# UVA Comprehensive Cancer Center Accelerating Innovation Fund
## Request for Applications
*Application Deadline:* February 14, 2025

**Program Overview:**

The UVA Comprehensive Cancer Center (UVACCC) Accelerating Innovation Fund was created by the Cancer Center to support innovative, entrepreneurial cancer-relevant biomedical research projects with commercialization potential.

The goal of this program is to support cancer research projects that turn scientific insights into tangible advancements that can positively impact the lives of patients, such as developing new therapies, improving diagnostics and screening technologies, creating digital interventions, and enhancing patient care practices. This is a multidisciplinary effort that requires collaboration among researchers, clinicians, and/or other professionals who work with the targeted population(s).

The program plans to make five awards averaging $150,000 each for 12 months. The requested amount of funding must be commensurate with the project stage and goals. To generate and advance novel and compelling translational ideas, we strongly encourage projects that involve faculty co-investigators from multiple departments, schools, or specialties at UVA. Additionally, applicants are encouraged to consider the potential impact of innovations on patient-reported outcomes or experiences (e.g., health-related quality of life) and the payer's perspective of the innovation (e.g., cost savings).

The program's desirable outcomes focus on advancing healthcare through research and innovation, with the ultimate goals of improving patient outcomes, increasing the precision of diagnosis and treatment, and enhancing the overall healthcare experience. Funded projects will not only generate valuable knowledge to improve patient lives, but also have real-world impact by creating intellectual property, forming partnerships with industry, or launching new companies to bring innovations to market.

To facilitate project development and meet the program objectives, each funded project will work with the Program Director and a liaison from the UVA Licensing and Ventures Group (UVA LVG) to provide guidance on product/services development, market, business and follow-on funding strategies.

Project teams will benefit from feedback and mentoring, provided by the Program Director (Sharon Krueger), UVA LVG, Cancer Center Accelerating Innovation Review Board, I-Corp Mid-South Hub and mentors from UVA and state organizations including Innovation Commercialization Assistance program (ICAP), Commonwealth Commercialization Fund (CCF) and entrepreneur-in residents from UVA LVG and the Cville BioHub.

**Eligibility Criteria:**
- Applicants must be UVACCC members or have applied to become a member.
- Each proposal must have at least <u>two co-investigators</u>, one of whom must be a UVA-affiliated professional who directly interacts with the targeted population.
- Eligible investigators may submit more than one proposal.
- Awardees from previous funding cycles are eligible to apply, and competitive renewal applications should include a description of milestone achieved vs. those planned in the original submission and any challenges during the funding period.

**Proposal Evaluation Criteria by the UVACCC Accelerating Innovation Review Board:**

Evaluation of proposals will be based on the potential for commercialization, which will be assessed by clinical merit; potential healthcare significance and impact; likelihood of uptake by non-UVA clinicians; technical feasibility; ability to achieve the proposal's milestones within the 12 months of funding; experience of the team; probability of creating intellectual property; and potential of obtaining follow-on funding to advance the project into the marketplace via state/federal sources, foundations, industry and/or investor capital.

**Application Guidelines:**
- Applications should not exceed **six** pages, <u>excluding</u> cover page, budget page, and two-page biosketches from the co-investigators. Use Arial font, 11-point and 0.5-inch margins.
- The cover page must contain the project title, names of the investigator(s), amount requested, a one-paragraph summary, and the approval/signature of the department chair(s). Signatures can be scanned.
- Approvals for animal and/or human subjects (if needed) will be required after awards are announced.

**Submission:**
- Investigators interested in submitting a proposal are required to contact Sharon Krueger (Program Director) to discuss their idea and obtain approval to proceed with the full application.
- Written approval (email is acceptable) from the Program Director is required to submit the proposal in the InfoReady application portal.
- Final proposal submissions are due by **<u>February 14, 2025</u>** via InfoReady.
- The UVACCC Accelerating Innovation Fund Review Board will review the submitted proposals and select finalists in early April for oral presentations in mid- June 2025.
- **All finalists will be required to rehearse their draft presentation in person with the AIF Program Director and members of UVA Licensing & Ventures Seed Fund.**
- Following ranking by the Review Board, final funding decisions will be made by the UVACCC Associate Directors for Basic Science, Clinical Research, and Population Sciences.

**Proposals must include these components:**
- Describe the unmet clinical need (Problem) and how your research/technology (Solution) will fill this need
- Address the market potential and market diligence.
    - What is the market?
    - Is the market growing? Why is it growing?
    - Which companies/investigators/products are in this space and at what stage?
- Describe how the product that you intend will ultimately be developed.
    - How is your Solution an improvement on current standard of care/procedures?
    - Who is your initial target population with the Problem?
    - How will you address clinical uptake beyond UVA?
- Specific **realistic** focused research milestones and the plan for achieving them.
    - Make sure you identify and discuss each of the following:
        - any technical or logistic dependencies
        - the "killer" experiment
        - your current NIH Technology Readiness Level (TRL)
    - Use a Gantt type chart to depict quarterly milestone timeline
- Address potential research results and research challenges
- Discuss your commercialization strategy to advance the technology into the market and/or clinical adoption
    - Current intellectual property status (work with UVA LVG on this status)
    - Include a description of any known hurdles to be addressed to obtain the FDA approval (if relevant)
    - Plan for obtaining follow-on funding after the UVACCC Accelerating Innovation Fund award expires
- Briefly discuss your next research steps after the funding period ends
- List of relevant current funding and pending proposals for each co-investigator

- Budget page with justifications (NIH format)

**Budgets:**
Eligible budget items include salary support (faculty, graduate students, and other research staff), operating supplies, minor equipment items, prototyping expenses, fees for Shared Resources, and travel directly associated with the research activity. Funds cannot be requested or used for F & A costs, administrative support, or tuition.

**Duration:**
Grants will be awarded for a one-year period in two installments: one at the start of award and the second following review of the six-month update. Applicants are eligible to apply for renewal funding.

**Reporting:**
Award recipients are required to provide a six-month update report and a final report. All funded projects will give an oral update presentation to the UVACCC Accelerating Innovation Review Board nine months after the start of award. Project update meetings will be held between the funded project PIs and Program Director in advance of the required reports.