

Wilmot Cancer Institute



Wilmot Physician-Scientist Fellowship Program Request for Applications 2024

Program Overview

The Wilmot Physician-Scientist Fellowship Program pays tribute to James P. Wilmot, Rochester businessman and philanthropist. His family established the Wilmot Foundation in his memory to support the career development of early-stage cancer researchers.

The goal of the program is to support mentored research training for physician scientists interested in the causes, diagnosis, treatment, prevention or management of cancer or its side effects, preparing them for independent careers in cancer research. Each fellow is supported for up to three years. Wilmot fellows may enroll in graduate courses at the University of Rochester as a component of their career development plan. The program does not support clinical training.

Important Dates

RFA release date: October 23, 2023

Application due date: February 12, 2024

Anticipated award notification: May, 2024

Anticipated start date: July 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. Applicants must have one or more faculty mentors, and at least one mentor must be a [Wilmot member](#). Previous research experience is desirable but not required. Applicants may have served as principal investigator for R03 or R21 grants from NIH, but may not have served as principal investigator for other substantial 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) or other equivalent peer-reviewed research grants that provide more than \$137,500 per year in direct costs or more than \$275,000 over the term of the grant
- Subprojects of NIH program project or center grants (P01s or P50s)

Budget

Fellows will receive \$75,000 per year for a total of three years. Of that amount, \$70,000 per year will provide salary support for the fellow, and the balance may be used for other expenses that directly support the fellow's research program, such as research supplies and equipment, research services, staff salary support, travel to relevant scientific conferences, and publication expenses. Fellows are encouraged to take advantage of [Wilmot shared resources](#). Applicants must demonstrate that sufficient resources are available to complete their proposed research project.

Application Process

Applicants must submit applications via the online tool available at this link: <https://redcap.link/xjeqvgff>.

Download detailed application instructions and additional information for applicants by clicking here:

<https://rochester.box.com/v/WilmotPhySciAppInstructions>.

Applications will include the components listed below.

- Abstract (30 lines)
- Specific aims (1 page)
- Research plan (4 pages), organized under the headings of background and significance (including catchment area relevance), innovation, and approach. Must be written by applicant.

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- Career Development Plan (2 pages)
- Bibliography and references cited (no limit)
- Mentor statements (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)
- Optional letters of support or letters of reference from collaborators, contributors, consultants (optional, 1 page each, no more than three)

Application Review Information

A panel of outstanding cancer research scientists from outside of the University of Rochester, established by the James P. Wilmot Foundation, reviews applications using the criteria listed below. The foundation's Board of Trustees considers the panel's recommendations at their annual spring meeting, and makes final award decisions.

Application Review Criteria

- Community focus: Does the project address a specific community priority for cancer research relevant to the Wilmot catchment area?
- Candidate
 - Does the candidate have the potential to develop as an independent and productive researcher?
 - Are the candidate's prior training and research experiences appropriate for this award?
 - Is the candidate's academic, clinical, and research record of high quality?
 - Is there evidence of the candidate's commitment to meeting program objectives to become an independent investigator in research?
 - Does the candidate have the potential to organize, manage, and implement the proposed research project?
- 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 scientific independence?
 - 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 training and research objectives for achieving research independence?
 - Are there adequate plans for monitoring and evaluating the candidate's research and career development progress?
- Research Plan
 - Are the proposed research questions, design, and methodology of significant scientific and technical merit?
 - Is the prior research that serves as the key support for the proposed project rigorous?
 - Has the candidate included plans to address weaknesses in the rigor of prior research that serves as the key support for the proposed project?
 - Has the candidate presented strategies to ensure a robust and unbiased approach, as appropriate for the work proposed?
 - Is the research plan relevant to the candidate's research career objectives?
 - Is the research plan appropriate to the candidate's stage of research development and as a vehicle for developing the research skills described in the career development plan?

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- Is the research plan feasible to accomplish within the award period with the resources available to the fellow?
- Mentors, Consultants, Collaborators
 - Are the qualifications of the mentor(s) in the area of the proposed research appropriate?
 - Does the mentor or mentoring team have the expertise, experience, and ability to guide the applicant in the proposed research project?
 - Do the mentors adequately address the candidate's potential, strengths, and areas needing improvement?
 - Is there 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 the mentors', consultants', and collaborators' previous experience in fostering the development of independent investigators?
 - Is there evidence of mentors' current research productivity and peer-reviewed support?
 - Is active/pending support for the proposed research project appropriate and adequate?
 - Are there adequate plans for monitoring and evaluating the career development awardee's progress toward independence?

Award Information

- The term of the award is three years, beginning July 1, 2024.
- Fellows are required to commit 50% effort to the fellowship program.
- Fellows may not simultaneously hold a Wilmot Fellowship award and an individual career development award from NIH or similar award from another funding agency.
- At the time of award notification, the candidate and all mentors must provide current and pending other support information in the standard NIH format, written plans for the use of human subjects (if applicable), and written plans for the use of vertebrate animals (if applicable).
- Fellows are required to respond to *ad hoc* requests for project updates, attend and participate in monthly meetings of at least one [Wilmot research program](#), and provide periodic updates at program meetings. Annual progress reports are required, covering scientific progress with reference to planned specific aims, community outreach and engagement activities related to the fellow's research project, activities and plans related to dissemination of findings (e.g., presentations, posters, manuscripts prepared, manuscripts submitted, manuscripts published), and grants that benefitted from knowledge gained through the research project (submitted or received). Progress reports are incorporated into an annual report to the Wilmot Foundation.
- All publications, posters and presentations related to the fellowship must acknowledge support of the James P. Wilmot Foundation and 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 James P. Wilmot Foundation and the Wilmot Cancer Institute, and benefited from the support of the Wilmot [Biobank | Biostatistics and Bioinformatics | Cytometry | Genomics | Human Biophysiology | Imaging and Radiation] Shared Resource[s]."

Contacts for Additional Information

- For questions regarding the application process or fellowship administration, contact [Thom Fogg](#), Assistant Director for Research Administration.
- For questions regarding Wilmot catchment area research priorities, community outreach and engagement, or to facilitate interaction with community members in support of the proposed research project, contact [Charles Kamen, PhD](#), Assistant Director for Community Outreach and Engagement.

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- For questions on scientific matters, contact a Wilmot research program leader:
 - Genetics, Epigenetics and Metabolism: [Paula Vertino, PhD](#), or [Darren Carpizo, MD, PhD](#)
 - Cancer Microenvironment: [Laura Calvi, MD](#), or [Minsoo Kim, PhD](#)
 - Cancer Prevention and Control: [Karen Mustian, PhD](#), or [Supriya Mohile, MD, MS](#)
 - or -
 - One of Wilmot's Assistant Directors for Clinical Research: [Paul Barr, MD](#), or [Jamie Flerlage, MD, MS](#)