

The P³ Cancer Innovation Accelerator (Practice-Changing, Paradigm-Shifting, Policy-Creating)

The Vanderbilt-Ingram Cancer Center (VICC) announces The P³ Cancer Innovation Accelerator, a funding opportunity to support high-impact, translational cancer research projects. This mechanism is designed to spark collaboration across disciplines and career stages, bringing together varied expertise to tackle the most pressing challenges in cancer care. This award will fund paradigm-shifting, practice-changing, or policy-creating research, with a clear path toward a human endpoint. **Teams are eligible for an award of \$500,000 (direct costs) for a one-year term.**

The application and evaluation process will be in three stages:

1. Applicants submit a one-page research description and a half-page team description.
2. Top proposals deliver a 5-10-minute pitch to VICC Senior Leaders. This year, the VICC Associate Directors (ADs) of Basic, Clinical, and Population Science will each champion one team, serving as strategic partners to strengthen and amplify the proposed work.
3. Teams participate in a “Shark Tank”-style in-person event, presenting a 15-minute proposal, followed by a ten-minute question-and-answer session. Champions will guide teams through this stage to ensure projects are positioned for maximum impact.

For detailed information about the stages and application process, see below.

Eligibility Criteria

- Projects require a minimum of three investigators per team from varied scientific disciplines (i.e., pathology, engineering, biomedical informatics, etc.). Tenure- and research-track faculty from Vanderbilt University and Vanderbilt University Medical Center are welcome to apply.
- At least one team member must be an early-career investigator, defined as being within five years of their first faculty appointment.
- Projects can be focused on any area of cancer research, though they must have a translational impact.
- Proposals should focus on ***Practice-Changing, Paradigm-Shifting, Policy-Creating*** cancer research.

Selection Process

- **Submission:**
 - One-page research description, using 11-point, Arial font
 - A half-page description of the team
 - NIH biosketches for all key personnel
 - **Due date: Sunday, March 1, 2026**
- **Stage One - Review:**
 - A peer-review panel will evaluate submitted research descriptions and select teams to advance to Stage Two based on impact and scientific merit.
- **Stage Two - Team Selection:**
 - Top proposals from the initial review will be invited to give a 5-10-minute pitch to VICC Senior Leadership, including the ADs of Basic, Clinical, and Population Sciences.
 - Each AD will select one team to champion through the final round.
 - **The Team Selection round will take place on Monday, May 4, 2026 at 3:30 PM in PRB 898J.** Please hold this time on your calendar; presenters will receive more information on their specific presentation time as the review process unfolds. Presenters will only have to attend for their specific time slot.
- **Stage Three - Presentation:**
 - Each AD and their team will advance to a “Shark Tank” style presentation round.

- Teams will provide a 15-minute presentation of their work, followed by a ten-minute question-and-answer session.
- Prior to the presentation, teams will submit a 6-page research plan detailing the team structure and anticipated clinical impact of the proposal, a half-page lay summary, as well as an NIH budget and justification.
- The presentation and written proposals will be scored in aggregate on the NIH scale, with the best (lowest) score funded. Reviewers will focus on significance and impact, defined as ***Practice-Changing, Paradigm-Shifting, Policy-Creating*** cancer research.
- Lay audience members who helped raise philanthropic funds to support this award mechanism will be invited to participate.

Deliverable Requirements of Awardees

- A final written progress report, including financial reporting, will be required at the end of the funding period.

Application Timeline

- **Tuesday, February 3, 2026 at 2:30 PM:** An information session will be held via Teams to address questions regarding this mechanism. [Click here](#) to join the information session.
- **Sunday, March 1, 2026 at 11:59 PM: Initial research and team descriptions are due**
- **Early April 2026:** Teams advancing to the second round will be notified, with presentations scheduled thereafter.
- **May 4, 2026 at 3:30 PM in PRB 898J: Team Selection Round.** Please hold this time on your calendar; presenters will receive more information on their specific presentation time as the review process unfolds. Presenters will only have to attend for their specific time slot.
- **June 2026:** Final presentation round.

Please submit a single PDF containing all documentation through the [VICC Pilot Project Application Portal](#). A link to the VICC Pilot Project Application Portal can also be found at the top right-hand corner of the VICC Funding Opportunities web page (<http://www.vicc.org/research/funding/>). The starting date of the P³ Cancer Innovation Accelerator Award is flexible.

If you have further questions or comments, please contact Lindsay Jensen (lindsay.jensen@vumc.org).