



Program Name: Developing Innovative GastroEnterology Specialty Training (DIGEST) Program - 2022

Brief Program Overview/Description: The CF Foundation (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 fourth 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.

Funding Amount: Applicants may request up to \$30,000 per year for Salaries & Benefits, and up to \$3,000 per year for Travel. An additional twelve percent (12%) of indirect costs may be requested per year for up to three (3) years of support. See Section III. below for more information.

Eligibility:

- Applicants must be U.S. Citizens or U.S. permanent residents (must have obtained permanent residency prior to the time of application)
- Applicants must be physicians trained in Internal Medicine or Pediatrics with subspecialty training in Gastroenterology. Training, and gastroenterologic care of CF patients, and must coordinate with one of the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation-accredited CF Centers or Affiliate programs.
- Applicants must have completed their fellowship by the September 1, 2022 start date of the award, but not be more than 7 years out from fellowship.
- *Additional eligibility requirements can be found in Section IV. below.*

Key Dates:

Published _____	March 25, 2022
Full Application Deadline _____	May 24, 2022*
Committee Review _____	Late July 2022
Notification to Applicants _____	August 2022
Earliest Start Date for Awarded Projects _____	September 1, 2022

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*We highly encourage all applicants to pre-register their profile, institution, contacts, and Title of their application at least two weeks prior to the application deadline. This will help to ensure the CFF Grants & Contracts Management and Administration (GCMA) Office is able to assist all applicants with any potential system-related queries prior to the Application Deadline.

I. About the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation

The mission of the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation (CFF) is to cure cystic fibrosis (CF) and 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.

II. Program and Award Overview

The CF Foundation (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 fourth 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.

Program 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. Meetings: Virtual meeting in September 2022 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

Applicants must be available to attend monthly webinars on the third Thursday of every month from 11 AM-noon (Eastern) and attend a virtual or face-to-face meeting in Bethesda, Maryland in September 2022 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 Philadelphia, PA on Nov. 3-5, 2022. The letter of support from the Division Chief must state this explicitly.

III. Funding Amount

Applicants may request up to \$30,000 per year for Salaries & Benefits, and up to \$3,000 per year for Travel. An additional twelve percent (12%) of indirect costs may be requested per year for up to three (3) years of support.

IV. Eligibility

- Applicants must be U.S. Citizens or U.S. permanent residents (must have obtained permanent residency prior to the time of application)
- Applicants must be physicians trained in Internal Medicine or Pediatrics with subspecialty training in Gastroenterology Training, and gastroenterologic care of CF patients, and must coordinate with 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 September 1, 2022 start date of the award, but not be more than 7 years out from fellowship.
- Funding for Year 2 and year 3 is contingent upon progress documented in the annual reports.

V. Mentorship Requirements

- Each applicant must interact quarterly with a designated DIGEST mentor.
- The Mentor(s) must be able to provide the mentorship needed to guide the project if awarded.
- The Mentor(s) must be at the institution where the applicant will be carrying out the work for the project.

VI. Goals of Research Currently of Interest to CFF/Priority Areas

Not applicable to this RFA

VII. Review and Award

All applications are evaluated by a CFF established DIGEST review committee. Funding of awards is based on the priority score awarded to each application and the recommendations of the Committee. Relevance of the proposed project to issues in CF is also considered in determining awards. All awards are subject to observance of the regulations and policies of CFF related to that category of support and are contingent upon the availability of CFF funds.

CFF may withdraw applications receiving low scores, and/or those deemed nonresponsive to the program announcement before the review meeting. In these cases, CFF will notify applicants if their application has been withdrawn without discussion.

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.

VIII. Submission Information

Applications deadline: Tuesday, May 24, 2022 by 5:00 PM (Eastern)

Submit online through <http://awards.cff.org>

(Refer to Section X. 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. The CF Foundation reviews applications electronically, and only documents submitted online at <http://awards.cff.org> will be reviewed.

General Timeline:

Full Application Deadline _____	May 24, 2022*
Committee Review Date _____	Late July 2022
Notification to Applicants _____	August 2022
Earliest Start Date for Awarded Projects _____	September 1, 2022

**We highly encourage all applicants to pre-register their profile, institution, contacts, and Title of their application at least two weeks prior to the application deadline. This will help to ensure the CFF*

Grants & Contracts Management and Administration (GCMA) Office is able to assist all applicants with any potential system-related queries prior to the Application Deadline.

IX. Letter of Intent Guidelines

Not applicable to this RFA

X. Full Application Guidelines

Applications must be submitted online at <http://awards.cff.org>

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 awards.cff.org, the system will compile them into a single PDF file. You may preview this file by selecting “Application Full Print”, as well as exporting the compiled PDF file.

To login, please visit: <http://awards.cff.org>

For all first-time applicants in the new Grants Management System, we ask that you pre-register to create a username and password for “<http://awards.cff.org>” and complete a profile prior to submitting an application. We also request that as you begin your application, you enter the title of your project, if available. If you are registered and cannot remember your password, click on the “**Forgot Password?**” link below the “**Login**” fields.

Once logged in, the award opportunities, including this Request for Applications (RFA), will be listed in the **Funding Opportunities** tab on the opening screen.

Locate the listing for the “**Developing Innovative GastroEnterology Specialty Training (DIGEST) Program - 2022**” program. Click on the “Apply” 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 progress.

The following sections are displayed as tabs across the application screen. Click on each section and follow the directions. Click “**Save**” as you complete each section.

GENERAL

Enter the project start and end dates, select the number of periods being requested, and complete any additional questions displayed.

CONTACT PROFILE

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, you may update your profile in this section. Once updated you must “**Save and Validate**” prior to returning to continue your submission.

Please note: This tab must be completed prior to being able to search for/locate relevant contacts in the CONTACTS tab.

INSTITUTION

If a profile was completed upon registration, the applicant's/principal investigator's institution will be preloaded as the Lead Institution. Domestic applicants must verify their institution by entering the Employer Identification Number (EIN) or Tax Identification Number (TIN) to search the system for the correct institution. If the EIN/TIN is not located, you may add the legal institution. Please also confirm if the project site is the same as the legal institution.

Verification of Applicant Institution's Tax Status (upload as PDF documents):

The CFF GCMA Office must have a copy of the applicant institution's current W-9 and 50113 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 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 GCMA Office.
- Non-U.S. applicants must provide a copy of the W-8BEN-E form (required). In addition, a tax equivalency letter should be uploaded, if available. If a tax equivalency letter is not available, applicants must upload a letter stating this documentation is not available.

International Applicants (if applicable):

Not applicable to this RFA

CONTACTS

Please note: The INSTITUTION tab must be completed prior to adding internal contacts to ensure that the contacts are properly associated with the applicant institution.

Complete the required contact fields by searching by name for existing contacts at your institution for each role. If the desired institutional contact is not available in the system, you may select "**Add Internal Contact**" to create a basic contact profile in order to add the individual to your application.

Additional optional contacts **not** associated with the applicant institution may also be added. These contacts would be considered as additional contributors involved in the proposed research plan. These may include consultants, or collaborators. If the desired external contact is not available in the system, you may select "**Add External Contact**" to create a basic contact profile in order to add the individual to your application.

REFERENCES

Letters of Support and/or Reference are weighted heavily in the review. At least three (3) letters are required as follows:

- 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

Letters of Reference must be submitted prior to submission of the application. To invite Referees, go to the "**REFERENCES**" tab of the online application, and first search for the referee using the lookup field. If the referee is not located in the system you may select "**Add Referee**" to create a basic contact profile in order to add the individual to the application. Once added, this will generate automated emails (with instructions) sent to each Referee. 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 <http://awards.cff.org> 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.

ABSTRACTS AND RELEVANCE

Not applicable to this RFA. Please enter "N/A" for each section and click "Save".

BUDGET

Select the "Edit Budget" button under Application Budget, to enter and begin completion of the application's budget detail for each year of funding being requested. Initial award commitments will be for one (1) year with the possibility of renewing for each additional year awarded. Continued support will be based upon achievement of the goals of the proposal, and the availability of CFF funds. The total budget request may not exceed \$33,000 per year (plus 12% indirect costs – see Section III. for more guidance).

Be sure to click "Save" prior to closing the budget window.

Please outline the anticipated budget for the proposed project/program. A budget justification for each year is required as an upload on the "Full Application Uploads" tab.

The following budget categories are offered under this program:

Salaries and Benefits – List the names and roles of all personnel involved in the project/program. In accordance with National Institutes of Health (NIH) policy, salary requests may not use an institutional base salary in excess of the current federal salary cap of \$203,700. Organizational applicants can include fringe benefits of the personnel involved. Please see a brief example of a Salaries & Benefits section of a GMS budget below:

Salaries & Benefits (Salaries are restricted to the Federal salary cap (\$197,300.00 in 2021.))								
Name	Project Role	% effort	Institutional Base Salary/Stipend	Salary Requested	Fringe Benefits Rate	Fringe Benefits	Amount	
Jane Doe	Other	10.00%	\$100,000.00	\$10,000.00	0.00%	\$0.00	\$10,000.00	
Subtotal:							\$10,000.00	

Applicant Jane Doe entered in 10% in the "% effort" box, and a "Institutional Base Salary/Stipend" of \$100,000. The GMS calculated a "Salary Requested" to be \$10,000.

Jane Doe was then able to manually edit the salary requested to the amount they actually want to request of \$4,000.

Salaries & Benefits (Salaries are restricted to the Federal salary cap (\$197,300.00 in 2021.))								
Name	Project Role	% effort	Institutional Base Salary/Stipend	Salary Requested	Fringe Benefits Rate	Fringe Benefits	Amount	
Jane Doe	Other	10.00%	\$100,000.00	\$4,000.00	0.00%	\$0.00	\$4,000.00	
Subtotal:							\$4,000.00	

Travel - Describe the purpose of any relevant travel. Please note: expenses for travel outside the North American continent, including travel to Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and other U.S. territories are not allowable expenses without prior written approval from the CFF GCMA Office. Travel expenses are restricted to \$3,000 per year. Please refer to Section II. above for travel requirements. Registration fees associated with conferences are part of the travel allowance and should be separately listed under "Other Expenses".

Other Expenses – If registration for NACFC is being requested please include it here.

FULL APPLICATION UPLOADS

Download the available templates applicable to the project, upload the completed templates to the corresponding attachment types within this section. Templates available for download include:

- Biographical Sketches for Key Personnel
- Other Support (NIH format)
- Budget Justification
- Personal Statement
- Proposed Mentoring Plan
- Previous Training and Future Plans

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

Biographical Sketches for Key Personnel (template available for download)

Complete and upload an NIH Biographical Sketch for all key project personnel, beginning with the Applicant/Principal Investigator. International applicants can upload a biosketch that is equivalent in content to the NIH template provided. (CFF defines “key personnel” as any individual with an advanced degree that will play an instrumental role in the accomplishment of the research project.) Do not exceed five (5) pages per person.

Other Support (NIH format)

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.

Budget Justification

Use this template to describe the nature of costs listed in the online Budget for each category:

- Salaries & Benefits
- Travel
- Other Expenses

Personal Statement

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.

Proposed Mentoring Plan

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.

Previous Training and Future Plans

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.

VALIDATION AND SUBMISSION

If applicants apply through an organization, once the applicant clicks “**Sign & Submit to AIO**” the application will be routed to be signed by the applicant and then sent on for final signature by their organization’s AIO. After the AIO has signed the application, it will be submitted to CFF.

If applicants apply as an Individual, once the applicant clicks “**Sign & Submit**”, the application will be electronically signed by the applicant and submitted to CFF.

To ensure the application is fully signed and submitted ahead of the Application Deadline for this program, please be sure to complete the application, and begin the Sign & Submit to AIO process in advance of the 5:00 PM EST deadline. The status of your application will display “Submitted” once fully signed, to indicate that your application has been received by CFF.

XI. Other Information

Not applicable to this RFA

XII. Contact Information

For technical support:

Primary CF Foundation GCMA Office contact ewarnke@cff.org or 301-841-2667

Secondary CF Foundation GCMA Office contact nmohaghegh@cff.org or 301-841-2614

For programmatic questions:

CF Foundation Program Management contact Chris Dowd, cdowd@cff.org