

Winship Invest\$: Request for Pilot Grant Proposals Summer 2025

Winship Invest\$ Summer 2025 Research Domains At-a-Glance

Awards are \$50,000 for one year unless otherwise indicated.

Investigators must specify one domain from the nine listed below which best fits the proposed project.

Research Area Domains	
1. Early Detection, Risk Reduction and Prevention	Impactful early detection, risk reduction and prevention research, aiming to reduce the burden of cancer, with a focus on primary or secondary prevention strategies and community engagement
2. Team Science Research	Research from collaborative, multi-project research teams aiming to apply for large extramural grants within 2-3 years <i>Award: \$100,000 for 1 year, may be competitively renewed</i>
3. Precision Immunotherapy	Basic, translational, or clinical cancer research focused on advancing cancer precision immunotherapies, utilizing strategies such as immune profiling, cell therapy, or biomarker development
Strategic Research Domains	
4. Translational Cancer Metabolism Initiative (TCMI)	Collaborative cancer metabolism-related translational research with priority in integrating cancer, metabolism, and artificial intelligence expertise
5. Artificial Intelligence (AI)	Innovative AI applications in cancer biology, detection, treatment, and prevention with emphasis on novel AI approaches in basic and translational research
6. Nutrition and Cancer	Interdisciplinary research linking nutritional science to cancer prevention, progression, treatment response, or survivorship
7. Promoting Cancer Health Equity and Reducing Cancer Disparities	Addressing cancer disparities, social determinants of health, prevention and cancer control, and community engagement in Georgia <i>Award: \$100,000 over 2 years</i>
Disease-Specific Research Domains	
8. Breast Cancer	Translational or therapeutic research addressing disparities, novel targets, prognostic markers, immune pathways, and prevention strategies in breast cancer
9. Extramammary Paget's Disease (EMPD)	Translational, clinical, and preclinical research on EMPD, including quality of life, detection, treatment, and biological characterization with emphasis on collaborative teams <i>Awards: \$50K or \$100K, renewable to 2 years</i>

Key Dates

RFP Announcement:	Tuesday, July 22, 2025
Applicant Letter of Intent:	Monday, August 25, 2025
Application Receipt Date:	Monday, October 20, 2025 (extended)
Anticipated Start Date:	January 1, 2026

Winship Invest\$:

Request for Pilot Grant Proposals

Summer 2025

Winship Cancer Institute of Emory University (Winship) is pleased to release the *Winship Invest\$* Summer 2025 Request for Pilot Grant Proposals (RFP). *Winship Invest\$* is a peer-reviewed pilot grant program that funds innovative research and strategically builds cancer research capacity at Emory. Funds are intended to enable Winship investigators to obtain preliminary data for publication and subsequent peer-reviewed funding. *Winship Invest\$* releases two funding opportunities every year. Successful applications are supported by philanthropic contributions to Winship and by developmental funds from Winship's NCI Cancer Center Support Grant (CCSG). Investigators involved in cancer research but who are not yet Winship members may submit an application for funding, but must apply for Winship Program Membership (<https://winshipcancer.emory.edu/research/research-programs/membership/index.php>) to be eligible for awards.

Proposals with a budget of up to \$50,000 for one year may be considered for *Winship Invest\$* (unless otherwise stated for specific research domains). Investigators may submit a maximum of one proposal as PI (or MPI) for this RFP. Each proposal must identify one research domain for the submission that most closely aligns with the proposed aims. The current *Winship Invest\$* RFP seeks applications in the following nine research domains:

Winship Invest\$ Summer 2025 Research Domains:

I. RESEARCH AREAS

1. **Early Detection, Risk Reduction and Prevention** – Eligible proposals must clearly describe pre-clinical, translational, clinical, or population-based research projects in the field of cancer prevention, early detection, and risk reduction. Successful research projects will aim to reduce the burden of cancer, either through primary prevention or secondary prevention strategies. Community engagement in project aims to maximize impact preferred.
 - a. Primary prevention strategies could include but are not limited to modifications to diet, tobacco use, physical activity, or environmental exposures.
 - b. Secondary prevention strategies could include but are not limited to innovative techniques or technologies to reduce rates of cancer, such as immunologic, imaging, molecular techniques, screening, health trackers, artificial intelligence.
2. **Team Science Research** – This award will support multi-project, collaborative team research projects that have an intent to submit an application for a large, multi-project funding opportunity (ex: P-series, U-series or other similar awards with budget >\$2M) within two to three years for extramural funding. Proposals will be considered for budgets up to \$100K for one year with the potential of competitive renewal upon successful completion of the first-year milestones (maximum total \$200K). The award budget should support research projects for the grant submission. In addition, Winship may provide additional administrative support (up to 0.25 FTE) within the pilot grant award period to coordinate team efforts and external grant submission. This administrative effort is not part of the award budget. Requirements for funding include a two-year timeline with milestones plus bi-annual progress updates presented to the Winship Scientific Research Council composed of Winship program leaders and associate directors.
3. **Precision Immunotherapy** – The next generation of cancer immunotherapies are being designed based on patient tumor and immune system biology. This opportunity will support basic or translational cancer-related research projects or investigator-initiated clinical trials that focus on accelerating progress in treating cancers with precision immunotherapy approaches. Projects may utilize but are not limited to strategies such as immune profiling, immune monitoring, cell therapy development, immune/genomic profiling and/or immunotherapy biomarkers and may address new strategies to optimize immunotherapy response rate or resistance. Projects that utilize Winship shared resources will be preferred.

II. STRATEGIC RESEARCH DOMAINS

4. **Translational Cancer Metabolism Initiative (TCMI)** – This new Winship initiative aims to foster team science between investigators from the fields of cancer and metabolism. Inclusion of new collaborations with faculty who have not yet been involved in cancer-related projects at Winship and/or project aims or methods related to artificial intelligence are highly encouraged. The proposed projects should be collaborative and focused on translational cancer metabolism-related research. Projects should have at least two participating principal investigators and at least one investigator should have a background in cancer research. Applicants must be members of TCMI. Grant recipients are required to participate in a minimum of 50% of TCMI monthly meetings and to serve as reviewers for TCMI grants for at least one year. Applications should include a specific goal to leverage TCMI funding towards securing collaborative federal and private foundation awards, which is a critical measure of success. Questions related to this domain may be directed to the TCMI co-leaders Biplab Dasgupta (Biplab.dasgupta@emory.edu), Sumin Kang (smkang@emory.edu), or Mala Shanmugam. (mala.shan@emory.edu). Find more information for the TCMI initiative on the website at: <https://winshipcancer.emory.edu/research/research-programs/cell-molecular-biology/translational-cancer-metabolism-initiative.php>
5. **Artificial Intelligence (AI)** – Winship is seeking proposals for a pilot grant program aimed at fostering innovative applications of artificial intelligence (AI) in basic and translational cancer research. This initiative seeks to support pioneering projects that harness AI technologies to address critical challenges in cancer biology, detection, treatment, and prevention. Preference will be given to projects proposing new AI approaches that focus on basic and translational research, including but not limited to, protein structure prediction, identifying new druggable targets, high resolution imaging, cellular analysis, and analysis/integration of large data sets. Proposals should emphasize novel strategies for leveraging AI that would have the potential for future extramural funding.
6. **Nutrition and Cancer** – Winship is pleased to announce a pilot funding opportunity through the Winship Invest\$ Program focused on Nutrition and Cancer. This funding opportunity seeks innovative pilot projects exploring the behavioral factors, lifestyle interventions, and molecular mechanisms linking nutrition to cancer prevention, progression, treatment response, or survivorship. Priority will be given to interdisciplinary projects integrating nutritional science and oncology research, with strong potential for future external funding. Awards are intended to facilitate novel research directions, foster collaborations, and strengthen the scientific foundation in nutrition and cancer within the Winship research community.
7. **Promoting Cancer Health Equity and Reducing Cancer Disparities** – The Winship Center for Cancer Health Equity Research (WCCHER) and the Winship Community Outreach and Engagement (COE) are funding up to two (2) new cancer research pilots that focus on the unique cancer needs and priorities to reduce the cancer burden within the Winship catchment area (state of Georgia). Projects may focus on research related to high incidence or mortality tumors in our state, populations that experience health disparities, social determinants of health, prevention and cancer control efforts, implementation/ dissemination of evidence-based interventions, and impact on policy. Projects can focus on basic/translational research that addresses mechanisms contributing to cancer disparities in our catchment area, clinical research to reduce disparities in cancer survivor symptoms or response, or ways to improve diversity of enrollment on clinical trials. Projects should result in preliminary data needed to investigate potential solutions needed to reduce the cancer burden throughout the state of Georgia and leading to extramural funding. Questions related to this proposal may be directed to Theresa Gillespie, PhD (tgilles@emory.edu), AD-COE, and Director of the Winship Center for Cancer Health Equity Research.
 - a. Funding will provide up to \$100,000 over a two-year project period. A total of two (2) pilots will be funded if sufficient meritorious applications are submitted.
 - b. Applications **must be from a multi-PI** team, with the PI's representing **two or more Winship programs**.
 - c. The proposal should clearly indicate how, if the project is successful, it will promote greater cancer health equity among populations in Georgia.
 - d. Cancer populations include those residing in rural or urban underserved areas, older adults, populations from poverty/lower socio-economic status, or other groups that experience disparities across the cancer research continuum – basic, translational, clinical, or population sciences.
 - e. The proposal must include a well-designed plan as to how the work will be completed in the two-year time period and **how the results will lead to submission of applications for extramural funding**.

- f. The proposal must include some aspect of **community engagement**, such as receiving input from the COE community research panel, patients/survivors, community partners, or feedback on study design or research plan from community stakeholders. The proposal may also engage with established or new community or patient advisory groups.

III. DISEASE TYPE-SPECIFIC RESEARCH

8. **Breast Cancer** - Thanks to the generous donations from the Glenn Family Breast Center, we are pleased to solicit investigator-initiated proposals for breast cancer-specific translational research from both Preclinical Research Scientists AND Clinical Investigators. Junior faculty are strongly encouraged to apply. This opportunity aims to support:
- Therapeutic or non-therapeutic studies which prospectively enroll patients for research studies, utilize breast cancer samples/data, or develop innovative technology to address patient care opportunities or improve patient well-being.
 - Preclinical studies which prospectively utilize translationally minded in-vitro studies, breast cancer tissue samples, or drug delivery and animal-based disease models.

Submitted projects that leverage the strengths and expertise of multiple investigators from across two or more Winship research programs or research disciplines will be prioritized.

Project proposals should focus on (but are not limited to) the following breast cancer research concentration areas:

- Addressing Disparities
- Novel Targets and Therapeutic Strategies
- Development of Prognostic and Predictive Markers
- Non-immune Therapeutic Mechanisms
- Immune Therapy Pathways and Overcoming Resistance
- Carcinogenesis and Prevention

9. **Extramammary Paget's Disease ("EMPD")** - Thanks to the generosity of Dexter and Ann Crotts, the "Dexter T. and Ann Crotts Global Initiative for Extramammary Paget's Disease" was established in January of 2024. As a part of that initiative, the program leadership is soliciting investigator-initiated proposals focused on this rare tumor. Two proposals will be funded as per the details below:
- Translational, clinical or health-services research focusing on EMPD treatment, detection and diagnosis, or patient quality of life. Junior faculty are encouraged to apply. Collaborative and team-based research or multi-institution studies will be reviewed favorably. Studies that prioritize investigation of health care disparities are encouraged. Proposals do NOT have to be therapeutic. This proposal will be funded up to \$50,000 for one year with a renewable second year of support requiring a progress report for renewal.
 - Preclinical proposals focused on genetic and genomic characterization of EMPD, therapeutic or diagnostic/imaging targets, immunology of EMPD or novel investigation into etiology or predictive factors will be considered. Senior, funded investigators with established track records of scientific investigation will be prioritized. Team-based research, collaboration (especially inter-institutional), and potential for future extramural funding will also be reviewed favorably. This proposal will be funded up to \$100,000 for one year with a renewable second year of support requiring a progress report for renewal.

All funded investigators will be required to provide a written report detailing outcomes of their research, including manuscripts published or presentations resulting from the work, to be shared with the donors (regardless of request for renewal). In addition, any academic output generated from this support will require acknowledgment of the Initiative and a thank you to the donors.

OTHER REQUIRED INFORMATION FOR ALL APPLICATIONS:

1. Community Outreach and Engagement Statement

For all research domains, a community outreach and engagement (COE) statement is required. The COE statement should describe the project's impact on Winship's catchment area, defined as the state of Georgia. It should justify how the proposed research will address and help reduce the cancer burden in Winship's catchment area, or state how proposals will disseminate evidence-based interventions to communities in Georgia or beyond. Investigators should highlight how their research aligns with catchment area priorities when appropriate.

Research catchment area priorities include cancers with increased incidence, disparities, vulnerable populations and/or risk factors in Georgia. This includes cancer types such as lung, breast, prostate, colorectal, pancreatic, multiple myeloma and risk factors such as obesity, low screening rates, health literacy, HPV vaccination, UV exposure, tobacco use, and poverty. Questions about COE may be directed to Theresa Gillespie, PhD (tgilles@emory.edu), Winship Associate Director for Community Outreach and Engagement (COE).

WINSHIP INVEST\$ ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA AND APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS:

1. Pilot projects will be awarded to active Winship members (<https://winshipcancer.emory.edu/research/research-programs/index.php>). To maintain active membership status, the following criteria must be met:
 - a. Attendance of at least 50% to published meetings of the research program to which the member belongs;
 - b. Maintenance of good financial standing with Winship (no pilot projects in deficit);
 - c. Acknowledgement of the Winship Cancer Center Support Grant (CCSG) on all publications resulting from utilization of services in one or more of Winship Shared Resources;
 - d. Acknowledgement of the appropriate pilot funding source on all publications resulting from work supported by the *Winship Invest\$* Program.
2. Winship members may receive only one pilot project award in a 12-month period and may not submit more than one proposal through this RFP. Members who have an active Winship Invest\$ pilot project are not eligible to apply.
3. Salary support for the principal investigator is not allowed except for junior faculty at the rank of Assistant Professor and below.
4. All proposals must include a clear plan for subsequent extramural grant submissions as a result of the work proposed, and a one-year timeline based on specific aims.
5. Data Management - Proposals must include a plan to maintain research data in Redcap or other secure data management system (if relevant) with quality control and stored on the Emory system with back-up and potential for data sharing. Consultation for data sharing plans is recommended with the Winship Data and Technology Applications (DATA) Shared Resource. (<https://winshipcancer.emory.edu/research/shared-resources/winship-data-and-technology-applications.html>)
6. Clinical Research – Proposals can only be submitted by MDs, MD/PhDs, or RN/PhDs. All clinical research awardees are expected to follow clinical research guidelines set by Emory IRB, Winship Clinical Trials Office SOPs and the Winship Protocol Review and Monitoring Committee and must satisfy clinical research training requirements. Proposals must include the following:
 - a. A Human Subjects Research document
 - b. Winship PRMC Application
 - c. Clinical Protocol and Informed Consent Form
 - d. A plan to maintain clinical research data in Oncore or with the support of the Winship DATA shared resource
7. Vertebrate Animals Research - Proposals that include *in vivo* studies must include a section addressing *Vertebrate Animals* research and include either a draft to be submitted or IACUC-approved protocol.

Letter of Intent

A Letter of Intent must be submitted and approved by Winship to advance a proposal to full application status. This document must identify the PI, all potential co-investigators and/or collaborators on the project, the research program of the applicant, one research domain which best fits the project to be considered, a proposed title and a brief description of the proposed research project. Letters of Intent should be no longer than two pages and should be uploaded as a single PDF document to <https://intranet.winship.emory.edu/pilotgrant> **no later than 11:59 pm on Monday, August 25, 2025**. Please direct any questions you have regarding this funding opportunity to winshipgrants@emory.edu.

Timeline:

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