



Cure CF Columbus Research & Development Program (C3RDP) Trainee Grant Request for Applications (RFA)

Brief Program Overview/Description: Cure CF Columbus (C3) Research Development Program (RDP) supports and promotes groundbreaking research and clinical cystic fibrosis (CF)-related investigation with individuals located at The Ohio State University (OSU) and Nationwide Children’s Hospital (NCH) and subsequently applies this knowledge for the development of new therapeutic strategies to better arm host defenses that combat infection.

Mission Statement: Excessive inflammation and recurrent infections are a hallmark of cystic fibrosis pathophysiology. Moreover, extra-pulmonary complications are a significant problem, particularly as our CF population ages. The C3RDP mission is to develop treatments that minimize or prevent this pathophysiology.

C3RDP Training and Enrichment goals:

1. Engage junior investigators in CF research
2. Expand the C3RDP community through recruitment of new investigators and trainees/future investigators
3. Facilitate new collaborations among CF researchers
4. Foster a strong network of CF and non-CF researchers worldwide

The values of diversity, equity and inclusion are integral to the success of the C3 community. The C3RDP commits to fostering diversity in research by recruiting investigators of different scientific disciplines but also of diverse social backgrounds.

Funding Amount: Funding of up to **\$29,500** for pre-doctoral trainees and **\$70,500** for post-doctoral trainees per year per project may be requested (indirect costs are not allowed) for up to a two (2) year period.

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The C3RDP Training and Enrichment Program

The mission of the C3 Training and Enrichment Program is to provide superbly integrated, high quality, and formative scientific training to individuals committed to careers in CF research. The immediate goals are to support trainees who will develop and test new hypotheses and methods and/or apply existing methods to CF for the first time. The long term goal is to enable trainees to conduct research relevant to CF and to recruit and train the next generation of CF researchers and physician-scientists.

Training Program objectives aim to:

- Provide continued support for state-of-the-art laboratory-based training in our established focus area on the impact of immune dysfunction on infection in CF, topics broadly related to CF pathophysiology and the Path-to-a-Cure are also of interest such as CF immune dysfunction, microbial pathogenesis, the interface of macrophages and neutrophils with CF pathogens, and CF airway epithelial physiology.
- Provide partial financial stipend and tuition support (cost share agreement) for graduate students and post-doctoral trainees.
- Provide potential biomedical research career trainees with a strong foundation in basic sciences and the direct lab experience needed to conduct research in our established and emerging focus areas.
- Enhance training in our emerging focus areas (Cystic Fibrosis Transmembrane Conductance Regulator (CFTR) modifier effects on immune cell function, progenitor cell biology and therapy, CFTR channel function and dysfunction, adaptive immune cell dysfunction in CF, and therapeutics aimed at managing infection and inflammation).
- Support C3 core trainee enhancement programs.
- Offer clinical shadowing in NCH's CF clinic to meet with and discover the clinical impact of CF for basic science trainees and visitation and basic science shadowing in laboratories at NCH and OSU to meet with principal investigators to explore basic science aspects of CF research for clinical trainees.

Trainee grant applications should focus on basic or translational research. Studies that incorporate use of clinical specimens that are recovered from human subjects (e.g., airway cells, immune cells, bronchioalveolar lavage (BAL), serum, etc.) and that utilize and acknowledge the C3 research cores (<https://www.curefcolumbus.org/core-services.html>) are strongly encouraged. Special consideration will be given to projects that: 1) propose innovative and creative approaches to the problems of CF disease and/or 2) focus on areas of special and emerging interest to the C3RDP research (see section below). Applications will be reviewed, and training applicants may be required to submit a revised application. All applications will be reviewed by the C3 Internal Advisory Board.

Funding

The CFF Training and Enrichment grant includes funding for **two trainee fellowships**. This RFA aims to support highly meritorious **trainee projects**. These applications can be a second year extension of prior funded C3 Research projects or new proposals from any eligible OSU or NCH trainee.

- Up to **\$29,500** can be awarded to the pre-doctoral trainee.
 - **Up to \$25,000** will be used for partial stipend support.
 - **Up to \$3,000** will be used for supplies, core services, and animal costs.
 - **Up to \$1,500** will be used for travel and registration for the North American CF Conference (NACFC).
- Up to **\$70,500** can be awarded to the post-doctoral trainee.
 - **Up to \$66,000** will be used for partial stipend support.
 - **Up to \$3,000** will be used for supplies, core services, and animal costs.
 - **Up to \$1,500** will be used for travel and registration for the North American CF Conference (NACFC).
- For training applicants with prior C3 support, a second year of funding is contingent on demonstration of satisfactory progress and approval by the C3 Research Internal Advisory Board. A separate budget and justification will be required at this stage. See additional information below.
- No indirect costs are allowed.

Eligibility

General eligibility criteria:

1. Applicants should be currently enrolled in an OSU or NCH training program or employed in an OSU or NCH laboratory. These typically include individuals who are at the predoctoral, postdoctoral, or fellow phase of their education.
2. Applicants are ineligible if they will be holding an existing fellowship award (e.g., T32, CFF postdoctoral, F31/F32 or equivalent) that supports their stipend at the time of the start of the Training grant.
3. Post-doctoral scientists/fellows within 5 years of their PhD/MD/DVM degree are eligible.
4. Research scientists are not eligible for the training RFA but are encouraged to submit applications to the Pilot and Feasibility RFA.
5. Current C3 trainees supported by C3 funds may apply for a 2nd year of support. See Section: “Renewal Guidelines & Components” for more information.
6. Candidates must be U.S. citizens, permanent residents, or non-residents working in an OSU or NCH laboratory.
7. Relevant approvals from the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee, Institutional Biosafety Committee, and Institutional Review Board must be in place at the time that the trainee grant is awarded.

Current C3RDP Research Interests

In general, the research priorities outlined in the CFF [2025 Policies and Guidelines](#) are most relevant. Thus, investigators working in the following areas are particularly encouraged to apply for consideration:

- Pulmonary manifestations in CF.
- Infection and Inflammation*.
- CF related diabetes (CFRD).
- Gastrointestinal complications in CF.

**Projects that solely explore basic biology of pathogens that will not have direct applicability to the development of new treatment strategies or improve outcomes for people with CF may be deprioritized for funding. Infection/microbiology-focused applications should utilize clinically relevant strains and specimens or address host responses to the organism as part of the application.*

Application Guidelines & Components (Non-Renewal applicants)

1. Application Components
 - a. The grant application must be submitted as a single PDF. All application attachments (links) are listed below and can be found on the C3 website. The pages must be in the following order:
 - i. Signed Face page
 - ii. Lay abstract (see page 5)
 - iii. Scientific abstract (see page 5)
 - iv. NIH Biosketches – Maximum 5 pages per biosketch for both the trainee and primary mentor. Please use new NIH biosketch common form template.
 - v. Detailed budget
 - a. \$25,000/\$66,000 will be used for partial stipend support.
 - b. \$4,500 will be used for supplies, core services, animal costs, NACFC travel and registration.
 - vi. Budget justification
 - a. Using the Budget justification template, provide justification by major categories. Indirect costs are not allowed.



vii. Research plan: NIH formatting (font size and page formatting) must be followed for the research plan and bibliography. - The Research Plan is limited to 6 pages (Arial 11 font with at least 0.5" margins). References are not counted in the 6-page limit.

- a. Describe the aims of the project, the hypothesis to be tested and supporting preliminary data, approach (research design), anticipated results, and expected outcomes/alternative approaches.
- b. Include the relevance of the project to the CF Foundation and C3 research missions. Indicate how C3 core resources will be utilized. Formal consultation with Cores is strongly encouraged prior to submission. The scope of the work should encompass work proposed in a two-year project with the aims you plan to accomplish, although funding of a second year is contingent on progress made during year 1 (below).
- c. Mentor's Letter of Support and Training plan (2-page limit)
- d. Appendices are not allowed.
- e. [Application attachments](#) and the [descriptions of the C3RDP Cores](#) can be found on our C3 website.
- f. Grant applications must be submitted as a single PDF file due on **March 23, 2026, at 5 pm EST** to PulmonaryGrants@nationwidechildrens.org.
- g. Training applicants are strongly encouraged to enlist a CF clinical mentor. This would likely be a physician who is involved in CF clinical activities and is knowledgeable about research related to CF. If the trainee and supervisor are new to CF, applicants are strongly encouraged to enlist a mentor with CF expertise.

Renewal Guidelines & Components (for previously funded trainees to request 2nd year funding)

1. The grant application is to be submitted as a single PDF. All application attachments (links) are below and can be found on our website. The pages must be in the following order:
 - a. Signed Face Page
 - b. Updated NIH biosketch Maximum 5 pages per biosketches for trainee and mentor
 - c. Revised detailed budget
 - d. Budget justification
 - e. Progress report (2 pages maximum; use research plan template below)
 - f. Copy of the original application
 - g. A 1-page description of plans for the upcoming year, publications, and further support for the project (use research plan template below)
 - h. NIH formatting (font size and page formatting) must be followed for the research plan and bibliography.
 - i. Appendices are not allowed.
2. Grant applications must be submitted as a single PDF file due on **March 23, 2026, at 5 pm EST** to PulmonaryGrants@nationwidechildrens.org.

Full Application

Download the available templates applicable to the project on the C3 Website, submit the completed templates, as well as the additional application components as outlined below. All documents must be submitted in PDF

format to the corresponding attachment types within this section. [Application template forms](#) and the [descriptions of the C3RDP Cores](#) can be found on our C3 website.

Grant Review Process

1. Review will be conducted by members of the C3RDP Research Internal Advisory Board.
2. Each reviewer will submit a written review
3. Each grant reviewer will provide 4 scores:
 - a. Applicant
 - b. Training Plan and Environment
 - c. Scientific Merit
 - d. Relevance to CF Foundation and C3 missions
4. Grants needing clarification or improvement will be returned to the applicant and revisions will be due by **April 10, 2026, at 5 pm EST**. Revisions, if needed, must be submitted via email to PulmonaryGrants@nationwidechildrens.org.
5. Grant awards will be announced in May of 2026.
6. If accepted, awardees planning to obtain specimens through the Translational and Data Core must submit a [Specimen Request Form](#).

Abstracts

Provide a statement of no more than 2,000 characters each (including spaces) explaining the subject of the research proposal and its relationship to CF. **Note that three different abstracts are required:**

- Lay Abstract: This statement will be used to inform the non-scientific departments of the C3RDP and the general public of the nature of this work. Applicants should not include any confidential or proprietary information, including intellectual property, in the lay abstract.
- Scientific Abstract: This statement will be used to inform the scientific community.

CF Relevance

- Summary of Relevance to CFF and C3 mission: All applications are reviewed and scored not only on scientific merit but also on relevance to CFF's stated mission: to cure CF and to provide all people with CF the opportunity to lead long, fulfilling lives by funding research and drug development, partnering with the CF community, and advancing high-quality, specialized care. Provide a statement of no more than 3,000 characters (including spaces) summarizing the relevance of the proposed research to the health and well-being of people with CF, for a scientific audience who may or may not have a background in the subspecialty of the proposed research. Clearly articulate how the proposed research advances one of the C3RDP research priorities outlined above. Identify up to three specific outcomes anticipated upon completion of the project, demonstrating its potential to contribute meaningfully to the field.

NIH Biographical Sketch

Complete and submit an NIH Biographical Sketch for the trainee and primary mentor, beginning with the trainee applicant. **Do not exceed five (5) pages per person.** Biosketches in either the former NIH format or the current SciENcv format are acceptable.

Budget Justification

- Salaries & Benefits - List the name and position of the applicant. List dollar amounts separately for institutional base salary and fringe benefits.
- Travel - Describe the purpose of any travel being requested. Applicants are required to attend the North American CF Conference each year to present their work, max \$1500 per year.
- Consumable Supplies - Itemize supplies e.g., glassware, chemicals, animals, in separate categories and give the estimated cost of each category. If animals are involved, state the number, unit purchase cost, and unit care cost.

Facilities Available

- Describe the facilities and equipment available at the applicant's organization that will be used for this project, such as laboratory, clinical, animal, computer, office, etc. Provide any additional information about the environment, including any support services available that will be utilized. Describe their pertinent capabilities, proximity and anticipated extent of use. If facilities or equipment at a consultant's or collaborative site will be used, they should be identified and clearly described. There is no page limit. Use continuation pages, if necessary.

Research Plan

- Describe the aims of the project, the hypothesis to be tested and supporting preliminary data, approach (research design), anticipated results, and outcomes/alternative approaches. Include the relevance of the project to the CF Foundation and C3 research missions and an indication of how C3 core resources will be utilized. The scope of the work should encompass work proposed in a two-year project, although funding of a second year is contingent on progress made during year 1 (below).
- Trainees with prior support from C3 (i.e. those applying for a second year of funding) must include a summary of progress towards the aims of their prior proposal (maximum of 2-pages) that includes presentations, manuscripts, or other publication communications of progress. These individuals do not need to complete a full research plan for the second year.

Letters of Support:

- Mentor's Letter of Support and Training plan (2-page limit), which includes:
 - The merits of the trainee
 - Discuss how the mentor will develop the trainee's capabilities for CF and C3RDP-related research or clinical activity.
 - Training environment
 - Relationship between the current application and the trainee's long-term career goals.

Letters of Support must be submitted to PulmonaryGrants@NationwideChildrens.org by the application deadline.

Key Dates

RFA Release date	January 26, 2025
Grant Application Deadline	March 23, 2026, at 5 pm EST
Revisions Submitted (if necessary)	April 10, 2026, at 5 pm EST
Award Notifications	May 2026
Earliest Project Start Date	July 1, 2026
Award Period	July 1, 2026—June 30, 2027

Full Application Checklist

Please use provided templates/attachments to complete the full application:

- Face Page
- Lay Abstract
- Scientific Abstract
- Summary of relevance to CFF
- NIH Biographical Sketch
- Detailed Budget
- Budget Justification
- Research Plan
- Mentor's Letter of Support and Training Plan

Contact Information and Other Resources

Title	Name	Phone #	Email
Program Directors	Grace Paul Luanne Hall-Stoodley	614-722-4766 614-292-7851	Grace.Paul@nationwidechildrens.org Luanne.Hall-Stoodley@osumc.edu
C3 Administrator	Stephanie Sliemers	614-722-2059	Stephanie.Sliemers@nationwidechildrens.org
Research Operations Manager	Katie Thornton	614-722-4922	Katie.Thornton@nationwidechildrens.org

- Please visit our Cure CF Columbus website for more information and resources: <http://www.curecfcolumbus.org/>
- The RDP is administered out of Nationwide Children's Hospital Pulmonary Research Core (PRC). If you have any questions about the application, who to speak to about specimens, or any problems that may arise during the grant period, please contact the PRC at PulmonaryResearchCore@nationwidechildrens.org or Dr. Karen McCoy directly at Karen.McCoy@nationwidechildrens.org.