



## **Developing Innovative GastroEnterology Specialty Training (DIGEST) Program**

### **POLICIES AND GUIDELINES**

**Published: December 6, 2018**

**Application Deadline: March 1, 2019**

## **I. ABOUT THE CYSTIC FIBROSIS FOUNDATION**

The mission of the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation (CFF) is to cure cystic fibrosis (CF) and to provide all people with the disease the opportunity to lead full, productive lives by funding research and drug development, promoting individualized treatment, and ensuring access to high-quality, specialized care.

To achieve this mission, various types of awards are offered to support meritorious research in CF.

## **II. DIGEST AWARD OVERVIEW**

The CFF recognizes the growing demand for physicians trained to address the unique gastroenterologic needs of CF patients and the need for a greater GI focus in the clinical research enterprise. To expand the availability of CF-GI experts, the CFF announces the second Developing Innovative GastroEnterology Specialty Training (DIGEST) Program. Accordingly, the CFF is releasing this Request for Applications (RFA) for training awards to physicians interested in developing expertise in the gastroenterologic care of patients with CF. CFF will award up to \$30,000 per year to cover salary support for awardees. In addition, CFF will provide up to \$3,000 per year for required travel under this program.

All awards are subject to the regulations, policies and objectives of CFF governing this form of support and are contingent upon the availability of funds.

## **III. REVIEW AND AWARD**

The DIGEST Application Review Committee will evaluate all applications and make recommendations to CFF and the Board of Trustees for final approval and funding. CFF considers the availability of funds, the priority score awarded each application, and the committee recommendations when determining awards.

The following are among the chief causes for assigning low priority scores to applications during review:

- Insufficient information or documentation
- Inadequate/no documentation of the necessary skills/training
- Failure to meet all of the criteria described in this policies and guidelines statement
- Failure to describe career goals related to a long-term commitment to CF care/research.

### **A. Eligibility**

Applicants must be physicians trained in Internal Medicine or Pediatrics with subspecialty training in Gastroenterology. Training, and gastroenterologic care of CF patients, must be coordinated through one of the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation-accredited CF Centers or Affiliate programs. A letter of support from the CF Center or Affiliate Director AND a letter from the Chief of Gastroenterology must be included. Applicants must have completed their fellowship by the June 1, 2019 start date of the award, but not be more than 5 years out from fellowship.

**Applicants must be available to attend monthly webinars on the third Thursday of every month from 11 AM-noon (Eastern) and attend a face-to-face meeting in Bethesda, Maryland in July 2019, and the annual North American CF Conference (NACFC). The in-person DIGEST meeting**

is currently being scheduled and awardees will be notified when a date is identified. The next NACFC is in Nashville, TN, Oct. 31 - Nov. 2, 2019. The letter of support from the Division Chief must state this explicitly.

## B. Requirements

Training, and gastroenterologic care of CF patients, must be coordinated through one of the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation-accredited CF Centers or Affiliate programs. A letter of support from the CF Center or Affiliate Director AND a letter from the Chief of Gastroenterology must be included. The CF Center Director or Affiliate Director's letter must affirm that the applicant will be integrated into the CF Center Program and attend CF clinic on a regular basis. The Division Chief's letter must affirm the applicant's availability for DIGEST webinars and meeting, and the annual North American CF Conference. Please see the list below for summarized requirements:

1. In person meetings: in July 2019 for the initial launch with annual meetings at NACFC (or NASPGHAN depending on overlap)
2. Webinars, the third Thursday of every month from 11:00 AM to 12:00 PM, eastern
3. CF clinic participation including weekly CF center patient reviews if applicable
4. Scholarly project during the 3-year award which can include a chapter or article review, or research
5. Interaction quarterly with assigned senior DIGEST mentor. This can include clinical and/or research discussions and should focus not only on what is working but importantly, what issues the DIGEST awardee needs help with to maximize the experience in this program.
6. Planning for how CF contribution will continue after the 3-year award – e.g. designated clinic, research efforts through grant applications, etc.
7. Annual Progress Report

## IV. SUBMISSION INFORMATION & GENERAL TIMELINE

**Application Deadline: Friday, March 1, 2019 at 5:00 PM (Eastern)**

Submit online through proposalCENTRAL: <https://proposalcentral.altum.com/>  
(Refer to Section VI of these guidelines for specific submission instructions)

An application will be considered incomplete if it fails to comply with the instructions, or if the submitted material is insufficient to permit adequate review. CFF reviews applications electronically, and only documents submitted online at proposalCENTRAL will be reviewed. Late applications will not be accepted, and the deadline will not be waived.

### General Timeline:

<b>Application Deadline</b> .....	<b>March 1, 2019</b>
Peer Review .....	Late-April 2019
Applicant Notified.....	Early-May 2019
Earliest Start Date for Awarded Projects.....	June 1, 2019
DIGEST Meeting in Bethesda, MD.....	July 2019 (TBD)

## V. FULL APPLICATION GUIDELINES

Applications must be submitted online at proposalCENTRAL: <https://proposalcentral.altum.com/>

### **Documents should be typed using:**

- Font: Times New Roman 12 or Arial 11
- Margins: No less than a half inch on each side

***Note:** When all the documents have been uploaded to proposalCENTRAL, the system will compile them into a single PDF file in the correct sequence.*

Log-in at proposalCENTRAL: <https://proposalcentral.altum.com/>

First-time applicants must register to create a user name and password for proposalCENTRAL and will need to complete a profile online before applying. If you are registered and cannot remember your password, click on the **“Forgot Your Username/Password?”** link below the **“Application Login”** fields.

Award opportunities, including this Request for Applications (RFA), are listed on the opening screen, but you must be logged in first to see them.

Select the gray tab labeled **“Grant Opportunities”** found in the upper right-hand side of the page.

Click on the light blue **“Filter by Grant Maker”** button to the left and scroll down to locate **Cystic Fibrosis Foundation** in the list.

Locate the listing for the **“Developing Innovative GastroEnterology Specialty Training (DIGEST)”** program. Click on the **“Apply Now”** button in the column on the far right to open the application form.

Applicants may stop at any point but must click the **“Save”** button before exiting in order to save their work. When logging in to continue, click on the blue tab, **“Proposals”**, and then the **“Edit”** button next to the in-progress application.

The following sections are listed in the navigation menu to the left of the application screen. Click on each section and follow the directions.

- 1. Title Page:** Select **“DIGEST – Developing Innovative GastroEnterology Specialty Training Program”** from the drop-down menu in the **“Project Title”** field.
- 2. Download Templates & Instructions:** Download the available templates applicable to the project, fill them out and upload them when completed in Section #10. Templates available include: Applicant Instructions for Letters of Reference (for reference only), Biographical Sketches for Key Personnel, Other Support, Budget Detail, Budget Justification, Previous Training, Future Plans and Personal Statement, Proposed Mentoring Plan, and Names and Addresses of References.

3. **Enable Other User to Access this Proposal:** Complete this section online if you wish to designate access to another individual, such as an assistant who has registered on proposalCENTRAL. Enter the email address of the individual and in the “Permissions” column, use the pulldown menu to select the type of access you wish to give. Please note that only delegates who are granted “Administrator” rights can submit applications on behalf of the applicant. Check the “Auto Notify” box and then “Save”.
4. **Applicant/PI:** If a profile was completed upon registration, the fields in this section will already be populated with the information entered in your Professional Profile. If you need to make any changes, click the “**Edit Professional Profile**” button and follow the instructions. If a profile was not completed, enter the required information and click “**Save**”.
5. **Institution & Contacts:** If a profile was completed upon registration, the Principal Investigator’s (PI) institution will be preloaded as Lead Institution. If a profile was not completed, enter the required information and click “**Save**”. Be sure to use the full legal name of the institution.
6. **Letters of Reference/Support:** Letters of Reference/Support must be submitted by the following individuals:
  - A letter of support from the **CF Center or Affiliate Director**
  - A letter of support from the **Gastroenterology Division Chief**
  - **At least one (1) other individual** familiar with the applicant’s prior work record, interests and abilities

*Note: The application will not be considered without these letters.*

#### **Invite Referees to Submit Letters of Reference through proposalCENTRAL**

Letters of Reference must be submitted electronically ONLY. To “invite” Referees, go to the “Letters of Reference” section of the online application, and enter the email addresses of the individuals you have asked to submit letters. This will generate automated emails (with instructions) sent to each Referee through the proposalCENTRAL website. **The applicant should inform Referees to submit the letters at least one (1) week prior to the application deadline.** This helps to ensure that the letters have been uploaded before the application is submitted. Once the application has been submitted, no documents can be added.

Letters uploaded to proposalCENTRAL should not be password protected or otherwise encrypted. Such encryption will cause errors in assembling a single-print PDF of the application. The applicant should inform the individuals writing letters to not include password protection on their documents.

*Note: Detailed Instructions on how to invite referees to submit the Letters of Support/Reference are also available in a downloadable document found in Section #2. Letters uploaded to proposalCENTRAL should not be password protected or otherwise encrypted. Such encryption will cause errors in assembling a single-print PDF of the application. The applicant should inform the individuals writing letters to not include password protection on their documents.*

7. **Budget Summary:** Fill in the start and end date and applicable amounts for the support requested by completing the online fields for Period 1. Up to \$30,000 per year may be requested for salary support and \$3,000 for travel to the DIGEST meeting in July 2019 and the annual North American CF Conference, Nashville, TN October 31 – November 2, 2019. Indirect costs up to 8% are allowable.

*Note: The Budget Detail and Budget Justification templates downloaded in Section #2 need to be completed and uploaded in Section #10 for each year of support requested. The amounts included in this uploaded Budget Detail must match the amounts entered in the Budget Summary online.*

8. **Training Program & Supporting Documents:** In this section, upload the completed templates downloaded in Section #2 above in PDF format. Fill out the fields describing the attachment, select the attachment type from the pulldown menu, choose the file to be uploaded, and click the “Upload Attachment” button to upload the file. Do this for each attachment.

Below are instructions specific to each template as well as additional information regarding other application components.

**A. Biographical Sketch(es) of Key Personnel (NIH template available for download)**

CFF defines “Key Project Personnel” as any individual with an advanced degree who will play an instrumental role in the research project. An NIH Biographical Sketch form should be completed for each key project personnel and uploaded as PDF. The maximum length for each biosketch is five (5) pages.

**B. Other Support (template available for download)**

Complete and upload the Other Support form for all key project personnel, beginning with the Applicant/Principal Investigator. There is no page limitation. Information on other support assists CFF in the identification and resolution of potential sources of overlap. Scientific and budgetary overlap should be minimized. Commitment of an individual’s effort greater than 100 percent, is not permitted.

**C. Budget Detail and Budget Justification (separate templates available for download)**

Fill out the Budget Detail and Budget Justification templates for each and all years of support requested. In the space provided on the templates, indicate the year or period as well as start and end dates for the proposed budget period. (Be sure the amounts entered in the Budget Detail(s) match the amounts entered in the online budget summary in Section #8).

- **Budget Detail – Direct Costs**

**Personnel** – Salary support and fringe benefits for the applicant, up to \$30,000 (Direct Costs) per year may be requested.

**Travel** – Awardees are required to attend the DIGEST meeting in July 2019 and the annual North American CF Conference (NACFC) Nashville, TN October 31 – November 2, 2019. Up to \$3,000 may be requested for travel costs per year.

- **Budget Detail – Indirect Costs**

Indirect costs of up to eight percent (8%) may be requested from CFF per year for this program.

- **Budget Justification**

Describe costs listed in the Budget Detail. Use major categories, such as Personnel, and Travel. Justify all items and make sure amounts and figures listed in the narrative are consistent with those listed in the Budget Detail(s).

**D. Previous Training, Future Plans and Personal Statement (template available for download)**

Provide a brief description (not exceeding 2 pages) of previous clinical training and a summary of future plans. This section should note previous and anticipated involvement with care of adult cystic fibrosis patients and participation in clinical or basic research.

**The personal statement should include descriptions of the following:**

- Area(s) of focus in gastroenterology and interest in CF.
- Opportunity to see CF patients clinically and involvement with the CF Center.
- Current clinical and research obligations and how you see clinical care of CF patients fitting into your current obligations.
- Career goals related to a long-term commitment to CF research and care.
- Description of how the DIGEST award will advance the applicant's understanding of CF GI disease and their ability to manage it.

**E. Proposed Mentoring Plan (template available for download)**

This section should be completed in conjunction with the CF Center or Affiliate Director. It should outline the plan for mentoring the applicant in the gastroenterologic care of patients outside of the DIGEST curriculum (not exceeding 2 pages). Participation in local CF Center teaching activities, care conferences, quality improvement activities, attendance at the annual North American CF Conference and any other mentoring activities should be included.

**F. Names and Addresses of References (template available for download)**

List the names, titles, and contact information of the individuals who have been asked to submit Letters of Reference on the applicant's behalf. A PDF copy of the completed form should be uploaded. Though not required to submit Letters of Reference, Senior investigators should still check the box in the template that identifies them as Senior investigators and upload the form to proposalCENTRAL.

**G. Verification of Applicant Institution's Tax Status (upload as PDF documents)**

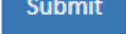
The CFF Grants and Contracts Office must have a copy of the applicant institution's current W-9 and 501(c)3 letter, or other documentation verifying its Federal tax status, and will not issue Award Letters to Awardees if these documents are not received and on file.

Applicants from for-profit organizations are eligible to apply and must submit a copy of the applicant institution's W-9 and IRS documentation verifying the organization's Federal tax status. Awards are not issued prior to having these documents on file with the CFF Grants and Contracts Office.

**10. PI Data Sheet:** Fill in the required fields, save and exit.

**11. Print Face Pages:** Follow the prompts on the screen to generate and print a Face Page. The Face Page will be populated automatically with data entered in the online application (applicant's name, institution, title of application, etc.). The Face Page must be signed by the Principal Investigator and Authorized Institutional Official and uploaded in Section #10. Co-Principal Investigators, if any, are not expected to sign the Face Page. *Note: CFF will not submit applications for committee review if it does not have the Face Page on file signed by the Principal Investigator and Authorized Institutional Official.*

**12. Validate:** Upon completing the application, click on the **"Validate"** button on the main screen. Attend to any omissions/errors as prompted onscreen, and then click **"Validate"** again.

**13. Submit:** Click on the blue button with white lettering.  CFF will not receive your application unless the **"Submit"** button is clicked.

**Confirmation:** Applicants will receive an e-mail confirmation from proposalCENTRAL (not from CFF) that the Application was successfully submitted. This e-mail will be your only acknowledgement. If you do not receive this confirmation, please contact proposalCENTRAL immediately to ensure that your submission was submitted and processed.

**For technical support with the online application:**

Proposal CENTRAL at [pcsupport@altum.com](mailto:pcsupport@altum.com) or  
800-875-2562 on weekdays, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (Eastern)

**For program/content information:**

CFF Grants & Contracts at [grants@cff.org](mailto:grants@cff.org) or 301-841-2614.



## VI. ELECTRONIC APPLICATION CHECKLIST

**Application Deadline: Friday, March 1, 2019 at 5:00 PM (ET)**

Applications must be submitted at proposalCENTRAL: <https://proposalcentral.altum.com/>

### **Face Page which includes:**

- Signatures
  - Principal Investigator (Co-PI's are not required to sign)
  - Authorized Institutional Official
- Applicant/PI information (online)
- Complete Institution and PI Contact Information, including correct mailing address (online)

### **Training Program & Supporting Documents:**

- Biographical Sketches for Key Personnel - (upload)
- Other Support (NIH Format) - (upload)
- Budget Detail - (upload)
- Budget Justification - (upload)
- Previous Training, Future Plans and Personal Statement - (upload)
- Proposed Mentoring Plan - (upload)
- Names and Addresses of References - (upload)
- Verification of Applicant Institution's Tax Status - (upload)
  - W-9
  - Federal (IRS) tax status letter