



Target Grant FAQ

Projects focused primarily on HIV will not be considered responsive.

Examples of responsive projects include:

- Testing whether exhausted or senescent tumor-infiltrating T cells can be functionally restored through transcriptional, epigenetic, metabolic, or RNA-mediated reprogramming
- Developing a targeted RNA-LNP, antibody-conjugated, or ligand-directed delivery system to modulate dendritic cells, macrophages, T cells, NK cells, or B cells in the tumor microenvironment
- Using patient-derived tumor-immune co-cultures or organoids to identify interventions that convert suppressive myeloid cells into antigen-presenting or immune-supportive states
- Identifying cytokine or chemokine circuits that can be modulated to overcome immune exclusion and promote immune-cell infiltration into tumors
- Applying perturb-seq, CRISPR screening, or computational modeling to identify targets that distinguish reversible from fixed immune dysfunction
- Testing immune-reprogramming combinations that improve response to checkpoint blockade in virally driven or poorly inflamed tumors
- Developing spatial or single-cell functional assays to measure whether a candidate intervention changes immune-cell state, localization, and anti-tumor activity

Examples of Non-responsive Projects

The following would generally not be considered responsive:

- Broadly descriptive profiling studies without a defined immune-reprogramming hypothesis or functional validation plan
- General drug, RNA, or delivery-platform development without cancer-relevant immune readouts
- Standard tumor-antigen vaccine projects that do not test a specific immune-reprogramming mechanism
- Conventional CAR-T, TCR-T, NK-cell, or antibody engineering projects unless immune reprogramming is central to the proposed mechanism
- Projects conducted exclusively in immortalized cell lines without validation in human tumor samples, primary immune cells, patient-derived models, or other human-relevant systems
- Large clinical trials or treatment-access studies without substantial mechanistic or correlative immune-biology endpoints
- Projects focused only on manufacturing, formulation scale-up, or regulatory development without a central biological hypothesis

Are early-stage concepts or exploratory studies eligible?

Yes, provided they are supported by strong preliminary evidence and rationale, and include a clear plan for future advancement toward clinical testing, if pre-clinical.

What types of research are *not* eligible for consideration under this RFP?

This Target Grant RFP is focused exclusively on **translational biomedical research** directly related to cancer immunology. As such, the following types of research are **not** eligible:

- Epidemiological studies
- Behavioral or social science research
- Health services research
- Policy or implementation science
- Descriptive studies that do not include pre-clinical or clinical interventions
- Basic science projects using only cell lines and lacking *in vivo* or *ex vivo* validation in disease-relevant models

When will the grant period begin?

The performance period is expected to begin on November 1, **2026**.

Who is eligible to apply?

Applicants must:

- Hold a **research or clinical doctoral degree** (e.g., PhD, MD).
- Be affiliated with a **nonprofit research institution**, in the U.S. or internationally.

What is the total funding amount available per grant?

- Each grant provides up to **\$480,000 total costs**, including **up to 20% indirect costs**.
- For example: If you budget \$400,000 for direct costs (with no subawards), you can apply an indirect cost rate of 20% for 80,000 in indirect costs. If your institution will accept a lower indirect cost rate, you can budget more for direct costs.
- amfAR does not allow indirect cost rates higher than 20%

Are any costs excluded from the indirect cost base?

- The total costs of subgrants are excluded from the indirect cost base
- The maximum indirect cost rate allowed for subgrants (i.e., indirect costs received by the subgrant recipient) is 20%
 - For example: Using an indirect cost rate of 20%, if your budget includes a subgrant for 120K total costs (direct and indirect), 360K is available for total costs (300K direct; 60K indirect) at your institution.

Can subgrants be made to for-profit organizations?

Yes, the budget can include subgrants and contracts with for-profit organizations.

What is the application process?

- **Submit a project synopsis** through the amfAR Grants portal.
- Synopses are reviewed for eligibility and alignment with amfAR's mission.
- **Selected applicants** will be invited to submit a full proposal.
- Invited proposals are **externally peer-reviewed**.

What are the key dates and deadlines?

- **Synopsis submission deadline:** June 29, 2026, 3PM (ET)
- **Invitation to submit full application will be sent on:** July 13, 2026

- **Full application deadline:** August 24, 2026, 3PM (ET)

Will amfAR provide feedback on all synopsis submissions?

Unfortunately, due to the high volume of submissions, amfAR cannot provide feedback or discuss all submitted synopses.

Can multiple investigators from the same institution apply?

Yes, as long as each application has a **distinct research focus** and meets all eligibility and submission criteria.

Are investigators allowed to submit more than one synopsis?

Yes, an investigator can submit more than one synopsis and may be invited to submit more than one application. Each synopsis must have a distinct research focus that is responsive to the RFP.