

Pershing Square Sohn Cancer Prize

An initiative from the Pershing Square Sohn Cancer Research Alliance at

The Pershing Square Foundation

Frequently Asked Questions

ELIGIBILITY

1.) Q: How many Primary Investigators (PIs) from an institution can apply?

A: This is an open call for proposals, so multiple PIs from an eligible institution in the greater NYC area may apply as long as they meet the eligibility requirements. We have no limit and applicants do not need to be nominated. However, please keep in mind that applicants may only apply to the Prize twice.

2.) Q: Can postdoctoral fellows apply?

A: Unfortunately, no. Assistant Professors and Associate Professors (or equivalent) with independent experience running their own labs from a minimum of two to a maximum of six years by the start date of the Prize (July 2025) may apply. Salaries for postdocs in these labs may be on the submitted budgets.

3.) Q: What does “independent research experience” mean?

A: Independent research experience means the start of a tenure-track faculty appointment or independent lab space, with a minimum of two and maximum of six years of experience by July 2025.

4.) Q: Can scientists from biotech startups apply?

A: No, Pershing Square Sohn Prize applicants must be full-time tenure-track faculty members at 501(c)3 research institutions in the greater New York City area.

5.) Q: What is the “greater New York City” area?

A: The greater New York City area includes New York City’s five boroughs, Long Island, Westchester County, New Jersey, Western Connecticut (Fairfield and New Haven Counties), and (as of 2025) certain institutions in Philadelphia, PA. If you aren’t certain if your institution is eligible, please reach out to info@psscra.org.

6.) Q: Is a PI allowed to submit two LOIs for two very distinct projects?

A: No, only one LOI is allowed per PI. We encourage them to choose their most innovative, high-risk, high-reward project to submit! However, a PI can be listed as a collaborator on another lead PIs application.

7.) Q: I applied two times before, but only submitted a letter of intent application and was never invited to submit a full proposal. Can I apply a third time?

A: Unfortunately, no. Regardless of the application stage achieved, if a PI has submitted an application for two different years, they are no longer eligible to apply.

8.) Q: I applied twice, but one of the years I withdrew my application. Am I eligible to apply again?

A: Possibly. Please reach out to info@psscra.org to confirm your eligibility.

9.) Q: Do you make eligibility exceptions for parental leave and other similar extenuating circumstances?

A: We do on a case-by-case basis. Please contact info@psscra.org with additional information on the applicant's exact situation.

THE APPLICATION

10.) Q: How should I format my LOI?

A: The LOI is a one-page document in Georgia, 11-point font and single-spaced with 0.5-inch (NIH standard) margins.

11.) Q: Do figures need to be included in the page limit? What about references?

A: While neither are required, figures need to be confined to the one-page limit, while references can be appended to an additional page(s). However, we encourage that any figures included remain legible for our reviewers.

12.) Q: Are there naming requirements for the application files?

A: No, there aren't any file naming requirements for the application files. As long as they are submitted as PDFs, applicants can name them whatever they'd like (reviewers don't see the file name).

13.) Q: Where can I find the necessary templates?

A: Once an applicant registers and begins to create an application on our application submission portal (<https://prizeapplication.smapply.io>), they will have access to any necessary forms and templates. We do not have an LOI template. However, should an applicant be invited to submit a full proposal, we do have full proposal, budget, and biosketch templates, which will be on our application submission portal.

14.) Q: How much is the award total and how much can I budget for direct and indirect costs per year?

A: The award total is \$750,000 over three years, so \$250,000/year. This includes the indirect costs (not to exceed 10%), so annually it would be \$225,000 in direct costs and \$25,000 in indirect costs.

Therefore, the budget should be constructed as follows:

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total
Total Direct Costs	\$225,000	\$225,000	\$225,000	\$675,000
Indirect Costs (10%)	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$75,000
TOTAL (Direct + Indirect)	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$750,000

15.) Q: Should the budget take into account the full \$750,000 award, or can I apply for a smaller amount of funding, such as \$400,000?

A: The award is \$750,000 over three years, so the proposed project should be large enough in scope to have a budget that requires the full award amount. We do not accept budgets for amounts smaller than \$750,000.

16.) Q: Is there a salary cap?

A: No, we do not have a salary cap, but expect applicants to budget reasonably and responsibly.

17.) Q: Is there a minimum effort requirement for the PI?

A: We don't have a formal policy on this, but budgets are viewed favorably if there is at least a 5% minimum effort.

18.) Q: Do you allow carryover from year to year, and no-cost extensions?

A: Budgets should not be designed to have carryover each year, but we do approve carryover as needed and requested in annual grant reporting, with adequate explanation. We also approve no-cost extensions at the end of an award term on a case-by-case basis. More details on this are included in our award terms and conditions, should an applicant be selected for funding.

19.) Q: In the biosketch publication list, can I include pre-prints?

A: Yes, you absolutely can, but we'd recommend also including some fully published papers so that the reviewers can see the types of journals published in thus far, as that is also helpful. We recommend applicants have at least one last-author publication (in press or in revision is ok) before applying to ensure their application is competitive.

20.) Q: I plan on having collaborator(s). Is this OK? Do I need to submit their biosketch and/or letters of support?

A: This is a single investigator award, so there may only be one lead PI who is the primary applicant. However, we do allow collaborations! Applicants do not need to include the biosketches of collaborators or any letters of support. We encourage collaborations, but the reviewers will focus

first and foremost on the primary applicant's accomplishments, background, and work. If these wish to be included, they can be uploaded as additional files in the full proposal stage.

21.) Q: Who should submit the online application? Can this be the PI applicant? Or should this be someone from the academic institution?

A: Ideally, it should be the PI applicant, and the email address associated with the application should be that of the applicant. However, administrative staff may also access the portal to assist.

22.) Q: I submitted my application. I realized I forgot to include a publication, and/or I have a new one that just came out. Can I edit it?

A: Applicants are unable to edit their applications once submitted. However, if it is before the deadline, please email info@psscra.org and we can update it for you. If it is after the deadline, per internal policies, we will not allow any further edits or updates.