customizable for students from diverse academic backgrounds and differing educational philosophies?

PI and Mentors: Do the PI and mentors have excellent research qualifications (including publications in high-quality journals and peer-reviewed research support) and track records of mentoring that are appropriate for the proposed training program?

Trainees: Are high-quality individuals routinely recruited at the applicant institution's existing training programs? Are the qualifications and interests of these potential trainees appropriate for the training program described by the applicant institution? Are there sufficient numbers of highly meritorious potential trainees to fill the slots requested? Is there a plan to enhance the diversity of trainees by recruiting from underrepresented groups?

Institutional Environment and Commitment to Training: Is there a high-quality institutional environment for the scientific development of trainees? Is there appropriate institutional commitment to fostering training as investigators or physician-scientists? Are the research facilities, resources (eg, equipment, laboratory space, computer time, subject populations), and training opportunities adequate and appropriate?

Primary Review Criteria for Renewal Applications

Overall Evaluation of Training Outcomes and Future Potential: Does the proposed continuation of the program demonstrate a high likelihood of success based on the initial program's results and outcomes? Has the applicant sufficiently described results and findings of the previously funded application? What is the likelihood that the training program will continue to serve as a sound foundation to enhance a supported trainee's potential for, and commitment to, a productive, independent scientific research career in a cancer-related field? Has the program recruited underrepresented minority trainees?

Research Training Plan: Has the training plan provided, and will the plan continue to provide, trainees with individualized and supervised experiences that will enable them to develop the research skills needed to be independent researchers or physician-scientists? Is the training plan customizable for students from diverse academic backgrounds and differing educational philosophies?

PI and Mentors: Do the PI and mentors have excellent research qualifications (including publications in high-quality journals and peer-reviewed research support) and track records of mentoring that are appropriate for the proposed training program?

Trainees: Have high-quality individuals been recruited into the training programs? Are the qualifications and interests of these potential trainees appropriate for the training program described by the applicant institution? Have there been sufficient numbers of highly meritorious candidates to fill the available slots? Have efforts been made to enhance the diversity of trainees by recruiting from underrepresented groups? Has appropriate progress been demonstrated by trainees?

Institutional Environment and Commitment to Training: Is there a high-quality institutional environment for the scientific development of trainees? Is there appropriate institutional commitment to fostering training as investigators or physician-scientists? Are the research facilities, resources (eg, equipment, laboratory space, computer time, subject populations), and training opportunities adequate and appropriate?

9.4.2. Secondary Criteria

Secondary criteria contribute to the global score assigned to the application. Concerns with these criteria potentially question the value of the proposed training program.

Secondary criteria include the following:

Relevance to Cancer Research: Does the proposed training program have a high degree of *direct* relevance to cancer research? Does the program include high priority areas of emphasis for CPRIT (prevention and early detection, rare and intractable cancers, computational biology, cancers of special interest in Texas)?

Project Leadership: Is the program managed by strong leadership in a position to organize and manage the proposed training activities?

Responsible Conduct of Research: Does the applicant institution have acceptable plans to provide instruction in the responsible conduct of research?

Budget: Is the budget appropriate for the proposed work?

Duration: Is the stated duration appropriate for the proposed work?

10. KEY DATES

RFA

RFA release February 20, 2015

Application

Online application opens March 20, 2015, 7 AM central time

Application due May 20, 2015, 3 PM central time

Application review September - October 2015

Award

Award notification November 2015

Anticipated start date March 2016

11. AWARD ADMINISTRATION

Texas law requires that CPRIT grant awards be made by contract between the applicant and CPRIT. CPRIT grant awards are made to institutions or organizations, not to individuals. Award contract negotiation and execution will commence once the CPRIT Oversight Committee has approved an application for a grant award. CPRIT may require, as a condition of receiving a grant award, that the grant recipient use CPRIT's electronic Grant Management System to exchange, execute, and verify legally binding grant contract documents and grant award reports. Such use shall be in accordance with CPRIT's electronic signature policy as set forth in chapter 701, section 701.25.

Texas law specifies several components that must be addressed by the award contract, including needed compliance and assurance documentation, budgetary review, progress and fiscal monitoring, and terms relating to revenue sharing and intellectual property rights. These contract provisions are specified in CPRIT's Administrative Rules, which are available at www.cprit.state.tx.us. Applicants are advised to review CPRIT's administrative rules related to contractual requirements associated with CPRIT grant awards and limitations related to the use of CPRIT grant awards as set forth in chapter 703, sections 703.10, 703.12.

Prior to disbursement of grant award funds, the grant recipient organization must demonstrate that it has adopted and enforces a tobacco-free workplace policy consistent with the requirements set forth in CPRIT's Administrative Rules, chapter 703, section 703.20.

CPRIT requires award recipients to submit an annual progress report. These reports summarize the progress made toward the research goals and address plans for the upcoming year. In addition, fiscal reporting, human studies reporting, and vertebrate animal use reporting will be required as appropriate. Continuation of funding is contingent upon the timely receipt of these reports. Failure to provide timely and complete reports may waive reimbursement of grant award costs and may result in the termination of the award contract. Forms and instructions will be made available at www.cprit.state.tx.us.

12. REQUIREMENT TO DEMONSTRATE AVAILABLE FUNDS

Texas law requires that prior to disbursement of CPRIT grant funds, the award recipient must demonstrate that it has an amount of funds equal to one-half of the CPRIT funding dedicated to the research that is the subject of the award. The demonstration of available matching funds must be made at the time the award contract is executed, and annually thereafter, not when the application is submitted. Grant applicants are advised to consult CPRIT's Administrative Rules, chapter 703, section 703.11, for specific requirements regarding demonstration of available funding.

13. CONTACT INFORMATION

13.1. HelpDesk

HelpDesk support is available for questions regarding user registration and online submission of applications. Queries submitted via email will be answered within 1 business day. HelpDesk staff are not in a position to answer questions regarding scientific aspects of applications.

Dates of operation: February 20 – May 20, 2015 (excluding public holidays)

Hours of operation: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday, 7 AM to 4 PM central time
Wednesday, 8 AM to 4 PM central time

Tel: 866-941-7146

Email: Help@CPRITGrants.org

13.2. Scientific and Programmatic Questions

Questions regarding the CPRIT program, including questions regarding this or any other funding opportunity, should be directed to the CPRIT Senior Manager for Research.

Tel: 512-305-8491

Email: Help@CPRITGrants.org

Website: www.cprit.state.tx.us