

Clinical Trial Principal Investigator Grant Program (CTPI)

Program Overview

LCFA's Scientific Advisory Board created LCFA's Clinical Trial Principal Investigator Grant Program to address a critical need in thoracic oncology: ensuring that promising junior-career clinical investigators have the protected research time necessary to lead practice-changing clinical trials.

Over the past two decades, investigator-led clinical trials in targeted therapy and immunotherapy have transformed outcomes for many lung cancer patients. We fund research because sustained investment turns breakthroughs into new standards of care, and a single well-designed study can change treatment for thousands.

LCFA will award two \$150,000 grants to junior-career clinical investigators. Each grant will be for \$50,000 per year for three years to subsidize the protected research time of junior investigators who serve as National Principal Investigators on National Clinical Trials Network (NCTN) therapeutic trials (including those sponsored by NCTN group foundations) in thoracic malignancies. Eligible disease areas include non-small cell lung cancer, small cell lung cancer, mesothelioma, thymoma/thymic carcinoma, and pulmonary carcinoid.

Eligibility

Candidates must meet all of the following criteria:

- Hold an M.D., D.O., or equivalent degree
- Hold the rank of Assistant Professor with fewer than six years at rank at the time the trial activates (exceptions may be considered after prior consultation with LCFA)
- Be a U.S. citizen or permanent resident
- Serve as National PI on a fully approved NCTN (Alliance, ECOG-ACRIN, SWOG, or NRG) Phase II/III or Phase III thoracic oncology therapeutic trial that is about to activate or will activate within six months

Nomination Process

Nominations are submitted exclusively by the chairs of NCTN lung cancer or thoracic oncology committees. Each nomination must be accompanied by a letter of support from the NCTN Group Chair. LCFA encourages committee chairs to identify junior investigators whose work reflects the urgency and promise of this moment in thoracic oncology.

The complete nomination package must be assembled as a single PDF (named **LastName_FirstName_NCTN.pdf**) and emailed to grants@lcfamerica.org. The package must include the following:

1. Nomination letter from the committee Chair (1 page)
2. Group Chair support letter (1 page)
3. Candidate CV or NIH biosketch (up to 6 pages)
4. Candidate statement describing how protected time will be used and expected impact (max 2 pages)
5. Trial summary including protocol number, phase, approval status, estimated activation date, and the nominee's National PI responsibilities (1 page)
6. Institutional commitment letter from an authorized official confirming acceptance of award terms, including no overhead, and institutional support (1 page)
7. Budget justification showing percent FTE funded, start date for funds, and other salary support sources (1 page)
8. Optional: one additional support letter from a mentor or division chief (1 page)

Review & Selection

The nomination period will open on October 1 and close on December 1, 2026 with the announcement in 2027. During this time, we encourage you to submit your nominations of promising junior investigators. Following a thorough review process by LCFA's Scientific Advisory Board, the awardees will be announced at the IASLC Targeted Therapy Meeting in February, 2027. This timeline ensures we provide adequate time for the review and selection of outstanding candidates, culminating in a prestigious setting for the announcement of the grant recipients.

Selection is based on four criteria:

- Trial impact and relevance to thoracic oncology
- Candidate leadership, potential, and need for protected time
- Institutional commitment and feasibility of trial activation within the window
- A clear, realistic plan for use of funds and career development

Award Administration

Annual payments for years two and three will be released after LCFA receives the required annual progress report and institutional financial certification (due within 30 days of each grant anniversary). Please note, this award is not considered a W-2 payment and as such, tax implications should be discussed with NCTN's financial office. By default, funds are designated for salary support for the National PI's protected research time. Any reallocation of funds to other direct costs (e.g., travel, consumables) or purchases above \$5,000 requires prior written approval from LCFA; requests must include a brief justification and revised budget and will be reviewed within 15 business days. Funds may not be used for unrelated projects or institutional indirect/overhead charges.

Unspent funds, including early trial termination, must be reported and may be carried forward only with LCFA approval; LCFA may require return of unspent funds on grant termination or material noncompliance.

Reporting Requirements

- **Annual report** (due within 30 days of each grant anniversary): A 1–2 page investigator progress report plus institutional financial certification showing LCFA funds used as budgeted, including trial activation/enrollment status and key milestones.
- **Final report** (due within 60 days after grant end): Up to 5 pages summarizing outcomes: activation, enrollment, results if available; along with publications, abstracts, subsequent funding, career impacts, final financial reconciliation, and an updated CV.
- **Ad hoc requests:** LCFA may request interim updates or additional documentation as needed.

Impact Tracking

LCFA tracks program impact using both operational and career metrics, including:

- Trial activation date and time to activation
- Enrollment milestones and percent of target accrued
- Publications, presentations, and abstracts from trial work
- Subsequent grants and funding secured by awardees
- Career progression, including promotions and leadership roles

Compliance & Publicity

Institutions must comply with all IRB, NCTN, sponsor, and regulatory requirements. Noncompliance or failure to submit timely reports may result in suspension or termination of funding and a requirement to return unspent funds.

LCFA may publicly announce the awardee's name, institution, and trial title. Additional publicity will be coordinated with the awardee and NCTN. Sensitive or proprietary trial details will be withheld upon request.

Contact & Support

For eligibility or nomination questions, contact grants@lcfamerica.org. LCFA encourages prospective nominators to reach out before submitting to confirm candidate eligibility and discuss timing.