

Across the Finish Line Funding Opportunity Spring 2026 Award Cycle

Background

The University of Colorado Cancer Center is interested in supporting Cancer Center member investigators' efforts to secure **NCI, NIH, and other national peer-reviewed cancer research grants**. To this end, the Cancer Center has created an "Across the Finish Line" funding opportunity to enable investigators to address reviewer comments on grant proposals that just missed the payline. Across the Finish Line focuses on **high-potential applications** from investigators with a strong track record who may benefit from additional resources to overcome a discrete barrier, gap, or weakness identified during peer review. Funding provided through this RFA is intended to help strong proposals get "across the finish line" and secure national peer-reviewed support.

The Cancer Center's Across the Finish Line (CC-AFL) grant is a collaboration between the Cancer Center Programs and the center's Associate Director for Basic Research. Funding provided through this RFA is not intended to serve as bridge funding, but rather to support targeted efforts to strengthen and enhance the competitiveness of resubmitted grant applications.

Important Dates

September 25, 2026	RFA release
October 16, 2026	Proposal deadline – 5:00 pm (MST)
November 13, 2026	Reviews due
December 1, 2026	Award start date

Eligibility

CC-AFL pilots will be competitively awarded to Cancer Center members¹ with an NCI/NIH/national peer-reviewed grant proposal that fell just short of the score necessary for funding. CC-AFL proposals should be task-driven with a focus on specific actions required to address reviewers' comments and improve the overall competitiveness of a resubmitted grant. ***A1 applications are ineligible as they are considered a new submission, not a resubmission.*** A proposal must highlight cancer relevance to be eligible. Preference will be given to multi-PI (MPI) and multi-project applications, emphasizing collaborative and interdisciplinary approaches to research. Pilot grants will be awarded in the amount of **\$30k for single-PI proposals and \$50k for MPI's**.

Additional Funding: In recognition of the importance of collaborative research and the value of the Cancer Prevention and Control (CPC) Program, additional funding is available for MPI applications where **one of the investigators is a CPC member (Full/Mentored only)**. Eligible proposals may request supplemental funding up to **an additional \$25k** if the aims of the grant proposal align with the goals of the CPC Program.

Funds will be awarded for 1 year only and the revised grant must be resubmitted to a national peer-reviewed program before the end of the 1-year funding period.

¹ Cancer Center membership is available to individuals holding research or tenure track faculty appointments at the instructor level or above, who have a demonstrated track record in cancer research and who meet all membership guidelines. Application for membership is voluntary and is required to submit under this RFA. Applications are located at: <https://medschool.cuanschutz.edu/colorado-cancer-center/research/membership-resources>

Review Criteria

Applications for CC-AFL funds will be competitively reviewed and assigned an overall priority score based on the adequacy of the plan to address reviewers' comments and the likelihood of the proposed plan to be completed with sufficient time to allow for a resubmission to be filed within 12 months of receipt of the CC-AFL funding.

Application Process

Individuals interested in applying for a CC-AFL grant should submit the required materials outlined below to the following link by **5:00 pm October 16, 2026**. No late proposals will be accepted.

[Across the Finish Line Grant Submission Link](#)

The contact or co-PI must be a member of the Cancer Center. If you need to check on your status, please email CC_FundingOps@cuanschutz.edu

Required Materials

Only one submission per contact/lead PI will be accepted.

Please maintain at least ½ inch margins and use font not less than 11-point.

Title Page: Provide the title of the just-missed grant proposal, the sponsor to which the grant was submitted, the overall impact score received and percentile, and the names of the Principal Investigator(s) and other Key Personnel.

Specific Aims: Submit the specific aims page from the just-missed grant proposal.

Summary Review: Submit the official Summary Review document received from the sponsor.

Plan for Response to Review: In one page describe the gaps identified in the Summary Review and the plan to address the gaps. This should be a task-focused description of steps you will take to address the critiques. Include a timeline for the proposed tasks and the target date for resubmission of your grant.

Budget: Provide a detailed, categorical budget outlining all anticipated expenses for the tasks/activities outlined in the Plan for Response to Review.

Budget Justification: Provide a clear justification for all expenses included on the budget.

Biographical Sketch(es): Include for PI and co-PI only.

Post-Award Requirements

Funding is issued for 12 months only. Recipients agree to make every effort to resubmit their national grant within 12 months of receipt of CC-AFL funding.

No Cost Extensions may be granted on a limited basis for extraordinary circumstances only. Please contact Cancer Center Administration at CC_FundingOps@cuanschutz.edu if you have questions.

Awardees will be required to document their resubmission. Subsequent information on publications, the success of your national grant submission, subsequent grants, and any other research resources resulting from the pilot funding will be solicited for up to 5 years following the completion of your pilot grant.

Investigators who receive awards will be expected to serve as Reviewers in future rounds.