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CANCER PREVENTION & RESEARCH  
INSTITUTE OF TEXAS

**REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS**  
**RFA R-21.2-TREC**

**Texas Regional Excellence in Cancer**

**Please also refer to the Instructions for Applicants document,  
which will be posted on September 16, 2020**

Applications for this award mechanism are subject to institutional eligibility requirements, including an invitation from CPRIT to apply based on an institutional letter of intent. Applicants are advised to consult with their institution's Office of Research and Sponsored Programs (or equivalent).

**Letter of Intent due:** December 4, 2020  
**Application Receipt Opening Date:** September 16, 2020  
**Application Receipt Closing Date:** January 27, 2021

**FY 2021**  
Fiscal Year Award Period  
September 1, 2020-August 31, 2021

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**RFA VERSION HISTORY**

Rev 08/05/20 RFA release

## 1. KEY POINTS

- The Texas Regional Excellence in Cancer (TREC) award is a multicomponent award designed to strengthen cancer research at institutions located in regions of Texas that have historically received low levels of peer-reviewed cancer research funding.
- Applicants may request up to \$6.0 million in CPRIT funds over 5 years to support program leadership, investigator-initiated research projects, recruitment of new junior faculty, and research infrastructure.
- The TREC award will support an established investigator with a strong record of funding to develop a center with a cohesive theme relevant to the cancer problems of the region.
- The TREC award will support investigator-initiated research projects led by faculty that stand alone as individual projects but share a common thematic cancer focus. Each research project is required to propose a timeline that includes a plan to submit an Investigator-Initiated Research Award application to CPRIT and/or the National Institutes of Health (NIH) by the end of 3 years of TREC support.
- The TREC may be used to support the recruitment of new junior faculty.
- The TREC may be used to support access to technology and core services necessary for the TREC-sponsored research projects to conduct competitive cancer research.
- Applicants are encouraged to partner with another Texas institution to address areas of technical or content expertise necessary for the TREC projects but not available in their institution. To support these partnerships, the TREC will allow subcontracts to be established with collaborating investigators, mentors, or core facilities located at another Texas institution.
- The TREC award can be renewed once to support further development of an institution's cancer research infrastructure and cancer-focused investigators.

## **2. ABOUT CPRIT**

The State of Texas has established the Cancer Prevention and Research Institute of Texas (CPRIT), which may issue up to \$6 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.

### **2.1. Academic 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 with regard to how the Oversight Committee directs the orientation of the agency's funding portfolio.

Established Principles:

- Scientific excellence and impact on cancer
- Increasing the life sciences infrastructure

The program priorities for academic research adopted by the Oversight Committee include funding projects that address the following:

- Recruitment of outstanding cancer researchers to Texas
- Investment in core facilities
- A broad range of innovative, investigator-initiated research projects
- Implementation research to accelerate the adoption and deployment of evidence-based prevention and screening interventions
- Computational biology and analytic methods
- Childhood cancers
- Hepatocellular cancer
- Expansion of access to innovative clinical trials

### 3. GOAL

The TREC award is a new CPRIT mechanism designed to strengthen the cancer research environment and to increase the number and quality of scientifically meritorious cancer research projects at institutions in geographic regions of Texas that have historically received low levels of peer reviewed cancer research funding. **A high priority is the development of cancer research programs addressing the cancer challenges affecting regions of Texas without a National Cancer Institute–Designated Cancer Center.**

### 4. BACKGROUND

The structure of the TREC award is modeled after the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Centers of Biomedical Research Excellence ([COBRE](#)) awards that support the establishment and development of innovative, state-of-the-art biomedical research centers at institutions in states that have historically received low levels of support from the NIH. The COBRE award provides resources to support research projects led by junior faculty and to enhance an institution's research infrastructure. In addition to improving the competitiveness of investigators and the research capacities of an institution, the COBRE program is designed to increase an institution's ability to serve its unique populations, such as rural and medically underserved communities (<https://www.nigms.nih.gov/Research/DRCB/IDeA/pages/COBRE.aspx>).

Over the past decade, CPRIT academic research awards have gone primarily to Texas institutions located along the I-35 corridor or located within the Houston metroplex with dramatic impact on accelerating the cancer research capabilities and accomplishments of those institutions. However, institutions located in other geographic regions of the state have not been as competitive for cancer research funding from [CPRIT](#) (<https://www.cprit.state.tx.us/grants-funded>) or the [National Cancer Institute \(NCI\)](#) (<https://www.nih.gov/grants-funding>). **The limited cancer research funding to these regions of Texas raises a concern that cancer-related issues affecting Texans from these geographic regions of Texas will not be adequately addressed.**

As CPRIT plans the next decade of investment in the cancer research capabilities of Texas academic research institutions, the TREC award is designed to provide an opportunity for those institutions located in geographic regions of Texas that historically have received low levels of peer

reviewed cancer research funding to develop a multidisciplinary corps of successful cancer researchers who will compete nationally for cancer research funding to address the cancer challenges facing their region.

## **5. PROGRAM COMPONENT DESCRIPTIONS**

The TREC award will establish a multicomponent center that supports cancer research in a thematic scientific area and develops a critical mass of investigators competitive for peer-reviewed external cancer research funding. The TREC theme can be in any cancer research area: basic, translational, clinical, prevention, population research.

**Principal Investigator:** The institution will identify a Principal Investigator (PI) who is an established investigator with a strong record of funding to lead the program and to provide mentorship to existing and newly recruited program faculty. The PI must be willing and able to commit 20% effort to this leadership during the time the research that is the subject of the grant is conducted.

**Research Projects:** The TREC should support a minimum of 3 (and a maximum of 5) investigator-initiated research projects.

A majority of the research project leaders must be junior investigators appointed as assistant professor or equivalent and have not yet received an NIH R01, NSF-CAREER award, major DOD award, or CPRIT Individual Investigator Research Award. Junior faculty with a K99/R00 award or other faculty transition or development award will be eligible to lead TREC research projects. Individuals holding positions that lack independent faculty status are not eligible to lead TREC research projects.

Established independent investigators of any faculty rank who are making significant changes to their career goals by initiating new lines of research that are significantly different from their current investigative program may also serve as research project leaders. However, they cannot make up the majority of the research project leaders.

Each research project should stand alone but share a common thematic scientific focus. A TREC is required to support 3 to 5 active research projects at any given time. It is expected that a research project leader will be supported by the TREC for no more than 3 years and will move to

independent research support. Support of a project investigator by the TREC mechanism beyond a total of 3 years is not allowed.

**Recruitment:** A TREC supported research project award may be used to support the recruitment of new junior faculty with a cancer research focus or expertise relevant to the TREC theme.

**Core resources:** The TREC may support access to technology and core research services necessary to support the proposed research projects. TREC programs from Health Science Centers are encouraged to plan for core resources to support clinical trials and biospecimen access. Other investigators at the institution may also use the core facilities provided TREC participants' research needs are met first. Sharing research facilities at other Texas institutions is strongly encouraged, and subcontract awards to support such access are permitted. Renovations or construction are not appropriate for this mechanism.

**Mentorship, Evaluation, and Administration:** The TREC will support a formal mentoring structure for each research project, an external advisory council, and an administrative core. These components will coordinate the center's governance, mentoring, and evaluation functions.

**Applicants are encouraged to partner with another Texas institution for collaboration, mentoring, and to provide access to technology or content expertise not available in their institution.**

## **6. FUNDING INFORMATION**

The maximum duration for this award mechanism is 5 years. Applicants may request a maximum of \$1,200,000 in total costs annually. Funds may be used for salary and fringe benefits, research supplies, equipment, subject participation costs including diagnostic or interventional procedures associated with participation in a clinical trial and not considered routine patient care, travel to scientific/technical meetings, and travel for external advisory council members or travel to collaborating institutions. Up to \$200,000 annually can be requested to support new faculty recruits to the institution.

Subcontracts with collaborating institutions to provide access to mentors and technical and content expertise are permitted.

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.

## 7. ELIGIBILITY

Eligibility to apply for a TREC award is open to a Texas institution of higher learning whose campus is located 100 miles or greater from 1 of the 4 Texas NCI-Designated Cancer Centers located in Dallas, Houston, and San Antonio.

- Applicants must complete a preapplication process (see [section 8.1](#)).
- An institution may submit only 1 application under this RFA during this funding cycle. For purposes of this RFA, an institution is defined as that component of a university system that has a President.
- A university and a health science center that are components of the same university system and share a contiguous or near-contiguous campus are strongly encouraged to submit a single application that will leverage their combined assets to build a cancer research program to serve their region.
- Academic health science centers with multiple campuses are eligible to participate in a single application under this RFA.
- The Principal Investigator (PI) must be the director of the center and 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. The PI should hold a full-time faculty position, at the level of associate or full professor or the equivalent. Ideally, an institution will identify an established investigator with a record of peer-reviewed funding to lead the TREC.
- This award must be directed by the PI. Co-PIs are not permitted.
- TREC PI, research project leaders, and core resource must be located on a TREC-eligible campus located 100 miles or greater from an existing NCI-Designated Cancer Center.
- Collaborations with Texas-based institutions to provide access to technology and counsel are permitted and can be supported with TREC funds through subcontracts. Texas institutions are eligible to hold subcontracts with multiple TREC grantees.
- Collaborators may or may not reside in Texas; however, collaborators who do not reside in Texas are not eligible to receive CPRIT funds. Collaborators should have specific and

well-defined roles. 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. In no event shall equipment purchased under this award leave the State of Texas.

## **8. RESPONDING TO THIS RFA**

### **8.1. Letter of Intent**

A preapplication process is required to encourage interactions with the CPRIT Academic Research Program staff in the planning and development of an application. A letter of intent (LOI) must be sent electronically by 4 PM central time on December 4, 2020 to [research@cprit.texas.gov](mailto:research@cprit.texas.gov). Late LOIs will not be accepted. The LOI should be addressed to the CPRIT Chief Scientific Officer and should include the biosketch (NIH format) of the proposed PI, and a summary (5-page limit) of the proposed TREC theme and planned components. The LOI must be approved prior to submission of an application in response to this RFA. If approved, CPRIT will provide a letter authorizing submission to include in the TREC application.

### **8.2. 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 apply. Furthermore, the Application Signing Official (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 September 16, 2020 and must be submitted by 4 PM central time on January 27, 2021. **Submission of an application is considered an acceptance of the terms and conditions of the RFA.**

### 8.3. Submission Deadline Extension

The submission deadline may be extended upon a showing of extenuating circumstances. A request for a deadline extension based on the need to complete multiple CPRIT or other grant applications will be denied. All requests for extension of the submission deadline must be submitted via email to the CPRIT [Helpdesk](#) within 24 hours of the submission deadline. Submission deadline extensions, including the reason for the extension, will be documented as part of the grant review process records. Please note that deadline extension requests are very rarely approved.

### 8.4. 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 7](#) will be administratively withdrawn without review.

#### 8.4.1. Abstract and Significance (5,000 characters)

Describe how the proposed TREC will build on an institutional commitment to cancer research, enhance the applicant institution's cancer research infrastructure, and provide junior faculty with the mentoring and research project funding to help them to acquire preliminary data and to successfully compete for independent peer-reviewed cancer research support. Discuss how the TREC will enhance access to technologies and content expertise not currently available to the TREC faculty. If the TREC will support collaborations and/or partnerships with other Texas institutions, discuss these plans. Discuss how the institution will monitor TREC progress.

#### 8.4.2. Layperson's Summary (2,000 characters)

Describe, in simple, nontechnical terms, the overall goals of the proposed TREC and describe the institutional vision and commitment to building cancer research capacity and how the TREC will help to realize this vision. Discuss the specific cancer problems addressed and how the proposed projects will impact these. 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 9.1](#)) in evaluating the significance and impact of the proposed work.

### **8.4.3. Goals and Objectives**

List specific goals and objectives for each year of the TREC. These goals and objectives will also be used during the submission and evaluation of progress reports and assessment of project success.

### **8.4.4. Timeline (Maximum of 1 page)**

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

### **8.4.5. Overall Description (6 pages)**

Present a compelling rationale for the establishment of the TREC and the goals the TREC will strive to achieve; discuss the institutional commitment and existing capabilities that will be drawn upon in the implementation of these goals. In this section also do the following:

- Discuss the central theme for the TREC and how the research proposed is designed to increase an institution's ability to impact its unique populations.
- Discuss the selection, capabilities, responsibilities, and the reporting structure within the institution for the TREC PI.
- Discuss how the TREC will be organized and how the different components will interact with each other and with existing programs and resources at the institution.
- Discuss how the TREC will develop and monitor faculty development plans for each research project leader receiving TREC support. Include a discussion of how the institution intends to support TREC faculty as they transition their TREC research support to cancer research grant support through applications submitted to CPRIT and the NIH.
- If the TREC plans to support the recruitment of junior faculty, discuss how priorities for new faculty recruitment are determined and how the recruitment funds (up to \$200,000/year) will be deployed.

- Describe an evaluation plan with clear timelines and milestones to monitor and evaluate the performance of all components of the TREC and the progress of the investigators it supports. Strategies to identify and remedy deficiencies such as poor performance and lack of progress should be described. Discuss plans to form an external advisory committee (EAC) comprising scientists with expertise directly relevant to the TREC theme.
- Discuss any plans to develop formal research partnerships with other Texas institutions and how these partnerships will be governed.

#### **8.4.6. Administrative Core (2 pages)**

Describe how the PI will manage and coordinate the research projects, EAC, committees, mentors, and research cores, to implement the TREC goals. Core responsibilities include preparing program and financial reports, managing budgets, and organizing scientific and career development activities such as seminar series, workshops, and retreats.

#### **8.4.7. Core Resource(s) (4 pages each)**

Describe plans for development of any common resources or to support existing resources to accomplish the goals of the proposed research to support TREC projects. Discuss how TREC resources were selected and how they will be managed and evaluated.

#### **8.4.8. Research Projects to be Funded in Year 1 (4 pages each)**

Present the rationale, specific aims, and brief research plan for each proposed research project. Preliminary studies are not required, but they are encouraged. In the absence of preliminary results, applicants should describe prior research that serves as the key support for the proposed project. Each research project should describe its relationship to the central theme of the TREC, and the cancer relevance of the proposed research should be concisely stated. Each project must propose a timeline that includes a plan to submit an Investigator-Initiated Research Award application to CPRIT and/or the NCI by the end of 3 years of CPRIT TREC award support.

#### **8.4.9. Letters of Support (2 pages each)**

A letter of support from a senior institutional official (eg, President or Dean) must be included, outlining the institutional commitment of resources and facilities to sustain and support the

TREC throughout the period of funding and to maintain these resources beyond the period of grant support. The level of institutional commitment will differ among applicant institutions because of the variability of resources available among institutions. Additional letters from collaborators at another Texas institution and letters demonstrating regional and/or local commitment and support for the proposed center may be included in this section.

#### **8.4.10. Vertebrate Animals (1 page for each research project or core)**

If vertebrate animals will be used in any research project or core, provide a detailed plan of the protocols that will be followed and justification for the number of animals used with reference to biostatistical input for sample selection and evaluation. Certification of approval by the institutional IACUC of the proposed animal use will be required before funding can occur.

#### **8.4.11. Human Subjects (1 page for each research project or core)**

If human subjects or human biological samples will be used in any research project or core, provide a detailed plan for recruitment of subjects and/or the acquisition of samples that that will meet the time constraints of this award mechanism. Certification of approval of these plans by the institutional IRB will be required before funding can occur.

#### **8.4.12. Budget Justification**

Provide a detailed justification of the budget for each component of the TREC for the entire proposed period of support, including salaries and benefits, supplies, equipment, patient care costs, animal care costs, and other expenses.

A minimum level of effort of 20% FTE is required for the PI to devote to career guidance and administrative oversight of the TREC. The PI may not use TREC funds to supplement research activities within his/her laboratory.

Research project leaders must commit a minimum of 20% effort to their TREC research project.

Funds to compensate members of the EAC should be requested in the Administrative Core budget. EAC members can be compensated as consultants via a fee-for-service arrangement. Funds to compensate mentors should be requested in the Administrative Core budget. Each mentor may be compensated for up to 1 person-month of effort and should be listed in the

Administrative Core's budget section of the application and not in the individual research projects' budget sections.

Funds may be used to assist the institution's recruitment of junior faculty who complement the scope of the proposed program. These funds are limited to \$200,000 per year and may be used for salary, supplies, and/or equipment costs.

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.texas.gov](http://www.cprit.texas.gov). 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 2021 is \$200,000; CPRIT FY 2021 is from September 1, 2020, through August 31, 2021. Salary does not include fringe benefits and/or facilities and administrative 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.

#### **8.4.13. Biographical Sketches (5 pages each)**

A biographical sketch must be provided for the PI, research project leaders, any core Resource leader, and proposed EAC members. Additional biographical sketches for key collaborators or

advisors from other Texas institutions may be provided. Each biographical sketch must not exceed 5 pages. The NIH biosketch format is appropriate.

#### **8.4.14. Current and Pending Support and/or Other Certifications**

Describe the funding source and duration of all current and pending support for the PI, research project leaders, and core facility leaders. For each award, provide the title, a 2-line summary of the goal of the project, and, if relevant, a statement of overlap with the current application. Refer to the sample current and pending support document located in [Current Funding Opportunities](#) for Academic Research in CARS.

#### **8.4.15. Institutional/Collaborator Support and/or Other Certification**

Applicants may provide letters of institutional support, collaborator support, and/or other certification documentation relevant to the proposed project. A maximum of 4 pages each may be provided.

### **8.5. Formatting Instructions**

Formatting guidelines for all submitted CPRIT applications are as follows:

- **Language:** English
- **Document Format:** PDF only
- **Font Type/Size:** Arial (11 point), Calibri (11 point), or Times New Roman (12 point)
- **Line Spacing:** Single
- **Page Size:** 8.5 x 11 inches
- **Margins:** 0.75 inch, all directions
- **Color and High-Resolution Images:** Images, graphs, figures, and other illustrations must be submitted as part of the appropriate submitted document. Applicants should include text to explain illustrations that may be difficult to interpret when printed in black and white.
- **Scanning Resolution:** Images and figures must be of lowest reasonable resolution that permits clarity and readability. Unnecessarily large files will NOT be accepted, especially those that include only text.

- **References:** Applicants should use a citation style that includes the full name of the article and that lists at least the first 3 authors. Official journal abbreviations may be used. An example is included below; however, other citation styles meeting these parameters are also acceptable as long as the journal information is stated. Include URLs of publications referenced in the application.

Smith, P.T., Doe, J., White, J.M., et al (2006). Elaborating on a novel mechanism for cancer progression. *Journal of Cancer Research*, 135: 45–67.

- **Internet URLs:** Applicants are encouraged to provide the URLs of publications referenced in the application; however, applicants should not include URLs directing reviewers to websites containing additional information about the proposed research.
- **Headers and Footers:** These should not be used unless they are part of a provided template. Page numbers may be included in the footer (see following point).
- **Page Numbering:** Pages should be numbered at the bottom right corner of each page.
- All attachments that require signatures must be filled out, printed, signed, scanned, and then uploaded in PDF format.

## 9. APPLICATION REVIEW

### 9.1. Full Peer Review

All applications submitted in response to this RFA will undergo 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 in [section 9.3](#). 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](#).

## **9.2. 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 (Texas Administrative Code RULE §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 Research 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. The prohibition on communication does not apply to the time period when preapplications or letters of interest are accepted.

Intentional, serious, or frequent violations of this rule may result in the disqualification of the grant application from further consideration for a grant award.

### 9.3. 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.**

#### 9.3.1. Primary Criteria

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

##### **Significance and Impact:**

- Do the proposed TREC theme and the proposed research projects have a high degree of relevance to cancer research?
- Will the proposed investments enhance the institution's cancer research capabilities and ability of research faculty to compete successfully for peer reviewed cancer research awards?
- Do the research projects proposed have clearly defined hypotheses or goals supported by sufficient preliminary data and/or scientific rationale?
- Will research project leaders have formal mentoring to help them acquire preliminary data and successfully compete for independent research grant support?
- Is the formation of the EAC properly described? Is the proposed scientific expertise of EAC members adequate to critique the scientific progress of the TREC and offer advice on scientific matters including the evaluation of research projects and core resources?

**Applicant Investigator:** Does the PI demonstrate the required experience and accomplishments to provide the necessary leadership of the TREC and to oversee mentorship of junior faculty.

**Institutional Commitment:** Is a strong institutional commitment demonstrated? Have internal and external evaluation processes been established to monitor progress?

**Relevance:** Does the proposed research have a high degree of relevance to cancer research? This is a critical criterion for evaluation of projects for CPRIT support.

### **9.3.2. Secondary Criteria**

Secondary criteria contribute to the global score assigned to the application. Concerns with these criteria potentially question the feasibility of the proposed research. Secondary criteria include the following:

**Research Environment:** Does the research team have the needed expertise, facilities, and resources to accomplish all aspects of the proposed research? Are the levels of effort of the key personnel appropriate? Is there evidence of institutional support of the research team and the project?

**Vertebrate Animals and/or Human Subjects:** Is the vertebrate animals and/or human subjects plan adequate and sufficiently detailed?

**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 August 5, 2020

### Application

Online application opens September 16, 2020, 7 AM central time

Application due January 27, 2021, 4 PM central time

Application review January 2021 to August 2021

### Award

Award notification August 18, 2021

Anticipated start date August 31, 2021

## 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.texas.gov](http://www.cprit.texas.gov). 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 award contract. Forms and instructions will be made available at [www.cprit.texas.gov](http://www.cprit.texas.gov).

## **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. A grant recipient that is a public or private institution of higher education, as defined by §61.003, Texas Education Code, may credit toward the Grant Recipient's Matching Funds obligation the dollar amount equivalent to the difference between the indirect cost rate authorized by the federal government for research grants awarded to the Grant Recipient and the 5% indirect cost limit imposed by §102.203(c), Texas Health and Safety Code. Grant applicants are advised to consult CPRIT's Administrative Rules, [chapter 703, section 703.11](#), for specific requirements regarding demonstration of available funding. 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.

## 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.

**Hours of operation:** Monday through Friday, 8 AM to 6 PM central time

**Tel:** 866-941-7146

**Email:** [Help@CPRITGrants.org](mailto: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 Academic Research.

**Tel:** 512-305-8491

**Email:** [Help@cpritgrants.org](mailto:Help@cpritgrants.org)

**Website:** [www.cprit.texas.gov](http://www.cprit.texas.gov)