



**FINAL DRAFT
EMBARGOED
UNTIL 03/19/2025**

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

**2025 ACGT – CINELLI FAMILY FOUNDATION Investigator Award in Cell and Gene Therapy for
BREAST CANCER**

RFA Opens: March 19, 2025

Abstract Deadline: May 16, 2025, at 11 am (EST)

Invitation to Submit Application: June 27, 2025

Deadline for Completed Application: August 22, 2025, at 11 am (EST)

Finalists Selected: October 17, 2025

Award Approval: November 2025

Date of Issue: March 19, 2025



This grant is supported by The Cinelli Family Foundation's commitment to a world where no one dies of cancer.

PROGRAM GUIDELINES

PURPOSE

Alliance for Cancer Gene Therapy, Inc. (ACGT) funds research aimed at furthering the development of cell and gene therapy approaches for the treatment of patients with cancer. The Cinelli Family Foundation supports research into drug redevelopment, immunotherapy and other innovative treatment modalities for the treatment of breast cancer, leukemia and pancreatic cancers.

This RFA is specifically targeted to advance cell and gene therapy approaches to treating patients with breast cancer.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Breast cancer is the second leading cause of cancer death in women. Breast cancer incidence in young women has been increasing, as well. The rate of cancer for young women has risen by 1% each year from 2012 to 2021. In women under the age of 40, the rate has increased by about 3% each year from 2000 to 2019. Triple negative breast cancer also presents a high-unmet medical challenge with an average survival rate of about 10 months. Patients with a diagnosis of this aggressive cancer with a poor prognosis have limited treatment options.

This new grant award is for those conducting **cell and gene therapy research** specifically in **breast cancers** including, but not limited to, the following research areas:

- Identifying potential effective antigen targets in individual breast cancer subtypes including HER-2+ and triple negative breast cancer (TNBC) actionable for TCR or CAR T approaches.
- Development of CAR-immune cells including but not limited to CAR-macrophages, CAR-NK cells, CAR-MSCs, for the treatment of breast cancer.
- Development of bispecific CAR-T cells targeting two or more antigens and logic-gated CARs.
- Constructing CARs to degrade the extracellular matrix of tumor cells - targeting one or more components of the TME including the endothelium, CAFs, MDSCs, TAM, and Treg cells.
- Using oncolytic viruses to drive CAR-T cell traffic to tumor sites.
- Improvement of HER2-targeted CAR-T cells for HER-2-positive breast cancer to improve efficacy and limit toxicity.
- Approaches to address antigen heterogeneity and on-target/off-tumor toxicity.
- Developing cell therapies in conjunction with cis-cytokine bispecifics.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Candidates for the **2025 ACGT – CINELLI FAMILY FOUNDATION Investigator Award in Cell and Gene Therapy for Breast Cancer** must hold an MD, PhD, or equivalent degree and **must** be tenure-track or tenured faculty. ACGT will also consider applications from biotechnology companies with an early-stage cell and gene therapy clinical asset for breast cancer. The biotech company must have a formal relationship to work on the proposed project with an academic investigator at an accredited institution. ACGT recognizes that there may be other excellent researchers not on a tenure-track, or not at medical schools or research centers, **but this is an eligibility requirement for application**. The investigator must be conducting original research as an independent faculty member. ACGT has no citizenship restrictions, however, research supported by the award must be conducted at academic medical centers or research centers located in the United States or Canada.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

The award provides up to a maximum of \$500,000 distributed over 2-3 years, inclusive of a maximum of 10% indirect costs. The funds may be used at the recipient's discretion for salary, technical assistance, supplies, animals or capital equipment, but may not support staff who are not directly related to the project, e.g. secretaries or administrative assistants. Purchase of equipment is not allowed in the final year of the grant. Continued support is contingent upon submission and approval of a comprehensive progress report each year.

APPLICATION PROCEDURES

There is a two-step process for submitting applications electronically via **proposalCENTRAL**, an outside service provider hosted by Altum. Access is available using links provided on the ACGT website, www.acgtfoundation.org, or directly through the proposalCENTRAL website at: <https://proposalcentral.altum.com/Login.asp>.

A candidate must submit the following by the required deadlines:

- **Step 1:** A pre-application Letter of Intent (LOI) that includes an abstract of the proposed research and a current biographical sketch must be submitted by the deadline (**May 16th, 2025, at 11 am (EST)**) through the proposalCENTRAL platform. The LOI/abstracts will then be reviewed by the ACGT Scientific Advisory Council and its approved reviewers. Those selected will be invited **by June 27, 2025**, to submit full applications.
- **Step 2:** For those invited to submit full applications, a completed electronic application, including templates and a Signed Administrative and Signature Page(s) scanned and attached to the front of the completed application template, must be submitted by the deadline (**August 22, 2025, at 11 am at 11 am (EST)**) through the proposalCENTRAL platform.

NOTE: A paper copy submission is NOT required.

INSTRUCTIONS

Instructions for completing the application are available on ACGT's website under Research Grants and through the proposalCENTRAL website.

CUSTOMER SUPPORT

If you have any questions regarding the online application, please contact proposalCENTRAL Customer Support by e-mail at pcsupport@altum.com or at (800) 875-2562 x 227 (toll-free) or (301) 916-4557 x 227.

REVIEW PROCESS

Each applicant's LOI/abstract of the proposed project is reviewed by members of the ACGT Scientific Advisory Council and its approved reviewers. All applicants will be evaluated on the basis of scientific and technical merit and alignment with the research objectives of the grant. Based on the review of the LOI/abstracts, certain applicants will be invited to submit a full application for consideration. These applications are then peer reviewed by two - three experts in the field, with the highest scores determining the pool of finalists from which the ACGT Scientific Advisory Council and its approved reviewers makes its final recommendations to ACGT's and Cinelli Family Foundation Board of Directors for approval.

INSTITUTIONAL POLICIES

Grant funds will be disbursed following execution of a grant agreement between the grantee institution and ACGT. The following items will be covered in ACGT grant agreements with grantee institutions:

- Overhead of up to 10% is included in the awarded amount. The **2025 ACGT Cinelli Investigator Award in Cell and Gene Therapy for Breast Cancer** research grant will support research projects with two to three-year time frames for completion, with annual non-competitive renewal applications.
- Grantees and their affiliated institutions are required to submit periodic progress reports to ACGT. In addition, they are expected to share their research findings with the scientific community in a timely fashion through presentation at professional meetings and publication in scientific journals.

- ACGT and The Cinelli Family Foundation will request acknowledgment of the grant in any presentations and/or publications by the investigators and/or institutions.
- **ACGT will receive a reasonable royalty return, including, but not limited to, license fees on inventions and improvements made by investigators on research supported by its grants and/or investments.**
- The grantee institution will agree (i) to indemnify ACGT and The Cinelli Family Foundation solely with respect to claims relating to the award of a grant and (ii) that all research supported by ACGT and Cinelli will be conducted in accordance with all applicable state and Federal laws, rules and regulations.
- Awards to an institution will terminate when the principal investigator departs from the grantee institution and can be re-initiated at an alternate institution subject to ACGT and Cinelli approval.
- Should grantees and/or their affiliated institutions fail to meet policies, procedures and/or ongoing requirements of the grant, ACGT reserves the right to rescind annual follow-on grant awards.

RESPONSIBILITY OF THE GRANTEE INSTITUTION

An application for a grant must bear the signature of an official authorized to sign for the institution, **acknowledging the above policies.**

PROGRAM INQUIRIES

For application information, policies and procedures, and general information, please contact blavery@acgtfoundation.org.