



**CURESEARCH**  
FOR CHILDREN'S CANCER

**CureSearch Catapult Award:**  
Clinical Trial Awards in Pediatric Cancer

**2024 Request for Applications**



## 2024 CureSearch Catapult Awards

### Timeline

<b>Request for Applications Opens</b>	December 11, 2023
<b>Letter of Intent Deadline</b>	January 16, 2024
<b>LOI Notification/Full applications invited</b>	February 7, 2024
<b>Full Applications Due</b>	April 15, 2024
<b>Earliest Award Notification*</b>	June 2024

*\*Awards will be made on a rolling basis, pending the availability of funds.*

CureSearch's Catapult Award program aims to accelerate the development of novel, innovative, less-toxic treatments for children with cancer. The goal of the Catapult Award is to overcome barriers to pediatric cancer drug development by providing meaningful funding and expert scientific guidance in order to advance the development of promising oncology research out of the lab and into clinical trials, with the ultimate goal of improving clinical outcomes in childhood cancer patients and making more effective and less toxic treatments widely available.

### Program Description

The Catapult Award is currently soliciting proposals for its 2024 award cycle. CureSearch for Children's Cancer will review and fund projects advancing promising therapies for pediatric cancer into or further along in clinical development, showing strong potential for future approval and commercialization. Awards will be granted for 1-3 years, based on the project's needs. The Catapult Award will provide funding support, as requested, up to \$2.5M for the entire award period, for **"clinic-ready" projects** that fit the following parameters:

- **Phase 1 or Phase 2 pediatric clinical trials** that seek to test single or combination therapies for a pediatric cancer indication.
- Preference will be given to projects that address areas of high unmet need in pediatric oncology, such as high-risk, relapsed, and metastatic disease and adolescent and young adult patient populations.
- All pediatric clinical trial projects should be either IND-ready (that is, with sufficient data to support the submission and approval of an IND or IND-equivalent), available for clinical trial use under an existing, active IND (or IND-equivalent), or have already gained approval by the FDA or other



## CURESEARCH FOR CHILDREN'S CANCER

- competent regulatory authority for an adult indication, but having not been studied in pediatric oncology indications.
- All pediatric clinical trial projects are expected to meet the following established milestones: enrollment of the first patient in the first year, completion of patient accrual within the second year, and manuscript submission by the end of the third year of funding.
  - For “first in human” clinical studies, all pre-clinical pharmacology and non-human safety and toxicology studies should be completed.
  - CureSearch is strongly interested in **collaborative projects** that leverage existing regulatory guidelines or governmental programs that require or reward **research in developing new therapies for pediatric patients**. Collaborative projects between academia and industry are strongly encouraged (see eligibility below).
  - Notice of Special Interest for projects addressing therapies in **neuroblastoma**.

Academic institutions will receive bi-annual grant payments over the project period if an award is made. Awards to for-profit entities may be made in accordance with pre-determined milestones, or in the case of equity investments, as a single investment as a portion of the capital raised by that company, or through an alternate schedule, depending on the project. For collaborative projects, payments will be made accordingly to the institution/entity of the principal investigator listed on the project.

### **Eligibility**

Applications from academic scientists and physician researchers from non-profit research institutions or consortia worldwide, including the US, EU, UK, Canada, Japan, and Australia, will be eligible. Priority will be given to academic researchers whose institutions own the intellectual property protecting the proposed research technology and who have licensed the technology through a spin-out company. Applications will also be considered from small, privately held, for-profit startups, biotechnology, or pharmaceutical companies worldwide, including the US, EU, UK, Canada, or Australia, seeking funding for the early-stage clinical development of proprietary oncology drug technology.

### **Application and Review Process**

Application and review will follow a two-stage process. Applicants must submit a “Letter of Intent” (LOI) (see application submission guidelines below) by the stated deadline date. LOIs will be administratively reviewed by CureSearch Scientific Staff. LOIs will advance to review by the CureSearch Scientific Review



Committee (SRC). Proposals will be evaluated in three criteria areas: (1) scientific and clinical merit, feasibility, and the potential to obtain scientific insight and learnings regardless of trial outcomes, (2) probability of technical and regulatory success for clinical development, and (3) commercial benefit. Promising high-potential LOI applicants will be invited to submit a full application for further review by the SRC, the CureSearch Industry Advisory Council, and the CureSearch Scientific Advisory Council.

**Letter of Intent (LOI) submission guidelines:**

All LOIs must be submitted in accordance with the requirements and instructions of this RFA. LOIs must be submitted via ProposalCentral at <https://ProposalCentral.com>. Each applicant will receive full application instructions based on the initial LOI review. To submit an LOI, you must establish a user account to submit a grant application. If you have a user account with ProposalCentral:

1. Log in to Proposal Central at <https://ProposalCentral.com>.
2. To begin an LOI, select "Grant Opportunities."
3. In the drop-down menu in the upper left-hand corner, select "Filter by Grant Maker", then find "**CureSearch for Children's Cancer à CureSearch for Children's Cancer International Catapult Award in Pediatric Cancer**"
4. Click the "apply now" link to create your LOI.
5. Complete all fields in the application and all provided templates. Upload all requested documents in PDF format. See the ProposalCentral FAQ section, for more information.

If you have difficulties registering, logging in, or creating your application, contact ProposalCentral Customer Support: Phone (800) 875-2562 or email [pcsupport@altum.com](mailto:pcsupport@altum.com).

**Letter of Intent Template**

Download the Template from ProposalCentral and fill in the following sections. The LOI Narrative (Section B) is limited to 2 pages and should be prepared as a Word document (converted to PDF for upload). Cited Publications and LOI supporting documents are not included in this page number limit.

**Document format:**

Please adhere to the following formatting requirements:

- PDF file format
- Font size: 11 point
- Font Type: Times New Roman or Arial
- Page Size: No larger than 8.5 inches x 11.0 inches



- Margins: 0.5 inch in all directions
- The complete LOI narrative (sections B, below) **must not exceed 2 pages** in length.

**A. Applicant and Project information (Completed in ProposalCentral)**

1. Title of Research Proposal
2. Principal Investigator, Co-investigators
3. Institution and/or Company
4. Stage of study
  - Clinical Trial
    - i. Phase 1 (1a/1b)
    - ii. Phase 2 (2a/2b)
5. Agent(s) or technology being tested
6. Technology intellectual property status

**B. Project Plan/Study Design and Rationale (2 page limit)**

1. Rationale and background - Describe how the proposed technology or therapeutic fulfills an unmet medical need, benefits the pediatric patient population, how the proposed agent is superior to existing therapies and how the technology and/or approach is innovative.
2. Preliminary studies (summary of key preclinical or pre-IND/IND-enabling studies, include figures if necessary)
3. Study hypothesis and aims
4. Pediatric safety considerations/therapeutic index

**C. Development Plan (completed in ProposalCentral)**

This section should include:

1. Outline of the next phase of the development process of the early-phase trial if successful
2. Current and anticipated intellectual property
3. Commercialization potential

Describe the path to development of your treatment, including an anticipated transition plan into later phase clinical trials.

**D. Cited Publications (Completed in ProposalCentral)**

**E. Appendix documents (Completed in ProposalCentral)**

- NIH Biographical sketch(es) for all key personnel
- Letter(s) of collaboration from co-investigators/collaborators, including commercial partner, if applicable



\*If an award is made, payments to academic institutions will be made bi-annually, over the project period. Payments to for-profit entities will be made in accordance with pre-determined milestones, or as a single investment at start of the award. For collaborative projects, payments will be made accordingly to the institution/entity of the principal investigator listed on the project.

### **Catapult Award Review Criteria**

All LOI applications will be reviewed for the following components by the SRC:

- Relevance to improving clinical outcomes in childhood cancer patients (e.g. survival, acute toxicity, late effects).
- Innovative biological or pharmaceutical approach
- Compelling scientific hypothesis
- Supporting preliminary data demonstrating clinical and drug development feasibility and likelihood of clinical efficacy
- Availability/accessibility of research agent or technology
- Demonstrated planning of development beyond the project period.
- For academic institutions, a documented track record of out-licensing technology to pharma and/or successfully spinning out start-up companies
- A viable product commercialization pathway that includes application in pediatric cancer patients

### **FULL APPLICATION SUBMISSION**

Only applicants with LOIs deemed most meritorious and aligned with the Program's goals will be invited to submit full applications. Full applications will require additional information from the applicant, including, but not limited to:

- IND submission packet and documentation of relevant IND (or IND-equivalent) enabling studies (non-clinical pharmacology studies, summaries of relevant CMC data/strategy, clinical trial protocols, pre-clinical data that includes proof of biology/mechanism, and evidence of tumor efficacy in relevant preclinical models)
- Documentation from regulatory interactions (e.g., minutes, correspondence, briefing documents, presentations)
- Information on any regulatory incentives granted by the FDA (or other competent regulatory authority) or under review (i.e., orphan drug status, pediatric priority review voucher status)
- Business/commercialization plan
- Correlative Science: Aims and Resources needed
- Budget Estimate
- (Cell therapy) Production Process



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- (Personalized vaccine) Selection and Production Process
- (Checkpoints) Biomarkers + Adverse Events Monitoring
- Contractors, CROs agreements/quotes/letters
- Track record of valorization/commercialization

### **IP / Royalty Sharing**

The recipient of this Award or his/her institution shall own any invention. However, the recipient shall promptly notify CureSearch of any invention and associated patent filing resulting from the research. If the recipient or his/her institution grants any right to the invention to a third party for commercial application and receives any amounts from the invention, CureSearch shall be entitled to receive a share calculated by multiplying the amounts received by a fraction, the numerator of which is the amount of the Award, and the denominator of which is the direct cost incurred by the recipient and his/her institution in developing the invention, except in no event shall the CureSearch share of any such amount received that exceeds 30%. CureSearch will use any share it receives to replenish research funding for re-investment in disease-modifying therapies, including by awarding additional Catapult grants. CureSearch is not looking to make money, but rather to sustain a philanthropic fund of dollars to strategically advance better, less toxic, children's cancer treatments well into the future.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

CureSearch treats all LOIs, full applications and associated research information (collectively, the "Confidential Information") in confidence using no less than reasonable care in protecting such Confidential Information from disclosure to third parties who do not participate in the grant review process and CureSearch assessments. All Confidential Information will be used by CureSearch and its scientific reviewers only internally for the purposes of reviews and assessments, and will be shared only in accordance with its sharing policy stated herein.

### **MONITORING AND REPORTING**

Project milestones will be established as part of the investment agreement specific to each funded project. In addition, CureSearch anticipates that all pediatric clinical trial projects meet the following established milestones: enrollment of first patient in the first year, completion of patient accrual within the second year and manuscript submission by the end of the third year of funding. Routine reporting on those metrics is required under the agreement. Progress reports must be submitted every six months to [researchgrants@curesearch.org](mailto:researchgrants@curesearch.org). Progress report guidelines and templates will be provided at the time of the award. Continued funding is dependent on meeting agreed-upon milestones. If new information learned through the study changes future milestones, a revised milestone agreement should be provided to



CureSearch for approval. Delayed or lack of progress may result in suspension of future funding.

### **CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

Principal investigators, co-investigators, sub-contractors or collaborators submitting applications to the RFA will be excluded from serving on the Scientific Review Committee. However, non-applicants who are invited to serve on the SRC may still have a conflict of interest if 1) the application is from the reviewer's own institution regardless of whether the reviewer has had any involvement in preparing the application, 2) the reviewer, his/her immediate family, or close professional associate(s) has a financial interest or vested interest in the outcome of the proposed research, or 3) the reviewer has been involved in discussions regarding the application, is a provider of services, cell lines, reagents or other materials, or writer of a letter of support for the applicant. When a conflict of interest is deemed to be present, the reviewer will be ineligible to review the proposal and be asked to recuse themselves from the deliberations.

### **REQUIREMENTS FOR AWARDEES**

- Subject to confidentiality considerations, It is required that the results of the research, regardless of study success, will be published as rapidly as possible in a peer-reviewed scientific journal. Publications should be consistent with high standards of scientific excellence and rigor and include acknowledgment of the funding provided by CureSearch for Children's Cancer.
- Progress Reports for CureSearch are due every six months. Progress report forms and instructions will be provided by CureSearch at the time of the award, and reminders will be provided two months prior to due dates.
- Principal investigators are required, if requested, to attend the annual CureSearch Summit and/or CureSearch Pediatric Early Development Symposium (PEDS). Grantees will report on the progress of their projects, exchange information with other investigators, industry, and other stakeholders, explore possible collaborative efforts, and identify strategies/resources to advance projects towards clinical application and commercialization.
- Principal investigators will work closely with CureSearch to translate complex science, findings, and outcomes for donors and constituents. This will be done by conducting interviews for videos, podcasts, webinars, newsletters, and/or other written updates.





**CURESEARCH**  
FOR CHILDREN'S CANCER

- Principle investigators are expected to participate in CureSearch volunteer leadership activities, including yearly scientific reviews and other events, as needed.
- Grantees are expected to account for the monies expended under the Award; any monies spent either not in accordance with the approved research project or prior to pre-approval of any material change in the project are subject to repayment and may be cause for immediate termination of funding by CureSearch.
- Grantees are expected to meet scheduled milestones and submit deliverables on time. Failure to meet milestones, furnish scheduled deliverables, including the aforementioned reports, or to comply with the terms of the grant may serve as a base for termination of funding by CureSearch.

**QUESTIONS?**

<b>Type of Inquiry</b>	<b>Contact</b>
<b>All programmatic inquiries</b> (including questions related to eligibility, requirements, etc.)	<b>CureSearch</b> Email: <a href="mailto:researchgrants@curesearch.org">researchgrants@curesearch.org</a> Phone: +1-240-235-2215
<b>All technical inquiries related to the online application system, ProposalCentral</b>	<b>Proposal Central</b> Email: <a href="mailto:pcsupport@altum.com">pcsupport@altum.com</a> Phone: 1-800-875-2562