

**US ARMY MEDICAL RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT COMMAND (USAMRDC)  
CONGRESSIONALLY DIRECTED MEDICAL RESEARCH PROGRAMS (CDMRP)  
FISCAL YEAR 2024 (FY24) PROSTATE CANCER RESEARCH PROGRAM (PCRP)**

**DESCRIPTION OF REVIEW PROCEDURES**

The FY24 PCRP called for applications in response to program announcements (PAs) for four award mechanisms released in May 2024:

- Data Science Award
- Early Investigator Research Award
- Implementation Science Award
- Physician Research Award

The PCRP received applications for the Data Science Award, Early Investigator Research Award, Implementation Science Award and Physician Research Award in August 2024, which underwent peer review in October 2024. The PCRP conducted programmatic review in February 2025.

In response to the Data Science Award PA, the PCRP received 60 compliant applications representing 90 potential awards and recommended funding seven (11.7%) for a total of \$10.1 million (M).

In response to the Early Investigator Research Award PA, the PCRP received 31 compliant applications and recommended funding 11 (35.5%) for a total of \$5.1M.

In response to the Implementation Science Award PA, the PCRP received 16 compliant applications representing 19 potential awards and recommended funding two (12.5%) for a total of \$5.8M.

In response to the Physician Research Award PA, the PCRP received 18 compliant applications and recommended funding eight (44.4%) for a total of \$9.4M.

Table 1 shows submission and award data summarized for the FY24 PCRP on the next page.

**Table 1. Submission/Award Data for the FY24 PCRP\***

<b>Mechanism</b>	<b>Compliant Applications Received</b>	<b>Applications Recommended for Funding (%)</b>	<b>Total Funds</b>
Data Science Award <sup>β</sup>	60	7 (11.7%)	\$10.1M
Early Investigator Research Award	31	11 (35.5%)	\$5.1M
Implementation Science Award <sup>±</sup>	16	2 (12.5%)	\$5.8M
Physician Research Award	18	8 (44.4%)	\$9.4M
<b>Totals</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>28 (22.4%)</b>	<b>\$30.4M</b>

\*These data reflect funding recommendations only. Pending FY24 award negotiations, final numbers will be available after September 30, 2025.

<sup>β</sup>Sixty applications representing 90 potential awards; seven applications recommended for funding representing 11 potential awards

<sup>±</sup>Sixteen applications representing 19 potential awards; two applications recommended for funding representing two potential awards

## **THE TWO-TIER REVIEW SYSTEM**

The USAMRDC developed a review model based on recommendations of the National Academy of Sciences report, *Strategies for Managing the Breast Cancer Research Program: A Report to the Army Medical Research and Development Command*. The report recommended a two-tier review process that reflects not only the traditional strengths of existing peer review systems but is also tailored to accommodate program goals. The Command adheres to this proven approach for evaluating competitive applications. An application must be favorably reviewed by both levels of the two-tier review system to be funded.

### **THE FIRST TIER—Scientific Peer Review**

The PCRP conducted a peer review online for the Data Science Award, Early Investigator Research Award, Implementation Science Award and Physician Research Award applications in October 2024 utilizing nine panels of researchers, clinicians, biostatisticians and consumer advocates based on the criteria specified in the PAs. Across these nine panels were 41 scientific reviewers, 23 clinician-scientist reviewers, 10 biostatisticians, 15 consumer reviewers and nine Scientific Review Officers.

Each peer review panel included a chair, scientific revisers, consumer reviewers and a nonvoting Scientific Review Officer. The panelists' primary responsibility was to review the technical merit of each application based upon the evaluation criteria specified in the relevant PA.

### **Individual Peer Review Panels**

The Chair for each panel presided over the deliberations. The panels discussed each individual application. The Chair called on the assigned reviewers for an assessment of the merits of each application using the evaluation criteria published in the appropriate PA. Following a panel

discussion, the Chair summarized the strengths and weaknesses of each application, and the panel members then rated the applications confidentially.

## **Application Scoring**

*Evaluation Criteria Scores:* Panel members rated each application based on the peer review evaluation criteria published in the appropriate PA. The panel members used a scale of 10 to 1, with 10 representing the highest merit and 1 the lowest merit, using whole numbers only. The purpose of obtaining the criteria ratings was to (1) place emphasis on the published evaluation criteria and provide guidance to reviewers in determining an appropriate overall score and (2) provide the applicant, the Programmatic Panel and the Command with an informed measure of the quality regarding the strengths and weaknesses of each application. The evaluation criteria scores were not averaged or mathematically manipulated in any manner to connect them to the global or percentile scores.

*Overall Score:* To obtain an overall score, panel members used a range of 1.0 to 5.0 (1.0 representing the highest merit and 5.0 the lowest merit), with scoring permitted in 0.1 increments. The PCRП averaged the panel member scores and rounded them to arrive at a two-digit number (1.2, 1.9, 2.7, etc.) that corresponds to the following adjectival equivalents used to guide reviewers: Outstanding (1.0–1.5), Excellent (1.6–2.0), Good (2.1–2.5), Fair (2.6–3.5) and Deficient (3.6–5.0).

*Summary Statements:* The Scientific Review Officer on each panel was responsible for preparing a Summary Statement reporting the results of the peer review for each application. The Summary Statements included the evaluation criteria and overall scores, peer reviewers' written comments and essence of the panel discussions. The PCRП staff used this document to report the peer review results to the Programmatic Panel. In accordance with USAMRDC policy, Summary Statements are available to each applicant after completion of the review process.

## **THE SECOND TIER—Programmatic Review**

The FY24 Programmatic Panel conducted programmatic review in February 2025. The panel included a diverse group of basic and clinical scientists and consumer advocates, each of whom contributed special expertise or interest in prostate cancer. Programmatic review is a comparison-based process that considers scientific evaluations across all disciplines and specialty areas. Programmatic Panel members do not automatically recommend funding applications that received high scores in the technical merit review process; rather, they closely examine the eligible applications to allocate as wisely as possible the limited funds available. The programmatic review criteria published in the PAs were as follows: ratings and evaluations of the peer reviewers, as well as relevance to the priorities of the Defense Health Program and FY24 PCRП, as evidenced by the following: adherence to the intent of the funding opportunity, program portfolio composition, programmatic relevance to the FY24 PCRП Overarching Challenges and relative impact. After programmatic review, the PCRП sent the applications recommended for funding to the Commanding General, USAMRDC, for approval.