Wilmot Cancer Institute

Wilmot Early-Stage Clinical Investigator Program
Request for Applications 2024

Program Overview

The Wilmot Early-Stage Clinical Investigator (ESCI) Program aims to prepare early-stage physician-scientists at Wilmot to pursue a career involving leadership of investigator-initiated therapeutic clinical trials where the primary endpoint is a cancer outcome. Emphasis is on building institutional expertise and capacity to translate Wilmot science into therapeutic clinical trials. Successful ESCI awardees will go on to receive training and career development awards, lead clinical trials as principal investigators or co-investigators, or serve as members and leaders of local clinical trial committees and groups, such as the Protocol Review and Monitoring Committee, the Data and Safety Monitoring Committee, Disease Working Groups, and Translational Research Groups. ESCI participants are supported for one year and must dedicate at least 20% effort to the program. The program does not support clinical effort.

Important Dates

RFA release date: July 10, 2024
Application due date: August 28, 2024
Anticipated start date: October 1, 2024

Eligibility

Applicants must be physicians with MD, MD/PhD, or equivalent degrees who have completed residency training. At the time of appointment to the program, the candidate must have a faculty appointment at the University of Rochester at the rank of assistant professor or senior instructor. Previous research experience is desirable but not required. Current and former Wilmot Physician-Scientist fellows are not eligible. Applicants may not have served as principal investigator for extramural career development or research grants, such as the following:

- NIH individual career development awards or any other equivalent peer-reviewed career development award
- NIH independent research grants (such as R01s, R03s, or R21s) or other equivalent peer-reviewed research grants
- Subprojects of NIH program projects or center grants (P01s or P50s)

ESCI awardees may not have concurrent support from NIH K or T awards.

Budget

Wilmot will contribute salary support at a level of 20% up to the NIH cap. If necessary, the awardee's department must provide additional support to ensure that 20% effort is dedicated to the program. The department may elect to support additional protected time. Wilmot will also provide $10,000 to support career development expenses, such as equipment, memberships, travel to and attendance at scientific conferences, textbooks, journal subscriptions, etc.

Application Process

Prospective applicants are encouraged to meet with one of the two ESCI program directors, Paul Barr, MD, or Karen Mustian, PhD, to identify one or two Wilmot faculty mentors who will guide career development and facilitate experiential training. Whether one or two mentors, experience as an active clinical trialist, such as an active investigator for an ongoing National Clinical Trials Network (NCTN) or NCI Community Oncology Research Program (NCORP) clinical study, is required. The mentor (or one of the mentors in the case of an applicant with two mentors) must be a Wilmot member.

Applicants must submit applications via the online tool at this link.

Download detailed application instructions and additional information for applicants by clicking here.
Applications will include the components listed below.

- Abstract (up to 30 lines)
- Career Development Plan (up to 3 pages)

- Summary of a proposed clinical trial, to be developed during the program period (1 page)
- Bibliography and References Cited (no limit)
- Mentor statement(s) (1 statement per mentor; up to 2 pages each)
- Applicant biosketch (NIH format)
- Mentor biosketches (NIH format)
- Letter of support from the applicant's department chair or division chief (2 pages)

Application Review Information

A panel of Wilmot cancer research scientists will review applications using the criteria listed below. The Wilmot Executive Committee will review the panel's recommendations. The Wilmot Director will make final award decisions.

Application Review Criteria

- Candidate
  - Does the candidate have the potential to develop as an independent and productive clinical trial leader?
  - Is the candidate's academic, clinical, and research record of high quality?
  - Is there evidence of the candidate's commitment to pursue a career in clinical trials leadership?
- Career Development Plan/Career Goals and Objectives
  - What is the likelihood that the plan will contribute substantially to the scientific development of the candidate and lead to a career in clinical trials leadership?
  - Are the content, scope, phasing, and duration of the career development plan appropriate when considered in the context of prior training, research experience, and the stated career development objectives?
  - Are there adequate plans for monitoring and evaluating the candidate's career development progress?
- Proposed Clinical Trial
  - Is the research plan relevant to the candidate's research career objectives?
  - Is the research plan feasible with available resources?
- Mentors
  - Are the qualifications of the mentor(s) appropriate?
  - Does the mentoring team have the expertise, experience, and ability to guide the applicant in the proposed career development plan?
  - Do the mentors adequately address the candidate's potential, strengths, and areas needing improvement?
  - Is there an adequate description of the quality and extent of each mentor's proposed role in providing guidance and advice to the candidate?
  - Is there evidence of mentors' previous experience fostering career development?
  - Is there evidence of mentors' active participation in clinical research?

Award Information

- Wilmot anticipates selecting one awardee per year for this program.
- The term of the award is one year, beginning December 1, 2024.
- Awardees are required to commit at least 20% effort to the program.
- At the time of award notification, the candidate and all mentors must provide current and pending other support information in the standard NIH format.
- Awardees are required to respond to *ad hoc* requests for progress updates. A final progress report is required at the end of the award period, covering all aspects of career development progress.

- All publications, posters, and presentations related to the ESCI program must acknowledge the support of the Wilmot Cancer Institute and if appropriate, Wilmot shared resources, using language similar to the following: "The work described in this [publication | presentation | poster] was supported [in part] by the Wilmot Cancer Institute and the University of Rochester Wilmot Cancer Institute Support Grant (P30CA272302), and benefited from the support of the Wilmot [Biobank | Biostatistics and Bioinformatics | Cytometry | Genomics | Human Biophysiology | Imaging and Radiation] Shared Resource[s]."
- Award funds must be expended during the one-year award period. No carry-forward is allowed.
- The timing of the award is dependent upon receipt of the University of Rochester Cancer Institute Support Grant. Wilmot Administration will work with the chosen awardee and their department administration to manage the award timeline.

Contacts for Additional Information

- For questions regarding the application process or program administration, contact Nicole O'Dell, PhD, program administrator.
- To discuss potential mentors, contact one of the ESCI program directors, Paul Barr, MD, or Karen Mustian, PhD, MPH.
- For questions on scientific matters or member rosters, contact:
    - Paula Vertino, PhD, Associate Director for Basic and Translational Science, or
    - Karen Mustian, PhD, MPH, Associate Director for Population Science