

Consortium on Translational Research in
Early Detection of Liver Cancer:
Translational Research Centers
Pre-Application Webinar for RFA-CA-22-031

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Purpose of Translational Liver Cancer Consortium

This funding announcement solicits applications for the NCI Translational Liver Cancer (TLC). This FOA is part of an initiative designed to establish a Liver Cancer Consortium to advance translational research focused on early detection of liver cancer.

Translational Research Centers (TRCs) will conduct studies to improve the surveillance of liver cancer in members of high-risk populations, increase the fraction of liver cancer detected at an early stage, and better stratify patients at risk of developing liver cancer.

Applicants must consult RFA-CA-22-031 for detailed information on the scope of this RFA, application procedures and requirements, and review criteria.

Specific Objectives

Each Translational Research Center proposed in response to this FOA must focus on research relevant to one or more of the main goals for the liver cancer consortium, which comprise the following areas:

Area 1: Improving the surveillance for liver cancers in patients with cirrhosis, including imaging approaches;

Area 2: Increasing the detectability of liver cancers at early stages, including imaging approaches; and/or

Area 3: Approaches to better stratify patients with cirrhosis, who are at risk of developing liver cancer.

Roles of Translational Research Centers in the Consortium

Individual Research Projects: Each proposed Translational Research Center must include:

- A well-developed individual research project;
- Proposed projects should be based on appropriate available biospecimen resources and capability for the inclusion of patients with different racial or ethnic backgrounds; and
- Proposed project must have a clear translational potential for and relevance to at least one of the main Research Areas defined previously.

Roles of the Translational Research Centers in the Consortium *(cont'd)*

Trans-Network Activities:

- Participating in collaborative Network projects with other Consortium recipients;
- Contributing to the establishment of a Network biospecimen repository and database;
- Engaging, as appropriate, in other collaborative activities, sharing resources and expertise, etc.; and
- Submitting data (e.g., biomarker, imaging, Common Data Elements, etc.) to and working with the Data Management and Coordinating Center.

Research Objectives of the Funding Announcement

Examples of specific directions relevant to these broad areas include, *but are not limited to*, the following research activities:

- Prospective collection and analysis of samples and/or images from cirrhotic patients with LR3/LR4 nodules to determine the likely progression to liver cancer;
- Integration of imaging approaches with biomarkers; and/or improving imaging modalities for surveillance and early detection of liver cancer;
- Identifying and/or validating biomarkers for HCC associated with racial and/or ethnic differences;
- Establishing cohorts of cirrhotic patients to study risks for liver cancer associated with viral infections (HCV or HBV), NASH, or ALD;
- Stratifying cirrhotic patients to identify those patients at the highest risk for progression to liver cancer;
- Identifying and/or validating biomarkers for HCC arising from different etiologies (e.g., viral and NASH, or ALD);

Award Information

The administrative and funding instrument used for this program will be the cooperative agreement:

- an "assistance" mechanism, not "acquisition"
- Substantial NIH programmatic involvement with the recipients is anticipated during the performance of the activities. Under the cooperative agreement
- NIH's purpose is to support and stimulate the recipients' activities by involvement in and otherwise working jointly with the award recipients in a partnership role
- It is not to assume direction, prime responsibility, or a dominant role in the activities.

Project Period: 5 years

Award Budget: Direct Costs should not exceed \$550,000

Letter of Intent Due: October 7, 2022

Application Due Date: November 7, 2022

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