**Center for Implementation Research in Cancer in Later Life (CIRCL)**
**Pilot Award Program Submission Instructions**

### Call for Proposals

The Center for Implementation Research in Cancer in Later Life (CIRCL) is <u>now accepting applications</u> for the annual pilot award program. CIRCL will be awarding two 12-month awards for $40K each plus 20% allowable indirect costs. The pilot award program is intended to expand the scope of dissemination and implementation (D&I) research being conducted in the domain of behavioral health interventions for older adults with cancer (OACs) and their caregivers. The program will support research across the stages of intervention development. The focus of the proposed studies must be related to the mission and long-term goal of CIRCL which is to improve the care and outcomes of OACs and their caregivers by using D&I approaches to increase access to evidenced-based behavioral interventions.

To be considered for funding, investigators must submit their proposal by January 20, 2026 by 11:59 PM Eastern time. CIRCL's Review Panel will meet in February 2026 to review/rank the final proposals and select the most meritorious applications.

### CIRCL Mission

The mission of the Center for Implementation Research in Cancer in Later Life (CIRCL) is to reduce the gap between behavioral intervention research and clinical care for older adults with cancer and their caregivers. This mission will be achieved by equipping the research workforce with the skills to integrate D&I science throughout all phases of the intervention development process. The long-term goal of CIRCL is to improve patient care and outcomes by increasing clinical access to evidence-based behavioral interventions using efficacious D&I techniques.

### Structure of the Pilot Award Program

The pilot award program is a structured investigator development program. Awardees will participate in five related activities: 1) funding for feasible projects focused on the D&I of behavioral health interventions for OACs and their caregivers; 2) investigator matching to a mentor through the CIRCL mentorship program; 3) participation in the work-in-progress seminar; 4) participation in the webinar series; and 5) participation in and attendance at the annual conference. The combination of funding for pilot research projects and training in D&I science will develop a base of rigorously trained investigators with resources to advance the D&I of behavioral health interventions for OACs.

CIRCL will fund 2 awards $40K each plus 20% allowable indirect costs. The project duration is 12 months.

### Eligibility to Submit an Application

Abstract submissions are open to 1) postdoctoral fellows; 2) junior faculty; 3) senior faculty members who are integrating D&I methods into an existing research program; and 4) clinicians who are implementing evidence-based practices into clinical care. MD and PhD applicants from all US institutions are eligible to apply. Candidates may be currently working in D&I science, cancer care, and/or with older adults. Since a goal of CIRCL is to attract new investigators to the area of D&I science for OACs, candidates may also include researchers with a demonstrated interest in beginning a research program in this area.

CIRCL is focused on promoting the dissemination and implementation of behavioral health interventions for older adults with cancer and their caregivers. Any project that advances work in this area is appropriate for submission. Examples of acceptable project types include, but are

not limited to literature reviews, meta-analyses, qualitative research, examination of implementation barriers and facilitators, and development and/or testing of implementation strategies. In addition, behavioral health is broadly defined and can include interventions, assessments, and care models. We encourage submission of a wide range of topics relevant to the mission of CIRCL. If you have questions regarding whether your abstract is appropriate for the conference, please contact us at circl@mskcc.org.

**Application Requirements**
Applications will be modeled after the NIH R03 application. NIH proposal font and margin requirements apply. However, the page limit for the research strategy is 4 pages, instead of the 6 pages required by the NIH. Each application must include the CIRCL cover sheet (see below) and the following elements:

1. CIRCL cover sheet
2. Specific Aims (1 page)
3. Research Strategy (4-page limit)
   a. Significance
   b. Innovation
   c. Preliminary Studies (not required)
   d. Approach
   e. Measures
   f. Analytic Approach
   g. Timeline
4. References (no page limit)
5. Budget and Budget Justification
   a. Budget should be for $40K plus 20% allowable indirect costs
   b. Submit the budget using your institutional budget template
6. Investigator Bio-sketches: Updated NIH style biosketches for all study investigators (limit: 5 pages per investigator; see latest version released by NIH)
7. Human Subjects Protection
8. If applicable, information on any collaborating institutions or agencies and how the collaborative process will take place (2 pages)
9. If the project includes collaboration with another institution or community agency, the application must be accompanied by a signed letter of agreement from collaborating institution/agency.

Each application must include a statement on how the proposed research contributes to the goals of CIRCL and a letter of support from the investigator's supervisor or institution. In addition, applications must include a statement regarding how the proposed project might lead to future funding or advance the investigator's research program. Investigator's must also have completed the required CITI Certification requirements. All selected studies must be approved by the relevant Institutional Review Boards prior to funding.

Applications should be submitted as a single pdf to circl@mskcc.org.

The first round of applications will be solicited in November 2025. The application due date is January 20, 2026. Funding decisions will be made by March 15th, 2026.

**Budget instructions**
Allowable expenses include salary support for the Principal Investigator and other investigators, research-related costs, research assistant salaries with fringe benefits, communications and supplies, respondent incentives, travel related to the research, data and resource sharing

expenses, and equipment purchases less than $500. Salary support for the Principal Investigator and other investigators are permitted but must be thoroughly justified how such salary support is critical to performing the proposed research tasks.

Funding will be released to awarded projects after all necessary Institutional Review Board approvals have been received.

**Review Process and Criteria**
An internal review committee will be convened to review the pilot applications. The committee will consist of 1) project principal investigators, 2) an Advisory Council member, and 3) an OACC Council member. The review committee may also be augmented with content experts from relevant fields.

The review criteria include: 1) project's consistency with CIRCL's objective to advance research on the D&I of behavioral health interventions for OACs and their caregivers; 2) quality of the proposed project and feasibility within the timeline; 3) likelihood that the proposed project will support applications for future funding; 4) the likelihood that the candidate will make a contribution to D&I research given prior accomplishments and the proposed project; 5) adherence to human subjects and other ethical guidelines; and 6) demonstration of plans to apply for external funding.

Applicants will receive feedback on their application. Those that are unsuccessful will be able to reapply.

**Monitoring of Project Progress**
The progress of the pilot awards will be closely monitored through structured activities. Awardees will be required to set up a meeting with their assigned mentor to receive guidance on any obstacles to project completion and to ensure timely project completion and submission of manuscripts and grants applications stemming from the pilot award. Pilot awardees will meet with the CIRCL Executive Committee twice throughout the year to provide updates and discuss project challenges. Awardees will also be required to present their project to the Advisory Council and OACC Council during the initial six months of the project and at the project's end. These presentations will provide awardees with access to CIRCL experts and allow the Councils to provide feedback to the investigators.

**Questions? Email CIRCL at [circl@mskcc.org](mailto:circl@mskcc.org).**

**Center for Implementation Research in Cancer in Later Life (CIRCL)**
**Pilot Award Program Cover Sheet**

**Project title:**

**Principal Investigator**
- Name:
- Title:
- Institution:
- Email:

**Co-Investigator #1**
- Name:
- Title:
- Institution:
- Email:

**Co-Investigator #2**
- Name:
- Title:
- Institution:
- Email:

**Co-Investigator #3**
- Name:
- Title:
- Institution:
- Email:

**Co-Investigator #4**
- Name:
- Title:
- Institution:
- Email:

**Co-Investigator #5**
- Name:
- Title:
- Institution:
- Email:

[Add more co-investigators, as needed]

**Do you have current and/or pending funding to support this project?**
- Yes
- No
- If yes, please describe:

**Describe your plans to apply for additional funding after your proposed study is completed, including a timetable for those applications.**