Research Grant Guidelines

2026

LOI Deadline: June 1, 2026

Application Deadline: September 1, 2026

Funding Available: January 1, 2026

For any questions throughout the application or award process, please contact Matt Kopkin, Grants Administrator, at grants@cannonballkidscancer.org.

To learn more about us, visit https://cannonballkidscancer.org/.

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Overview

Mission

Cannonball Kids' cancer (CKc) Foundation's mission is to fund innovative, accessible research for children fighting cancer to provide better treatments and quality of life, and to educate for change. Our vision is to create cures for all childhood cancers.

About CKc

Cannonball Kids' cancer Foundation was founded in 2014 by Michael and Melissa Wiggins, parents of Cannon Wiggins, who was diagnosed with Stage IV high-risk neuroblastoma when he was just 20 months old. During Cannon's treatment, they learned that very little time, effort and funding is devoted to finding cures for children's cancer compared to adult cancers, and as a result, children are unnecessarily and unjustly lost. CKc aims to stop the tragic reality of children suffering and dying because of the lack of research in the world of children's cancer treatments. CKc believes "Research is the Key" that will unlock a cure, and the foundation has now awarded $5.4 million in research grants, providing an option for over 1,000 children who were told they had "no more options". Most of those studies are first-of-their-kind and are dispersed throughout 35 U.S. states, D.C., Puerto Rico, Canada, Scotland and Switzerland.

Grant Programs

CKc offers two types of research grants: Clinical Trial and Young Investigator. The maximum award amounts and durations for the 2026 cycle are as follows:

- Clinical Trial: $200,000 over 3 years
- Young Investigator: $100,000 over 3 years

2026 Funding Priorities

For the 2026 Grants Cycle, CKc will prioritize funding clinical trials and research that is nearing translation to a clinical trial. Grants funded by CKc must be innovative and provide better quality of life or symptom relief than current treatments.

For CKc, "innovation" means the invention or application of novel methods or treatments, specifically treatments that have fewer side-effects than standard care, increase a child's quality of life, and/or create an option for care where there otherwise were few or none (either on primary diagnosis, relapse, or for recalcitrant cancers).

Whenever possible, CKc will prioritize funding **research** with a focus on:

- cancers that are under-funded or under-researched.
- with a focus on patient populations who are traditionally underserved.

Application & Review Process

Application Schedule

A Letter of Intent (LOI) must be submitted and approved by the SAB to access the application. LOI's and Applications are to be submitted online via ProposalCentral.

June 1, 2026	LOI's Due
September 1, 2026	Applications Due
December 15, 2026	Award Notifications
January 1, 2027	Grant Period Begins; Funding Available

Who Can Apply?

Eligibility Criteria

- Applicants are limited to one Letter of Intent (LOI) per Principal Investigator (PI)
- PI must be employed by an academic or non-profit research institution or laboratory
- PI must be affiliated with a clinical department that supports the proposed research
- PI must have a medical doctoral degree: MD, DO, MD/PhD, or equivalent
- PI must demonstrate the potential to successfully conduct and complete the proposed clinical study and/or research
- The institution must have the infrastructure and resources necessary to support the proposed clinical study and/or research

Evaluation Criteria

- Significance - Does the project address an important problem or a critical barrier to progress?
- PI Qualifications – Are the PI, collaborators, and other researchers well suited to the project?
- Innovation - Does the proposal challenge and seek to shift current paradigms?
- Approach - Is the overall strategy appropriate to accomplish the specific aims of the project?
- Environment - Will the environment where the work will be done aid in the probability of success?
- Non-scored Criteria –
    - Does the project include efforts to address issues of access to treatments?
    - Does the project incorporate collaborative efforts with other institutions?
    - Does the project incorporate efforts to support data-sharing?

See below for additional program specific eligibility and evaluation criteria in the Research Grants section.

Research Grants

Grant Program	Clinical Trial	Young Investigator
Award Amount & Duration	$200,000 over 3 years	$100,000 over 3 years
Program Specific Eligibility Criteria	• PI must hold an academic appointment at the Assistant Professor level or higher • Preclinical studies must be complete • If an FDA Investigational New Drug (IND) application is necessary for the proposed clinical study, the IND application should already have passed FDA initial review and be active • If the PI has recruited additional patient enrollment sites, local IRB approval must be obtained for each site.	• PI must hold an academic appointment at the instructor level or higher • PI must be within 5 years of completing a training fellowship in Pediatric Hematology/Oncology or a closely related discipline that has direct clinical contact with pediatric cancer patients • Research must be within 2-3 years to translation to a clinical trial or already associated with a clinical trial
Program Specific Evaluation Criteria	• How many treatment options would this study provide for children? • How accessible is this study for children and families to access?	• Evidence of Mentor's commitment to the PI's career development plan • Translational potential

Budget

Budget proposals, up to the award limits noted above will be considered, with the expectation that funds will be expended over the duration noted for each grant program. Funds are disbursed in equal installments, with Year 2 and 3 (if applicable) funding contingent upon adequate progress demonstrated in the annual report to CKc. Pro-rated per-encounter costs for investigator fees, nurse practitioner support, data managers, clinical coordinators, etc. are allowed.

Grant funding may vary depending upon the proposed budget, and some studies may be partially funded with agreement of the Principal Investigator. All grant awards will be disbursed to the Principal Investigator's institution to administer for costs related only to the studies proposed in the awarded application.

Multi-site studies will be considered, but funds will be disbursed only to the primary performance site, which is expected to be the Principal Investigator's institution. Payments to secondary sites should be made through subcontract arrangements.

Restrictions

CKc grant funds may not be used for:

- Trainee support;
- Travel;
- Indirect costs or institutional overhead;
- Direct support of consortium costs or cooperative group infrastructure;
- Research that involves the use of human embryonic or fetal tissue.

Co-Funding of Proposals

The CKc Foundation is open to projects that require multiple funding sources to complete. However, the budget justification must make it clear that no budgetary overlap exists between the CKc funds and other funding sources. The grant/contract budgets for other funding sources may be required as documentation, to be provided to CKc in the post-award period.

Application Attachment Requirements

All documents uploaded to the application must be in pdf format and follow National Institutes of Health (NIH) format guidelines for font and margins (Arial, Georgia, Helvetica, Linotype, or Palatino fonts; minimum font size 11 point; minimum one-half inch margins)
All biosketches should follow the NIH format with a 5-page maximum length.

Review Process

LOI Phase

CKc accepts letters of intent annually, according to published deadlines. CKc's staff and Scientific Advisory Board (SAB), a panel of scientific and medical experts, will review LOI's according to the evaluation criteria above to identify the proposals that best fit CKc's mission and funding priorities. Those proposals will then be invited to submit an application. CKc staff and SAB will only invite select candidates to submit applications in consideration of the amount of funds being awarded in the current grant cycle and in order to ensure SAB members are able to fully review all applications.

Application Phase

CKc's Scientific Advisory Board (SAB), a panel of scientific and medical experts, will review applications according to the evaluation criteria above and score applications using the NIH scoring system (1 = exceptional; 9 = poor). The application scores, commentary, and funding recommendations will be forwarded to the CKc Board for review and final funding decisions. CKc provides an anonymized summary of reviewer critiques to applicants.

Post-Award Requirements & Policies

Reporting

Annual progress reports are required through the completion of the funded project to include updates on overall progress of the study, detailed accounting of expenditures, continued justification of the need for any remaining funds, and listing of work product derived from the grant support (including oral presentation, poster presentation, and journal manuscripts and publications). A full report containing the above items for all budget periods is required at the completion of the grant project. Follow-up reporting will be requested five years and ten years after the grant is awarded.

Annual progress reports are considered delinquent if not submitted 30 days after their due date. PI's with delinquent reports have a further 30 days (60 days total after due date) to submit annual reports or risk cancellation of their grant.

Cancellation

CKc reserves the right to terminate any award if it determines that there has been inadequate research progress or a failure to adhere to the original proposal submitted with the application or if the PI fails to submit annual progress reports as described above.

Continued Funding

These are one-time awards, and renewals are not guaranteed. For continued funding, applicants are required to submit a new LOI that will be considered with all other proposals in the grant cycle.

No Cost Extension (NCE)

No Cost Extensions can be requested for 6 months or 1 year at a time. PI's must submit a written request for a no-cost extension to grants@cannonballkidscancer.org. Requests should be submitted no less than 30 days prior to the project end date. NCE requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Requests should include the amount of funds remaining, a brief report on progress, an explanation of why the extension is necessary, and the length of time requested.

Transfer of Institution

Requests for transfers by a grantee to another institution can be requested while the research grant is in effect. Requests should be submitted no less than 30 days prior to the project end date. Transfer requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Requests should include the amount of funds remaining, a brief report on progress, an explanation of how this transfer will impact the grant and the PI.

Carryover

Minor carry-over of funds (25% or less) is permitted each year with justification. CKc may elect to hold new funds if carry-over is excessive unless an approved No Cost Extension is on file. The Grantee shall return any unexpended funds to CKc:

- At the end of the grant period.
- If the PI terminates his/her relationship with the grantee organization without an approved transfer request.
- If CKc cancels the award.

Animal/Human Subjects

All research involving human subjects and human tissue must comply with current federal regulations and must be approved by an Institutional Review Board (IRB). Prior to disbursement of funds, the applicant must submit the Institution's Human Subjects Assurance Number and the IRB's approval letter.

All research involving vertebrate animals must comply with current federal regulations and must be approved by an Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC). Prior to disbursement of funds, the applicant must submit the IUCAC's approval letter.

Data Sharing

CKc believes strongly that data and resources should be shared with the scientific community whenever possible and PI's are encouraged to share those resources developed from any CKc-funded project.

Acknowledgement

The PI must acknowledge the support of Cannonball Kids' cancer Foundation when presenting data from any CKc-funded project, including oral presentation, poster presentation, and journal manuscripts and publications. Grantees should use the CKc logo on all scientific posters, Power Point presentations, and any other visual presentation about your funded work where CKc is noted as a funding source. The logo can be found here: Brand Kit.

Letter of Intent (LOI) Contents

- Title Page
  - Title
  - Requested Amount ($200K max. for Clinical Trial; $100K max. for Young Investigator)
  - Duration (years)
- Basic Information
  - Principal Investigator (PI) information
  - Institution & Contact information
- Abstract
  - Brief Lay Summary (1000 characters)
  - Technical Abstract (1000 characters)
  - **[Young Investigator ONLY]**
    - Is your proposed research 2-3 years to translation to a clinical trial? (Y/N)
    - Explain the estimated time it will take for your research to be translated. (1000 char.)
- Proposal Concept and Biosketch (Attachments)
  - Biosketch for PI
  - Proposal Concept (1 page)
    - Include the following:
      - Background
      - Hypothesis
      - Aims
      - Research Plan Overview
      - Feasibility
      - Impact

Application Contents

- Title Page
  - Title
  - Requested Amount ($200K max. for Clinical Trial; $100K max. for Young Investigator)
  - Duration (years)
- Basic Information
  - Principal Investigator (PI) information
  - Institution, Key Personnel & Contact information
- Abstract
  - **[Young Investigator ONLY]**
    - Explain the estimated time it will take for your research to be translated. (1500 char.)
    - What steps will be necessary for your research to be translated to a clinical trial and any anticipated challenges. (2000 char.)
  - Brief Lay Summary (3000 characters)
  - Technical Abstract (3000 characters)
  - Keywords
  - Specific Aims
- Budget
  - Budget
  - Budget Justification (3000 characters)
- Publications & Other Support
  - Your Recent Publications
  - Current & Pending Support
- Organization Assurances
  - Human Subjects
  - Does the proposed project involve Vertebrate Animals? (Y/N)
  - If Yes, status of IACUC approval (if applicable, attach IACUC Approval Letter)
  - Does the proposed project require IND? (Y/N; if yes, attach IND)
  - Does this project involve stem cells? (Y/N)
- Attachments

  NOTE: multiple letters can be bundled and uploaded together
  - Biosketch for PI
  - Biosketch for each co-investigator, collaborator, and consultant
  - **[Young Investigator ONLY]** Biosketch for mentor(s)
  - **[Young Investigator ONLY]** Mentor Letter(s) of Support
  - Research Plan (8 pages max.; see below for more details)
  - Institutional Letter(s) of Support (Dept. Chair, Division or Center/Institute Director)
  - Other Letter(s) of Support (each co-investigator, collaborator, and consultant)

- **[Clinical Trial ONLY]** Current full-text version of the Clinical Trial Protocol
- IRB approval letter
- IACUC approval letter, if warranted
- IND approval, if warranted

- Research Plan Components (8 pages max.) NOTE: include a reference page for any cited figures
  - Background:
    - Include published data or original preliminary/preclinical data and the rationale for the study. For competitive renewal applications, include clear evidence of the progress to date with the preliminary data.
  - **[Clinical Trial only]**
    - Experimental Design:
      - Describe or detail the target study population, treatment arms and detailed treatment plan, number of patients needed to enroll on each arm, duration of therapy, study objectives and how they will be assessed, correlative biological studies and their significance, statistical analysis plan including power analysis if warranted.
    - Institutional Infrastructure and Support **(maximum 1 page of the 8-page Research Plan)**:
      - Briefly describe the medical and scientific environment, track record and infrastructure for pediatric clinical trials (include information regarding early-phase trials), detailed accrual plan for the clinical trial, and plans for additional sites and collaborators.
  - **[Young Investigator only]**
    - Experimental Design:
      - Describe or detail the specific aims of the study, specific hypotheses to be tested, mechanistic experiments designed to test relevant hypotheses, relevant specialized methods, expected results, planned analyses and statistical methods.
    - Institutional Infrastructure and Support **(maximum 1 page of the 8-page Research Plan)**:
      - Briefly describe the medical and scientific environment, track record and infrastructure for research.
    - Career Development Plan **(maximum 1 page)**:
      - Include in this section a statement of the goals, metrics, and milestones for successful career development across a 3-year timeline, as well as specific contributions from the applicant's Mentor and other key personnel.
  - Future Directions **(maximum one-half page)**:
    - Include in this section a statement of the goals, metrics, and milestones for future scientific investigation.