



The mission of Susan G. Komen® is to save lives by meeting the most critical needs of our communities and investing in breakthrough research to prevent and cure breast cancer.

# INFLAMMATORY BREAST CANCER (IBC) RESEARCH GRANT: BIOLOGICAL UNDERPINNINGS OF IBC

## 2026 Letter of Intent (LOI) Announcement and Instructions



Susan G. Komen®

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Website: [www.komen.org](http://www.komen.org)

## KEY DATES

|                                                         |                                           |
|---------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| Letter of Intent (LOI) Announcement:                    | September 28, 2026                        |
| Institution Opt-in Deadline:                            | October 9, 2026                           |
| LOI Form Due:                                           | November 30, 2026, by 1 p.m. Eastern Time |
| LOI Decision and Invitation to Submit Full Application: | By December 8, 2026                       |
| Full Application Due:                                   | January 18, 2027, by 1 p.m. Eastern Time  |
| Award Notification:                                     | On or around June 15, 2027                |

**PURPOSE OF THE AWARD:** The Inflammatory Breast Cancer (IBC) Research Grant will support research projects that aim to unlock new knowledge about the biological mechanisms driving inflammatory breast cancer (IBC), stimulating the exploration of new ideas and areas of investigation with significant potential to improve IBC patient care and outcomes.

**GRANT TERMS:** Applicants/Primary Investigators (PIs) may request funding of up to \$125,000 (combined direct and indirect costs) for one year.

## INFLAMMATORY BREAST CANCER (IBC) RESEARCH GRANT OVERVIEW:

At Susan G. Komen®, we are committed to saving lives by meeting the most critical needs in our communities and investing in breakthrough research to conquer deadly and aggressive breast cancers. We are determined to change the unacceptable reality that each year about 43,000 people in the U.S. will die from breast cancer. As part of this goal, we are focused on improving the care and outcomes for people with inflammatory breast cancer (IBC), a rare and highly aggressive form of breast cancer.

IBC is characterized by tumor cell emboli blocking the breast lymph vessels. This blockage causes inflammatory-like changes in the breast, including swelling and skin reddening. The American Joint Committee on Cancer (AJCC) guidelines define IBC by the rapid onset (less than 6 months) of erythema occupying at least 1/3 of the breast, edema, peau d' orange (orange peel-like appearance) and/or warmth (with or without an underlying mass), and pathologic confirmation of invasive carcinoma. Although IBC has been recognized as a distinct form of breast cancer for over a century, its etiology and underlying biological mechanisms remain poorly understood. Consequently, no validated, widely adopted IBC-specific biomarkers or targeted therapies exist, and current management is largely informed by evidence from non-IBC breast cancer. This limited understanding of IBC biology remains a significant barrier to the development of more precise diagnostic and therapeutic approaches, highlighting the need for research focused on the unique mechanisms driving the disease. **Therefore, the goal of the Inflammatory Breast Cancer (IBC) Research Grant is to support innovative, hypothesis-driven research that advances our understanding of the biological underpinnings of IBC and opens new avenues of investigation into the disease.**

To identify areas where investment could have the greatest impact, the [Susan G. Komen-IBCRF IBC Collaborative](#), in partnership with the Milburn Foundation, convened the Biology of IBC Task Force, a group of IBC researchers and patient advocates. The Task Force identified three broad areas of scientific opportunity that require significant investigation to advance the field:

1. IBC onset and development, including studies focused on the tumor and host microenvironment, epigenetic and proteomic drivers of disease, host genetic factors and biological contributors to health disparities.
2. IBC metastatic dissemination, including mechanisms of cell migration and mobility, biological characteristics associated with therapeutic response and the role of tumor and host, epigenetic and proteomic factors in IBC disease progression.
3. IBC monitoring and detection, including approaches to detect minimal residual disease (MRD), improve prognostication, assess therapeutic response and advance theragnostic strategies.

**Applicant/PIs are strongly encouraged to align their proposed studies with one or more of these priority areas.** In addition, applications proposing the development of shared biological research tools, models, datasets, or other resources that enable and accelerate IBC research are encouraged.

Komen considers “innovative” to be employing new thinking, new methods or new strategies to make a substantial, non-incremental step forward in our understanding of the biology of IBC. To accelerate transformative advances in the understanding of IBC biology, we encourage Applicant/PIs to build ground-breaking paradigms, test imaginative hypotheses and develop creative concepts that could shift the current prevailing theories and scientific perspectives around IBC. Projects that use preliminary data or other compelling evidence to support new avenues of investigation are especially well aligned with this funding mechanism, particularly when they have the potential to inform future larger-scale studies.

**This is a limited submission opportunity: each institution may nominate ONE applicant for this funding opportunity** (See Limited Submission Nomination Process). Applicants/PIs must hold full-time faculty appointments. Researchers in the early stages of their faculty careers and those from outside the IBC field whose fresh perspectives and innovative approaches can bring new ideas into the fold are strongly encouraged to apply.

Komen believes that diversity in research is essential to expand our knowledge of breast cancer, advance breast cancer care and improve outcomes for everyone. We are committed to supporting a diverse workforce; research environments that encourage a wide range of views, expertise, and experiences; and research studies that include participants who are representative of all people impacted by breast cancer to fuel innovation and scientific discoveries that can benefit all.

**Letters of Intent that are not hypothesis-driven, inflammatory breast cancer-focused studies as described above, will be administratively withdrawn from consideration for a Full Application submission without an opportunity for appeal. Applicants/PIs may only submit ONE Letter of Intent for this funding opportunity and must be nominated as the sole applicant from their institution.**

### LIMITED SUBMISSION NOMINATION PROCESS

Institutions must respond to [SSPrograms@komen.org](mailto:SSPrograms@komen.org) by **October 9, 2026**, to indicate that they are opting into the institutional nomination process.

**This is a limited submission opportunity: each institution may submit ONE nominee to apply for this funding.** Applicants/PIs cannot self-nominate. The Institution’s Office of Sponsored Programs, Grants Office, or equivalent must select the nominee to apply for this funding.

### Required: Institutional Nomination Process and Selection Criteria Disclosure Statement

Institutions must provide a Disclosure Statement containing a detailed description of the internal process for selecting a nominee to be put forward for this funding opportunity. This requirement is intended to ensure transparency, fairness, and alignment with the program’s objectives. This Disclosure Statement should include details of how the institution solicited, reviewed, and selected nominees; the name, email address, and position of the selected nominee; the offices or individuals responsible for administering the process, eligibility requirements, evaluation criteria, weighting (if applicable), composition of the selection committee, and measures taken to mitigate conflicts of interest or bias. The Disclosure Statement should be included along with the LOI submission Form (completed by the Applicant/PI) and should be signed by an authorized institutional representative and provided on institutional letterhead. **Disclosure Statements and LOI Forms are due to Komen by November 30, 2026.**

## ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS/DESIGNATED RECIPIENTS

Applicant/PIs and Institutions must conform to the following eligibility criteria to apply for an Inflammatory Breast Cancer Research Grant.

Grants will be awarded to a single Principal Investigator (PI). Co-Principal Investigators (Co-PIs) are not allowed. Co-Investigators are permitted.

### Applicant/PI

- Must be nominated as the sole Applicant/PI from their institution by the Institution's Office of Sponsored Programs, Grants Office, or equivalent. This is a limited submission opportunity, and the Applicant/PI cannot self-nominate.
- Must have a doctoral degree, such as M.D., Ph.D., D.Ph., D.O. or equivalent.
- Must hold a full-time faculty appointment or have a formal offer letter from the Institution that confirms position and start date by the Full Application due date (**January 18, 2027**), documented by the Applicant/PI Biosketch.
- May NOT be the PI of an active Komen Grant that includes specific aims or objectives focused on IBC at the Full Application due date (**January 18, 2027**).
- May NOT be the PI of **two or more** active Komen Grants at the Full Application due date (**January 18, 2027**)
- Must ensure that all past Komen-funded Grants are up to date and in compliance with all Komen requirements, e.g., progress and financial report submissions, IRB approvals, etc. by the Full Application due date (**January 18, 2027**), if applicable.
- Is not required to be a U.S. citizen or permanent resident.
- The institution-nominated Applicant/PI may submit only one Letter of Intent in response to this funding announcement.

### Institution

- Must be a U.S. non-profit institution or organization.
- May not be a governmental agency (e.g., NIH, NCI, etc.).
- Must agree to adhere to Komen's Policies and Procedures for Research and Training Grants.
- **Institutions are limited to a single LOI; multiple LOI submissions from the same institution will NOT be accepted.**

**Note:** It is the policy of Susan G. Komen® to support organizations, projects and programs that do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, disability, or any other legally protected characteristics. Komen does not knowingly award grants to organizations that discriminate in their hiring, those they accept as volunteers or the clients they serve. We encourage Applications from researchers of all backgrounds who meet the eligibility criteria.

## FUNDING INFORMATION AND GRANT TERM

Applicants/PIs may request funding of up to \$125,000 (combined direct and indirect costs) for one year. **Budgets are not required to be submitted with the Letter of Intent.** However, Applicant/PIs should take note of the following budget guidelines:

- Personnel on the Research Project are limited to a base salary at or below \$250,000 per year.
- Level of effort committed to the proposed Research Project does not determine salary level; salary levels are determined by the Applicant/PI's institutional policies.
- Reasonable compensation of Patient Advocates is allowed when advocates perform services that would otherwise be a contracted expense. Compensation may be in the form of per-hour compensation or honoraria. It may also include reimbursement for out-of-pocket expenses directly related to their work on the research project (e.g., travel, parking, printing, registration fees).
- Research Technicians may be included as salaried personnel on the Research Project.

- Reasonable travel costs ARE allowed for purposes specifically related to the proposed Research Project for the PI and Key Personnel conducting the research (e.g., Postdoctoral Fellow or Graduate Student). Travel costs must be in line with the Applicant/PI's institutional travel policies.
- Publication costs and meeting-related poster printing costs ARE allowed for purposes specifically related to the proposed Research Project.
- Equipment costs are limited to no more than 25% of total direct costs.
- Professional membership dues or subscription dues ARE NOT allowed.
- Periodicals or other subscriptions ARE NOT allowed.
- Graduate Students and Fellow tuition costs ARE NOT allowed; stipends and salaries to Graduate Students and Postdoctoral Fellows ARE permitted.
- Visa costs ARE NOT allowed.
- **Indirect costs cannot exceed 15% of total direct costs** (including any indirect costs paid through subcontracts or consortia). Indirect costs include all expenses not directly related to the conduct of the Research Project, including, but not limited to, allocated costs such as facilities, telephone/communication expenses, technology support, computer usage fees, administrative support, etc.

## LETTER OF INTENT REQUIREMENTS

**The Letter of Intent Form, included at the end of this document, must be filled out in its entirety.** The institution-nominated Applicant/PI may submit only one Letter of Intent in response to this funding announcement. Each Letter of Intent that does not meet eligibility, submission, or responsiveness to the requirements and program goals of this Announcement will be administratively withdrawn (i.e., will not be invited to submit a Full Application) with no opportunity for appeal.

The LOI Form requires the following:

### A. General Information

Enter general information regarding the Applicant/PI, including name, contact details, and institution name and address.

### B. Title

The title is limited to no more than 81 characters in length (including spaces). Do not use abbreviations or all capital letters. The title should be lay-friendly and accurately describe the focus of the proposal.

### C. Research Plan

Proposed Research Projects must be hypothesis-driven studies focused on inflammatory breast cancer (IBC). Projects should aim to investigate the biological underpinnings of IBC as it relates to IBC onset and development, metastatic dissemination or monitoring and detection. The Research Plan must provide a concise description of this proposed Research Project using no more than 3,000 characters (with spaces) and should include the scientific rationale for the proposed research, hypothesis(es) to be tested, research specific aims and design and potential impact of the study to the IBC patient and survivor community.

### D. Key Personnel

Key personnel include Major Collaborators and Patient Advocate(s) who are integral to the execution of the research plan. Komen defines Key Personnel as an individual who contributes to the scientific development or execution of a project in a substantive, measurable way, whether or not they receive salaries or compensation under the Grant. Typically, these individuals devote a defined percentage of effort to the project and have doctoral or other professional degrees. Collaborators/Consultants at the postdoctoral or graduate student level may be considered Key Personnel if their involvement meets this definition. Patient advocates who are integral to the execution of the Research Plan need not have doctoral or other professional degrees.

- E. Institutional Nomination Process and Selection Criteria Disclosure Statement:** Institutions must provide a detailed description of the internal process for selecting a nominee to be put forward for this funding opportunity. This requirement is intended to ensure transparency, fairness, and alignment with the program's objectives. This Disclosure Statement should include details of how the institution solicited, reviewed, and selected nominees; the name, email address and position of the selected nominee; the offices or individuals responsible for administering the process, eligibility requirements, evaluation criteria, weighting (if applicable), composition of the selection committee, and measures taken to mitigate conflicts of interest or bias. The Disclosure Statement should be included along with the LOI Submission Form the Applicant/PI, signed by an authorized institutional representative and provided on institutional letterhead.
- F. Applicant/PI Signature:** The Applicant/PI must provide their signature to certify that the information provided in the LOI Form accurately describes the proposed project and that all required LOI components have been completed/submitted.

Applicants/PIs are strongly encouraged to complete, review, and submit their Letters of Intent with sufficient time to allow for technical difficulties, varying time zones, human error, loss of power/internet, sickness, travel, etc. **Extensions to the Letter of Intent submission deadline will not be granted to allow for lateness, corrections, or submissions of missing information, with the rare exception made for severe extenuating circumstances at the sole discretion of Komen.**

If you have questions or need assistance, please email [SSPrograms@komen.org](mailto:SSPrograms@komen.org). **Completed Letter of Intent Forms should be submitted as a PDF and emailed to [SSPrograms@komen.org](mailto:SSPrograms@komen.org) by November 30, 2026.**

## LETTER OF INTENT REVIEW PROCESS

Susan G. Komen® utilizes a multi-step approach to Grant application and review that first requires submission of a Letter of Intent (LOI), and upon invitation only, submission of an Application.

Each Letter of Intent will be administratively reviewed for eligibility, compliance with submission guidelines and alignment with the requirement for hypothesis-driven, inflammatory breast cancer-focused studies as described above. Applicants/PIs whose Letters of Intent are appropriately responsive to the requirements and goals of this funding opportunity will be invited to submit a Full Application. Letters of Intent that do not meet eligibility, submission, or responsiveness to the requirements and program goals of this Announcement will be administratively withdrawn (i.e., will not be invited to submit a Full Application) with no opportunity for appeal. Applicants/PIs will be notified of Letter of Intent review decisions via email by **December 8, 2026**.

Komen reserves the right to take no action based on responses to this Letter of Intent (LOI) and is not responsible for any costs incurred by the applicants and the institutions in preparing their proposals and applying for this grant mechanism. Submission of an LOI or invitation to submit a Full Application does not guarantee funding.

## FULL APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

Applicants/PIs whose Letters of Intent meet the eligibility requirements, comply with the submission guidelines, and align with the requirements and program goals of this Announcement will receive an **invitation by December 8, 2026, to submit a Full Application**. The required components of the Full Application are briefly described below.

### Required Components of the Full Application:

- 1. Research Plan Narrative (Not to exceed six pages in total length and must include the a-g sections briefly described below:**
  - a. **Title (81-character limit):** This title should be auto-populated from the Letter of Intent submission, but changes can be made to the title if they are needed.

- b. **Research Questions, Hypothesis(es) and Specific Aims:** Outline the overarching research questions to be addressed, the hypothesis(es) that will be tested to address these research questions, and the specific aims that will be necessary to address the stated hypothesis(es). Describe how the proposed specific aims fully answer the study hypothesis(es).
- c. **Background:** This includes a detailed description and citation of any related preliminary data and existing research findings, how existing research findings support the hypothesis(es) and specific aims proposed in the application, and data validating any existing models that are proposed to be used in the studies may be included.
- d. **Approach:** This includes details about the experimental design and methodology and the merits and feasibility of the approach, including pitfalls and steps to overcome potential problems. It should describe the participant population(s), resources, and/or methodologies that will be used to ensure the research findings benefit as many people affected by breast cancer as possible.
- e. **Impact and Innovation:** This section summarizes how, if successful, the proposal will advance the understanding of IBC biology and open new avenues of investigation into the disease. It should describe why the research question(s) is important to the IBC patient and survivor community, the project's significance/potential impact, and who will/will not benefit from the findings of the study.
- f. **Patient Advocate Involvement Plan:** This section describes how the Applicant/PI will involve a Patient Advocate in the proposed project.
- g. **Statistical Plan:** This section describes appropriate statistical considerations for the study, along with the rationale for the selected statistical methods. Applicants/PIs are encouraged to include the guidance or consultation of an expert in the design of the study once the endpoints have been characterized.

## 2. Key Personnel

Komen defines Key Personnel as an individual who contributes to the scientific development or execution of a project in a substantive, measurable way, whether or not they receive salaries or compensation under the Grant. Typically, these individuals devote a defined percentage of effort to the project. Collaborators/Consultants may be considered Key Personnel if their involvement meets the above definition.

## 3. Data Sharing Plan

To accelerate scientific discovery, research results and data should be made as widely and freely available as possible, ensuring equitable access while safeguarding the privacy of participants and protecting confidential and proprietary data. Komen's Data Sharing Policy aligns with the NIH's data sharing requirements updated in January 2023 ([https://grants.nih.gov/grants/policy/data\\_sharing/data\\_sharing\\_guidance.htm](https://grants.nih.gov/grants/policy/data_sharing/data_sharing_guidance.htm)), including policies for sharing large-scale genomics data (<https://sharing.nih.gov/genomic-data-sharing-policy>) and clinical trial information (<https://grants.nih.gov/policy/clinical-trials/reporting/index.htm>). The Komen Data Sharing Policy will apply to all Komen-funded research grants, regardless of the award amount.

## 4. Letters of Support

The Applicant/PI must submit Letter(s) of Support from Patient Advocate(s), Collaborators, Resource Availability, and/or Institutional Support, if applicable.

## 5. Applicant/PI Biosketch

The Applicant/PI must submit a Biosketch to confirm all current and past academic experience and positions. Additionally, the Biosketch should include scientific contributions and publications that the Applicant/PI considers to be of the most significance in their career or field, including relevance to inflammatory breast cancer, if applicable, and why the central findings were so influential or how they applied to the field. Biosketches must be no more than five pages each and in NIH format. A template is available for download on the NIH website: <https://grants.nih.gov/grants-process/write-application/forms-directory/biosketch>.

## 6. Other Sources of Funding

The Applicant/PI must submit a **signed Other Support** document to confirm their current, past and pending research grants. Other Support may be as long as necessary to be thorough. A template is available for download on the NIH website: <https://grants.nih.gov/grants-process/write-application/forms-directory/other-support>.

## 7. Other Information or Documents Required at Application:

- Cited Publications
- Budget and Budget Justification
- Institution Payment Verification form
- Institution W-9
- Clinical Trial Protocol (if applicable)
- Contract/Consortium Budget (if applicable)

## 8. ORCID Identifier

The Principal Investigator must include an ORCID (Open Researcher and Contributor ID) identifier upon Full Application submission. ORCID is a non-proprietary alphanumeric code to uniquely identify scientific and other academic authors. You can register for an ORCID at any time: <http://orcid.org/>.

## FULL APPLICATION SUBMISSION

Only Applicants/PIs with a Letter of Intent deemed appropriately aligned with the requirements of this LOI Announcement will be invited to submit a Full Application. Full Application Instructions, including application review/evaluation criteria and instruction on how to submit a Full Application, will be provided on the Letter of Intent decision date listed above under “KEY DATES.” **Full Applications will be due on January 18, 2027.**

**INFLAMMATORY BREAST CANCER (IBC) RESEARCH GRANT:  
BIOLOGICAL UNDERPINNINGS OF IBC  
LETTER OF INTENT (LOI) FORM**

***INSTRUCTIONS:*** This Letter of Intent form must be filled out in its entirety in English using the prescribed font and margin size found below (Aptos and 11 point). Applicant/PI must be nominated by their institutions and may submit only one Letter of Intent in response to this funding announcement. Each Letter of Intent will be administratively reviewed for eligibility, compliance with submission guidelines and alignment with the requirement for hypothesis-driven studies focused on advancing our understanding of the biological underpinnings of inflammatory breast cancer. Applicants/PIs whose Letters of Intent appropriately align with the requirements and goals of this funding opportunity will be invited to submit Full Applications. Applicants/PIs will be notified of Letter of Intent review decisions via email by December 8, 2026. If you have questions or need assistance, please email [SSPrograms@komen.org](mailto:SSPrograms@komen.org). Completed Letter of Intent Forms should be submitted as a single PDF and emailed to [SSPrograms@komen.org](mailto:SSPrograms@komen.org) by **November 30, 2026**.

**A: General Information**

Principal Investigator: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_  
Institution: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ -

**B: Title**

**Title of Research Project:**

*The title is limited to no more than 81 characters in length (including spaces). Do not use abbreviations or all capital letters. The title should be lay-friendly and accurately describe the focus of the proposal.*

**C: Research Plan**

**Research Plan**

*Provide a concise description (3,000 characters or less with spaces) of the proposed research project. Research Projects must be hypothesis-driven studies focused on inflammatory breast cancer. Projects should aim to investigate the biological underpinnings of IBC as it relates to IBC onset and development, metastatic dissemination or monitoring and detection. The Research Plan must include brief descriptions of the following:*

- *The scientific rationale supporting the proposed research.*
- *The specific hypothesis or hypotheses to be tested and the expected and/or realized results.*
- *The research aims and design.*

- *How the successful completion of the project will advance our understanding of inflammatory breast cancer biology.*
- *The potential impact of the proposed research to the IBC patient and survivor community.*

## D: Key Personnel

*Please list Major Collaborators and Patient Advocate(s) who are integral to the execution of the research plan, if known.*

|                          |                 |       |
|--------------------------|-----------------|-------|
| 1. Name:                 |                 |       |
| Institution/Affiliation: | Title/Position: | Role: |
| 2. Name:                 |                 |       |
| Institution/Affiliation: | Title/Position: | Role: |
| 3. Name:                 |                 |       |
| Institution/Affiliation: | Title/Position: | Role: |
| 4. Name:                 |                 |       |
| Institution/Affiliation: | Title/Position: | Role: |

\*add additional rows as needed

## **E: Institutional Nomination Process and Selection Criteria Disclosure Statement**

Institutions must provide a detailed description of the internal process for selecting a nominee to be put forward for this funding opportunity as described on page 3. This Disclosure Statement should be included along with this Letter of Intent Form, signed by an authorized institutional representative and provided on institutional letterhead.

Letters of Intent received without the required Institutional Nomination Process and Selection Criteria Disclosure Statement attached, will be administratively withdrawn without a chance for appeal.

## **F. Signature**

☐ I certify that, to the best of my knowledge, the information provided in this Inflammatory Breast Cancer (IBC) Research Grant LOI Form accurately describes the proposed project and includes all required LOI components: General Information, Title, Research Plan, Key Personnel, and the Institutional Nomination Process and Selection Criteria Disclosure Statement. I understand that Susan G. Komen® has sole discretion to invite applicants to submit a Full Application.

Applicants/PI Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

***Completed Inflammatory Breast Cancer (IBC) Research Grant Letter of Intent Forms should be emailed as a single PDF directly to [SSPrograms@komen.org](mailto:SSPrograms@komen.org) by November 30, 2026.***