

BASSER  
CENTER  
FOR BRCA



2018-2020

Grants Program for Penn Investigators  
Application Instructions

**Letter of Intent Deadline: March 12, 2018**

**Grant Submission Deadline: April 3, 2018**

Request for Applications for Basser Research Awards: \$50,000-\$150,000 yearly x 2 years

Release Date: February 9, 2018

Due Date: LOI- March 12, 2018

Full Application- April 3, 2018: PLEASE NOTE – THERE WILL BE NO EXCEPTIONS

Funding begins: July 1, 2018

## **Background and Purpose**

The Bassett Center for BRCA has the unique opportunity to catalyze research to change the paradigm of discovery, innovation, and care for issues related to *BRCA1* and *BRCA2* mutations. Germline mutations in *BRCA1* and *BRCA2* significantly increase the risk of breast and ovarian cancer and also are associated with prostate cancer and pancreatic cancer. Towards this end, the Bassett Center is seeking applications that propose innovative approaches to the focus areas listed below.

## **General Guidelines**

Priority areas:

1. Improved understanding of the mechanisms by which *BRCA1/2* mutations lead to tumor initiation focusing on issues with potential translational implications. Examples might include tissue specificity and identification of pathways for the development of novel therapeutics.
2. Development of projects leading to improvements in cancer screening for *BRCA1/2* mutation carriers. Examples might be development of novel imaging or screening approaches, or biomarkers for early detection.
3. Improve understanding of mechanisms by which *BRCA1/2* mutant cancers develop resistance to PARP inhibitors, platinum salts and other therapies. Projects should increase basic understanding of molecular events that enable resistance to these agents in cells lacking functional *BRCA1/2*. Ideally, proposal should also involve strategies to overcome clinically validated resistance mechanisms.
4. Development of immune approaches for prevention of *BRCA1/2* related tumors, which might be informed by the understanding of tumor progression and/or somatic genetics in *BRCA1/2* related tumors.
5. Strategies to improve the availability and uptake of genetic testing for *BRCA1/2* in appropriate individuals.

## **Submission Guidelines**

**Phase I: A mandatory letter of intent (LOI) is due by March 12, 2018.**

The LOI must be submitted here: [https://www.med.upenn.edu/apps/pgacc/users/sign\\_in](https://www.med.upenn.edu/apps/pgacc/users/sign_in)

- Under the “Basic Info” tab, please provide the information requested. Standard NIH formatted Biosketches are sufficient. If there are multiple PIs, please combine all Bios *into one single PDF file* and upload.
- Under the “Co-PI(s)” tab, please provide the name of your Co-PI(s), if applicable.
- Under the “Documents” tab, please provide an Abstract that contains the following information:
  - PI/Co-PI (if applicable) names, degree(s) and position.
  - Title of proposed project
  - Indication of *type* of research. Choose one of the following:

- Mechanisms of *BRCA1/2* related tumor initiation
- Improvements in screening/early detection for *BRCA1/2* carriers
- Mechanisms of tumor resistance to therapies
- Development of immune approaches for prevention of BRCA-related tumors
- Implementation of new approaches for genetic testing
- Brief paragraph that describes the proposed project

**The purpose of the LOI is to allow the Bassett Center time to assemble appropriate reviewers - not to approve grants for full submission. There will be no feedback provided to applicants regarding the LOI and anyone submitting an LOI is welcomed to follow through with a full grant application.**

### **Phase II: Full grant applications (due April 3, 2018)**

1. Applicants must use the Bassett Center for BRCA Application Form (located at the bottom of this announcement).
2. Only one application will be accepted per investigator. Investigators may not be Co-PI on more than one application.
3. Applications must be submitted using this website: [https://www.med.upenn.edu/apps/pgacc/users/sign\\_in](https://www.med.upenn.edu/apps/pgacc/users/sign_in)
  - Under the “Basic Info” tab, please provide the information requested. Standard NIH formatted Biosketches are sufficient. If there are multiple PIs, please combine all Bios into one single PDF file and upload.
  - Under the “Co-PI(s)” tab, please provide the name of your Co-PI(s), if applicable.
  - Under the “Documents” tab, please upload your Research Proposal as one single PDF file, using the Bassett Center for BRCA Application Form. Application Forms must include:
    - Abstract
    - Specific aims, not to exceed one page
    - Significance\*
    - Background\*
    - Research Plan\*
    - References
    - Budget with justification

*\*Note: Significance, Background and Research Plan must not exceed **five** total pages*
4. Formatting requirements: Arial 11 font, single spaced, no less than ½ inch margins all around.
5. Page numbering is recommended, and should use sequential numbers, e.g., do not use 2a and 2b, etc.
6. Supplemental/Appendix material is limited to letters of support/collaboration and PDFs of papers in press and not yet publically available. Any other additional material will be discarded.

**Preparation of Budgets:** No specific budget format is required, but be sure to include adequate details and corresponding justification. Awards will be funded for a period of 2 years for \$50,000-\$150,000/year contingent on significant progress year to year. Awards are also contingent on the availability of funds.

**Allowable expenditures include:**

- Salary support for investigator
- Research supplies and animal maintenance
- Technical assistance
- Travel when necessary to carry out the proposed research program
- Publication costs, including reprints
- Costs of computer time
- Special fees (pathology, photography, etc.)
- Equipment costing less than \$5,000. Special justification is necessary for items exceeding this amount, and permission must be obtained from the Bassett Center for the purchase of such equipment
- Registration fees at scientific meetings
- Technician/laboratory personnel support

**Non-allowable expenditures include:**

- Secretarial/administrative personnel
- Honoraria and travel expenses for visiting lecturers
- Per diem charges for hospital beds
- Non-medical services to patients
- Construction or building maintenance
- Major alterations
- Purchasing and binding of periodicals and books
- Office and laboratory furniture
- Office equipment and supplies
- Rental of office or laboratory space
- Recruiting and relocation expenses
- Dues and membership fees in scientific societies

**Review Process**

The review process will be completed by a committee of outside scientists, which is expected to include a subset of members of the Bassett Center External Scientific Advisory Board. Successful applicants will be announced in June 2018. Funding will have a start date of July 1, 2018  
Review Criteria will include:

1. **Impact**: What is the likelihood that the proposed program of research will have a transformative impact on science with a goal toward an impact on clinical care pertaining to BRCA?
2. **Innovation**: Is the proposed application creative and original? If successful, will the work produce dramatic paradigm shifts in research and clinical practice by using novel concepts, methodologies, and/or interventions?
3. **Investigative Team**: Does the proposed PI have a strong track record of leadership of innovative science?
4. **Approach**: Are the general strategies and translational approaches sufficiently rigorous to ensure generation of important data? Are metrics of success and plans for sustainability presented and reasonable?

### **Ongoing Review and Evaluation**

Funded awardees will be expected to submit semi-annual progress reports, which will be evaluated by the Basser Center leadership and Internal Advisory Board and possibly by outside advisors. Metrics of success and progress toward achieving scientific goals will be considered. Continuation of funding will depend on progress.

**Link to application form:** [2018 Basser Internal Grant Application Form](#)

**Link to online submission:** [https://www.med.upenn.edu/apps/pgacc/users/sign\\_in](https://www.med.upenn.edu/apps/pgacc/users/sign_in)

**For questions relating to this RFA, please contact:**

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