

***New NCI Funding Initiative:***  
**NCI Awardee Skills Development Consortium**  
**(NASDC)**

**Jeannette Korczak, PhD**

***Center for Cancer Training (CCT) / Cancer Training Branch (CTB)***

Email questions: [korczakj@mail.nih.gov](mailto:korczakj@mail.nih.gov); subject “NASDC”

# Outline

- NASDC initiative and underlying rationale
- NASDC Research Education Short Courses (UE5) FOA
- NASDC Program Logistics and Evaluation Coordinating Center (U24) FOA
- NASDC Cooperative Agreement features
- Tips for preparing NASDC applications
- Discuss questions from the Audience sent to [korczakj@mail.nih.gov](mailto:korczakj@mail.nih.gov) with the subject line “NASDC”

# NASDC Initiative and Underlying Rationale

# NASDC Initiative

- *Goal: provide opportunities for current NCI grantees, especially junior faculty, to enhance their skills in critical areas for establishing and maintaining independent academic cancer research careers*
- NASDC is a consortium that is to be funded through two companion, cooperative agreements RFAs:
  - [RFA-CA-19-010](#): Supports Research Education Short Courses (**UE5**)
    - UE5 is the cooperative agreements analog of the R25 education grant
  - [RFA-CA-19-011](#): Supports a Program Logistics and Evaluation Coordinating Center (**U24**)
- Very important for UE5 applicants to understand the U24 RFA, and vice versa, in order to prepare strong applications

# Rationale for NASDC

- NCI funds ~ 1,500 junior faculty investigators each year through various types of “K” and “R” competing and non-competing awards
- These junior faculty grantees are at a critical career juncture
  - Need to successfully compete for additional NIH grants
  - Expected to become academic leaders who teach, mentor, and manage a research program
- Requires skills beyond those taught in graduate/medical schools and postdoctoral training, e.g., securing funding, managing personnel/ budgets, mentoring, collaborating, stay abreast of emerging technologies

## Rationale for NASDC (cont.)

- Although courses exist on many of these topics, they are not specifically designed to meet the needs of junior faculty NCI grantees
- The current hypercompetitive funding climate further exacerbates the difficulty of establishing a successful academic career trajectory
- In 2016, Congress established the Next Generation Researchers Initiative (NGRI) as part of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Cures Act
- Among other activities, the NGRI tasked the NIH to develop, modify, or prioritize policies to enhance training and mentorship programs for new researchers
- In response, the NCI CCT/CTB proposed NASDC to address the training and mentorship needs of current NCI-funded junior faculty investigators.

## Rationale for NASDC (cont.)

- NASDC will support the development and delivery of a suite of short courses that teach skills in areas critical to establish and maintain successful independent academic cancer research careers
- Ensure that junior faculty investigators with various types of current NCI “K” and “R” awards have access to opportunities and resources that help them develop needed skills for academic careers
- Help retain these PIs in cancer research with long and productive academic careers, maximizing the return on NCI’s investment in these individuals

# **NASDC Research Education Short Courses (UE5) RFA-CA-19-010**

**<https://www.cancer.gov/grants-training/training/funding/UE5>**



## UE5 Participants

- Priority participants for NASDC courses consist of current NCI-funded junior faculty with various types of “K” or “R” awards
  - Allowable awards include: K01, K07, K08, K22, K23, K25, R00, R21, or first R01-equivalent awards
  - Junior faculty include assistant professors, instructors, research scientists, or equivalent
  - If space is available, any NCI-funded extramural independent PI or NCI intramural researcher may participate
- A recruitment plan to enhance diversity must assure that participants include adequate representation with respect to race, ethnicity, gender, and disability

# UE5 Short Courses

- Short Courses should provide skills and competencies necessary for the career development of current NCI-funded junior faculty investigators
- Sample course topics may include, but are not limited to:
  - NIH/NCI Grant Opportunities and Grant Writing
  - Writing Skills for Scientists
  - Mentoring, Leadership, and Collaboration
  - Business of Science
  - Clinical Aspects of Immuno-Oncology
  - Emerging Technologies and Research Resources
  - Essentials of Data Science and Statistical Analysis
- A given course can include content from multiple topics listed above

## UE5 Short Courses (cont.)

- Should be innovative and include state-of-the-art, evidence-based scientific and/or educational content
- Must be open to all eligible NCI-funded junior faculty, although certain courses may be of greater interest to some junior faculty awardees than others
- Must include in-person educational activities; teleconferences and/or online educational components are optional
- Educational activities should be completed within 6 months; evaluation activities may extend beyond that
- Courses must be offered once in Year 1 and twice in each of Years 2 and 3

## UE5 Short Courses (cont.)

- Non-responsive applications **WILL NOT** be reviewed and include those that:
  - Are not expressly oriented to the needs of NCI-funded junior faculty
  - Do not involve in-person activities
  - Are not offered once in Year 1 and twice in each of Years 2 and 3

## UE5 Principal Investigators (PI(s))

- Individual PI or Multiple PI (MPI) teams are allowed
- Expected to be senior faculty with established careers as educators and researchers, including effective mentoring of junior faculty towards successful academic research careers
- Expected to have demonstrated experience in providing administrative and scientific leadership to the development and implementation of an education program that includes participants from a national audience
- May serve as a PI or MPI on more than one scientifically distinct NASDC UE5 application
- May NOT serve as a PI or MPI on a NASDC U24 application (although a given institution can submit applications to both NASDC FOAs)

# UE5 Budget Considerations

Funds Available	\$1,840,000 Total Costs / Year for up to 5 UE5 awards
<b>Award Budget</b>	<b>\$340,000 Direct Costs / Year</b>
Award Project Period	3 years
Personnel	Up to \$170,000 Direct Costs / Year (including consultants costs)
Minimum PI Effort	At least 1.2 CM for each PI / Multiple PI
Other Program-Related Expenses	Consultants, equipment, supplies, travel, etc. (Also, see Section IV. R&R Budget in FOA)
(Partial) Participant Costs	Up to \$1,000 per participant for travel, housing, and per diem
Indirect Costs	8% of Modified Total Direct Costs

**NASDC Program Logistics and Evaluation  
Coordinating Center (U24)  
RFA-CA-19-011**

**<https://www.cancer.gov/grants-training/training/funding/U24>**

## U24 Coordinating Center

- Addresses the NASDC logistics and evaluation needs in serving the NASDC Short Courses that are supported by the companion UE5 FOA
- Interacts closely with NASDC UE5 awardees and Steering Committee in performing activities and roles that may include, but are not limited to:
  - Advertising the NASDC Short Courses and recruiting participants
  - Providing logistic support during course implementation
  - Arranging periodic NASDC Steering Committee in-person meetings and teleconferences and preparing summary minutes
  - Assuming a primary role in the evaluation of the NASDC Short Courses and overall NASDC program



## U24 Principal Investigators (PI(s))

- Individual PI or Multiple PI (MPI) teams are allowed
  - May be advantageous to have MPIs with complementary logistics and evaluation expertise
- Expected to be senior faculty with successful track records of providing collaborative leadership in the organization, management, and evaluation of large educational programs involving multiple institutions and drawing participants from a national audience
- May NOT serve as a PI or MPI on a NASDC UE5 application (although a given institution can submit applications to both NASDC FOAs)

# U24 Budget Considerations

Funds Available	\$660,000 Total Costs / Year for one U24 award
<b>Award Budget</b>	<b>\$440,000 Direct Costs / Year</b>
Award Project Period	3 years
Personnel	No budget cap but request must be justified
Minimum PI Effort	At least 1.2 CM for each PI / Multiple PI
Other Program-Related Expenses	Consultants, equipment, supplies, travel, etc. (Also, see Section IV. R&R Budget in FOA)
(Partial) Participant Costs	Not Applicable
Indirect Costs	Negotiated institutional F&A rate

# NASDC Cooperative Agreement Features

# Cooperative Agreement

- A support mechanism used when there will be substantial Federal scientific or programmatic involvement
- Substantial involvement means that, after award, NCI scientific or program staff will assist, guide, coordinate, or participate in project activities
- Specifics of the substantial involvement are delineated in Section VI.2 of the FOA under “Cooperative Agreement Terms and Conditions of Award”
  - This is useful information to keep in mind as you write your application

## Cooperative Agreement (cont.)

- NCI's purpose is to support and stimulate the recipients' activities by involvement in and otherwise working jointly with the award recipients in a partnership role
- NCI's purpose is not to assume direction, prime responsibility, or a dominant role in the activities
- The dominant role and prime responsibility resides with the awardees for the project as a whole, although specific tasks and activities may be shared among the awardees and the NCI
- See Section VI.2 of the FOAs for the specifics of the primary responsibilities of the PI(s), the substantial programmatic involvement of NCI staff, the areas of joint responsibility, and how any disputes will be resolved

## Cooperative Agreement (cont.)

- Since NASDC is a consortium with multiple grantees, it will be governed by a Steering Committee
- The Steering Committee will be composed of the following voting members:
  - A PI or designee from each UE5 award who will each have one vote
  - A PI or designee from the U24 award who will have one vote
  - NCI Project Scientist(s) who will have collectively one vote
- The Chair and Co-Chair of the Steering Committee will be selected from the representatives of all NASDC awardees
- Additional NCI staff members may participate in Steering Committee meetings as non-voting members

# Tips for Preparing NASDC Applications

# Useful Tips for Preparing NASDC Applications

- Be familiar with both the UE5 and U24 FOAs since their activities dovetail in certain areas
  - In particular, see Section VI.2 – “Cooperative Agreement Terms and Conditions” of both FOAs
- Pay special attention to Sections IV and V of the FOA you are responding to
  - Section IV has the detailed instructions for YOU to follow in preparing your application
  - Section V has the detailed instructions for the REVIEWERS to follow as they evaluate your application
    - Write your application to make it as easy as possible for the reviewers to find what they are told to look for!



## Useful Tips for Preparing NASDC Applications (cont.)

- Note that the “Research Strategy” of Section IV differs from an R01
  - UE5 Research Strategy is called the “Research Education Program Plan” and can be up to **25** pages long (like an R25) and includes:
    - Proposed Research Education Program
    - Program Director / Principal Investigator
    - Program Faculty
    - Program Participants
    - Institutional Environment and Commitment (in addition, a Letter of Institutional Commitment is *required* in Letters of Support)
    - Diversity Recruitment Plan
    - Plan for Instruction in the Responsible Conduct of Research
    - Evaluation Plan

## Useful Tips for Preparing NASDC Applications (cont.)

- U24 Research Strategy can be up to **12** pages long and includes:
  - Subsection A: Coordinating Center Overview
  - Subsection B: General Approaches to the Coordination of NASDC Activities
  - Subsection C: Plans for Basic Coordinating Center Functions
- Note that Section V of both FOAs has reviewers evaluating:
  - Significance
  - Investigator(s)
  - Innovation
  - Approach
  - Environment
- The lack of alignment of the components of Sections IV and V makes it wise to consider both sections when preparing your application

## Useful Tips for Preparing NASDC Applications (cont.)

- If you want to include an appendix, be aware of the NIH appendix policy – see [NOT-OD-18-126](#) and [https://grants.nih.gov/grants/policy/appendix\\_policy.htm](https://grants.nih.gov/grants/policy/appendix_policy.htm)
  - Applications with non-compliant appendixes WILL NOT be reviewed
- Send a Letter of Intent (LOI) to me via email by March 1 (this Friday!)
  - LOI is not mandatory but helps NCI staff plan the review meeting
- Feel free to email me to request a pre-application discussion of your project
  - Include the Specific Aims and NIH biosketches of any PIs in the email for my review before we speak

# Important Dates for NASDC Applications and Awards

- March 1, 2019 – LOI Due Date and Earliest Application Submission Date
- **April 1, 2019 – Application Due Date – by 5 PM local time of applicant organization**
  - This is a ONE-TIME Due Date for this NASDC pilot initiative
  - No late applications will be accepted
- ~ June 2019 – Scientific Merit Review
- October 2019 – National Cancer Advisory Board Review
- December 2019 – Earliest Start Date

## Questions:

Email [korczakj@mail.nih.gov](mailto:korczakj@mail.nih.gov); subject “NASDC”

## Slides:

Email [korczakj@mail.nih.gov](mailto:korczakj@mail.nih.gov); subject “Slides”

Soon will also be available via webpages below

## Webpages:

<https://www.cancer.gov/grants-training/training/funding/UE5>

<https://www.cancer.gov/grants-training/training/funding/U24>

# THANK YOU!



**NATIONAL  
CANCER  
INSTITUTE**

[www.cancer.gov](http://www.cancer.gov)

[www.cancer.gov/espanol](http://www.cancer.gov/espanol)