MCC / UNITE Pilot Application
Release Date: 05/05/2021
Application Deadline Extended to: 09/30/2021
Project Duration: 12 months

Markey Cancer Center and the UNITE (United in True Racial Equity) Research Priority Area are proud to introduce a new funding opportunity for one $50,000 pilot project during a 12-month period (expected start date: 12/01/2021).

A part of the United in True Racial Equity (UNITE) Research Priority Area (RPA) mission is to support research focused on racial disparities, racial health equity, social and racial justice that will result in impactful scholarly outputs and extramural funding for sustainability.

Projects proposed in response to this funding announcement should seek to understand and prevent cancer, detect cancer early, and/or manage cancer treatment more accurately and effectively among racial/ethnic minority populations.

Background
According to the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention, Kentucky ranks number one nationally in cancer deaths, with an age-adjusted rate of 186.0 for all cancer sites.\(^1\) Research has linked social inequities impacting racial and ethnic minorities at the individual and systemic level to cancer risk factors and mortality rates.\(^2\) For example, Black Kentuckians are at significantly higher risk of cancer mortality for prostate, breast, and colorectal cancer based on figures from the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services.\(^2\)

Preventative screenings have been associated with a reduction in the cancer mortality rate, especially in aggressive forms of cancer, but underrepresented minorities have cited bedside manner, lack of a usual healthcare provider and follow-up as barriers to the frequency of their screenings.\(^3\) Given the increased risk of death from cancer and known challenges with willingness and accessibility of preventative screenings, this is a critical issue within the Commonwealth.

Eligibility
Projects must involve investigators from at least two of MCC’s three Research Programs, and must use at least one MCC Shared Resource Facility. All proposals must include documentation (e.g., letters of support) of adequate input from the appropriate Shared Resource Facility to support their studies. Multi-PI awards are not allowed. PIs must be MCC Research or Associate members (UK faculty) in one of the MCC’s three research programs.

Eligibility is limited to full-time faculty (all title series including regular, research, clinical and special) at the University of Kentucky who are members of the UNITE Research Priority Area. If you are interested in applying and are not a member of the UNITE RPA, please send an inquiry to unite-rpa@uky.edu.

Applications
Full applications will be due to J. Bybee (jennifer.bybee@uky.edu) by the new deadline (09/30/2021), and must include the following components, submitted as one combined PDF:

- Cover page, listing contact information for PI, co-investigators, and collaborators
- A one-half page abstract of the proposed research, including a two-to-three sentence statement regarding translational and clinical/population relevance, inter-programmatic collaborations, and Shared Resource Facility usage.
• An NIH-style biosketch for each investigator involved in the project, consistent with the current required biosketch format. The personal statement should accurately reflect the role of the investigator on the proposed project.

• A detailed, justified budget for one year of proposed work.
  o If no salary support is requested, the amount of proposed effort should still be specified, and cost-share (including appropriate departmental approvals and documentation) will be required. Indirect costs are not included in the budget.
  o It is strongly encouraged that applicants consult MCC staff or administration during the development of their applications (especially budget-related components). MCC administrative staff will conduct a review of each project recommended for funding and work with principal investigators to resolve any issues before the project’s funding can begin.

• A six-page proposal (page limit excludes references), including:
  o Specific Aims (one page)
  o Significance and Innovation (one page)
  o Experimental Design (three pages)
  o Collaboration across Research Program(s) and utilization of SRF(s) (one page)

Projects utilizing human subjects must include the PHS Human Subjects and Clinical Trials Information Form, including all applicable attachments. The form is available at https://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/phs398/phs398.html

Application Deadlines and Key Dates
09/30/2021: Extended application deadline
Week of 11/15/2021: Selected Applicants notified
Project period: 12 months from project start date (project start date dependent on IRB approval and disbursement of funds but must be within 1 month of award notification date). Projects are expected to have the appropriate IRB/IACUC approvals in place before funding will begin.

Please address specific application questions to Jennifer Bybee (Jennifer.bybee@uky.edu).

Review Criteria
Full applications will be reviewed by the MCC’s Research Review committee with input from the UNITE RPA selection committee and possible external reviewers. Applications recommended for funding will be approved by the MCC Director’s Council and the UNITE RPA Lead. Review criteria will include:

- **Significance**: (i.e., Does the project address an important problem or critical barrier to progress in the field?)
- **Innovation**: (i.e., Does the proposal utilize novel and applicable theoretical concepts, approaches, methodologies, instrumentation or apply existing concepts to new populations or problems?)
- **Approach**: (i.e., Are the intended research activities well-described and likely to be feasible? Does the strategy involve leveraging existing connections and collaborations? Are the overall strategy, methodology, and analyses well-reasoned and appropriate to accomplish the specific aims of the project? Are study limitations acknowledged and addressed?)
- **Investigator(s)**: (i.e., Does the PI have the appropriate experience and training, evidence of productivity and/or potential to lead the project? Does the PI and research
team have the required expertise and experience to conduct the proposed research study?)

Emphasis during the review of applications will be placed on the project’s potential to:
- produce clinical/population translation-focused outcomes, including NIH awards that include a clinical/population study
- result in a multi-component or multi-investigator NIH award (i.e., an MPI, PPG- or SPORE-style grant)
- promote or strengthen inter- and intra-programmatic collaborations.

Reporting Requirements
During the formative phase of the project, awardees will be expected to present the research funded through this mechanism to the MCC Community Advisory Board and at UNITE-sponsored events. All publications, presentations, and other creative activities resulting from this award must include the following acknowledgement: “Funding was provided, in part, by the United in True Racial Equity Research Priority Area at the University of Kentucky.” One (1) page final report will be due at project completion detailing study enrollment, results, dissemination, and plans for future funding. All reporting requirements will be outlined in award notifications.

References