Program Announcement for the Defense Health Agency

Melanoma Research Program
Team Science Award

Funding Opportunity Number: HT942526MRPTSA

Pre-Application Due: July 13, 2026

Application Due: October 14, 2026

This program announcement must be read in conjunction with the General Application Instructions, version CD26_01.

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Before You Begin

- **Active SAM.gov, eBRAP.org and Grants.gov registrations are required for application submission.** User registration for each of these websites can take several weeks or longer. Each applicant must ensure their registrations are active and up to date prior to application preparation.
- **Read this funding opportunity announcement in the order it is written before beginning to prepare application materials.** It is the responsibility of the applicant to determine whether the proposed research meets the intent of this funding opportunity and that all parties meet eligibility requirements.
- **To support application preparation, additional resources are available** including an application process FAQ, a Guide for Intragovernmental & Intramural Applicants and a CDMRP Video Series detailing the application process.

Who to Contact for Support

eBRAP Help Desk

301-682-5507
help@eBRAP.org

Questions regarding funding opportunity submission requirements, as well as technical assistance related to pre-application or intramural application submission.

Grants.gov Support Center

800-518-4726
International: 1-606-545-5035
support@grants.gov

Questions regarding Grants.gov registration and Workspace.

This document uses internal links; you can go back to where you were by pressing the Alt + left arrow keys (Windows) or command + left arrow keys (Macintosh) on your keyboard.

Click ⓘ to be taken to additional guidance and instructions within the General Application Instructions (GAI).

1. Basic Information About the Funding Opportunity

Summary: The fiscal year 2026 (FY26) Melanoma Research Program (MRP) Team Science Award supports a broad range of hypothesis-driven, multidisciplinary studies that have a short-term goal of advancing the state of the science in melanoma research and/or patient care. Team science is a synergistic effort that harnesses techniques, approaches and perspectives from multiple disciplines and/or therapeutic areas to address complex, multi-dimensional problems that will impact patient outcomes.

Distinctive Features:

- This funding mechanism requires multiple Principal Investigators (PIs). At least two and up to three PIs should partner to jointly design and execute ***a single research project***; multi-institutional partnerships are encouraged. If recommended for funding, each PI will be named on separate awards to the recipient organization(s).
- **Consumer Collaboration Option:** Investigators are encouraged, but not required, to form collaborative relationships with the melanoma consumer community to maximize the impact and translatability of the research for the benefit of the intended community(ies).
- After submitting the required pre-application, ***investigators must receive an invitation to submit a full application***.
    - Only the Initiating PI will submit a pre-application. All PIs ***must*** submit full applications. The Partnering PI(s)'s application is an abbreviated package specific to their proposed research effort.

Funding Details: The Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs expects to allot roughly $18.9M to fund approximately nine Team Science Award applications with total cost caps of $2.1M per award. The maximum period of performance is 3 years. It is anticipated that awards made from this FY26 funding opportunity will be funded with FY26 funds, which will expire for use on September 30, 2032. Awards supported with FY26 funds will be made no later than September 30, 2027.

Submission and Review Dates and Times

- **Pre-Application (Preproposal) Submission Deadline:** 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time (ET), July 13, 2026
- **Invitation to Submit an Application:** August 19, 2026
- **Application Submission Deadline:** 11:59 p.m. ET, October 14, 2026
- **End of Application Verification Period:** 5:00 p.m. ET, October 20, 2026
- **Peer Review:** December 2026
- **Programmatic Review:** March 2027

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: HT942526MRPTSA

Assistance Listing Number: 12.420

2. Eligibility Information

2.1. Eligible Applicants

2.1.1. Organization

Extramural and intramural U.S. Department of War (DOW) organizations are eligible to apply, ***including foreign and domestic organizations, for-profit and nonprofit organizations, and public or private entities***.

2.1.2. Principal Investigator

The investigator named as the Initiating PI or a Partnering PI on the application must be an independent investigator at or above the level of Assistant Professor, or equivalent. The investigators do not have to be from academic organizations.

An investigator in a mentored position (e.g., postdoctoral fellow, clinical fellow) is not considered independent and is ***not*** eligible to be named as Initiating or Partnering PI.

An investigator may be named on only one FY26 MRP full application as a PI.

Independent investigators affiliated with an eligible organization are eligible to be named PI on the application, regardless of ethnicity, nationality or citizenship status.

2.2. Cost Sharing

Cost sharing is not an eligibility requirement.

2.3. Other

Awards are made to eligible ***organizations***, not to individuals. Refer to the GAI for additional recipient qualification requirements.

3. Program Description

The Defense Health Agency Contracting Activity (DHACA) is soliciting applications to this funding opportunity using delegated authority provided by United States Code, Title 10, Section 4001 (10 USC 4001). The Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs (CDMRP) is the program office managing this FY26 funding opportunity as part of the Melanoma Research Program (MRP). The CDMRP is located within the Defense Health Agency Research and Development (DHA R&D), which is a part of the Department of Defense, DOD, herein referred to using the secondary title Department of War, DOW. Congress initiated the MRP in 2019 to provide support for research of high potential impact and exceptional scientific merit. Appropriations for the MRP from FY19 through FY25 totaled $220 million (M). The FY26 appropriation is $40M.

The vision of the MRP is to prevent melanoma initiation and progression, and reduce hardship. The mission is to support development of earlier interventions to enhance mission readiness, diminish melanoma burden, and improve quality of life for Service Members, Veterans, their Families and the American public.

Studies involving non-melanoma skin cancers are not allowed under the FY26 MRP.

The MRP identified three strategic priorities to ensure that funded research addresses unmet needs and/or underfunded areas of melanoma research and patient care. These three priorities are:

Prevention and Interception: Individuals diagnosed with melanoma have significantly improved prognoses when the disease is diagnosed and treated before it metastasizes. Although primary prevention (use of sunscreen, sun avoidance, etc.) is critical, the MRP seeks to fund research that will lead to improved detection and monitoring capabilities (particularly for individuals at highest risk) as well as inhibition of melanoma initiation, early dissemination, emergence from tumor dormancy and metastases (i.e., interception).

With the exception of studies investigating rare melanomas, the FY26 MRP is not requesting research into established macrometastatic disease or developing treatments for macrometastatic disease.

Rare Melanomas: Rare melanoma subtypes can have distinct characteristics compared to cutaneous melanoma, which makes up the majority of melanoma diagnoses. Rare melanoma subtypes are typically less well-studied, and this has led to a variety of prevention, diagnosis and treatment challenges. The MRP seeks to fund research across the entire cancer research spectrum addressing unmet needs and knowledge gaps associated with rare melanomas. Although the FY26 MRP accepts applications addressing topics relevant to uveal melanoma, the MRP is particularly interested in receiving applications that address other uncommon presentations of melanoma, including but not limited to:

- Genetic (molecular subtypes).
- Histologic (desmoplastic and acral lentiginous).
- Tissue of origin (mucosal, acral).
- Clinical presentation (pediatric, leptomeningeal disease).

Survivorship: The widely accepted definition of cancer, and therefore melanoma, survivorship spans ***the time from an individual receiving their initial diagnosis through the balance of their life. Under this definition, an individual is considered a melanoma survivor beginning at the time they receive their initial diagnosis.*** For the purposes of the MRP, the

needs and impact of a melanoma diagnosis on family members, friends and care partners of melanoma survivors are also included within the purview of "melanoma survivorship." With the increasing incidence of melanoma and the increased availability of effective treatment options for patients with melanoma, the number of melanoma survivors is also increasing. Melanoma survivorship research covers a broad range of research areas that have the goal of improving the health and well-being of melanoma survivors and their families/care partners. The MRP seeks to fund innovative and impactful research that advances studies in preservation of function (physical ability), quality of life improvement, symptom management, treatment outcomes and support for psychological and social issues related to melanoma diagnosis, treatment and life post-treatment.

3.1. Award History

The MRP Team Science Award mechanism was first offered in FY19. Since then, 210 TSA applications were received (representing 525 potential awards), and 41 were recommended for funding (representing 99 awards).

3.2. Intent of the Team Science Award

The intent of the FY26 MRP Team Science Award (TSA) is to support a broad range of hypothesis-driven, multidisciplinary studies that are responsive to at least one of the FY26 MRP Focus Areas and have the short-term goal of advancing the state of the science in melanoma research and/or patient care. Team science is a synergistic effort that harnesses techniques, approaches, and perspectives from multiple disciplines and/or therapeutic areas to address complex, multi-dimensional problems that will impact patient outcomes. The TSA is intended to bring together investigators from divergent disciplines to achieve innovations and advancements in melanoma research and/or patient care that could not be achieved by any one investigator working independently. While basic research is allowed, all applications are expected to articulate the short- and long-term benefits of the expected research outcomes for the melanoma patient community.

The TSA requires at least two and up to three PIs to partner and jointly design ***a single research project***; multi-institutional partnerships are encouraged. One PI will be identified as the Initiating PI and will be responsible for the majority of the administrative tasks associated with application submission. The other PI(s) will be identified as a Partnering PI(s). Each PI should contribute significantly to the development and execution of the proposed research project. If recommended for funding, each PI will be named on separate awards to the recipient organization(s). Each award will be subject to separate reporting, regulatory and administrative requirements. Instructions regarding the unique full application components for the Initiating and Partnering PIs are located in Section 4.3. For individual submission requirements for the Initiating and Partnering PI(s), refer to Section 5.3. Submission Instructions.

At least one member of the partnership must have experience in either melanoma research or patient care. Inclusion of investigators from outside the melanoma field is encouraged. ***Each PI is expected to contribute both intellectual investment and research effort to the development and execution of the proposed research project. A proposed project in which a Partnering PI merely supplies reagents, specimens or access to patients will not meet the intent of this award mechanism***.

Types of research that meet the intent of the TSA include, but are not limited to:

- ***Translational research*** that leverages clinical samples from established biobanks, established biorepositories, and/or ongoing or completed clinical trials. Translational

research applications should include evidence for the reciprocal transfer of information between basic and clinical science or vice-versa in developing and implementing the research plan. Such integration between the laboratory and clinic should lead to greater knowledge, discovery and/or development of earlier interventions.

- ***Data science research*** where quantitative and analytical approaches, processes and/or systems are developed and/or used to obtain knowledge and insight from large and/or complex sets of melanoma data. Studies utilizing data derived from large patient studies that include long-term health records or repositories with well-annotated and high-quality biospecimens are encouraged. Proposed research can include studies related to computational biology, bioinformatics, artificial intelligence and machine learning, medical imaging, digital pathology, etc. Applications may combine diverse data types for integrative analysis. Use/analysis of already-existing datasets is strongly encouraged.
- Research that uses ***bioengineering*** approaches to develop tools that assist in the detection, diagnosis, prognosis and/or treatment of melanoma. Techniques from fields such as quantitative science, mathematics, computer science or engineering may be merged with biomedical sciences to address a relevant question or area of need. Any applications proposing such research should articulate how the project outcomes will offer real-world practicality or advance current tools, either in the short or long term.
- ***Other hypothesis-driven basic to translational research*** designed to investigate melanoma prevention and/or interception, rare melanomas or melanoma survivorship. The proposed research project may utilize preclinical models, human data and/or anatomical substances, and/or human subjects.

3.2.1. Focus Areas for the TSA

All applications to the FY26 MRP TSA must address at least one of the following FY26 MRP Focus Areas that support the MRP strategic priorities:

Prevention and Interception:

- Identify, understand and mitigate risk factor determinants and develop biomarkers for melanoma.
- Develop new technology for the detection, diagnosis, and monitoring of melanoma that can distinguish lesions and/or individuals at higher risk for progression from lesions and/or individuals requiring only surveillance.
- Define the ***mechanisms*** of:
    - Melanoma initiation
    - Response and/or resistance to adjuvant and/or neoadjuvant therapy, including cellular-based therapies
    - Progression
    - Recurrence
    - Emergence from tumor dormancy
    - Metastatic spread

  Mechanism-focused studies may include the role of the tumor microenvironment and/or microbiome in these processes.

- Develop new preclinical models that faithfully represent disease evolution observed in humans, from melanomagenesis through progression. New models may represent cutaneous melanoma or any rare melanoma subtype.

Rare Melanomas:

- Address unmet needs across the entire cancer research spectrum for rare melanomas, as defined above, which includes studies of biology, etiology, prevention, early diagnosis and detection, prognosis, treatment or survivorship.

Survivorship:

- Address the psychological and social impacts of a melanoma diagnosis, symptom trajectories, adverse effects of treatment and other outcomes affecting melanoma survivors and their family members/care partners.
- Address the physical impacts of symptom trajectories; acute and late-occurring adverse effects of treatment, including lymphedema, toxicities, reproductive and sexual health issues, and side effects that may not manifest until after treatment ends; role of diet, exercise and other lifestyle factors on treatment outcomes and/or quality of life; etc.

3.2.2. Key Elements for the TSA

Multidisciplinary Collaboration: The success of the project should depend on the unique skills and perspectives of each partner. The application must clearly define the synergistic components that will facilitate and accelerate progress in melanoma in a way that could not be accomplished through independent efforts. The plans for interactions among all PIs and organizations involved must be clearly articulated. Collectively, the members of the research team should represent the appropriate diversity of expertise necessary for addressing the proposed research question. Participating organizations must be willing to resolve potential intellectual and material property issues and remove organizational barriers to achieving high levels of cooperation. The following components of the proposed multidisciplinary collaboration are encouraged but not required:

- It is strongly encouraged that the research team has a least one investigator key personnel, or consultant who can provide input on the ultimate utility/applicability (short- or long-term) of the anticipated outcome(s) to the melanoma field and/or patient care***.***
- The inclusion of an early-career investigator is encouraged. An early-career investigator is defined as an independent, early-career researcher or physician-scientist within seven years of receiving their first faculty appointment by the time of the full application deadline. ***Investigators in mentored positions, (e.g., postdoctoral fellows) are not eligible to be named as a PI on a TSA application.***
- The inclusion of a military and/or U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) investigator is encouraged. A military or VA investigator is defined as an investigator who is active-duty, active reserve, active duty detailed to agencies outside of the DOW, civilian DOW investigators or an investigator at a VA research facility. If included as PI on the research team, the military/VA investigator should have a substantial role in the research and should not be included only for access to active-duty military and/or VA populations.

Impact: The application must articulate the impact the proposed work, including basic research, will have on melanoma research and/or patient care. Outcomes from this award are expected to expedite the advancement of promising ideas toward clinical applications and/or improve the current state of the science/technology in the melanoma field. The proposed research must relate to at least one of the FY26 MRP Focus Areas.

Preliminary Data Required: Applications ***must include preliminary data*** to support feasibility of the study. However, these data do not necessarily need to be derived from melanoma studies. Any unpublished, preliminary data presented should originate from the laboratory of at least one of the PIs or other member(s) of the research team.

3.2.3. Other Important Considerations for the TSA

Melanoma Resources: When appropriate and feasible, PIs are encouraged to utilize existing, well-characterized data and specimens. Examples of such resources are listed below. PIs are encouraged to explore the utility of these and/or other resources to ensure the use of the most appropriate data and/or models to conduct impactful melanoma research. The list is not all-inclusive, and the information provided below, including external links and references, is not to be construed as endorsement by the DOW, CDMRP or MRP.

- National Cancer Institute (NCI) Patient-Derived Models Repository (PDMR). The PDMR is a national repository of patient-derived models (PDMs) comprised of patient-derived xenografts (PDXs), *in vitro* patient-derived tumor cell cultures (PDCs), and cancer-associated fibroblasts (CAFs), as well as patient-derived organoids. In addition to model generation, NextGen sequencing data are available for all models, as well as DNA, RNA and flash-frozen fragments for protein extraction from early-passage PDXs. The PDMR's catalog currently contains numerous melanoma PDXs, PDCs, organoids and CAF cultures, including some for rare melanoma subtypes.
- Human Cancer Models Initiative (HCMI). The goal of the HCMI is to create up to 1,000 patient-derived next-generation cancer models such as organoids, conditionally reprogrammed cells, neurospheres, or optimal growth condition models as a community resource. The HCMI aims to provide the models' case-associated data which include quality-checked clinical, biospecimen, and molecular characterization data from the models, the tissues from which they were derived, and normal tissues, when available. Available harmonized data are accessible through NCI's Genomic Data Commons.
- NCI-Funded Skin Specialized Programs of Research Excellence (SPOREs). There are currently three skin SPOREs whose programs focus predominantly on melanoma. Historically, each SPORE site includes a biospecimen core.
- VA Science and Health Initiative to Combat Infectious and Emerging Life-Threatening Diseases (VA SHIELD). The VA SHIELD is a comprehensive, secure biorepository of specimens and associated data that provides researchers and clinicians with high-quality biosamples and comprehensive associated medical and sample data to accelerate the discovery-to-therapy pipeline for the benefit of Veterans. **NOTE:** These specimens and data are available ONLY to authorized VA investigators.
- Million Veteran Program. The Million Veteran Program (MVP) is the nation's largest genomic biorepository of Veteran data and is one of the most diverse cohorts of any genetic research program in the world. **NOTE:** Access to MVP data is currently limited to ONLY VA-affiliated researchers.
- American Association for Cancer Research (AACR) Project Genomics Evidence Neoplasia Information Exchange (GENIE®). Project GENIE is a publicly accessible cancer registry of real-world clinico-genomic data assembled through data sharing between 19 international cancer centers. As of the January 2024 release there were over 198,000 sequenced samples from more than 172,000 patients, with melanoma samples, including uveal melanoma, being well-represented.

- Patient-Derived Cancer Models. CancerModels.Org provides harmonized and integrated model attributes to support consistent searching for PDX, organoid, and cell line models and to facilitate researchers' search for models and associated data across multiple commercial and academic resources.
- The Community United for Research and Education of Ocular Melanoma (CURE OM) Virtual Information System to Improve Outcomes and Networks (VISION) Platform. The CURE OM VISION Platform is a patient-powered OM research project funded and sponsored by the Melanoma Research Foundation's CURE OM initiative. The registry launched in the United States in May 2021 and was made available to participants worldwide soon thereafter. The CURE OM initiative's patient community and collaborators are now actively participating, sharing data, and joining researchers in the work toward more effective treatments and, one day, a cure.
- INSIGHT: A Global Ocular Melanoma Patient Registry. The ocular melanoma INSIGHT patient registry is a collaborative effort between A Cure In Sight, the University of California San Francisco Beckman Vision Center, and the National Organization for Rare Disorders. This participant-driven registry launched in 2019 to enhance the understanding of ocular melanoma, collect data for medical research, and facilitate the development of new diagnostic and treatment options.
- The RARE® Registry. The RARE Registry is an initiative led by the Melanoma Research Alliance primarily for patients with acral and mucosal melanoma. It provides a free, interactive, web, and mobile-friendly tool to share information, experiences, and disease history; advance research and awareness; and get potential matches to clinical trials.

Melanoma Consumer Collaboration Option: For the purposes of the TSA, ***a "melanoma consumer" is a melanoma survivor (active or post-treatment), family member and/or care partner who can provide lived experience expertise*** to the research project. Applicants to the TSA are encouraged, but not required, to collaborate with the melanoma consumer community to maximize the impact and translatability of the research outcomes for the benefit of the intended community(ies).

Collaborative research approaches create partnerships between scientific researchers and melanoma consumers to create knowledge useable by both sets of stakeholders. Recognizing the strengths of each partner, scientific researchers and melanoma consumers collaborate and contribute equitably on all aspects of the project, which may include needs assessment, planning, research design, implementation, evaluation and results dissemination. Collaborative research approaches feature shared responsibility and ownership for the research project to ensure non-tokenistic involvement of the melanoma consumer community members within the research team. Research results are jointly interpreted, disseminated and fed back to affected communities and in some instances, translated into interventions or policy.

Collaborative relationships with the melanoma consumer community may be established through integrating community members into research teams as co-researchers, advisors, and/or consultants; melanoma consumer collaborators should ***not*** be named as Initiating or Partnering PIs. Examples for implementing collaborative research approaches are listed below, but each research team may pursue other options as appropriate for the proposed research. The research team may:

- Include at least one melanoma consumer who will provide advice and consultation throughout the planning, implementation and results dissemination of the research project. The consumer(s) should be able to speak to the needs of the melanoma consumer community, not just speak to their own personal experiences.

- Establish partnerships with at least one community-supporting organization that provides advice and consultation throughout the planning, implementation and results dissemination of the research project. Community-supporting organizations may include advocacy groups or other formal organizational stakeholders that can speak to the needs of the melanoma consumer community.
- Assemble a melanoma consumer community advisory board. The advisory board may include melanoma consumers, a coalition of community-supporting organizations or any combination thereof that provides advice and consultation throughout the planning, implementation and results dissemination of the research project.

Additional information on collaborative research approaches can be found in:

- Cancer Research UK. Patient involvement toolkit for researchers.
- Patricial A. Spears, "Patient Engagement in Cancer Research From the Patient's Perspective," *Future Oncology* 17, no. 28 (2021):3717–28. doi: 10.2217/fon-2020-1198. Epub 2021 Jul 2. PMID: 34213358.
- Ann Tivey et al., "Patient Engagement in Melanoma Research: From Bench to Bedside," *Future Oncology* 17, no. 28 (2021): 3705–16. doi: 10.2217/fon-2020-1165. Epub 2021 Jul 2. PMID: 34213356.
- Jeannine M. Salamone, et al., "Promoting Scientist-Advocate Collaborations in Cancer Research: Why and How," *Cancer Research* 78, no. 20 (2018): 5723–28. doi: 10.1158/0008-5472.CAN-18-1600.
- Food and Drug Administration. Center for Drug Evaluation and Research (CDER) Patient-Focused Drug Development.

Relevance to Military Health: Advancing knowledge in melanoma research, patient care and/or treatment options in the Military Health System is critical. Therefore, the MRP seeks to support research that is relevant to the health care needs of Service Members, Veterans and/or their Families. The MRP encourages investigators to consider the following examples of how a project may demonstrate relevance to military health:

- Use of military or Veteran populations, biospecimens, data, databases, or programs in the proposed research.
- Applications from investigators within the DOW and applications involving multidisciplinary collaborations among academia, industry, DOW, VA and other federal government agencies are highly encouraged. These relationships can leverage knowledge, infrastructure and access to unique clinical populations that the collaborators bring to the research effort, ultimately advancing research that is of significance to Service Members, Veterans, and/or their Families.
- Explanation of how the project addresses an aspect of melanoma that has relevance or is unique to Service Members, Veterans and/or their Families.

If the proposed research involves access to active-duty military and/or VA patient populations and/or DOW or VA resources or databases, the application must describe the access at the time of submission, provide appropriate letters of support, and include a plan for maintaining access as needed throughout the proposed research. Refer to the Full Application Submission Components, for detailed information. Refer to the GAI, Appendix 4, for additional information.

A list of websites that may be useful in identifying additional information about ongoing DOW and VA areas of research interest or potential opportunities for collaboration can be found in Appendix 10 of the GAI.

Preclinical Research: All projects should adhere to a core set of standards for rigorous study design and reporting to maximize the reproducibility and translational potential of clinical and preclinical research, such as those described in the STROBE, CONSORT, SPIRIT and ARRIVE guidelines 2.0.

For Research Involving Animals: In accordance with the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2026, Section 732, CDMRP does not support the conduct of painful research (U.S. Department of Agriculture pain category D or E) involving domestic cats or dogs, except for studies relating to military or service animals.

The MRP acknowledges that domestic dogs can spontaneously develop mucosal melanoma. FY26 applications proposing mucosal melanoma studies involving pets that are voluntarily enrolled in studies at the owner's discretion may be considered (e.g., a pet owner enrolling their domestic dog in a clinical trial administered in a veterinary hospital setting). Such studies, if recommended for funding, must obtain a waiver of National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2026, Section 732 before initiating. Receipt of such a waiver is not guaranteed.

For Research Involving Human Data, Human Anatomical Substances, Human Subjects or Human Cadavers:

Clinical trials are not allowed within this funding opportunity.

For the purposes of this funding opportunity, research that meets the definition of a clinical trial is distinct from clinical research.

For more information, a Human Subject Research Resource is available on the CDMRP website.

Metastatic Cancer Task Force: A congressionally mandated Metastatic Cancer Task Force was formed with the purpose of identifying ways to help accelerate clinical and translational research aimed at extending the lives of advanced state and recurrent patients. As a member of the Metastatic Cancer Task Force, CDMRP encourages applicants to review the recommendations and submit research ideas to address these recommendations provided they are within the limitations of this funding opportunity and fit within the FY26 MRP strategic priorities

3.3. Funding Instrument

The funding instrument for awards made under the program announcement will be grants (31 USC 6304).

3.4. Funding Details

Period of Performance: The maximum period of performance is **3** years.

Cost Cap: The ***combined*** total costs budgeted for the entire period of performance in the applications of the Initiating PI and each Partnering PI should not exceed **$2,100,000**. If indirect cost rates have been negotiated, indirect costs are to be budgeted in accordance with the organization's negotiated rate. Collaborating organizations should budget associated indirect costs in accordance with each organization's negotiated rate.

All direct and indirect costs of any subaward or contract must be included in the direct costs of the primary award.

The applicant may request the entire maximum funding amount for a project that may have a period of performance less than the maximum **3** years.

The appropriateness of the budget for the proposed research will be assessed during peer review.

A separate award will be made to each PI's organization.

The PIs are expected to be partners in the research, and direct cost funding should be divided accordingly unless otherwise warranted and clearly justified.

Direct Cost Restrictions: For this award mechanism, direct costs:

May be requested for (not all-inclusive):

- Travel in support of multi-institutional collaborations.
- Costs for no more than three investigators to travel to one scientific/technical meeting per year. The intent of travel to scientific/technical meetings should be to present project information or disseminate project results from the MRP TSA.
- Costs associated with Melanoma Consumer Collaboration Option (e.g., consultant costs, equitable participation training, capacity-building activities).

Must not be requested for:

- Clinical trial costs.

4. Application Contents and Format

4.1. Application Overview

Application submission is a two-step process requiring both a ***pre-application*** submitted via the Electronic Biomedical Research Application Portal (eBRAP) and a ***full application*** submitted through eBRAP or Grants.gov. Depending on the submission portal, certain aspects of the application will differ.

Intramural DOW organizations submitting a full application should follow instructions for submission through eBRAP.

Extramural organizations submitting a full application must follow instructions for submission through Grants.gov.

4.2. Pre-Application Components

Pre-application submissions must include the following components.

The ***Initiating PI*** must submit the following pre-application components.

Upload documents as individual PDF files unless otherwise noted. Files must comply with the formatting guidelines listed in the GAI.

- **Preproposal Narrative:** Provide responses in the appropriate text fields in eBRAP for the following questions. Inclusion of URLs that provide additional information to expand responses and that could confer an unfair competitive advantage is prohibited and may result in administrative withdrawal of the pre-application.
    - What is the hypothesis to be tested and/or objective to be obtained? Briefly describe the specific aims of the proposed research. Explain how the scope of the proposed research is appropriate for the intent of a TSA and feasible to complete within the allowed budget and period of performance limits. (2000-character limit.)
    - How will the proposed work uniquely address a critical problem in at least one of the FY26 MRP Focus Areas? The focus area(s) described in this response should match the primary (and secondary, if applicable) focus area(s) selected within the Application Tab in eBRAP during pre-application submission. (500-character limit.)
    - Briefly describe the research team. How will the proposed collaboration accelerate progress in melanoma in a way that could not be accomplished through independent efforts? (1,500-character limit.)
    - ***For Applications to the Team Science Award – Consumer Collaboration Option only***: Describe plans to incorporate melanoma consumer collaboration into the planning, execution, and dissemination of the proposed research. Identify the individual(s) and/or organization(s) of the proposed consumer collaborator(s). (500-character limit.)
    - How will the anticipated short- and long-term outcomes of the proposed research, if the effort is successful, answer a critical question or address an unmet need in melanoma to the benefit of Service Members, Veterans, their Families and the American public? (500-character limit.)

- **Pre-Application Supporting Documentation:** The items to be included as supporting documentation for the pre-application ***must be uploaded as individual files*** and are limited to the following:
    - **References Cited (one-page limit):** List the references cited (including URLs if available) in the Preproposal Narrative using a standard reference format that includes the full citation (i.e., author[s], year published, reference title, and reference source, including volume, chapter, page numbers, and publisher, as appropriate).
    - **List of Abbreviations, Acronyms and Symbols:** Provide a list of abbreviations, acronyms and symbols used in the Preproposal Narrative responses.

4.3. Full Application Components

Applicants ***must*** receive an invitation to submit a full application. Uninvited full application submissions will be rejected.

The CDMRP requires separate full application package submissions for the Initiating PI and each Partnering PI, even if the PIs are located within the same organization. The application submission process for each Partnering PI uses an abbreviated full application package.

4.3.1. Full Application Components for the Initiating PI

Each application submission must include the completed full application package for this program announcement. See Appendix 1 for a checklist of the full application components.

(a) SF424 Research & Related Application for Federal Assistance Form *(Grants.gov submissions only)*:

IMPORTANT: *When completing the SF424 R&R, enter the* ***eBRAP log number*** *assigned during pre-application submission into* ***Block 4a – Federal Identifier****.*

(b) Attachments:

Each attachment of the full application components must be uploaded as an individual file in the format specified and in accordance with the formatting guidelines in the GAI.

- **Attachment 1: Project Narrative (12-page limit): Upload as "ProjectNarrative.pdf".**

  Describe the proposed project in detail using the outline below.

  - **Background:** Present the scientific rationale to support the proposed multidisciplinary research project and its feasibility, as established through the demonstration of logical reasoning and a critical review and analysis of published literature; include relevant literature citations. Provide sufficient preliminary data to support the feasibility of work proposed. Any unpublished, preliminary data provided should originate from the laboratory of at least one of the PIs or a member of the research team. ***The inclusion of preliminary data is required***. However, preliminary data does not have to be derived from melanoma studies.
  - **Hypothesis and Objectives:** State the hypothesis to be tested or the objective to be reached.
  - **Specific Aims:** State the specific aims of the study. If the proposed research is part of a larger study, ***present only aims that this award would fund****.*

- **Research Strategy and Feasibility:** Describe the experimental design, methodology, and analyses, including appropriate controls, in sufficient detail for evaluation of their appropriateness and feasibility. Describe how the studies are designed to achieve reproducible and rigorous results that support successful completion of the project aims. Address potential problem areas and pitfalls, and present alternative methods and/or approaches.

  - Clearly describe the statistical plan and the rationale for the statistical methodology. If applicable, describe an appropriate power analysis, how it supports the sample size, and how it adequately represents an assessment of the population or subpopulation proposed. If a power analysis was not used to determine the proposed sample size, justify why a power analysis is not essential to the statistical evaluation. Ensure sufficient information is provided to allow thorough evaluation of all statistical calculations and/or the power of the proposed studies during review of the application. If there are sample size limitations (budget limitations, availability of specimens, etc.) justify how analysis of the proposed sample size(s) will yield meaningful information. A separate Sex as a Biological Variable (SABV) Strategy is required as part of Attachment 2.
  - If cell lines are to be used, justify why the proposed cell line(s) are appropriate to achieve the goals the proposed study(ies) and clearly articulate the source(s) of the proposed cell line(s).
  - If animal studies are proposed, including the use of PDX models, justify why the proposed animal model was chosen and clearly articulate the source of the model(s). Describe how the animal studies are conducted in accordance with the appropriate guidelines to ensure relevant aspects of rigorous and reproducible research are adequately planned for and, ultimately, reported.
  - If human data sets, human anatomical substances (blood, tumor tissue, etc.), and/or human participants will be used, provide evidence supporting the availability of and access to the proposed specimens/populations required for the study. Include a detailed plan for the acquisition of samples or the recruitment of participants, and for acquiring any additional research resources necessary for conducting the proposed research project.

    For projects that propose using human data sets and/or specimens from biobank(s), biorepository(s) and/or ongoing or completed clinical trial(s), and if the manager or lead investigator is not one of the named PIs or key personnel on the TSA application, applicants should provide letter(s) of collaboration (see Attachment 2) from the manager or lead investigator for the source that details the applicant's access to the data sets/specimens and confirms the manager/lead investigator's commitment to provide the data sets/specimens.
  - For all applications that propose clinical research, describe the strategy for the inclusion of women and minorities appropriate to the objectives of the study, including a description of the composition of the proposed study population in terms of sex, racial and ethnic group, and an accompanying rationale for the selection of specimens/subjects. Studies utilizing human biospecimens or datasets that cannot be linked to a specific individual, ethnicity or race (typically classified as exempt from Institutional Review Board [IRB] review) are exempt from this requirement. ***This award cannot be used to conduct clinical trials*.** See Attachment 2 for instructions regarding the Inclusion Enrollment Report that is required with all applications that propose clinical research.

- If the proposed research involves access to military and/or VA patient populations and/or DOW or VA resources or databases, describe the access at the time of submission and include a plan for maintaining access as needed throughout the proposed research. Also include a plan for obtaining any required data sharing, memorandum of understanding or other agreements required to access and publish data. Refer to the General Application Instructions, Appendix 4, for additional considerations.

- **Attachment 2: Supporting Documentation: Combine and upload as a single file named "Support.pdf".**

  There are no page limits for these components unless otherwise noted. Include only components described below; inclusion of items not requested or viewed as an extension of the Project Narrative will result in the removal of those items or may result in administrative withdrawal of the application.

  - **References Cited:** List the references cited in the Project Narrative using a standard reference format (include URLs, if available).
  - **List of Abbreviations, Acronyms and Symbols:** Provide a list of abbreviations, acronyms and symbols.
  - **Facilities, Existing Equipment and Other Resources:** Describe the facilities and equipment available for performance of the proposed project; include any additional facilities or equipment proposed for acquisition at no cost to the award. Indicate whether government-furnished facilities or equipment are proposed for use. If so, reference the original or present government award under which the facilities or equipment items are now accountable. There is not a standardized form for this information.
  - **Publications and/or Patents:** Include a list of relevant publication URLs and/or patent abstracts. If articles are not publicly available, then copies of up to five published manuscripts may be included in Attachment 2. Extra items will not be reviewed.
  - **Letters of Support (two-page limit per letter is recommended):** Provide individual letters signed by collaborating individuals and/or organizational officials demonstrating that the PIs have the support and resources necessary for the proposed work. Letters from the PI's Department Chair, or appropriate organization official, should also confirm that the PIs meet eligibility criteria. If applicable, provide a letter of support, signed by the lowest-ranking person with approval authority, confirming participation of intramural DOW collaborator(s) and/or access to military populations, databases or DOW resources. If applicable, provide a letter of support signed by the VA Facility Director(s), or an individual designated by the VA Facility Director(s), confirming access to VA patients, resources and/or VA research space.
  - **Sex as a Biological Variable (SABV) Strategy (two-page limit is recommended):** Describe the strategy for how sex will be considered as a biological variable. This strategy should include a brief discussion of what is currently known regarding sex differences in the applicable research area. Clearly articulate how sex as a biological variable will be factored into the data analysis plan and how data will be collected and disaggregated by sex. If needed, provide a strong rationale for proposing a single-sex study, based on justification from scientific literature, preliminary data or other relevant considerations. Refer to the CDMRP Directive on Sex as a Biological Variable in Research for additional information.

- **Research Sharing Plan:** Describe the type of data or research resources (e.g., bio-specimen, analysis tool/software, training material) to be made publicly available as a result of the proposed work. Describe the mechanism (e.g., direct sharing, repository, mixed mode) by which data and resources generated during the period of performance will be shared with the research community and other affected communities, including clinical research participants. Include the name of the repository(ies) where scientific data and resources arising from the proposed study will be archived, if applicable. Identify and provide the rationale for any data or resources that will not be shared (e.g. for intellectual property, feasibility, cost or other considerations). The plan should also protect participant privacy, confidential and proprietary data, and performer/third-party intellectual property. Provide a milestone plan for disseminating data/results including when data and resources will be made available to other users. In cases where the study participant could potentially derive medical or other benefit from the information, explain whether the results of screening and/or study participation will be shared with the participant or their primary care provider, including results from any screening or diagnostic tests performed as part of the study.

  Do not submit a copy of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Data Management and Sharing Plan or duplicate the Data Management Plan which will be requested only after a recommendation for funding is made.

  Refer to the CDMRP Directive on Sharing Data and Research Resources for more information about the CDMRP's expectations for making data and research resources publicly available.

- **Inclusion Enrollment Report *(only required if clinical research is proposed)*:** Provide an anticipated enrollment table(s) for the inclusion of women and minorities using the "Public Health Service (PHS) Inclusion Enrollment Report", a three-page fillable PDF form, that can be downloaded from eBRAP. The enrollment table(s) should be appropriate to the objectives of the study with the proposed enrollment distributed on the basis of sex, race and ethnicity. Studies utilizing human biospecimens or datasets that cannot be linked to a specific individual, ethnicity or race (typically classified as exempt from IRB review) are exempt from this requirement.

- **Attachment 3: Technical Abstract (one-page limit): Upload as "TechAbs.pdf".**

  Write the technical abstract using the outline below. Clarity and completeness within the space limits are highly important.

  - **Background:** Present the scientific rationale behind the proposed project. Describe the preliminary data.
  - **Hypothesis/Objective:** State the hypothesis to be tested or the objective to be reached.
  - **Specific Aims:** State the specific aims of the study.
  - **Study Design:** Describe the study design, including the model system(s) used and appropriate controls.
  - **Collaboration:** Summarize how the project depends on the unique skills and expertise of each partner. Describe how the proposed collaboration involves a

substantial contribution by each partner and the reciprocal flow of ideas and information.

- **Impact:** Summarize how the proposed project will advance the state of the science in melanoma research and/or patient care in at least one of the FY26 MRP Focus Areas.

- **Attachment 4: Lay Abstract (one-page limit): Upload as "LayAbs.pdf".**

  The lay abstract should address the points outlined below ***in a manner that is readily understood by readers without a background in science or medicine.*** Avoid overuse of scientific jargon, acronyms and abbreviations. ***Do not duplicate the technical abstract.***

  - State the FY26 MRP Focus Area(s) addressed by the research project.
  - Summarize the scientific rationale, objective and aims for the proposed project.
  - Summarize the applicability of the research to melanoma patients and/or survivors by considering the following points:
    - What populations will the proposed research help?
    - What are the potential applications, benefits, and risks?
    - How will the proposed research outcomes benefit Service Members, Veterans, their Families and the American public?
  - For applications submitted under the Consumer Collaboration Option, summarize the melanoma consumer collaboration plan, including the name(s) of the melanoma consumer(s) and/or melanoma community-serving organization(s) involved in the collaboration.

- **Attachment 5: Statement of Work (five-page limit): Upload as "SOW.pdf".** Refer to eBRAP for the Suggested SOW Format.

  For guidance on preparing the SOW, refer to the Example: Assembling a Generic Statement of Work. Include milestones for data or research resource(s) sharing.

  For applications submitted under the Consumer Collaboration Option, the SOW should contain tasks outlining the melanoma consumer collaborator's contributions to the proposed research's implementation, evaluation and results dissemination.

  Each PI must submit an identical copy of a jointly created SOW. The specific contributions of the Initiating PI and each Partnering PI should be clearly noted for each task.

- **Attachment 6: Impact Statement (one-page limit): Upload as "Impact.pdf".** ***Using language readily understood by readers without a background in science or medicine***, state how the proposed research uniquely addresses a critical problem in at least one of the FY26 MRP Focus Areas. The focus area(s) addressed here should be the same as what was described in the pre-proposal. Define a reasonable expectation for success for the proposed research and describe a practical vision for how the short- and long-term research outcome(s) and/or product(s) of the proposed research will expedite the advancement of promising ideas toward clinical utility and/or improve the current state of the science/technology in melanoma. Describe the relevance of the proposed research to the health and well-being of Service Members, Veterans, their Families and all people affected by melanoma. ***All research, including basic, should relate to patient outcomes and how it benefits those affected by melanoma.*** If

applicable, describe how the anticipated outcomes of the proposed study will make an impact in understanding health differences between sexes.

- **Attachment 7: Research Collaboration Plan (two-page limit): Upload as "CollabPlan.pdf".**
  - Describe the roles, responsibilities and intellectual contribution of each PI in the proposed research. Describe how the proposed collaboration involves a substantial contribution by each partner and the reciprocal flow of ideas and information. Include levels of effort by each PI.
    - Describe the role and responsibility of the early-career investigator in the overall research project (if applicable).
    - Describe the role and responsibility of the military or VA investigator in the overall research project (if applicable).
  - Explain how the research team has the appropriate expertise to assess the utility/applicability (short- and/or long-term) of the anticipated outcome(s) to the melanoma field and/or patient/survivorship care.
  - Describe the multidisciplinary aspects of the team, including how the project depends on the unique skills of each PI and their respective teams. Describe how the collaboration is synergistic (i.e., why the work must be done together rather than through separate efforts). Explain how the overall organization of the team supports the coordinated efforts.
  - Describe plans for communication, decision-making, allocation of resources, coordination of research progress and results, conflict resolution, and sharing intellectual and material property among all PIs and participating organizations.
  - Include a figure within the two-page limit illustrating the organization of the collaborative effort.
- **Attachment 8: Post-Award Transition Plan (two-page limit): Upload as "Transition.pdf".** PIs are encouraged to work with their organization(s)'s Technology Transfer Office (or equivalent) to develop the transition plan. The research team is also encouraged to explore developing relationships with industry and/or other funding agencies to facilitate moving the anticipated research outcome(s) and/or product(s) into the next phase of development. The post-award transition plan should include the following components:
  - Outline the project's anticipated research outcome(s) and/or product(s) (e.g., finding, methodology, intervention, device).
  - Describe the next logical steps to be taken ***by the research team*** upon successful completion of the project to advance the anticipated research outcome(s)/product(s), including outcomes resulting from basic research projects, to the next stage of development (e.g., next stage preclinical/clinical research, translational research, clinical trial). Include a description of collaborations and other resources that are in place or would be established during the period of performance to execute the next logical steps (e.g., clinical partners, commercial partners, manufacturing partners, clinical practice guideline development/execution committees, training providers/resources).
  - Describe/discuss the methods and strategies necessary for the research outcome/product to impact patient care and outcomes, even if those are long-term

goals; include a timeline with defined milestones. Include details of the funding strategy necessary to transition to the next level of investigation, development and/or commercialization. This may include commercial sponsorship, venture capital, federal or non-federal funding opportunities, etc. Discuss the opportunities available and potential barriers that would impact the progress of commercializing and/or translating the research outcome(s)/product(s) into public utility and/or clinical practice.

- If applicable, discuss ownership rights/access to the intellectual property necessary for the development and/or commercialization of products or technologies supported with this award, including a plan for resolving intellectual and material property issues among participating organizations. If the intellectual property rights are not owned by the performer(s), describe the planned next steps necessary to make the product available to the melanoma community.

- **Attachment 9: Melanoma Consumer Collaboration Plan: Combine multiple documents, including letters of collaboration, into one PDF and upload as "Consumer.pdf".** ***(Consumer Collaboration Option only.)***

  - **Melanoma Consumer Collaboration Statement (two-page limit is recommended):** For applications submitted under the Team Science Award – Consumer Collaboration Option the application should include a Melanoma Consumer Collaboration statement that provides the name(s) of the melanoma consumer community partner(s) and describes the following:

    - The collaborative research approach planned (collaborating with at least one melanoma consumer, partnering with a melanoma community-supporting organization, etc.), including a justification for the approach.
    - The input from the melanoma consumer community partner that has already been and/or will be captured and how this input has been and will be meaningfully integrated and incorporated into the needs assessment, planning, design, execution, analysis and results dissemination of the research.
    - Any plans for training provided to scientific researchers and/or melanoma consumers on collaborative research approaches, decision-making and equitable participation.
    - The evaluation measures that will be used to assess the effectiveness of the chosen collaborative research approach.

  - **Letter(s) of Melanoma Consumer Collaboration (two-page limit per letter is recommended):** Provide a letter signed by each melanoma consumer collaborator and/or melanoma consumer community-supporting organization confirming their role and commitment to participate on the research team throughout the period of performance. If engaging in a community-supporting organization, both the organization's point of contact leading the collaboration and the organization's leadership endorsing the collaboration should sign the letter of commitment. The letter should include the qualifications and background of the melanoma consumer collaborator(s) and describe the relevance of those qualifications to the proposed research.

- **Attachment 10: Representations** ***(Grants.gov submissions only)*****: Upload as "RequiredReps.pdf".** All extramural applicants must complete and submit the Required Representations document available on eBRAP.

- **Attachment 11: Suggested Intragovernmental/Intramural Budget Form *(if applicable)*: Upload as "IGBudget.pdf".** If an intramural DOW organization will be a collaborator in the performance of the project, complete a separate budget for that organization using the Suggested Intragovernmental/Intramural Budget form available on eBRAP.

(c) Additional Application Materials:

The following are additional forms for application submission. Follow the instructions specific to the submission portal, as found within the GAI.

Grants.gov	eBRAP.org

i. Research & Related Senior/Key Person Profile (Expanded)

- **Biographical Sketch**
- **Current/Pending Support**

  Intragovernmental applicants must include their internally supported research and development programs.

ii. Research & Related Budget

Initiating and Partnering PIs must have a separate budget and justification specific to their distinct portions of the effort that the applicant organization will submit as separate Grants.gov or eBRAP application packages. The Initiating PI should not include budget information for Partnering PI(s), or vice versa, even if they are located within the same organization. Refer to Section 3.4, Funding Details, for detailed budget information.

iii. Project/Performance Site Location(s)

iv. Research & Related Subaward Budget Attachment(s) *(if applicable, Grants.gov submissions only)*

4.3.2. Full Application Components for each Partnering PI

Refer to the equivalent attachment above for details specific to each of the following application components. See Appendix 1 for a checklist of the full application components required for each Partnering PI.

(a) SF424 Research & Related Application for Federal Assistance Form *(Grants.gov Submissions Only)*:

(b) Attachments:

- **Attachment 5: Statement of Work (five-page limit): Upload as "SOW.pdf".** Each PI must submit an identical copy of a jointly created SOW.
- **Attachment 10: Representations *(Grants.gov submissions only)*: Upload as "RequiredReps.pdf".**
- **Attachment 11: Suggested Intragovernmental/Intramural Budget Form: Upload as "IGBudget.pdf".**

(c) Additional Application Materials:

The following are additional application materials for application submission. Follow the instructions specific to the submission portal found within the GAI.

Grants.gov eBRAP.org

i. Research & Related Senior/Key Person Profile (Expanded)

- **Biographical Sketch**
- **Current/Pending Support**

  Intragovernmental applicants must include their internally supported research and development programs.

ii. Research & Related Budget

Initiating and Partnering PIs must have a separate budget and justification specific to their distinct portions of the effort that the applicant organization will submit as separate Grants.gov or eBRAP application packages. The Partnering PI(s) should not include budget information for the Initiating PI, or vice versa, even if they are located within the same organization. Refer to Section 3.4, Funding Details, for detailed budget information.

iii. Project/Performance Site Location(s) Form

iv. Research & Related Subaward Budget Attachment(s) Form *(if applicable, Grants.gov submissions only)*

4.4. Other Application Elements

If recommended for funding, a data management plan compliant with Section 3.c, Enclosure 3, DoD Instructions 3200.12 will be requested.

The government reserves the right to request a revised budget, budget justification and/or additional information for applications recommended for funding.

5. Submission Requirements

5.1. Location of Application Package

Download the application package components for HT942526MRPTSA from Grants.gov or eBRAP, depending on which submission portal will be used.

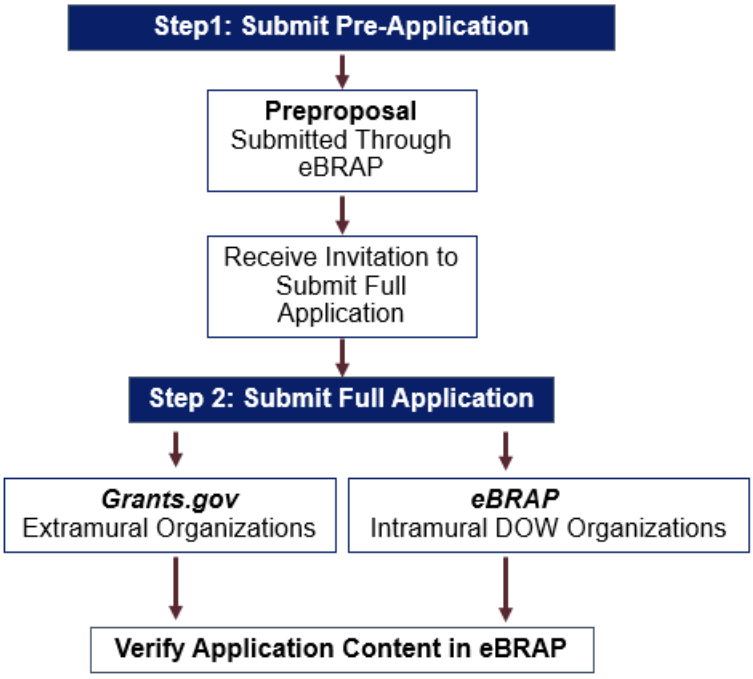
5.2. Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management

The applicant organization must be registered as an entity in the System for Award Management (SAM), SAM.gov, and receive confirmation of an "Active" status before submitting an application through Grants.gov. Organizations must include the unique entity identifier (UEI) generated by the SAM in applications to this funding opportunity and maintain an active registration in the SAM at all times during which it has an active Federal award or an application under consideration.

5.3. Submission Instructions

The CDMRP uses two portal systems to accept pre- and full application submissions. The workflow below shows which portal system to use for pre- and full application submissions, respectively.

Application Submission Workflow



5.3.1. Pre-Application Submission

All pre-application components must be submitted by the Initiating PI through eBRAP, including the submission of contact information for each Partnering PI.

During the pre-application process, eBRAP assigns each submission a unique log number. This unique log number is required during the full application submission process. The eBRAP log number, application title and all information for the PI, Business Official(s), performing organization and contracting organization must be consistent throughout the entire pre-application and full application submission process. Inconsistencies may delay application processing and limit or negate the ability to view, modify and verify the application in eBRAP. Contact the eBRAP Help Desk if any changes need to be made.

When starting the pre-application, Initiating PIs should select a Mechanism Option appropriate to their pre-application:

Application Includes:	Select Mechanism Option:
DOES NOT include a Melanoma Consumer Collaboration Plan	**Team Science Award**
DOES include a Melanoma Consumer Collaboration Plan	**Team Science Award – Consumer Collaboration Option**

NOTE: For applications including melanoma consumer collaborator(s), the Initiating PI should name those individuals during the pre-application submission. For administrative purposes, select "Consumer" when assigning the melanoma consumer collaborator(s) roles in eBRAP under "Collaborators and Key Personnel".

After the Initiating PI confirms submission of the pre-application, the Partnering PI(s) will be notified of the pre-application submission via an email from eBRAP. ***The Partnering PI(s) must follow the instructions provided in the email to associate the partnering pre-application with their eBRAP account.*** If not previously registered, the Partnering PI(s) must register in eBRAP.

Partnering PIs should not initiate a new pre-application based on the same research project submitted by the Initiating PI. Partnering PIs are urged to associate the partnering pre-application with their eBRAP account as soon as possible. If this is not completed by the full application deadline:

- Any intramural Partnering PI will not be able to submit their full application package components to eBRAP.
- The Partnering PI(s) will not be able to view and modify their full application during the verification period in eBRAP.

5.3.2. Full Application Submission

Grants.gov Submissions: Full applications from extramural organizations *must* be submitted through the Grants.gov Workspace.

eBRAP Submissions: Only intramural DOW organizations may submit full applications through eBRAP.

5.3.3. Applicant Verification of Full Application Submission in eBRAP

Independent of the submission portal, once the full application is submitted, it is transmitted to and processed in eBRAP; the transmission to eBRAP may take up to 48 hours. At this stage, the PI and organizational representatives will receive an email from eBRAP instructing them to log in to eBRAP to review, modify and verify the full application submission. ***The Project Narrative and Research & Related Budget Form cannot be changed after the application submission deadline.*** Other application components, including subaward budget(s) and subaward budget justification(s), may be changed until the application verification period ends. The full application cannot be modified once the application verification period ends.

5.4. Submission Dates and Times

The pre-application and full application submission process should be started early to avoid missing deadlines. Regardless of submission portal used, all pre- and full application components must be submitted by the deadlines stipulated in this program announcement. There are no grace periods for deadlines; failure to meet submission deadlines will result in application rejection. ***The DHACA cannot make allowances/exceptions for submission problems encountered by the applicant.***

Submission dates and times are specified in Section 1, Basic Information.

5.5. Intergovernmental Review

Not applicable for this funding opportunity.

6. Application Review Information

6.1. Application Compliance Review

Submitting applications that propose essentially the same research project to different funding opportunities within the same program and fiscal year is prohibited and will result in administrative withdrawal of the duplicative application(s).

While it is allowable to propose similar research projects to different programs within the CDMRP or to other organizations, duplication of funding or accepting funding from more than one source for the same research is prohibited. See the CDMRP's Directive on Research Duplication.

Including classified research data within the application and/or proposing research that may produce classified outcomes or outcomes deemed sensitive to national security concerns, may result in application withdrawal.

Members of the FY26 MRP Programmatic Panel must not be involved in any pre-application or full application including, but not limited to, concept design, application development, budget preparation and the development of any supporting documentation, including personal letters of support/recommendation for the research and/or PI. Programmatic panel members ***may*** provide letters to confirm PI eligibility and access to laboratory space, equipment and other resources necessary for the project if that is part of their regular roles and responsibilities (e.g., as Department Chair). ***A list of the FY26 MRP Programmatic Panel members can be found on the CDMRP website.***

Additional restrictions and associated administrative responses are outlined in Section 9.2, Administrative Actions.

6.2. Review Criteria

6.2.1. Pre-Application Screening Criteria

To determine the merits of the pre-application and the relevance to the mission of the MRP, pre-applications will be screened based on the following criteria:

- To what extent the hypothesis and/or objective and the stated specific aims are appropriate for the intent of a TSA and feasible to complete within the allowed budget and period of performance limits.
- How well the application addresses at least one of the FY26 MRP Focus Areas.
- To what extent the composition of the research team and collaboration will facilitate accelerating progress in melanoma in a way that could not be accomplished through independent efforts.
- ***For Applications to the Team Science Award – Consumer Collaboration Option,*** how well the plans to incorporate melanoma consumer collaborations into the planning, execution and dissemination of the proposed research are described.
- To what extent the proposed research, if successful, will answer a critical question or address an unmet need in melanoma to the benefit of Service Members, Veterans, their Families and the American public.

6.2.2. Peer Review Criteria

To determine technical merit, all applications will be evaluated individually according to the following **scored criteria**, which are of equal importance:

- **Research Strategy and Feasibility**
    - To what extent the scientific rationale supports the multidisciplinary project and its feasibility, as demonstrated by logical reasoning and a critical review and analysis of the literature.
    - Whether sufficient preliminary data are provided and to what extent the preliminary data supports the feasibility of the proposed study. *Preliminary data does not have to be derived from melanoma studies.*
    - To what extent the experimental design, methodology and analyses are described in sufficient detail and are designed to achieve reproducible and rigorous results to support successful completion of the specific aims.
    - How well the application acknowledges potential problems and pitfalls and presents alternative methods and/or approaches.
    - To what extent it is feasible to complete the proposed research within the allowed budget and period of performance limits.
    - To what extent the statistical plan is appropriate for the proposed research, and the application provides sufficient information to allow thorough evaluation of all statistical calculations. If applicable, whether the power analysis for the proposed study adequately represents an assessment of the population or subpopulation proposed.
    - If applicable, whether the use of the proposed cell lines is appropriately justified.
    - If applicable, to what extent the animal studies are designed to achieve the research objectives, to include the use of appropriate models.
    - If applicable, to what extent the application demonstrates the availability of human data sets, human anatomical substances and/or human participants, including a detailed plan for the acquisition of samples/resources and/or recruitment of human participants necessary for conducting the proposed research.
    - If applicable, whether the strategies for the inclusion of women and minorities are appropriate to the objectives of the clinical research study, including a description of the composition of the proposed study population in terms of sex, racial and ethnic group, and an accompanying rationale for the selection of participants. Whether a completed Inclusion Enrollment Report providing anticipated enrollment table(s) for the inclusion of women and minorities is included with the application.
    - Whether the strategy for considering sex as a biological variable is appropriate to the objectives of the study or whether the justification for a single sex study is sufficiently strong.
- **Personnel and Collaboration**
    - To what extent the roles, responsibilities and intellectual contribution of each PI in the proposed research are described and the proposed collaboration involves a substantial contribution by each PI.
    - Based on the biographical sketches, whether each PI and named key personnel have the research experience needed to complete the proposed research project.

- Whether the research team has the appropriate expertise to ensure that the anticipated outcomes of the proposed research will have utility/applicability to the melanoma field.
- To what extent the multidisciplinary aspects of the team are described and the extent to which it is clear why the work must be done together rather than through separate efforts.
- How well the plans for communication, decision-making, allocation of resources, coordination of research progress and results and sharing of data among all PIs and organizations participating in the project are coordinated.
- If applicable, whether appropriate statistical expertise is available to support the proposed research and analyses.
- If applicable, whether appropriate letter(s) of collaboration is (are) provided to confirm access to proposed use of human data sets and/or specimens.
- If applicable, to what extent an early-career investigator is integrated into the research team.
- If applicable, to what extent a military or VA investigator is integrated into the research team.

- **Impact**
  - To what extent the proposed research uniquely addresses a critical problem in at least one of the FY26 MRP Focus Areas.

  Assuming the objectives/aims of the proposed research are realized, to what degree:

  - A practical vision for how the short- and long-term outcome(s) and/or product(s) of the proposed research, including how the outcomes from this award will accelerate the development of promising ideas toward clinical applications and/or improve the current state of the science/technology in melanoma, is described.
  - The proposed research is relevant to the health and well-being of Service Members, Veterans, their Families and all people impacted by melanoma.
  - If applicable, to what extent the anticipated outcomes of the proposed study will make an impact in understanding health differences between sexes.
- **Post-Award Transition Plan**
  - To what extent the post-award transition plan outlines the project's anticipated research outcome(s) and/or product(s).
  - To what extent the plan describes the next logical steps to be taken by the research team to advance the anticipated research outcome(s)/product(s) to the next stage of development.
  - To what extent the plan describes collaborations and other resources that are in place or will be established during the period of performance to execute the proposed next logical steps.
  - To what extent the plan describes the methods and strategies necessary for the research outcome/product to impact patient care and outcomes and whether the plan provides a timeline with defined milestones.

- To what extent the plan describes the funding strategy necessary to transition the outcomes of the overall program to the next level(s) of investigation, development and/or commercialization.
- To what extent the plan discusses the opportunities available and potential barriers that would impact the progress of commercializing and/or translating the research outcome(s)/product(s) into clinical practice/public utility.
- If applicable, to what extent the applicant discusses ownership rights and/or access to the intellectual property necessary for the development and/or commercialization of products or technologies supported under this award.

- **Melanoma Consumer Collaboration Plan *(Melanoma Consumer Collaboration Option only)***

  For the purposes of the TSA Melanoma Consumer Collaboration, a ***"melanoma consumer" is defined as a melanoma survivor (active or post-treatment), family member and/or care partner who can provide lived experience expertise to the research team.***

  - How well a collaborative research approach with the melanoma consumer community is described.
  - Whether a melanoma patient advocate and/or a melanoma consumer community-supporting organization is named.
  - How well the application describes the input from the melanoma consumer community partner(s) that has already been and/or will be captured.
  - How well the application describes how the melanoma consumer community input has been and/or will be meaningfully integrated and incorporated into the needs assessment, planning, design, execution, analysis and dissemination of the research. Whether the SOW contains tasks outlining the collaborator's contributions.
  - Whether a letter (or letters) of support from the melanoma consumer community collaborator(s) is/are provided. If provided, to what extent the letter includes the qualifications and background of the rare melanoma consumer collaborator(s) and describes the relevance of those qualifications to the proposed research.
  - How well the application describes the process measures that will be used to assess the effectiveness of the chosen collaborative research approach.

In addition, the following criteria will also contribute to the overall evaluation of the application, but will not be individually scored and are therefore termed **unscored criteria**:

- **Research Sharing Plan**
  - To what extent the plan for sharing of project data and research resources is appropriate and reasonable and includes dissemination to affected communities, study participants and/or the scientific community. If applicable, whether specific repository(ies) are named where data and research resources arising from the project will be stored.
- **Budget**
  - Whether the budget is appropriate for the proposed research.
- **Environment**
  - To what extent the scientific environment and level of institutional support is appropriate for the proposed research project.

- How well the research requirements are supported by the availability of and accessibility to facilities and resources.

- **Application Presentation**
  - To what extent the writing, clarity and presentation of the application components influence the review.
  - Whether the lay abstract and impact statement are written with clarity for persons without a background in science or medicine.

6.2.3. Programmatic Review

To make funding recommendations and select the application(s) that, individually or collectively, will best achieve the program objectives, the following criteria are used by programmatic reviewers:

- Ratings and evaluations of peer reviewers
- Relevance to the priorities of the FY26 MRP, as evidenced by the following:
  - Adherence to the intent of the funding opportunity
  - Relative impact
  - Relative synergistic potential of the collaboration
  - Program portfolio balance
  - Relevance to military health

6.3. Application Review and Selection Process

6.3.1. Pre-Application

Following the pre-application screening, Initiating PIs will be notified as to whether they are invited to submit full applications. The estimated date when PIs can expect to receive notification of an invitation to submit a full application is indicated in Section 1, Basic Information About the Funding Opportunity. No feedback (e.g., a critique of the pre-application's strengths and weaknesses) is provided at this stage. Because the invitation to submit a full application is based on the contents of the pre-application, investigators should not change the title, selected Focus Area(s), or research objectives after the pre-application is submitted.

6.3.2. Full Application

All applications are evaluated by scientists, clinicians and consumers in a two-tier review process. The first tier is **peer review**, the evaluation of applications against established criteria to determine technical merit, where each application is assessed for its own merit, independent of other applications. The second tier is **programmatic review**, a comparison-based process in which applications with high scientific and technical merit are further evaluated for programmatic relevance. Final recommendations for funding are subject to review and approval by a designated official. ***The highest-scoring applications from the first tier of review are not automatically recommended for funding. Funding recommendations depend on various factors as described in Section 6.2.3, Programmatic Review.*** Additional information about the two-tier process used by the CDMRP can be found on the CDMRP website.

Funding of applications received is contingent upon the availability of federal funds for this program, the number of applications received, the quality and merit of the applications as evaluated by peer and programmatic review, and the requirements of the government. Funds to be obligated on any award resulting from this funding opportunity will be available for use for a limited time period based on the fiscal year of the funds.

6.4. Risk, Integrity and Performance Information

Prior to making an assistance agreement award where the federal share is expected to exceed the simplified acquisition threshold, as defined in the Code of Federal Regulations, Title 2, Part 200.1 (2 CFR 200.1), over the period of performance, the federal awarding agency is required to review and consider any information about the applicant that is available in the SAM.

An applicant organization may review the SAM and submit comments on any information currently available about the organization that a federal awarding agency previously entered. The federal awarding agency will consider any comments by the applicant, in addition to other information in the designated integrity and performance system, in making a judgment about the applicant's integrity, business ethics and record of performance under federal awards when determining a recipient's qualification prior to award, according to the qualification standards of the Department of Defense Grant and Agreement Regulations (DoDGARs), Section 22.415.

In accordance with National Security Presidential Memorandum-33 and all associated laws, all fundamental research funded by the DOW must be evaluated for affiliations with foreign entities. All applicant organizations must disclose foreign affiliations of all key personnel named on applications. Failure to disclose foreign affiliations of key personnel shall lead to withdrawal of recommendations to fund applications. Applicant organizations may be presented with an opportunity to mitigate identified risks, particularly those pertaining to influence from foreign entities specified in law. Implementation of mitigation discussions and utilization of the DOD Component Decision Matrix must decrease risk of foreign influence in accordance with the above-mentioned laws and guidance prior to award.

7. Federal Award Notices

For each compliant full application received, the organizational representative(s) and PI will receive email notification when the funding recommendations are posted to eBRAP, typically within 6 weeks after programmatic review. At this time, each PI will receive a peer review summary statement on the strengths and weaknesses of the application and an information paper describing the application receipt and review process for the MRP award mechanisms. The information papers and a list of organizations and PIs recommended for funding are also posted on the program's page within the CDMRP website. After all awards are made, the CDMRP includes individual award information in a searchable database.

If an application is recommended for funding, after the email notification is posted to eBRAP, a government representative will contact the person authorized to negotiate on behalf of the recipient organization.

Only an appointed DHACA Grants Officer may obligate the government to the expenditure of funds to an extramural organization. No commitment on the part of the government should be inferred from discussions with any other individual. ***The award document signed by the Grants Officer is the official authorizing document (i.e., assistance agreement).***

Intragovernmental obligations of funding will be made according to the terms of a negotiated Inter-Agency Agreement and managed by a CDMRP Science Officer.

Funding obligated to ***intragovernmental and intramural DOW organizations*** will be sent through the Military Interdepartmental Purchase Request (MIPR), Funding Authorization Document (FAD) or Direct Charge Work Breakdown Structure processes. Transfer of funds is contingent upon appropriate safety and administrative approvals. Intragovernmental and intramural DOW investigators and collaborators must coordinate receipt and commitment of funds through their respective Resource Manager/Task Area Manager/Comptroller or equivalent Business Official.

An organization may, at its own risk and without the government's prior approval, incur obligations and expenditures to cover costs up to 90 days before the beginning date of the initial budget period of a new award.

8. Post-Award Requirements

8.1. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Applicable requirements in the DoDGARs found in 32 CFR, Chapter I, Subchapter C, and 2 CFR, Chapter XI, apply to grants and cooperative agreements resulting from this program announcement.

The GAI contain information regarding administrative requirements and national policy requirements.

Refer to full text of the latest DoD R&D Terms and Conditions and the DHACA Terms and Conditions for further information.

If there are delinquencies in technical reporting requirements for any existing Defense Health Agency (DHA) or U.S. Army Medical Research and Development Command awards at the applicant organization, DHACA will not issue any new awards to the applicant organization until all delinquent reports have been submitted.

Applications recommended for funding that involve animals, human data, human specimens, human subjects or human cadavers must be reviewed for compliance with federal animal and/or human subjects protection requirements and must be approved by the DHA R&D Office of Research and Regulatory Compliance (ORRC), prior to implementation. This administrative review requirement is in addition to the local Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC), IRB or Ethics Committee (EC) review.

8.2. Reporting

Annual technical progress reports as well as a final technical progress report will be required. Annual and final technical progress reports must be prepared in accordance with the Research Performance Progress Report (RPPR).

The Award Terms and Conditions will specify whether additional and/or more frequent reporting is required.

Award Expiration Transition Plan: An Award Expiration Transition Plan, using the template available on eBRAP, must be submitted with the final progress report.

PHS Inclusion Enrollment Reporting ***(Required for projects involving clinical research)***: Enrollment reporting on the basis of sex, race and/or ethnicity will be required with each annual and final progress report. The PHS Inclusion Enrollment Report is available on eBRAP.

Awards resulting from this program announcement may entail additional reporting requirements related to recipient integrity and performance matters. Recipient organizations that have federal contract, grant and cooperative agreement awards with a cumulative total value greater than $10M are required to provide information to the SAM about certain civil, criminal and administrative proceedings that reached final disposition within the most recent 5-year period and that were connected with their performance of a federal award. These recipients are required to disclose, semiannually, information about criminal, civil and administrative proceedings as specified in the applicable Representations.

8.3. Additional Requirements

Changes in Initiating or Partnering PI(s) are discouraged and will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

The organizational transfer of an award supporting the Initiating PI or a Partnering PI will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

An organizational transfer of an award will not be allowed in the last year of the original period of performance or any extension thereof.

9. Other Information

9.1. Program Announcement Version

Questions related to this program announcement should refer to the program name, the program announcement name and the program announcement version code CD26_01d.

9.2. Administrative Actions

After receipt of pre-applications or full applications, the following administrative actions may occur.

9.2.1. Rejection

The following will result in administrative rejection of the pre-application:

- Preproposal Narrative is missing.

The following will result in administrative rejection of the full application:

- The Project Narrative is missing.
- The Budget is missing.
- Submission of an application for which a letter of invitation was not issued.

9.2.2. Modification

- Pages exceeding the specified limits will be removed prior to reviewing all documents.
- Documents not requested will be removed.

9.2.3. Withdrawal

The following may result in administrative withdrawal of the full application:

- A member of the FY26 MRP Programmatic Panel is named as being involved in the development or execution of the research proposed or is found to have assisted in the pre-application or application processes.
- The application includes the name(s) of personnel from either of the CDMRP peer or programmatic review companies for which conflicts cannot be adequately mitigated. For FY26, the identities of the peer review contractor and the programmatic review contractor may be found on the CDMRP website.
- Personnel from applicant or collaborating organizations are found to have contacted persons involved in the review or approval process to gain protected evaluation information or to influence the evaluation process.
- The application from an extramural organization, including non-DOW federal agencies, is received through eBRAP.
- The federal government recipient organization (including an intramural DOW organization): (a) cannot accept and execute the entirety of the requested budget in FY26 funds; and/or

(b) cannot coordinate the use of contractual, assistance or other appropriate agreements to provide funds to collaborators.

- The application fails to conform to this program announcement description.
- The application includes URLs, with the exception of links in the References Cited and Publication and/or Patent sections.
- The application includes research data that are classified and/or proposes research that may produce classified outcomes, or outcomes deemed sensitive to national security concerns.
- The invited application proposes a different research project than that described in the pre-application.
- The same research project is submitted to different funding opportunities within the same program and fiscal year.
- An investigator may only be named as a PI on a single FY26 MRP full application. If an investigator is named as a PI, Initiating PI or Partnering PI on multiple full application submissions, only the first application received for the PI will be accepted; additional full applications may be administratively withdrawn.
- Failure to submit all associated (Initiating and Partnering PI) applications by the deadline.
- The application does not address at least one of the FY26 MRP Focus Areas.
- Preliminary data are not included.
- The Initiating PI or Partnering PI(s) do not meet the eligibility criteria.
- A clinical trial is proposed.
- The main subject of the research is non-melanoma skin cancers.

9.2.4. Withhold

Applications that appear to involve research misconduct will be administratively withheld from further consideration pending organizational investigation. The organization will be required to provide the findings of the investigation to the DHACA Grants Officer for a determination of the final disposition of the application.

Appendix 1. Full Application Submission Checklist

Full Application Components	Uploaded	
	Initiating PI	Partnering PI
SF424 Research & Related Application for Federal Assistance *(Grants.gov submissions only)*	☐	☐
Summary (Tab 1) and Application Contacts (Tab 2) *(eBRAP submissions only)*	☐	☐
Attachments		
Project Narrative – Attachment 1, upload as "ProjectNarrative.pdf"	☐	
Supporting Documentation – Attachment 2, upload as "Support.pdf"	☐	
Technical Abstract – Attachment 3, upload as "TechAbs.pdf"	☐	
Lay Abstract – Attachment 4, upload as "LayAbs.pdf"	☐	
Statement of Work –Attachment 5, upload as "SOW.pdf"	☐	☐
Impact Statement – Attachment 6, upload as "Impact.pdf"	☐	
Collaboration Plan – Attachment 7, upload as "CollabPlan.pdf"	☐	
Post-Award Transition Plan – Attachment 8, upload as "Transition.pdf"	☐	
Melanoma Consumer Collaboration Plan *(if applicable)* – Attachment 9, upload as "Consumer.pdf"	☐	
Representations *(Grants.gov submissions only)* – Attachment 10, upload as "RequiredReps.pdf"	☐	☐
Suggested Intragovernmental/Intramural Budget Form *(if applicable)* – Attachment 11, upload as "IGBudget.pdf"	☐	☐
Additional Application Materials		
Research & Related Senior/Key Person Profile (Expanded)	☐	☐
Attach Biographical Sketch for Senior/Key Persons (Biosketch_LastName.pdf)	☐	☐
Attach Current/Pending Support for Senior/Key Persons (Support_LastName.pdf)	☐	☐
Research & Related Budget	☐	☐
Project/Performance Site Location(s)	☐	☐
Research & Related Subaward Budget Attachment(s) (*if applicable*)	☐	☐

Appendix 2. Acronym List

AACR	American Association for Cancer Research
ARRIVE	Animal Research: Reporting *In Vivo* Experiments
CAF	Cancer-Associated Fibroblast
CDMRP	Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
DHA	Defense Health Agency
DHA R&D	Defense Health Agency Research and Development
DHA R&D-MRDC	Defense Health Agency Research and Development Medical Research and Development Command
DHACA	Defense Health Agency Contracting Activity
DOD	U.S. Department of Defense
DoDGARs	Department of Defense Grant and Agreement Regulations
DOW	U.S. Department of War
eBRAP	Electronic Biomedical Research Application Portal
EC	Ethics Committee
ET	Eastern Time
FAD	Funding Authorization Document
FY	Fiscal Year
IACUC	Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee
IRB	Institutional Review Board
M	Million
MRP	Melanoma Research Program
MIPR	Military Interdepartmental Purchase Request
MVP	Million Veteran Program
NCI	National Cancer Institute
NIH	National Institutes of Health *i*
ORRC	Office of Research and Regulatory Compliance
PDC	Patient-Derived Tumor Cell Culture
PDF	Portable Document Format
PDM	Patient-Derived Model
PDMR	Patient-Derived Models Repository
PDX	Patient-Derived Xenograft
PHS	Public Health Service
PI	Principal Investigator
R&D	Research and Development

RPPR	Research Performance Progress Report
SABV	Sex as a Biological Variable
SAM	System for Award Management
SF424 R&R	Standard Form 424 (Application for Federal Assistance, Research & Related)
SOW	Statement of Work
SPORE	Specialized Programs of Research Excellence
TSA	Team Science Award
UEI	Unique Entity Identifier
URL	Uniform Resource Locator
USC	United States Code
VA	U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
VA SHIELD	VA Science and Health Initiative to Combat Infectious and Emerging Life-Threatening Diseases