2025 KCA Award Guidelines

Description:
The KCA funds promising young-to mid-career investigators to foster innovative kidney cancer research. Proposals should be projects that can be realistically accomplished in one year and should provide sufficient preliminary data that could lead to potential further funding through other granting mechanisms.

Funding Details:
- **Amount:** $75,000 for 1 year
- **Submission Window:** March 3, 2025 - April 21, 2025

Eligibility: Applicants must have a doctoral degree (MD, Ph.D., or equivalent). Postdoctoral researchers who have completed their first doctoral degree within the past seven years and who do not hold a faculty position should consider collaboration with a mentor who has a well-established career in the field.

2025 Grant Award Categories:

- **Trailblazer Awards – $75,000**
  Any focus in kidney cancer accepted. This program allows use of funds for accessing biological samples through Pattern.org (for more information see section on the Award Terms and Conditions).
  - Please consider these topics for additional opportunities (if your proposal will include any of these topics and scores high in review, we will consider it for additional funding opportunities with our partner funders):
    - Therapy Optimization:
      - Optimization of (neo-)adjuvant therapies
      - Optimization of Standard of care treatment (dose optimization, de-escalation)
      - Optimization of surgical procedures
      - Optimization of radiotherapeutic interventions
      - Optimization of care versus specific populations such as pediatric and geriatric populations
    - Disease and treatment burden:
      - Addressing post-surgical recovery
      - Addressing treatment-related side effects (i.e. chronic pain, fatigue, cachexia…)
    - Science of Early Detection and Early Intervention (Identification or validation studies with clinical samples are allowed):
      - Early identification of (pre-) cancer
      - Biomarker validation (it requires proven association with the specific cancer investigated)
      - Methods for stratification of risk in the population

- Methods for identification of malignant vs nonmalignant lesions
- Interventions on early cancer stages

- **Pediatric Kidney Cancer Focus Awards – $75,000**
  In partnership with Joey's Wings Foundation
  Required Focus: Pediatric kidney cancer, specifically translocation RCC in the following ways:
  - Comparative Analysis of Pediatric and Adult tRCC
    - Develop methodologies to compare clinical and pathological characteristics of pediatric and adult tRCC.
    - Investigate shared and distinct biological features and therapeutic responses between pediatric and adult tumors.
  - Characterization of Fusion Targets in Pediatric tRCC Models
    - Evaluate the robustness and reproducibility of existing pediatric tRCC models and propose strategies for model improvement.
    - Explore the functional implications of distinct fusion events on disease biology in pediatric cases.
  - Therapeutic Target Identification and Validation for Pediatric tRCC
    - Perform focused drug screenings in patient-derived or engineered cell lines relevant to pediatric tRCC to identify new therapeutic vulnerabilities.
    - Validate potential targets using robust in vitro and in vivo pediatric models.

- **Interdisciplinary Medicine Focus Awards – $75,000**
  In partnership with the Michael and Ina Korek Foundation
  Required Focus: Explore the relationship between kidney cancer and various lifestyle factors. This includes, but is not limited to, nutrition, the gut microbiome, dietary habits, and physical activity. Proposals should aim to identify modifiable risk factors and develop preventive strategies or interventions that can be rapidly applied in clinical settings to aid in treatment or outcomes.

Application Requirements:
1. **Project Proposal:** A comprehensive research proposal (3-page max) **MUST** include:
   - Background Summary
     - Primary question: What led you to this project?
   - Impact Summary
     - How will this project impact the field and patients?
   - Purpose/Objective of Study
     - What will this project accomplish?
   - Brief Overview of Methods (**including statistical analysis**)
     - How will you accomplish this project?
   - A plain language abstract for patient reviewers (max 300-words)
     - How would you describe this project and its impact to a patient?

2. **Budget Justification:** A simple budget proposal with justification for each item (1 page max). This will be an uploaded document.
3. **Co-PI or Mentor Letter of Support:** A letter from a co-PI or a mentor who has expertise in kidney cancer, detailing its commitment to the applicant and their project. The letter should also speak about the applicant's involvement in existing lab work, other kidney cancer projects, the availability of a mentorship program or a peer network within the field (internal or external).
4. **Citations:** References and citations should be submitted as a separate document accompanying the proposal.
5. **Biographical sketch:** A standard NIH-format biographical sketch.
6. **Grant History:** A list of current and past grants related to the applicant's research (either the applicant or the sponsor submitting on behalf of a potential candidate for the grant), received in the last three years, including funding amounts and grant outcomes.
7. **Only if Application is Selected for Funding:** Data Management and Sharing (DMS) Plan – Awardees will be required to complete a DMS Plan in accordance with the NIH 2023 Data Management and Sharing (DMS) Plan for federal grants. Info on how to write a DMS Plan can be found on the NIH Scientific Data Sharing webpage.

Submission Guidelines:
- Prepare all application documents in PDF format.
- Name files clearly with your last name and document type (e.g., Smith_Project_Proposal.pdf).
- Submit all materials through the designated KCA grant application portal.

Review and Selection Process:
- Applications will be evaluated based on alignment with grant goals, scientific merit, impact, and feasibility of the proposed research.

Notification and Funding:
- Successful applicants will be notified by email by July 1, 2025.
- Funds will be distributed following the award notification and completion of any necessary administrative procedures.

Questions and Support:
For assistance with the application process or for more information about the grant, please contact *grants@kidneycancer.org.*
We look forward to your innovative contributions to the field of kidney cancer research. Submit your application and join us in this exciting endeavor!

Note on the use of Language Models and AI-assisted writing tools:
In the preparation of grant proposals, the use of Language Model (LM) and AI-assisted writing tools is permitted as a supplementary aid. However, applicants must ensure that the core ideas, data, and primary content of the proposal are their original work and

accurately represent their research intentions. **Any use of such technologies should be transparently declared in the application.** Applicants are responsible for the verification of all AI-generated content to confirm its accuracy, relevance, and alignment with ethical research standards. The final submission should reflect the applicant's unique perspective and contribution to their field, with AI serving only in an ancillary capacity to enhance the clarity and coherence of the written material. We advise applicants to engage with these tools judiciously, upholding the integrity of the scientific inquiry and maintaining the highest level of scholarship in their proposals.

Award Terms and Conditions

Applicant Notification
Applicants will be notified about the decision on their application within 8-10 weeks of application submission. All applicants, both funded and not funded, will be provided with a summary of the feedback from the review of their application.

Award Activation
Applicants whose proposals get selected for funding will be requested to complete and return the following documentation to KCA before their award can be activated:

- Award Acceptance Agreement – An award acceptance letter will be emailed requesting information on Awardee, Institution, contact officials, and bank information for electronic transfer of payments, and will include dates for grant requirements submissions (progress reports, financial reports)
- A copy of the Institution's IRS Form W-9 or IRS Form W-8BEN-E for non-US institutions (if not submitted previously)
- Data Management and Sharing (DMS) Plan – Awardees will be required to complete a DMS Plan in accordance with the NIH 2023 Data Management and Sharing (DMS) Plan for federal grants. Info on how to write a DMS Plan can be found on the NIH Scientific Data Sharing webpage.

Disbursement Guidelines
The total amount of this award is **$75,000** INCLUSIVE of indirect costs, and the anticipated granting period is **09/01/2025** to **08/31/2026** (to be agreed by both parties, pending signature of activation materials). Funds will be distributed within 30 days of receiving all the required documents and information.
Shortly after award notification, the KCA communications director will contact each award recipient for a short interview. Candidates agree to provide this information and allow for its inclusion in our social media, website, and marketing materials.

Funding and indirect costs:
- Funding is to be used solely for research costs and salaries of research personnel directly involved in the conduct of the research proposed. Other allowed uses of the funds are:
- A maximum of 5% can be utilized for institutional indirect costs if necessary.
- Up to $1,000 of the funds awarded can be used for expenses (travel, lodging, food, and beverage) to attend one IKCSNA conference.

Research Follow-up and Reports
The awardee must submit a 6-month and a final 12-month progress reports on the status of the project per the schedule proposed in the award letter; if deemed necessary you may be asked to participate in teleconferences with KCA.

Grant recipients are highly encouraged to submit an abstract or presentation at one IKCS meeting during or soon after the conclusion of their award. If no conference submission is entered, KCA requires a summary presentation with a clear statement of why the data is not

ready for formal meeting submission. Grant Recipient will do their best to provide any additional updates when asked by the KCA periodically up to 12 months after the end date of the grant. Grant Recipient will notify and acknowledge the KCA in any publications, presentation, poster on data stemming from this grant.

Financial Reporting

An annual financial statement must be provided to KCA, itemizing expenditure for all awarded funds within 60 days of the end of the award period. An Expenditure Report template will be provided and must be signed by the awardee and responsible institutional financial officer. Carryover of funds is subject to KCA's approval. Additional interim accounting may be requested by KCA. At the conclusion of the award period, unexpended/uncommitted funds must be returned to KCA within 60 days of the financial statement date. The Budget Justification form can be accessed HERE.

Intellectual Property Statement:

Materials (including but not limited to concepts, images, past data, drawings, processes, text) originated and submitted by the applicant, his/her co-investigators and their respective institutions (referred to hereafter as the "Submitting Parties") shall remain the sole and exclusive intellectual property of those Submitting Parties. This is to include any annual updates and/or communication about the project as communicated to the KCA and/or the grant review committee as well as any revenue, copyright and/or royalties resulting from the research. As an exception, the KCA shall only maintain the right to disclose the authors names, headshots, institutional affiliation, title and public abstract of the research in their grant award announcements. Although Submitting Parties are expected to notify the KCA of any public presentation, publication of data and outcomes, or patent filing stemming from research performed through support of their grant, the Submitting Parties are not under obligation to seek approval for those publications, nor any IP applications thereof.

Status of Awardee

The awardee will be considered an employee of the awardee's institution and not of KCA.

Extended Leave of Absence

Should the awardee need to take a leave of absence for more than a month for reasons such as maternity/paternity or illness, KCA must be informed of the date of departure and expected date of return.

Award Purpose Change or Transfer

Any fundamental change in the purpose for which the Award was originally made must have prior written consent of KCA. An Award may not be transferred from one institution to another without prior written authorization from KCA.

Award Cancellation or Early Termination

KCA reserves the right to cancel or prematurely terminate a grant if required. In such an event, the award amount will be prorated based on the number of months it was in effect. A final report on expenditures and a refund of any unspent funds must be submitted to KCA

within 60 days after cancellation or termination. Failure to provide the final expenditure report by the required date will result in suspension of the award and may impact the applicant's eligibility for future funding opportunities at KCA until all materials are received.

Other Sources of Support
Research overlaps with proposals for such funding is permitted as long as KCA is notified. The grantee and the sponsoring institution are responsible for informing KCA of possible conflicts related to duplicate funding of the grant-funded project, including new funding secured during the grant funding period. Failure to inform KCA of other sources of support can result in loss of KCA funding and may also impact the applicant's eligibility for future funding opportunities at KCA.

Attending IKCS Conference
Grantees are encouraged to present the progress of their research as a poster or an oral presentation at least at one IKCS Conference after the start of their research project. Up to $1,000 of the awarded funds can be allocated for expenses (travel, lodging, food, and beverage) to attend one IKCS conference. Grantees are eligible for a discounted registration rate (please notify your attendance at meetings@kidneycancer.org to obtain a reduced fare registration code).

Public Notification of Awards Funded
Once the grant is activated, KCA will advertise online and in KCA's other public documentation to the recipients of the grant together with a lay summary of the proposed research. In case of funding, we will ask awardees to share a photograph (over 2MB) that we can use in upcoming award announcements.

Publicity, Publications or Exhibits
The Awardee Institution must notify KCA in advance of any publications, presentations, or announcements pertaining to work done under the Grant or Follow-Up Work, whether these are to professional audiences or the public media. For professional publications and presentations, once these have been accepted, Grantee Institution must submit an electronic copy of the paper, abstract, slide presentation or poster to grants@kidneycancer.org with details of publication release or presentation (journal, meeting, time, location). The support of KCA must be duly recognized everywhere and must include the KCA grant number.
All information shall be held as confidential by KCA until time of public presentation or publication.
For announcements to the public, the public media and/or the press, including a posting to the Internet, pertaining to this Grant or any Follow-Up Work (collectively, a "Release"), Awardee Institution agrees to provide a draft of such Release to KCA at grants@kidneycancer.org least one week before such publication of such Release so as to

provide KCA the opportunity to suggest edits to the language of the Release, particularly as to KCA's role in the Award, any Follow-Up Work, and kidney cancer research. The Awardee Institution agrees to consider all such suggestions and include them in the Release if they are accurate. Grantee Institution shall not unreasonably decline to include any edits in a Release.

For the purposes of this Grant, the term, "Follow-Up Work" shall mean any research predicated upon or directly related to the research funded by this Award.

Collaboration with Pattern.org

Pattern.org, an initiative of the Rare Cancer Research Foundation (RCRF), allows cancer patients, regardless of where they're being treated in the U.S. to donate their tissue to research, including fresh living tissue directly from resections as well as stored FFPE or frozen specimens. If your research proposal requires access to fresh or stored tissue samples which are not attainable through your own institution or existing institutional agreements, please consider including a request in your proposal to utilize Pattern's services. The cost for a delivered-to-your-lab de-identified fresh specimen along with a germline sample and associated clinical data is $3000. FFPE samples and frozen specimens can also be obtained at variable costs. These fees cover the biologistics, platform and IRB oversight expenses associated with each tissue and related clinical data collection. If you would like more details on this opportunity and requirements to work with RCRF/Pattern.org, please contact info@rarecancer.org.

The grant recipient acknowledges having read this entire Award Acceptance Agreement and with full power and authority to execute this Agreement, agrees to perform with the Terms and Conditions contained herein.