



**Medical College of Wisconsin, Department of Surgery
We Care Fund for Medical Innovation and Research
2024 Faculty Seed Grants**

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

The We Care Fund for Medical Innovation and Research Committee is requesting applications for seed funding by faculty with a primary or secondary appointment in the Department of Surgery. Grants may be awarded in two categories:

\$50,000 Matthew J. Riese, MD, PhD Promising Pilot Grant, distributed over 1 year

Dr. Riese was a native of Wisconsin and a graduate of the Medical Scientist Training Program of the Medical College of Wisconsin. Following training in Internal Medicine at Massachusetts General Hospital and Hematology-Oncology at the University of Pennsylvania Perelman School of Medicine, he returned to his alma mater where he established a cutting-edge translational program in solid tumor immunotherapy. Beloved by his colleagues for his wit and sagacity, this We Care Grant honors the memory of Dr. Riese, his legacy of scientific achievement and his love of medicine.

\$100,000 Multi-PI Grant, distributed over 2 years

KEY DATES

Request for Applications (RFA) Release Date	Monday, January 22, 2024
Full Application Due in eBridge	Friday, March 22, 2024 by 5:00 pm CST
Recommended for Funding Notifications	<i>No Later Than</i> – Friday, July 12, 2024
Anticipated Start Date	September 1, 2024

OVERVIEW

The mission of the We Care Fund is to use contributions made available by the philanthropic community to support Department of Surgery faculty who are creating innovative therapies and clinical programs that benefit patients in Wisconsin and throughout the world. Proposals should demonstrate the importance of innovation and discovery to advance science and the clinical care of patients. Any level of science is eligible for funding; preference will be given to those proposals that effectively articulate a translational theme even if the bedside application may be in the future. Proposals may include innovative basic science or clinical research projects. Potential for extramural funding will be a consideration for these applications as the goal of We Care is to stimulate preliminary data for a larger NIH (or equivalent) proposal.

ELIGIBILITY/REQUIREMENTS

- A faculty member of any rank with either a primary or secondary appointment in the Department of Surgery must be the Contact Principal Investigator (PI). The Contact PI will be responsible for ensuring compliance with the scientific, safety, and ethical responsibilities of the grant award. The Contact PI will have the additional expectation of managing the award through the eBridge system. They will be responsible for all grant reporting and fiscal management.
- Key Personnel
 - Each application may list a maximum of one additional Principal Investigator (Multiple PI or MPI) and two Co-Investigators (Co-I) from any department or center at MCW.
 - MPIs must hold a faculty appointment.
 - Co-Is can be faculty, postdocs, fellows, or residents. If a postdoc, fellow, or resident will be a co-I, their available time period for commitment to the project should be considered.
 - A faculty member may participate as PI or MPI on only one proposal per grant cycle.
 - Consultants or other significant contributors are allowed in addition to the key personnel.
 - A description of team roles can be found here: <https://www.niaid.nih.gov/grants-contracts/team-roles-agreements>
- We Care Fund PIs and MPIs who have an active award at time of application due date (including no cost extension) **are not** eligible to be a Contact PI or MPI on a proposal. Former We Care Fund Grantees whose awards have ended and remain in good standing **are** eligible.
- **\$100,000 Multi-PI grant requirement:**
 - To promote interdisciplinary collaboration and innovative partnerships, it is required that the project be program-based and involve at least two Divisions in the Department of Surgery or one Division in Surgery plus one other Department or Center at MCW.
 - It is required that the application be an MPI proposal, and the additional principal investigator must be from another Division, Department, or Center than the Contact PI. A Multi-PI Leadership Plan is required (see #7 under application).
 - Research teams should be new or enhanced collaborations with the intent to pursue new research directions or integrate new research perspectives. Types of collaborations can be:
 - **Translational collaborations** of 2 or more investigators from different stages of the translational T0-T5 spectrum
 - **Interdisciplinary collaborations** integrating unique expertise in order to generate knowledge, models and/or approaches that would not likely occur otherwise
 - **Junior/established investigator collaborations** to expand the capacity of junior investigators and leverage expertise/resources of established investigators
- **\$50,000 Promising Pilot grant requirement:**
 - This should be a novel proposal. It should not be an extension of prior work or utilized as supplemental funding for an ongoing project. MPI proposals will be accepted. If the proposal includes multiple PIs, a Multi-PI Leadership Plan should be included in the application.
- Reapplications are allowed. Prior We Care faculty seed grant applicants may incorporate reviewer feedback into their proposal and resubmit.

BUDGET GUIDELINES

The maximum budget, \$100,000 over two years or \$50,000 over one year, should include direct costs, such as supplies, equipment and salary for technical assistance. All personnel support must be

justified, and their specific project roles outlined in the budget justification as part of the application. Salary support for faculty is not allowed (cost-sharing is required). To remain in compliance with MCW guidance on cost sharing, faculty effort should not exceed 5% per person. Travel costs, subcontracts, and indirect costs are not allowed.

INSTRUCTIONS

Completed applications must be submitted via a funding proposal in eBridge **no later than 5:00 pm CST on Friday, March 22, 2024.**

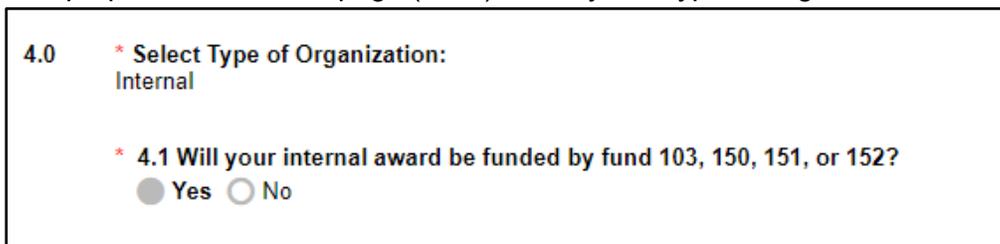
All application documents may be found on the [MCW Department of Surgery We Care RFA Website](#):

- 01 Request for Application (RFA)
- 02 Cover Page Form
- 03 Biosketch Template
- 04 Cost Sharing Form
- 05 Multi-PI Leadership Plan Template

DIRECTIONS FOR EBRIDGE SUBMISSION

The MCW Grants and Contracts Office (GCO) has developed an internal sponsor workspace in eBridge. Once the application is submitted in eBridge, it will go directly to We Care grants administration. You do not need to submit your application separately outside of eBridge.

On the general proposal information page (Q4.0), identify the Type of Organization as “Internal.”



4.0 * Select Type of Organization:
Internal

* 4.1 Will your internal award be funded by fund 103, 150, 151, or 152?
 Yes No

Answer “Yes” to “Will your internal award be funded by fund 103, 150, 151, or 152? This will route the application to the sponsor rather than GCO.

On the next page you will complete the Internal Sponsor Information. For question 1.0, please select “We Care Fund” as the MCW Sponsor. For question 2.0 “Is AHW the original source of funds (Funder),” select “No.”

APPLICATION

Text in the provided documents must follow these requirements:

- Font: Arial font, 11 points. Smaller text in figure, graphs, diagrams and charts is acceptable, as long as it is legible when the page is viewed at 100%.
- Type density: Must be no more than 15 characters per linear inch (including characters and spaces).
- Line spacing: Must be no more than six lines per vertical inch.
- Margins: Provide at least one-half inch margins (1/2”) on all sides.

1. **Cover Pages (use form provided):**
 - a) Insert contact information for Principal Investigator, Multiple Principal Investigator (if applicable), and Co-Investigator(s) (if applicable)
 - b) Select grant level: \$50,000 or \$100,000
2. **Abstract:** Briefly state the specific aims and research design. Not to exceed 30 lines of text.
3. **Project Narrative:** 2-3 sentence summary in lay language. Describe the relevance to public health. A useful tool for evaluating lay-friendly language, the “Readability Test Tool”, is available online at <https://www.webfx.com/tools/read-able/>, where you can directly input your project narrative. It is recommended that the target range for this section be an estimated 14–16-year-old reading level.
4. **Specific Aims (limit 1 page):** Succinctly list objectives of the proposed research.
5. **Research Strategy (limit of 6 pages):**
 - a) **Significance**
 - Explain the importance of the problem or critical barrier to progress in the field that the proposed project addresses.
 - Explain how the proposed project will improve scientific knowledge, technical capability, and/or clinical practice in one or more broad fields.
 - Describe how the concepts, methods, technologies, treatments, services, or preventative interventions that drive this field will be changed if the proposed aims are achieved.
 - b) **Innovation**
 - Explain how the application challenges and seeks to shift current research or clinical practice paradigms.
 - Describe any novel theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation or intervention(s) to be developed or used, and any advantage over existing methodologies, instrumentation, or intervention(s).
 - Explain any refinements, improvements, or new applications of theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation or interventions.
 - c) **Approach**
 - Describe the overall strategy, methodology, and analyses to be used to accomplish the specific aims of the project. Include how the data will be collected, analyzed, and interpreted as well as any resource sharing plans as appropriate.
 - Discuss potential problems, alternative strategies, and benchmarks for success anticipated to achieve the aims.
 - If the project is in the early stages of development, describe any strategy to establish feasibility, and address the management of any high-risk aspects of the proposed work.
6. **Facilities and Other Resources:** Briefly describe where the work will be done and what special resources are available to you. Describe how the scientific environment in which the research will be conducted contributes to the probability of success.
7. **Multi-PI Leadership Plan:** Template provided. This attachment must be completed if the project will include multiple PIs (required for multi-PI grant and optional for promising pilot grant). A rationale for choosing a multiple PI approach should be described. Specifically for the Multi-PI

grant, outline the unique role each party brings to the collaboration, as well as describe any existing collaboration among the parties. In efforts to fund new/enhanced collaborative efforts and not extend ongoing/prior projects, this section should also be used to distinguish any prior collaboration with the new proposal. The governance and organizational structure of the leadership team and the research project should be described, including communication plans, processes for making decisions on scientific direction, and procedures for resolving conflicts. The roles and administrative, technical, and scientific responsibilities for the project or program should be delineated for the PIs and other collaborators.

8. Bibliography/References Cited

9. Protection of Human Subjects (if applicable)

a) Risks to Human Subjects

i) Human Subjects Involvement, Characteristics, and Design

- (1) Briefly describe the overall study design.
- (2) Describe the subject population(s) to be included in the study; the procedures for assignment to a study group, if relevant; and the anticipated number of subjects for each study group.

ii) Study Procedures, Materials, and Potential Risks

- (1) Describe all planned research procedures (interventions and interactions) involving study subjects; how research material, including biospecimens, data, and/or records, will be obtained; and whether any private identifiable information will be collected in the proposed research project.
- (2) For studies that will include the use of previously collected biospecimens, data or records, describe the source of these materials.
- (3) Describe all potential risks to subjects associated with each study intervention, procedure or interaction, including physical, psychological, social, cultural, financial, and legal risks; risks to privacy and/or confidentiality; or other risks. Discuss the risk level and the likely impact to subjects.
- (4) Where appropriate, describe alternative treatments and procedures, including their risks and potential benefits.

b) Adequacy of Protection Against Risks

i) Informed Consent and Assent

- (1) Describe the process for obtaining informed consent. Include a description of the circumstances under which consent will be sought and obtained, who will seek it, the nature of information to be provided to prospective subjects, and the method of documenting consent.
- (2) If a waiver of some or all of the elements of informed consent will be sought, provide justification for the waiver.

ii) Protections Against Risk

- (1) Describe planned strategies for protecting against or minimizing all potential risks identified, including strategies to manage and protect the privacy of participants and confidentiality of research data.

10. Vertebrate Animals (if applicable)

If live vertebrate animals are involved in the project, provide a concise description of the proposed procedures to be used that involve live vertebrate animals in the work outlined in the "Research

Strategy” attachment. The description must include sufficient detail to allow evaluation of the procedures. Identify the species, strains, ages, sex, and total numbers of animals by species, to be used in the proposed work.

11. Budget

- a) The budget should be created in eBridge. The budget format will default to condensed.
- b) The budget, up to \$100,000 over two years or \$50,000 over one year, may include supplies, equipment and salary for technical assistance.
- c) Travel, subcontracts, and indirect costs are not allowed.
- d) Publication fees are allowed.
- e) Faculty effort must be cost-shared and cost sharing forms must be uploaded in eBridge prior to submitting application.

12. Budget Justification (no template provided)

- a) For all personnel, provide title and % effort. PI, MPI, and Co-I effort must be a minimum of 1%. Include a brief description of each person’s expertise and respective role on the project.
- b) Include a justification for any equipment, consumable supplies, and other expenses.

13. Biographical Sketch (use current standard NIH Biosketch template, Rev. 10/2021 Approved Through 01/31/2026)

All senior/key personnel, consultants, and other significant contributors (OSCs) must include biographical sketches (biosketches), not to exceed five pages. NIH instructions can be found here: <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/forms/biosketch.htm>

14. Letters of Support

- a) Letters of support are not required but recommended to demonstrate the support of collaborators such as Senior/Key Personnel and other significant contributors included in the grant application. Letters from leadership not directly involved in the research project will not be accepted. Letters from centers/cores where services will be utilized are allowed.

Disclaimer: Proposals that do not accurately complete the application or follow instructions properly will not be considered for review.

Checklist (Grant page order when submitting complete PDF application. Submit in a single PDF file.)

1. Cover Page
2. Abstract
3. Project Narrative
4. Specific Aims
5. Research Strategy
6. Facilities and Other Resources
7. Multi-PI Leadership Plan (if applicable)
8. Bibliography/References Cited
9. Human Subjects section (if applicable)
10. Vertebrate Animals section (if applicable)

11. eBridge Budget Summary (from eBridge Budget Workspace, click “Generate Budget Summary.” An excel spreadsheet will open. Save a PDF of the “financial summary” tab.)
12. Budget Justification
13. Biographical Sketches
14. Letters of support (optional)

REVIEW PROCESS

The Scientific Review Committee will score all proposals using the NIH grant scoring system (9-point rating scale) using the following review criteria:

1. **Overall Impact:** Reviewers will provide an overall impact score to reflect their assessment of the likelihood for the project to exert a sustained, powerful influence on the research field(s) involved, in consideration of the following review criteria.
2. **Significance.**
 - Does the project address an important problem or a critical barrier to progress in the field?
 - Is there a strong scientific premise for the project?
 - If the aims of the project are achieved, how will scientific knowledge, technical capability, and/or clinical practice be improved?
 - How will successful completion of the aims change the concepts, methods, technologies, treatments, services, or preventative interventions that drive this field?
3. **Innovation.**
 - Does the application challenge and seek to shift current research or clinical practice paradigms by utilizing novel theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions?
 - Are the concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions novel to one field of research or novel in a broad sense?
 - Is a refinement, improvement, or new application of theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions proposed?
4. **Approach/Feasibility.**
 - Are the overall strategy, methodology, and analyses well-reasoned and appropriate to accomplish the specific aims of the project?
 - Have the investigators presented strategies to ensure a robust and unbiased approach, as appropriate for the work proposed?
 - Are potential problems, alternative strategies, and benchmarks for success presented?
 - If the project is in the early stages of development, will the strategy establish feasibility and how will particularly risky aspects be managed?
 - Have the investigators presented adequate plans to address relevant biological variables, such as sex, for studies in vertebrate animals or human subjects?
5. **Extramural funding potential.**
 - What is the likelihood that the proposed project will generate resultant preliminary data for submitting a strong proposal for peer-reviewed extramural funding?

A written critique representing a combination of the reviewers’ comments will be provided to each applicant at the completion of the review process.

POST-AWARD CONSIDERATIONS (PLEASE READ PRIOR TO APPLYING)

- If awarded, any necessary regulatory approvals for use of human subjects, human material, animals, radioisotopes, carcinogens, toxic chemicals, pathogens or recombinant DNA must be in place within 6 months of award selection notification (by January 30th, 2025) or it will result in forfeiture of the award.
- The Department of Surgery and the We Care Fund require that award recipients submit a research proposal to a national peer-reviewed funding source within 18 months of the project end date.
- Award recipients must acknowledge the We Care Fund in any publications, scientific abstracts (where permitted), posters at scientific meetings, press releases or other media communications, and internet-based communications.
- A progress report, including a summary of progress and financial reconciliation, will be due on August 1, 2025 for the 1-year \$50,000 pilot grant.
- An annual progress report, including a summary of progress and financial reconciliation, will be due on August 1, 2025, and a final report due August 1, 2026 for the \$100,000 multi-PI grant.
- Up to 12 months of no-cost extension is allowed pending request approval, due at time of the final report submission. If extension is granted, this report will be considered a progress report and a final report will be due at the determined end date.
- Failure to comply with requirements will make PI ineligible for further We Care support.
- Awardees will be requested to sign a post-award contract agreeing to the terms of the award.

QUESTIONS

The We Care Fund application contact is Krissa Packard, Research Program Director, Division of Research, Department of Surgery, 955-1861 or kpackard@mcw.edu.

To learn more about the We Care Fund for Medical Innovation and Research, please visit the We Care Fund website at www.mcw.edu/wecare.