



Oncology Affinity Group

Contents

Goals:	1
Components:	2
• Steering Committee (3-4 people)	2
• Oncology Affinity Group	2
Process:	3
• Week 1:.....	4
• Week 7:.....	4
• Week 10:.....	4
Eligibility criteria and requirements:	4
Available funding:	5

Goals:

This overarching goal of the Oncology Affinity Group is to provide a framework to **accelerate scientific breakthroughs by leveraging team science** in the Oncology space. The Chicago Biomedical Consortium (CBC) is committed to funding some of the top ideas but anticipates that other funders will be interested if the platform is built to engender new collaborations for high-impact ideas.

The objectives of this program are to:

- Build a community of cancer researchers
- Develop research collaborations between Chicago scientists that incorporate orthogonal expertise
- Articulate the fundamental questions that will drive collaborations across Chicago scientists
- Develop a novel, team science approach to advance attractive scientific projects
- Accelerate high-risk/high-reward research

Components:

The **Affinity Group** is an inclusive community of Chicago scientists. It is organized into different layers that determine the community's most important questions and propose collaborative lines of inquiry for CBC, and potentially other foundation funding.

The goal is to build a collaborative platform where the CBC funds several high-priority collaborations, but which articulates a longer list of curated, vetted, collaborative approaches to fundamental questions that are attractive to many different funders. The members of the Affinity Group will have the opportunity to submit proposals for CBC funding, in return we ask for a commitment from the Affinity Group of approximately **14 hours over a 10-week period time.**

The layers are as follows:

- **Steering Committee (3-4 people)** The community rules of engagement are set by a Steering Committee of senior scientists from across the institutions who are committed to building the community. The Steering Committee is establishing an inclusive and diverse community for the next generation of scientists and should be foremost conscious of this goal.
 - Composition: 3-4 Senior representatives from CBC members' institutions focused on an Affinity Group topic.
 - UIC
 - NU
 - UC
 - Major activities:
 - Help specify the criteria that comprise successful collaborations such as:
 - Basic and translational approaches
 - Orthogonal expertise
 - Cutting-edge techniques
 - Research Core Facilities use
 - Interinstitutional representation
 - Provide input and feedback on proposed cutting-edge projects
 - Help implement decisions of the Affinity Group
- **Oncology Affinity Group (30-50 people)** This layer is the community of the Steering Committee, and the Scientific teams as follows:
 - **Oncology Teams** are formed between 2-3 collaborative scientists to develop projects that address key questions.
 - Composition: 2-3 scientists who wish to collaborate on scientific projects and are recruited by the Affinity Group.
 - Must include at least one tenured or tenure-track faculty from a CBC member institution
 - May include Ambassadors but need not.
 - Scientific Teams' participants should each be affiliated with different home institutions.
 - Major activities:
 - Identify fundamental questions to answer
 - Develop scientific project
 - Apply for CBC funding, and potentially other foundation funding

- Scientific Teams' approaches are shepherded by the Affinity Group to sharpen the approach and to help gain funding, some of which may be awarded by the CBC.
- The Affinity Group eventually prioritizes key questions important to the attainment of fundamental knowledge – although some topics will eventually be CBC funded, more questions will be generated, and the Affinity Group provides a thoughtful platform to memorialize the questions and approaches that could potentially seek out additional funding sources.

Process:

The following process, to be refined by the Affinity Group itself, is proposed.

Week	Components	Activity	Goals
-3	Steering Committee	Kick-off meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define a process to accelerate fundamental discoveries (described below) • Serve as facilitators to frame key topics to be considered
-3-0	Steering Committee	Invite Colleagues	
1 02/26/24	Affinity Group	In-person one day meeting (food and drinks provided)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of the Oncology Affinity Group • Explain process • Gather interest across oncology field to encourage natural collaborations • Discuss and prioritize key scientific questions • Call for proposals that will be reviewed based on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Impact ○ Cross-discipline interaction ○ Unique fundamental question/answer ○ High-risk/high-reward research ○ Sustainability beyond the award
1-5	Affinity Group	Scientific Teams forming, many based on collisions from the 1-day meeting	
5	Affinity Group	Scientific Teams finalizing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Groups of Scientific Teams form under key defined topics • Outline key questions for their project • Draft proposal: One page • Submit proposal on CBC portal
5	Internal Reviewers	Administrative Triage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select proposals (if >6 proposals)
6 04/01/24	Affinity Group	Scientific Teams Report out (virtual meeting 2h)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speaker Series - shepherd ideas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Report draft proposal key questions with 3 slides presentation deck (recorded 5 min pitch) to subgroup in breakout rooms ○ Preliminary idea on first few steps ○ Get feedback from entire Affinity Group • Triage (audience + reviewers)

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Select most promising proposals via upvoting (if >6/7 proposals)
10 <small>04/29/24</small>	Affinity Group	Project prioritization (in person- meeting 2h)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Present a handful of developed ideas (15 min pitch) ● Entire Affinity Group votes to prioritize top two to three proposals ● All projects continue to be workshopped ● 2 to 3 projects will be selected as eligible to receive CBC funding (of up to \$250,000 total over two-years) ● Intended to provide seed funding for longer-term pursuit of the scientific project

- **Week 1:**

Potential topics to direct the conversation of the Oncology Affinity Group in breakout rooms

- Metabolism (mitochondria and organelles)
- Epigenetics/genetics
- TME/Immunology

Alternative:

- Translational science
 - New models
 - Target Identification
 - Platforms

- **Week 6: Report out** – The individual **Scientific Teams** will report a draft of their proposal by presenting the key questions of their project in Break-out rooms divided by topic (5-minute pitch of novel cutting-edge projects). The sub-group of the Affinity Group will use an online portal provided by the CBC to select the most promising Scientific teams’ proposals via upvoting. The top 2 selected projects from each Breakout room will then be presented to the entire Affinity Group for feedback. This process will be needed if the number of proposals is greater than 6.
- **Week 10: Project prioritization** – The CBC will provide a portal for the Affinity Group to vote on proposals. The top selected projects from (Week 11) will present a 15-minute pitch to the Affinity group. The community will then prioritize the top two to three proposals that will be eligible to receive CBC funding (of up to \$250,000 total over two-years); while the ideas that were not chosen for CBC funding continue to be workshopped to eventually seek out and win awards from other funding sources.

Eligibility criteria and requirements:

- At least one of the Principal Investigators (PI) in the Scientific Team needs to be a tenure-track faculty member affiliated with a CBC member institution: Northwestern University, The University of Chicago, and/or University of Illinois Chicago.
- The Scientific Team must show the collaborative nature of the given project by providing a detailed research plan with shared resources.

- The Scientific Team's participants should each be affiliated with a different home institution.
- The Scientific Teams should not already be funded for closely related research activities.
 - Research projects submitted by Scientific Teams cannot be pending or under review at federal funding institutions/agencies.
- Funding is not expected to be distributed evenly among the CBC institutions.
- Multiple applications can be submitted from each institution.
- Applications should show both innovation and scientific merit. Call for proposals that will be reviewed based on:
 - Impact
 - Cross-discipline interaction
 - Unique fundamental question/answer
 - High-risk/high-reward research
 - Sustainability beyond the award

Available funding:

- CBC Affinity Group awards can range up to \$250,000 total for use over one to two years.
- The funded projects should have no expectation of continuation or renewal by the CBC.
- Please note that the three CBC institutions have waived all indirect costs. CBC does not allow facilities & administrative (F&A)/ Indirect Costs on any funded project.