

Program Announcement

Department of Defense Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs

Breast Cancer Research Program

Era of Hope Scholar Award

Funding Opportunity Number: W81XWH-09-BCRP-EOHS

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I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. Program Objectives

The Breast Cancer Research Program (BCRP) was established in fiscal year 1992 (FY92) to promote innovative research focused on eradicating breast cancer. Appropriations for the BCRP from FY92 through FY08 totaled \$2.2 billion. The FY09 appropriation is \$150 million (M).

The BCRP challenges the scientific community to design innovative research that will foster new directions for, address neglected issues in, and bring new investigators to the field of breast cancer research. The BCRP focuses its funding on innovative projects that have the potential to make a significant impact on breast cancer, particularly those involving multidisciplinary and/or multi-institutional collaborations. The BCRP encourages risk-taking research; however, all projects must demonstrate solid judgment and rationale.

B. Award Description

The BCRP Era of Hope Scholar Award mechanism was first offered in FY04. Since that time, 122 Era of Hope Scholar Award proposals have been received and 24 have been recommended for funding. The Era of Hope Scholar Award supports individuals who have high potential for innovation in breast cancer research early in their careers. Nominees for this award should be exceptionally talented, early-career scientists who have demonstrated that they are the “best and brightest” in their field(s) through extraordinary creativity, vision, and productivity. They also should exhibit strong potential for leadership in the breast cancer research community and be able to articulate a vision for the eradication of breast cancer. Individuals should challenge current dogma and demonstrate an ability to look beyond tradition and convention.

The Era of Hope Scholar Award application must focus on the Principal Investigator’s (PI) record of creative and original accomplishments, potential for leadership in the breast cancer research community, and vision for eradicating breast cancer. These aspects of the application will receive greater emphasis in the review process than the proposed research project, although the proposed research project also will be considered.

Experience in breast cancer research is not required; however, the application should focus on breast cancer research, and the PI must commit at least 50% of his/her full-time professional effort during the award period to breast cancer research.

Individuals must be nominated to be considered for this award mechanism; self-nominations will not be accepted. Do not submit an Era of Hope Scholar Award application unless you receive a letter of invitation.

C. Eligibility

Principal Investigators (PIs) must be independent, non-mentored investigators within 6 years of their last mentored position as of the nomination deadline (March 12, 2009). Postdoctoral fellows, clinical fellows (including residents and interns), and other “mentored” researchers are not eligible for this award. Refer to Application Instructions and General Information, Appendix 1, for general eligibility information.

D. Funding

- The maximum period of performance is **5** years.
- The maximum allowable funding for the entire period of performance is **\$2.5M** in direct costs.
- The applicant may request the entire maximum direct cost amount for a project that may be less than the maximum 5-year period of performance.
- Regardless of the period of performance proposed, you may not exceed the maximum direct cost. In addition to the direct costs, indirect costs may be proposed in accordance with your institution’s negotiated rate agreement.

Within the guidelines provided in the Application Instructions and General Information, funds can cover:

- Salary
- Research supplies
- Equipment
- Clinical costs
- Training
- Workshops
- Support for multidisciplinary collaborations
- Travel between collaborating institutions
- Travel to scientific/technical meetings

The Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs (CDMRP) requires attendance at the triennially scheduled 3½-day Department of Defense BCRP Era of Hope meeting, which is held to disseminate the results of BCRP-sponsored research. In addition, Era of Hope Scholar Award recipients will be required to attend the biennial 1½-day LINKS (Leading Innovative Networking and Knowledge Sharing) meeting along with BCRP Innovator Award recipients, the BCRP Integration Panel (IP), and CDMRP staff for the purpose of open communication and mutual benefit.

The CDMRP expects to allot \$21M of the \$150M FY09 BCRP appropriation to fund approximately five Era of Hope Scholar Award applications, depending on the quality and

number of applications received. Funding of applications received in response to this Program Announcement/Funding Opportunity is contingent on the availability of Federal funds for this program.

E. Award Administration

Refer to the Application Instructions and General Information, Appendix 5, for general award administration information.

II. TIMELINE FOR SUBMISSION AND REVIEW

Proposal submission is a two-step process consisting of (1) pre-application submission and (2) application submission.

Pre-application Submission Deadline:	March 12, 2009
Invitation to Submit Proposal:	April 24, 2009
Confidential Letters of Recommendation	June 17, 2009
Application Submission Deadline:	June 17, 2009
Scientific Peer Review:	July 2009
Programmatic Review:	September 2009

Awards will be made approximately 4 to 6 months after receiving a funding notification letter, but no later than September 30, 2010.

III. SUBMISSION PROCESS

Proposal submission is a two-step process consisting of (1) a pre-application submission through the [CDMRP eReceipt system](https://cdmrp.org/) (<https://cdmrp.org/>), and (2) an application submission through [Grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov/) (<http://www.grants.gov/>).

PIs and organizations identified in the application submitted through Grants.gov should be the same as those identified in the pre-application. If there is a change in PI or organization after submission of the pre-application, the PI must contact the eReceipt help desk at: help@cdmrp.org or 301-682-5507.

The Government reserves the right to reject duplicative applications submitted to different award mechanisms within the same program or to other CDMRP programs.

A. Step 1 – Pre-Application Components and Submission

Pre-application submission is the required first step. The pre-application consists of the components discussed below. All pre-application components must be submitted electronically through the [CDMRP eReceipt system](https://cdmrp.org/) by **5:00 p.m. Eastern time on the deadline date**. Refer to the Application Instructions and General Information for detailed information.

- Nomination Submission
- Nominee Identification
- Nominee Biographical Sketch (two-page limit)
- Nomination Letter (two-page limit)

The nominator should provide a letter describing the nominee's unique qualifications and accomplishments that exemplify how this nominee is among the best and brightest in his/her field. Self nominations will **not** be accepted.

The nomination letter should address the nominee's:

- Creative and original accomplishments,
- Likelihood of continued innovation and productivity,
- Potential for leadership in the breast cancer research community,
- Likelihood of establishing a successful career at the forefront of breast cancer research,
- Ability to manage both technical and administrative aspects of this award, and
- Date of completion of last mentored position.
- List of Three Individuals Providing Letters of Recommendation

Nomination Screening: Nominations will be reviewed by the BCRP IP, which is composed of scientists, clinicians, and consumer advocates. Nominees whose qualifications meet the intent of the award mechanism will be invited to submit applications. Each Nominee will be notified as to whether they have been invited to submit an application. The nomination letter will be provided to nominees who are invited to submit an application.

B. Step 2 – Application Components and Submission

Application submissions will not be accepted unless the PI has been invited. Do not submit an application unless a letter of invitation has been received. Applications must be submitted electronically by the Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR) through Grants.gov (www.grants.gov).

Each application submission must include the completed application package of forms and attachments identified in www.grants.gov for the US Army Medical Research Acquisition Activity (USAMRAA) Program Announcement/Funding Opportunity. In addition to the specific instructions below, please refer to the Application Instructions and General Information for detailed requirements of each component.

The package includes:

1. SF-424 (R&R) Application for Federal Assistance Form

2. Attachments Form

- Attachment 1: Project Narrative (five-page limit)

The content should clearly state your ***vision for the eradication of breast cancer*** and ***why you, the PI, should be considered for this unique award*** and should address the following items specifically.

- What is your vision for the eradication of breast cancer? Include your current research goals (without listing specific projects) and how these goals might change should you receive this award. Explain how these plans/goals are innovative.
 - What have you accomplished that demonstrates your extraordinary creativity, vision, and productivity? Have these accomplishments had an impact beyond your own laboratory or research setting into the broader scientific, clinical, and/or patient community?
 - What experience do you have that suggests a strong potential for leadership in the breast cancer research community?
 - How would you bring your creative energy and experience together to make an impact on breast cancer?
 - Describe the environment in which you work. How will this environment facilitate your development as an innovator and leader in breast cancer research?
 - Describe the proposed research team and discuss how their particular talents will contribute to success of the project.
 - What are your long-term career goals, and how would these be affected by receiving this award?
 - What barriers, aside from funding, exist that could inhibit your research and career goals, and what strategies will you employ to overcome these barriers? How would this award aid you in overcoming these barriers?
 - What inspired you to pursue innovative, high-risk research rather than pursuing more traditional research?
- Attachment 2: Supporting Documentation
 - References Cited
 - Acronyms and Symbol Definitions
 - Facilities & Other Resources
 - Description of Existing Equipment
 - Publications and/or Patent Abstracts (five-document limit)
 - Letters of Institutional Support
 - Letters of Collaboration (if applicable)

- Attachment 3: Detailed Budget and Justification
- Attachment 4: Federal Agency Financial Plan (if applicable)
- Attachments 5-15: Subaward Detailed Budget and Justification (if applicable)

3. Research & Related Senior/Key Person Profile (Expanded)

- PI Curriculum Vitae (no page limit)
- PI Current/Pending Support
- Key Personnel Biographical Sketches (four-page limit each)
- Key Personnel Current/Pending Support

4. Research & Related Project/Performance Site Location(s) Form

Confidential Letters of Recommendation (three letters total, two pages each): In addition to the completed Grants.gov application package of forms and attachments, Era of Hope Scholar Award applications also require the submission of **three** confidential letters of recommendation by the individuals designated during the pre-application process. All letters of recommendation must be submitted electronically through the [CDMRP eReceipt system](#) by **5:00 p.m. Eastern time on the deadline date**. The PI should monitor whether the letters have been received; however, the PI is not permitted or able to view these letters. If confidential letters of recommendation cannot be submitted by the individuals named in the pre-application, the PI should contact the CDMRP eReceipt help desk at help@cdmrp.org or 301-682-5507.

Each letter should describe the PI's unique qualifications and accomplishments that highlight his/her potential for success in pursuing highly innovative research avenues. Specifically, each letter should offer the writer's perspective on the PI's:

- Creative and original accomplishments,
- Likelihood of continued innovation and productivity,
- Potential for leadership in the breast cancer research community,
- Likelihood of establishing a successful career at the forefront of breast cancer research; and
- Ability to manage the technical and administrative aspects of this award.

Refer to the Application Instructions and General Information, Section II.B., for additional information regarding submission of the letters of recommendation.

IV. INFORMATION FOR APPLICATION REVIEW

A. Application Review and Selection Overview

All applications are evaluated by scientists, clinicians, and consumer advocates using a two-tier review process. The first tier is a scientific peer review of applications against established

criteria for determining scientific merit. The second tier is a programmatic review that compares submissions to each other and recommends proposals for funding based on scientific merit, the overall goals of the program, and the specific intent of the award mechanism. Additional information about the two-tier review process used by the CDMRP may be found at <http://cdmrp.army.mil/fundingprocess>

The peer review and programmatic review processes are conducted confidentially to maintain the integrity of the merit-based selection process. Each tier of review requires panelists to sign a non-disclosure statement attesting that application and evaluation information will not be disclosed outside the panel. Violations of the non-disclosure statement can result in the dissolving of a panel(s) and other corrective actions. Institutional personnel and PIs are prohibited from contacting persons involved in the application review process to gain protected evaluation information or to influence the evaluation process. Violations of these prohibitions will result in the administrative withdrawal of the institution's application. Violations by panelists or PIs that compromise the confidentiality of the peer review and programmatic review processes may also result in suspension or debarment of their employing institutions from Federal awards. Furthermore, it is a crime for Federal officials to disclose confidential information of one party to another third party (Title 18 United States Code 1905).

The Government reserves the right to review all applications based on one or more of the required attachments or supporting documentation (e.g., Innovation Statement or Impact Statement).

B. Review Criteria

1. Peer Review: All applications will be evaluated according to the following equally important criteria.

- **Principal Investigator**
 - How the PI's record of accomplishment supports his/her future abilities as an independent and visionary scholar/investigator.
 - How the proposal provides sufficient evidence to suggest that the PI will become a leader in the field of breast cancer research.
 - How the letters of recommendations support the PI as one of the "best and brightest" in his/her field and as a future leader in breast cancer.
- **Accomplishments**
 - How the PI's work has challenged the status quo and/or resulted in a significant effect on the broader scientific, clinical, and/or patient community.
 - Whether any products, patents, or licenses have resulted from the PI's work.
 - Whether the PI's work has resulted in publications in high-impact journals and/or presentations at international scientific meetings.
 - Whether the PI has received awards or other forms of acknowledgment for his/her achievements.

- **Vision and Ideas**

- How the PI's research goals and vision for the eradication of breast cancer suggest innovative, creative thinking that is not hindered by convention.
- How the PI's communicates a clear vision of what he/she hopes to accomplish during the tenure of the award.

- **Project Impact**

- How the project addresses an important problem(s) in breast cancer.
- Whether the PI presents a clear and compelling argument for how this award will be used to pursue creative (potentially groundbreaking) work in breast cancer.
- How the PI's goals have the potential to significantly impact breast cancer.
- How the letters of recommendation suggest that the PI could direct his/her creative energy to significantly impact breast cancer.

- **Personnel and Environment**

- How well the PI describes his/her plans to assemble a team of researchers with the appropriate expertise to accomplish the project goals.
- How the evidence indicates that the environment will facilitate the PI's growth as an emerging innovator and leader.
- Whether appropriate documentation of institutional support reflects the extent to which the PI will be relieved of academic or administrative responsibilities and allowed to pursue his/her goals.
- Whether the PI indicates that he/she will commit 50% effort during the award period to breast cancer research.
- Whether the PI has the necessary technical and administrative experience and/or ability to manage this award.

The following criteria will not be individually scored, but may impact the overall evaluation of the application:

- **Budget**

- How the budget is appropriate for the proposed research.

- **Application Presentation**

- How the writing and components of the application influenced the review.

2. Programmatic Review: The following criteria are used by programmatic reviewers to make funding recommendations that maintain the program's broad portfolio:

- Ratings and evaluations of the peer reviewers,
- Programmatic relevance,

- Relative innovation and impact,
- Program portfolio balance, and
- Adherence to the intent of the award mechanism.

Scientifically sound proposals that best fulfill the above criteria and most effectively address the unique focus and goals of the program will be identified by IP members and recommended for funding to the Commanding General, US Army Medical Research and Materiel Command. The highest scoring applications from the first tier of review are not automatically recommended for funding. All applications are carefully considered to ensure that the funds available are allocated to those proposals that best fulfill the goals, objectives, and areas of encouragement of the program.

V. ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIONS

After receipt of pre-applications from eReceipt and applications from Grants.gov, the following administrative actions may occur.

A. Rejection

The following will result in administrative rejection of the pre-application:

- Nomination Letter is missing.
- Nominee Biographical Sketch is missing.

The following will result in administrative rejection of the entire proposal:

- Project Narrative exceeds page limit.
- Project Narrative is missing.
- Budget is missing.
- Page size is larger than 8.5 inches x 11.0 inches (approximately 21.59 cm x 27.94 cm).

B. Modifications

- Pages exceeding the specified limits will be removed for all documents other than the Project Narrative.
- Documents not requested will be removed.
- ***NEW for FY09:*** Following the application deadline, you may be contacted by CDMRP via email with a request to provide certain missing supporting documents (excluding those listed directly above in Section A, Rejection). The missing documents must be provided within 48 hours of the date and time the email was sent. Otherwise, the application will be peer reviewed without the missing documents.

C. Withdrawal

The following may result in administrative withdrawal of the application:

- FY09 IP member(s) is found to be involved in the pre-application or application processes including, but not limited to, concept design, application development, budget preparation, and the development of any supporting document. A list of the FY09 IP members may be found at <http://cdmrp.army.mil/research>
- Submission of the same research project to different award mechanisms within the same program or to other CDMRP programs.
- The application does not conform to this funding opportunity description to an extent that precludes appropriate scientific peer and programmatic review.
- Direct costs as shown on the detailed budget form exceed the maximum allowed by the award mechanism.
- Inclusion of URLs, with the exception of links to published references.

D. Withhold

Applications that appear to involve research misconduct will be administratively withheld from further consideration pending institutional investigation. The institution will be requested to provide the findings of the investigation to the USAMRAA Contracting/Grants Officer for a determination of the final disposition of the application.

VI. CONTACT INFORMATION

A. Program Announcement/Funding Opportunity, application format, or required documentation: To view all funding opportunities offered by the CDMRP, perform a Grants.gov basic search using the CFDA Number 12.420. Submit questions as early as possible. Response times will vary depending upon the volume of inquiries. Every effort will be made to answer questions within 5 working days.

Phone: 301-619-7079
Fax: 301-619-7792
Email: cdmrp.pa@amedd.army.mil

B. eReceipt system: Questions related to pre-application components through the CDMRP eReceipt system should be directed to the eReceipt help desk, which is available Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Eastern time.

Phone: 301-682-5507
Website: <https://cdmrp.org>
Email: help@cdmrp.org

C. Grants.gov contacts: Questions related to application submission through the [Grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov/) (<http://www.grants.gov/>) portal should be directed to the Grants.gov help desk. Deadlines for application submission are 11:59 p.m. Eastern time on the deadline date. Please note that the CDMRP help desk is unable to answer questions about Grants.gov submissions.

Phone: 800-518-4726, Monday through Friday, 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. Eastern time

Email: support@grants.gov

Grants.gov will notify PIs of changes made to this Program Announcement/Funding Opportunity and/or application package ONLY if the PI subscribes to the mailing list by clicking on the “send me change notification emails” link on the Opportunity Synopsis page for this announcement. If the PI does not subscribe and the application package is updated or changed, the original version of the application package may not be accepted.