

**The Northern California Cancer Center
Greater Bay Area Cancer Registry**

**GUIDELINES FOR APPLICATIONS FOR
SCIENTIFIC MERIT PEER-REVIEW**

The Scientific Review Committee requests that applicants submit a research proposal in a format similar to that required for the “Research Plan” section of a Public Health Service Grant application to the National Institutes of Health. However, the proposal should be a shortened version, consisting of **no more than six pages, including an abstract** of not more than one page. The **font** used must be **no smaller than 11 point** and the **margins** should be **no less than ¾”**.

The applicable sections of the research plan are listed below and modified from those written by NIH.

Research Plan

Specific Aims

- List the overall (long-term) objective of the research
- List the specific aims of the research currently proposed

Background and Significance

- Briefly describe the background leading to the present application
- Critically evaluate existing knowledge
- Identify knowledge gaps and discuss how the proposed research will address those gaps
- State the importance of the research to understanding cancer

Preliminary Studies

- Describe preliminary work by the principal investigator and/or research team that is relevant to evaluating:
 - the potential success of the proposed research, and
 - the experience and competence of the investigators to pursue the proposed project

Research Design and Methods

- Describe the study design and subject eligibility
- Describe the procedures that will be used and the data that will be collected to achieve the specific aims
- Provide power calculations
- Describe the analysis plan
- Discuss the strengths and limitations of the proposed research

Financial, Human, and Institutional Resources

- Describe the amounts and sources of funding
- Provide a reasonably detailed budget
- Describe the personnel who will be working on the project and their compensation

- Describe the institutional resources available (e.g., space, computer hardware and software, office machines and supplies)

Other

- Provided literature citations
- List key personnel
- List performance site
- Limited appendices are acceptable; however, the research plan should stand on its own

VERY IMPORTANT NOTE:

If you are planning to use cancer registry data it is **strongly** recommended that the registry data dictionary – available at <http://www.ccrca.org> (Registrar Resources – California Cancer Reporting System Standards, Volumes I and III) – be consulted to identify appropriate variables and that the investigator evaluate the feasibility of the research plan and the interpretation of study results in light of the available data. A similar recommendation would be made for other previously collected datasets as well (e.g., Census data).

Criteria for Evaluation of Applications for Scientific Merit Peer-Review

The criteria used by the Scientific Review Committee is similar to that used by NIH study sections and is described below.

Research Project Evaluation Criteria

Significance

- Does this study address an important problem?
- Are the aims original and innovative?
- If the aims of the application are achieved, how will scientific knowledge be advanced?

Approach

- Are the conceptual framework, study design, methods, and analysis adequately described, developed, integrated, and appropriate for the aims of the project?
- Is the study feasible?
- Does the applicant acknowledge potential problems and consider alternatives?

Investigators

- Is the work proposed appropriate to the experience level of the PI and other researchers (if any)?

Adequate Resources

- Does the investigator have adequate funding, staff, and institutional resources to complete the project as described?