

DHART SPORE CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

CAREER ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM

ELECTRONIC RECEIPT DATE

Application Submission Deadline: November 3, 2026

Please note that you will submit through Indiana CTSI's grants management software, WebCAMP.

The WebCAMP user's guide is available under the funding announcement here:

<https://indianactsi.org/translational-research-development/open-funding-opportunities/>

DHART SPORE CAREER ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM

The Career Enhancement Program (CEP) is a component of the multi-institutional [Developmental and Hyperactive Ras Tumor \(DHART\) SPORE](#). This SPORE focuses on improving the diagnosis and management of tumors arising in persons with neurofibromatosis type 1 (NF1) and other inherited “Rasopathy” syndromes through basic, translational, and clinical research. These tumors include plexiform neurofibroma, malignant peripheral nerve sheath tumor (MPNST), optic pathway and other glioma, juvenile myelomonocytic leukemia (JMML), and subsequent malignant neoplasms caused by prior exposure to mutagenic chemotherapy and/or radiation. Research proposals investigating the role of somatic *NF1* mutations in cancers such as glioblastoma, adenocarcinoma of the lung, melanoma, and myeloid leukemia will also be considered for support through this program. **Basic, translational, and clinical research projects that focus on targeting oncogenic N-Ras, K-Ras, or H-Ras proteins will not be considered for DHART SPORE CEP support.** The goals of the [DHART SPORE Career Enhancement Program](#) are: (1) to attract outstanding early stage basic, translational and clinical investigators to the field of NF1-associated tumor research; (2) to assist in the career development of these early stage faculty; and, (3) to encourage collaborations between investigators that can lead to new ideas and directions in research related to tumors associated with *NF1* mutations while also contributing to career development.

Awards: We anticipate funding up to 3 CEP projects at \$50,000 - \$75,000 each for 1 year. **Awardees are expected to spend the funds during the current SPORE fund year.** It is anticipated that most projects will be funded for one year. However, a second year of funding is potentially available through a competitive re-application process for projects demonstrating substantial progress and a high likelihood of long-term success. Please note that multiple sources of funding support the CEP awards. As a result, the IDC rate can vary depending on the source of funding. Please do not include IDC in your budget proposal, but be aware that if a proposal is funded, the maximum allowable IDC from the source funder will be applied.

Eligibility: Proposals will be accepted from clinical, population, and basic science investigators at DHART SPORE and non-SPORE academic institutions. In keeping with the SPORE program guidelines, the CEP has a strong emphasis on supporting the career development of young investigators who engage in clinical and translational research. Applicants for CEP support must have a designated mentor at their institution who is appropriate for NF1-focused research, or a mentor who is a current DHART SPORE investigator. A list of potential mentors within the DHART SPORE faculty is provided on the [DHART SPORE CEP](#) page. Applicants are also encouraged to contact Dr. Jaishri Blakeley with any questions in this area at jblakel3@jhmi.edu.

Applicants must have faculty appointments and be eligible to apply for NIH K and R series awards at their current institution. Applicants may not hold R01 funding for NF1-related research as a Principal Investigator. Faculty members who hold career development awards (K08; K23 or similar) are eligible to apply for CEP funds.

APPLICATION PROCESS AND SUBMISSION

Applications: CEP applications consist of:

1. A cover page signed by the Principal Investigator (PI) and their department chair.
2. A single page containing an abstract of no more than 350 words, briefly summarizing the project and a 200-word statement describing the relevance to the goals of the DHART SPORE.
3. A non-redundant 2-page scientific proposal that includes aims, background, preliminary data (if available), and research plan, including a concise description of the methods used in the approach to test the hypothesis/hypotheses adequately. All figures and tables must be included in the 2-page proposal; appendices are not permitted. A bibliography listing citations to published work is the only item not included in the 2-page limit.
4. The NIH Biographical Sketch of the Principal Investigator (PI) and of any key collaborators.
5. An itemized budget page and budget justification. **IMPORTANT NOTE:** When utilizing one of the [DHART](#)

[SPORE Core](#) facilities, please ensure that you include the associated costs as a separate line item in your budget. Additionally, you must provide a letter of support from the respective Core Director that outlines the work being conducted in the Core and the associated costs. **Please also refer to the Budgetary Guidelines below for additional requirements for core usage.**

6. A letter of support from the identified mentor. A list of potential mentors within the DHART SPORE faculty is provided on the [DHART SPORE CEP](#) page. Alternate qualified mentors from outside of the DHART SPORE, but with appropriate expertise in NF1 or RASopathies, can be included. Applications should clearly define the mentor on their application and include a letter of support from the identified mentor. As stated above, applicants are also encouraged to contact Dr. Jaishri Blakeley with any questions in this area at jblakel3@jhmi.edu.

Proposals must use 11 point Arial font style throughout (except for Figure Legends) and 0.5 inch margins. Proposals that do not conform to the submission guidelines stated above will be returned without review.

Submission: The submission deadline is November 3, 2026

- Contract and grant approval are not required to apply.
- Submissions are via the 'Start a submission' link found [on the Indiana CTSI website](#).
- You must use the application forms available [on the Indiana CTSI website](#) and check the CEP box on the application to indicate you are submitting under this mechanism.

Application review: All applications will be reviewed by the DHART SPORE Steering Committee and prioritized based on translational potential, scientific quality, qualifications, and track record of the PI, potential for development of the project to a full project or clinical trial, and relevance to the goals of the DHART SPORE.

Anticipated Funding Start Date: December 1, 2026.

Budgetary Guidelines: Funds may be used to support up to 10% of the PI's salary (at a level equivalent to or below the allowable NIH cap), other research personnel, supplies, or small equipment. Funds cannot be used to purchase large equipment. Applicants may propose to utilize [DHART SPORE Core](#) facilities to advance the scientific goals of their CEP project. The costs of these studies should be deducted from the overall budget, **and a letter from the Core Director should be included** outlining the work being done in the Core and the associated cost. Please do not include IDC in your budget proposal, but be aware that if a proposal is funded, the maximum allowable IDC from the source funder will be applied.

Obligations of the Successful Applicant: Successful applicants are required to have a mentor for their project, which is generally chosen from a group of experienced DHART SPORE investigators. Applicants are required to interact with the mentor on a regular basis, and a brief summary of mentorship activities is required quarterly. Awardees are also invited to participate in DHART SPORE activities and will make a presentation at the yearly program retreat. A progress report must be submitted at the end of the funding period.

Any questions can be directed to Kevin Shannon (e-mail: kevin.shannon@ucsf.edu) and/or Jaishri Blakeley (e-mail: jblakel3@jhmi.edu).

For WebCAMP submission questions, contact Julie Driscoll (jdrisco@iu.edu / 317-278-2822)