

The Pershing Square Sohn Prize for Young Investigators in Cancer Research
An initiative from the Pershing Square Sohn Cancer Research Alliance (PSSCRA)
2020 Prize Application Guidelines

“For a challenge this huge, we need incredible innovators who don’t take the standard approach.” – Deborah Hung

Prize Overview

The Pershing Square Sohn Prize for Young Investigators in Cancer Research provides greater New York City area-based early career scientists the freedom to take risks and pursue their boldest research at a stage when traditional funding is lacking. Prize winners each receive \$200,000 a year for up to three years, totaling \$600,000. At least six prizes are awarded annually.

The Pershing Square Sohn Cancer Research Alliance (PSSCRA) is dedicated to accelerating cures for cancer by advancing the pursuit of innovative cancer research and by facilitating collaborations between the science and business communities. PSSCRA seeks to guide philanthropic funds to feed critical scientific discoveries, attracting like-minded investors to the cause of fighting cancer and creating a pipeline for early-stage biomedical investments.

In addition to receiving funding, Prize winners are given access to a unique network and are invited to participate in select programs, including:

- Facilitated partnerships with other researchers within and across institutions
- Networking programs (including but not limited to: collaborations/discussions between Prize winners and industry mentors, introductions to philanthropic and for-profit investors in the business community, invitations to special industry networking and entrepreneurship events, and more)
- Annual retreat and symposium
- Ability to present the best ideas at conferences and events (hosted by PSSCRA and other organizations)

Application Process

The application process will be conducted in three stages:

Stage 1: Letter of Intent (LOI) – Opens on Monday, September 30th, 2019, to all research organizations in the New York City area. LOIs must be completed online. Please refer to the <https://psscra.org/application/> website for details.

Stage 2: Full Length Proposal (FLP) – By invitation only; based on a review by PSSCRA of the LOI submission.

Stage 3: Presentation – Finalists will be invited to present their proposal to the Governing Board, Prize Advisory Board, and Scientific Review Council at the 2020 Prize Board Meeting.

Deadlines

Please note that PSSCRA may adjust the notification dates without notice to applicants:

September 30, 2019:	Application opens to receive Letters of Intent (LOI)
November 4, 2019:	Deadline to submit LOI
December 19, 2019:	Selected applicants invited to submit Full Length Proposals (FLPs)
January 24, 2020:	Deadline to submit FLPs
April 3, 2020:	2020 Prize Board Meeting
April 7-10, 2020:	2020 Prize winners notified
May 20, 2020:	Seventh Annual Pershing Square Sohn Prize Award Dinner
Summer 2020:	Projects start

Key Criteria

Innovative research: Truly novel approaches in cancer research with strong scientific rationale. Early stage and bold proposals are encouraged and will receive special consideration. The research areas include but are not limited to technology development and basic biology. The objective is to support projects that may be too innovative and speculative for traditional funding sources but still have a likelihood of producing important findings. It should be a unique project for scientists, who are encouraged to stretch their imagination into areas that can substantially change the area of research.

Scientific excellence: Scientific merit as determined by the Pershing Square Sohn Prize Scientific Advisory Council and Prize Advisory Board.

Application to cancer: Proposals that articulate a clearly defined application to cancer will be favored. The goal is to advance research in new ways that will have an impact on understanding, diagnosis, prevention and/or treatment of cancer.

Eligibility

An MD, PhD, MD-PhD degree (or equivalent) is required. Applicants must have at least two (2) years of experience running their own laboratories but no more than eight (8) years of experience by the start date of the Prize (July 2020). Principal Investigators (PIs) must hold faculty appointments at academic research institutions in the greater New York City area at the level of Assistant or Associate Professor (or equivalent). The greater New York City area includes New York City's five boroughs, Long Island, Westchester County, New Jersey, and Western Connecticut (including Fairfield and New Haven Counties).

An applicant who is not a U.S. citizen or permanent resident, by submitting an application for this funding, assures that his/her visa status will provide sufficient time to complete the project and grant term within the United States. Investigators need not be specifically trained in cancer research; however, they should be working in an environment capable of conducting high-quality, high-impact cancer research.

The Pershing Square Sohn Cancer Research Alliance does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, disability or any other legally protected characteristics.

Letter of Intent (LOI)

LOIs are due **Monday, November 4, 2019 at 5pm EST**. Applicants must fill out and submit the LOI online. The LOI is a one page document in Times New Roman 11-point font and single-spaced (figures are accepted), that **must** include the following elements:

1. A description of the applicant's scientific accomplishments to date;
2. A description of the proposed research project –must include scientific background, aims, and research plan;
3. A description of why the project is innovative within the specific research focus area;
4. A description of how the Prize funding will impact his/her research.

The link to the submission form can be found on our application submission website:

<https://prizeapplication.smapply.io/>.

Full Length Proposal (by Invitation Only)

- Full Length Proposals are due no later than **Friday, January 24th, 2020 at 5pm EST**. Proposals submitted after the deadline **will not** be considered.
- Applicants must fill out the 2020 Pershing Square Sohn Prize proposal application template and submit the proposal by accessing the submission website. The link to the submission website can be found at: <https://psscra.org/application/>.
- Content should be single spaced in Times New Roman, 12-point font.
- The applicant's name should be on every page. Please include page numbers.
- Figures can be in a smaller font as long as the information is legible.
- Each section should be indicated with a section number and heading.
- The Full Length Proposal application template, with detailed information on each section, can be found at <https://psscra.org/application/>.
- Complete 2020 Prize proposals will include the following components:
 - Cover Page (Project title, Principal Investigator contact info, abstract)
 - Lay Abstract
 - Scientific Abstract
 - Rationale & Significance
 - Specific Aims
 - Project Description
 - Statement of How the Proposed Research is Innovative
 - Statement of How the Expertise of the Applicant is Suited for the Research Proposed
 - Statement of What Can Be Accomplished
 - Timetable and Milestones
 - References (sent separately)
 - Budget
 - Budget Justification
 - Biographical Sketch
 - Other Support
 - Signed Submission Agreement

Review Mechanisms

- After submission of the LOI, PSSCRA will invite the selected applicants to submit Full Length Proposals.
- All proposals will undergo peer review by the PSSCRA Scientific Review Council and the Prize Advisory Board.
- Applicants will be selected from a group of qualified individuals based on their credentials, the merits of their proposals, and the connection of their proposals to the goals of the PSSCRA.
- Finalists will be invited to present their proposal at the 2020 Prize Board Meeting on April 3, 2020.
- The final selection will be contingent upon ratification by the PSSCRA Governing Board.
- PSSCRA will not provide reviewer critiques or evaluations to applicants.

Prize Administration

Award Agreement

Upon acceptance of the Prize, the PI and his/her employing institution will be required to sign an award agreement indicating acceptance of the PSSCRA Terms and Conditions. Among other requirements, PSSCRA must be notified in advance and approve of any significant changes in research objectives, key personnel, or budget.

Funding

PSSCRA will allow no more than 10% of the award amount (\$20,000/year) to be allocated to indirect costs. Full term funding will be contingent upon review of annual progress reports and other oversight activities conducted by PSSCRA. PSSCRA will determine future funding at its sole discretion.

Multi-year support is not automatic and is conditioned on meeting certain milestones and deliverables defined in the Full Length Proposal and award agreement, including submission of complete and accurate progress reports indicating that the research project is meeting measurable objectives.

Annual Retreat

Prize winners, academic and industry leaders, Scientific Review Council and Prize Advisory Board members, and select guests will be invited to attend the Pershing Square Sohn Annual Retreat, held each fall.

Reporting Requirements

All projects are required to provide an annual written progress report in accordance with applicable IRS requirements. The reports will be reviewed to ensure that the purposes of the grants are being fulfilled. A template and reminder will be sent in advance of the deadline.

The procedures outlined above are in accordance with the procedure for making grants to individuals approved by the IRS for The Pershing Square Foundation.

Further Information

Any questions concerning this RFP should be addressed to:

Olivia Tournay Flatto, PhD
Executive Director, Pershing Square Sohn Cancer Research Alliance
President, The Pershing Square Foundation
otflatto@persq.org

Christy Barrow
Program Manager, Pershing Square Sohn Cancer Research Alliance
The Pershing Square Foundation
cbarrow@persq.org

<http://psscra.org>