

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 now accepting applications for the annual pilot award program. CIRCL will be awarding four 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 November 6, 2026 by 11:59 PM Eastern time. CIRCL's Review Panel will meet in December 2026 to review/rank the final proposals and select the most meritorious applications. Decisions will be made in January 2027.

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) presentation at the work-in-progress seminar; 4) participation in the webinar series; and 5) presentation 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 4 awards \$40K each plus 20% allowable indirect costs. The project duration is 12 months. Two awards will begin in March 2027 and two will begin in July 2027.

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 following elements:

1. CIRCL cover sheet (see below)
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. NIH Project Summary/Abstract (30 lines)
6. Budget and Budget Justification
 - a. Budget should be for \$40K plus 20% allowable indirect costs
 - b. Submit the budget using your institutional budget template
7. Investigator Bio-sketches: Created in SciENcv, consistent with current NIH policy
8. Human Subjects Protection
9. NIH Inclusion Enrollment Report
10. NIH Data Management and Sharing Plan
11. Letter of support from the investigator's supervisor or institution
12. If applicable, information on any collaborating institutions or agencies and how the collaborative process will take place (2 pages)
13. If the project includes collaboration with another institution or community agency, the application must be accompanied by a signed letter of agreement from the collaborating institution/agency.

Each Research Strategy must include a statement on how the proposed research contributes to the goals of CIRCL and a statement regarding how the proposed project might lead to future funding or advance the investigator's research program. Investigators must also have completed the required CITI Certification requirements. All funded studies must be approved by the relevant Institutional Review Boards prior to funding. Investigators will be required to send the IRB approval letter to CIRCL upon receipt.

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

Budget instructions

Allowable expenses include salary support for the Principal Investigator and other investigators, research-related costs, research assistant salaries with fringe benefits, 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 must be thoroughly justified in terms of 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 Older Adult with Cancer and Caregiver (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; 3) feasibility of the project within the 12-month timeline; 4) 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. Pilot awardees will meet with the CIRCL Executive Committee twice throughout the year to provide updates and discuss project challenges. The purpose of these meetings is 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. 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.

**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:

How did you hear about the CIRCL pilot award?