Medical Research Fund
2025-26 Funding Opportunity

Overview

The Hawaiʻi Community Foundation's (HCF) [Medical Research program](#) makes annual grants to support basic and clinical research conducted in Hawaiʻi. The overall goal is to support a robust local medical research community that benefits the people of Hawaiʻi. Award recommendations are made by the Medical Research Advisory Committee (MRAC).

The Medical Research program is supported by several funders, including the George F. Straub Trust, the Victoria S. and Bradley L. Geist Foundation, the Leahi Fund, and multiple funds at HCF.

The program's areas of focus are:
- Clinical/basic research – Alzheimer's disease, mental or physical diseases related to old age.
- Clinical/basic research – cancer, heart disease, or lung disease.
- Clinical/basic research – general.
- Clinical/basic research – immunology, genetics, or the medicinal uses of Hawaiian plants.
- Clinical/basic research – prevent blindness, with particular emphasis on macular degeneration.
- Clinical/basic research – type I diabetes (juvenile diabetes).
- Clinical/basic research - prevention or treatment of pulmonary diseases and infirmities.

Grants in these areas are up to $60,000.

- Research infrastructure – HCF invites applications that propose to develop novel research infrastructure that will advance the biomedical research conducted in Hawaiʻi with organizational change, support new or existing research collection and database systems, or assist with inter-organizational collaborative efforts. Through this award, investigators will endeavor to develop a sustainable research infrastructure to support projects that address key interdisciplinary research questions. This priority area is not intended to support a specific research project or purchase equipment for a research project/department.

- An example of a successful proposal was to build the infrastructure (education, scope of practice, credentialing, documentation, quality assurance, and maintenance of skills) for a point of care ultrasound program. With this infrastructure in place, the organization would be positioned to develop research projects using point of care ultrasound to improve care, enhance safety of invasive procedures, and decrease unnecessary radiographs and associated radiation exposure.

Grants in this area are up to $25,000.

Priorities

The intent of the <u>Medical Research</u> program is to support research proposals that are based on strong science and assist in advancing Hawaiʻi's medical research community. Priority is given to research projects that advance as many of the following elements as possible:

- Articulate biomedical relevance and potential to impact health care delivery to benefit the people of Hawaiʻi.
- Are likely to lead to increased competitiveness for national funding by providing seed funding for gathering preliminary data.
- Support early career investigators.
- Support a new line of research in Hawaiʻi.
- Are a collaborative effort in Hawaiʻi-based research.

Award Period

- Researchers will have eighteen (18) months to complete their research project.

Eligibility

Applicants must meet the following conditions:

- The organization is a 501(c)(3) organization or a unit of government.
- The PI is based in and is conducting their research in Hawaiʻi.
- The PI is at least equivalent to an Assistant Professor, including Assistant Research Professors and non-tenure track (clinical) Assistant Professors. Lecturers, Instructors, Junior Researchers, or post-doctoral researchers are not eligible.
- The PI does not have more than $250,000 in direct cost per year from other grants during the duration of the proposed project.
- Only one (1) grant application per PI will be accepted per grant round. This includes being identified as a Co-PI.
- All previous grants must be completed with the submission of a final report, including a narrative and financial report, before a PI is eligible to apply for a new grant.
- A PI may receive no more than two Medical Research grants within a 6-year period. For this round, the 6-year period is March 2020-present.
- A PI who became an Assistant Professor within the past five years is considered junior faculty and must identify a mentor based in Hawaiʻi with research experience and submit a Mentor Statement and Letters of Support.
- If multiple PIs are proposed, all must meet all eligibility requirements and have strong justification for the PI-ship.
- A member of the MRAC who applies will not participate in any committee activities for that grantmaking round.

Please note: The Advisory Committee that reviews all applications includes scientists from a variety of disciplines in both basic and clinical research. Since your application may not be reviewed by a researcher in your specific discipline, the writing should be tailored for a general medical/scientific audience.

Online Submission

Applications will only be accepted online. Principal Investigators who have an account in the [grants portal](#) may access the online application with their username and password. Principal Investigators who do not have an account should establish an account. If you cannot remember your login credentials, please click the "Forgot Password" link and follow the indicated steps.

Once you are logged in, access the Medical Research Application from the Open Funding Opportunities shortcut.

Deadline

Submit your application online by 4:00 p.m. HST on December 12, 2025. Applicants will be notified in March 2026.

Online Application

You will be asked to provide the following:
(Note - The online application system is unable to accept Hawaiian diacritical markings consistently. Please do not include markings in the proposal abstract and lay summary – it may cause errors in the character counter and how the online system processes.)

1. **Proposal Abstract** *(3,000 character count max.)*
   Short description of the study that also includes study title, institution, and PI's name.
2. **Lay Summary** *(3,000 character count max.)*
   Short description of the study written for the general public that includes study title, institution, and PI's name.
3. **Project Personnel** *(2,000 character count max.)*
   All key personnel (name, title, affiliation) involved in the study and their roles/responsibilities.

Documents:

You will be asked to upload the following:

1. **Budget**
   a. Grant funds may be used for salaries, supplies and other expenses directly related to the proposed project. Funding may support PI(s) salary. However, the parent institution must confirm the availability of the PI's time. PI's support from other grants and the institution should be clarified. A limited amount of equipment essential to the proposed project may be funded provided sufficient justification is included. Grant funds may be used for travel expenses provided justification is sound and reasonable.
   b. Note: HCF is committed to advancing equity in Hawai'i. Applicants are encouraged to fairly compensate project personnel including post-doctoral and graduate students.

c. **Project Budget** – Provide details of the <u>total</u> cost of the project.
   - Identify the amount requested from this grant and which expenses the grant funds would cover.
   - Identify all other sources of funds that will support the project.
   - The project budget should reflect the total effort for PI(s) committed time to the project and show whether it is a grant expenditure or in-kind cost.
   - List all the sources of funds to cover the total cost of the project including those that have been secured and are currently unsecured.
d. **Budget Justification** – Provide justification for all expenses that this grant is requested to support. For salaries, provide the title for each person and formula for deriving the budgeted amount (i.e., hourly rate x # of hrs. dedicated to the project). Provide the PI's total time committed (including in-kind) to the project.
e. **Indirect Costs** – Indirect costs are included in the total grant amount. For grants to the University of Hawaiʻi a flat rate of 10% of total direct costs will be allowed. For other institutions, indirect costs are allowed on a direct personnel costs basis only and are calculated as follows:
   - 40% of the project's direct personnel costs for studies with a total project budget below $10,000.
   - 30% of the project's direct personnel costs for studies with a total project budget of $10,001 – $20,000.
   - 20% of the project's direct personnel costs for studies with a total project budget of $20,001 and over.
f. **Other Funding Sources** – Include a list of current and pending requests for this and all other research projects of the PI and co-PI(s) including name of agency, title of project, amount awarded or requested, period of support, and roles including percentage effort. Indicate whether the application is for an identical or similar project and where the proposed study fits with current or pending funded research. For scientific or budget similarities between this and funded projects, provide an explicit description of why this funding would not be considered overlap. For pending requests, provide an explicit description of potential budget/project overlap or why this funding would not be considered overlap. Also include the abstract and specific aims of all active or pending grants that involve research activities thematically related to the application that might be seen by the advisory committee as potentially overlapping. The NIH form is linked as an example but is not required: https://grants.nih.gov/sites/default/files/other-support-format-page-rev-10-2021.docx

2. **Proposal Narrative** (maximum of eight (8) pages, single spaced, using Times New Roman font, and a font size of not less than 12 pt.)
   - Name(s) of PI(s).

- Research Plan that outlines the significance of the research, specific aim(s), methodology, and preliminary data.
- Both hypothesis generating and hypothesis testing proposals may be proposed.
- Significance of project, including how the research will benefit the people of Hawai'i, document a need and relate to the field of medicine, and how project findings will be disseminated.
- **For Clinical Research, the proposal narrative must also include the following:**
  o How patients will be recruited.
  o Details of the research procedures that will be used.
  o Details of how the research will be analyzed.
  o Status of IRB approval.

3. **References Cited** (maximum of 50 citations)
   - Provide a numbered bibliography of references cited in the Proposal Narrative. Each reference should be sufficient to find the reference in conventional databases. It should include the names of at least the first three authors, the article and journal/book title, volume number, page numbers, and year of publication.
   - DO NOT submit actual papers or research documentation as part of your application.

4. **Biographical Sketch** (maximum of five (5) pages)
   - Required for all PI(s) and co-PI(s) associated with the research. Please use the NIH Bio Sketch format. This format can be found at http://grants.nih.gov/grants/forms/biosketch.htm (Use Biographical Sketch Format Page non-fellowship.)
   - In the Biographical Sketch, PI(s) should include a URL to a full list of published work. The recommendation is to utilize NCBI's MyBibliography (see Biographical Sketch sample found at the link above).
   - Reviewers are especially interested in the outcome of previously funded HCF grants in the form of grants applied for, grants awarded, publications in peer-reviewed journals, and oral presentation(s) at national and international meetings/conferences.

5. **IRB or IACUC Application Cover Page**
   - For research involving either human or animal subjects, the PI must submit the IRB or IACUC application cover page as documentation of a request for IRB or IACUC approval. Please do not submit the entire application. Applicants will be asked in the application whether IRB or IACUC approval is needed. If approved, the grant will be contingent on receiving IRB or IACUC approval.

6. **Authorization Form** (download from list of associated files on the Medical Research webpage)
   - Signed by the research organization's authorizing official.

7. **Mentor/Co-Mentors Statement** – required only for junior faculty

- Identify the mentor and their qualifications in the research field and previous experience as a research supervisor.
- Describe the nature and extent of supervision during the proposed award period.

8. **Letters of Support –** required only for junior faculty
   - Submit a letter from the mentor/co-mentors to specify the details of the mentorship for the applicant investigator.
   - Submit a letter from the Department Chair describing how this funding will lead to the PI becoming an independent researcher, addressing:
     o Institutional space commitment.
     o Type of position (tenure track, non-tenure track, explanation of rank).
     o Mentored investigator versus independent status.
     o The development and/or mentoring plan for reaching independent status.

Format for Uploaded Documents (other than NIH format documents)

☐ Use 8 1/2" x 11" letter size.

☐ Margins no less than 1" on all sides.

☐ All pages must be paginated and include the study title.

☐ The font is Times New Roman and font size is not less than 12 pt.

Figures and graphs should be legible without magnification.

☐ Use the following descriptive file name format when uploading your files: Last 4 digits of your HCF Online Application ID #_PI Name_Name of File (For example, 'App0467_JohnSmith_Narrative' or 'App0455_JaneDoe_BioSketch'). Do not use apostrophes, #, or parentheses in your file name. Each file must have a unique file name.

☐ Each file's size must be below 2 GB.

☐ Do not upload Word files with "Read Only" restriction.

Proposal Resubmission

A PI who previously submitted a research proposal that was denied within the last twelve (12) months, and was encouraged to resubmit an application, may resubmit their application for review provided they adhere to the items below. Resubmitting an application does not guarantee your research proposal will be approved.

- The application resubmission must adhere to the items requested above.
- In the beginning of the Proposal Narrative, applicants should add a section "Response to Reviewers' Comments" and address all previous reviewer queries point by point.

Compliance with Grant Terms

Grants are to be used only for the purposes outlined in project proposals. PI must contact HCF if the nature of activities described in the application, the grant period, or the project budget are likely to change.

Final Reports

A final report consisting of a financial report from the fiscal sponsor and a narrative report from the PI is due to Hawaiʻi Community Foundation one month after the end date of the grant. A PI with an overdue final report will not be eligible to apply for new funding.

In addition, PIs will be required to submit a post-grant report one year after the final report, to describe additional project funding, publications of research, and whether the preliminary data led to nationally funded research. This will be used in an ongoing outcomes evaluation of the HCF Medical Research Program.

Reporting guidelines are available at Medical Research.

Contact Information

If you have any questions regarding the application, please contact Ananda Luttet at ALuttet@hcf-hawaii.org or 808-566-5536.

For technical assistance with the online application process, please submit a ticket for assistance at this link.