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CANCER PREVENTION & RESEARCH  
INSTITUTE OF TEXAS

## **CPRIT GRANTEE AND GRANT APPLICANT GUIDANCE RELATED TO COVID-19**

*Updated April 3 – new FAQs appear in red*

Governor Abbott declared a State of Disaster for Texas on March 13 related to the COVID-19 pandemic. As COVID-19 precautionary measures and illness hinder business activities, CPRIT is committed to supporting our grant applicants and grantees. We will provide guidance through our website as information becomes available.

CPRIT is reviewing several issues related to COVID-19. The guidance presented below in a “frequently asked questions” format addresses near-term issues that may arise over the next few months and impact grant applications, grantee reporting, and grant project timelines and costs. As always, grant applicants and grantees should follow all relevant policies and procedures, including those of your organization, and apply those practices consistently to the extent possible.

CPRIT and grantees may identify additional issues requiring further consideration as COVID-19 continues to affect Texas. Grantees should contact program managers (Patty Moore, Academic Research; Rosemary French, Product Development; and Ramona Magid, Prevention) with questions about COVID-19’s effect on individual grant projects. CPRIT has also created a dedicated email ([covid19@cprit.texas.gov](mailto:covid19@cprit.texas.gov)) for grantee questions.

CPRIT will consider new COVID-19 developments in line with current cost principles, state law, and CPRIT rules. We are committed to working with grant applicants and grantees to support cancer research and prevention projects and provide necessary flexibility.

### **GRANT APPLICATIONS**

#### **What if I cannot submit my CPRIT grant application by the deadline because of COVID-19?**

CPRIT has made the difficult decision to suspend the first cycle of grant applications for fiscal year 2021 (FY 21.1) for Academic Research, Product Development Research and Prevention Program awards. In addition, CPRIT will not accept applications for CPRIT Dissemination of CPRIT-Funded Cancer Control Intervention awards for the rest of fiscal year 2020.

CPRIT will withdraw all applications submitted in response to the Academic Research Program FY 21.1 Requests for Applications (RFAs) and the Prevention Dissemination RFA.

CPRIT takes this action in response to the unexpected impact on the State’s budget caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and a projected decrease in oil and gas revenues. CPRIT will continue to

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evaluate releasing RFAs for fiscal year 2021 and is committed to doing so if circumstances support it.

**Will COVID-19 affect CPRIT’s timeline for reviewing and approving awards for applications already submitted to CPRIT?**

Peer reviewers are currently evaluating applications submitted for the second review cycle of fiscal year 2020, with award recommendations set for approval at the August 19 Oversight Committee meeting.

CPRIT’s review panels will meet virtually (rather than in-person) because of COVID-19. Governor Abbott authorized options for state agency governing boards to also meet virtually pursuant to the Texas Open Meetings Act while COVID-19 concerns limit in person gatherings and travel.

With these measures in place, CPRIT expects the peer review and award recommendation timeline to remain on course for the Oversight Committee to approve awards in August.

**CPRIT approved my grant application for an award at the February Oversight Committee meeting but I have not executed the grant contract yet. Will COVID-19 affect awards that the Oversight Committee has given final approval?**

CPRIT will execute grant award contracts for applications already approved by the Oversight Committee. Please contact your program manager if you have any questions or need more assistance related to a specific grant project.

**GRANT REPORTING**

**What should I do if I cannot file my quarterly Financial Status Report (FSR) on time?**

The next FSR deadline (covering expenses incurred December 1, 2019 – February 29, 2020) is May 29, 2020. [CPRIT rules](#) permit an additional 30-day grace period (through June 28, 2020) to submit the FSR and supporting documentation.

CPRIT recognizes that grantees may have reporting delays due to the impact of COVID-19. If a grantee is unable to file the FSR by the May 29 deadline, [CPRIT’s rules](#) include a process to defer submission of the FSR until August 29, the due date of the FSR for next fiscal quarter (covering expenses March 1 – May 31). The FSR filed by August 29 will include six months of project costs and supporting documentation, rather than three months.

The grantee should submit a request to defer submitting the next FSR (due May 29) until August 29 through CGMS/CARS using the “Change Not Otherwise Specified” option under the “Change Request” tab. The grantee should submit the request by May 29. CPRIT will approve deferral requests related to delays caused by COVID-19.

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More information about FSR deadlines and deferral requests is available in [CPRIT's administrative rule §703.24](#) and [CPRIT's Grant Policies and Procedures Guide at Section 6.2](#).

**What should I do if I cannot file my audit on time?** *(CPRIT has updated this FAQ to include information about how to file an extension request.)*

Grantees expending \$750,000 or more in CPRIT grant funds or a combination of CPRIT and other state grant funds in the grantee's fiscal year must complete a single audit, program specific audit, or agreed upon procedures audit no later than nine months after the end of the grantee's fiscal year.

CPRIT's rules allow for a grantee to request additional time to submit a required audit to CPRIT. If the grantee is unable to complete and submit a required audit by the due date because of the effects of COVID-19, please submit the notice that the audit will be late through "Change – Not Otherwise Specified" (CNOS) change request under the "Change Requests" tab in CPRIT's Grant Management System. CPRIT requires only one CNOS request per grantee institution or entity.

At this time, CPRIT will approve an extension of up to 90 days from the original audit due date for COVID-19 related delays. CPRIT may approve more time to file the audit if COVID-19 issues continue to affect the grantee's ability to conduct the audit for an extended period.

More information about audit deadlines is available in CPRIT's administrative rule [§ 703.13](#) and [CPRIT's Grant Policies and Procedures Guide](#) at Section 6.5.

**What should I do if I cannot file other required reports on time?**

[CPRIT's rules](#) require all grantees to submit required reports within 60 days of the anniversary of the grant contract's effective date. These reports include annual progress reports, Historically Underutilized Business (HUB) forms, annual inventory reports, and revenue sharing forms. In addition, matching certification forms are due 30 days following the due date of the last quarterly FSR of the grant year. Some grantees must also submit quarterly progress reports.

CPRIT recognizes that grantees may have reporting delays due to the impact of COVID-19. The grantee should contact the program manager if the grantee is unable to submit a required report by the reporting deadline. CPRIT will work with grantees to extend the deadline, if appropriate.

**How will CPRIT assess progress if COVID-19 stops or disrupts work on my project?**

CPRIT understands that the potential effects of COVID-19 may impact the progress of CPRIT-supported research and prevention projects. Grantees should explain the COVID-19 effects that disrupted the project's activities in the required progress report. CPRIT is committed to working with its grantees and will consider the grantee's explanation when evaluating overall progress.

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More information about progress report deadlines is available in [CPRIT's administrative rule §703.21](#) and [CPRIT's Grant Policies and Procedures Guide at Section 6.3](#).

## **PROJECT TIMELINE, CHANGES AND COST ISSUES**

### **What should I do if COVID-19 affects my ability to complete the project's goals and objectives within the budget and timeline included in the grant contract?**

CPRIT recognizes that the potential effects of COVID-19 may affect the grantee's ability to complete project goals and objectives within previously agreed timelines. CPRIT will work with the grantee to address goals and objectives changes necessary because of COVID-19. The grantee requests and CPRIT approves any changes to goals and objectives through CGMS/CARS.

The grantee may make transfers between or among lines within budget categories to accommodate changes resulting from COVID-19 without prior CPRIT approval if the transfer meets certain criteria listed in [CPRIT's rule](#) addressing budget changes. CPRIT will work with the grantee to review and approve all other contract goal, objective, and budget changes due to COVID-19.

More information about goals, objectives, and budget changes is available in CPRIT's administrative rules [§§ 703.10](#) and [703.25](#) and CPRIT's [Grant Policies and Procedures Guide at Sections 5.14 and 5.15](#).

### **What should I do if I cannot complete my CPRIT-funded project on time because of the effects of COVID-19?**

CPRIT provides grantees additional time to complete the work on CPRIT-funded projects through no-cost extensions (NCE). The grantee may request an NCE via the "Change Request tab" of CGMS/CARS within the last six months of the grant. Once approved, CPRIT will amend the contract to reflect the new termination date. When requesting an NCE, the grantee should indicate that COVID-19 affected the grantee's ability to complete the work on time.

More information about no cost extensions is available in [CPRIT's administrative rule §703.14](#) and [CPRIT's Grant Policies and Procedures Guide at Section 13.3](#).

### **We hold a summer research program through a CPRIT training grant. Do we need CPRIT approval before cancelling it due to COVID-19 travel issues?**

Deciding whether to cancel a summer research training program is an institutional decision. If the grantee decides to cancel programs due to COVID-19, please contact Patty Moore to discuss amending the grant contract to reflect the change.

**CPRIT approved my grant earlier this year. The award contract has a March 1 effective date, but my institution has a policy in place that each lab should operate with minimum**

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**personnel and conduct only essential experiments due to COVID-19. Can I change the effective date of the grant to June or July 1st instead of March?**

CPRIT recognizes that the potential effects of COVID-19 may impair the grantee's ability to start work and/or complete project goals and objectives within previously agreed timelines. CPRIT is not planning to change grant contract effective dates at this time. However, CPRIT will provide grantees additional time to complete the work on CPRIT-funded projects through no-cost extensions (NCE). The NCE option will ensure that grantees affected by COVID-19 related project delays have adequate time to complete work on the grant project. The grantee may request an NCE via the "Change Request tab" of CGMS/CARS within the last six months of the grant contract termination date.

More information about no cost extensions is available in CPRIT's administrative rule [§ 703.14](#) and [CPRIT's Grant Policies and Procedures Guide](#) at Section 13.3.

**CPRIT has already approved a no-cost extension (NCE) for my grant project. What should I do if I need to extend the NCE or receive another NCE because of COVID-19 related business closures or work stoppages?**

CPRIT administrative rules recognize that special circumstance may justify the grantee receiving more than one NCE to complete the work on a grant project. The grantee should contact the program manager for guidance on further extending the termination date for a grant project with an existing NCE.

More information about no cost extensions is available in [CPRIT's administrative rule §703.14](#) and [CPRIT's Grant Policies and Procedures Guide](#) at Section 13.3.

**Will CPRIT reimburse personnel costs (salaries and benefits) for employees assigned to the project who are not working or have reduced their level of effort on the project because of COVID-19?**

CPRIT recognizes that cancer research and prevention grantee staff may be unable to work on CPRIT-funded projects now due to or related to the COVID-19 disaster. Grantees should make every effort to perform work on the grant-funded project consistent with the grantee organization's directives to employees regarding COVID-19, such as working remotely. However, in the event that personnel is unable to work or must reduce their work level, CPRIT will allow grantees to continue to charge salaries and benefits to currently active CPRIT awards if they are paid in a way that conforms to an established policy of the grantee and that policy treats both grant-supported and other activities consistently.

Grantees must maintain records and documentation to support charges to the CPRIT grants for salaries and benefits for personnel not working or reducing their amount of work because of the COVID-19 disaster. CPRIT will provide additional instructions for grantees to track these costs.

CPRIT will reimburse salaries and benefits up to the level reflected on the grantee's Personnel Level of Effort (PLOE) form in place on February 29, 2020. This authorization applies to personnel costs incurred for the fiscal quarter March 1 – May 31, 2020. CPRIT will reassess the authorization for the fiscal period beginning June 1, 2020.

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**Will CPRIT reimburse stipend payments to trainees who are not working because of COVID-19?**

CPRIT will reimburse otherwise allowable stipend payments to fellows and trainees who are unable to work due to or related to the COVID-19 disaster if the stipends are paid in a way that conforms to an established policy of the grantee and that policy treats both grant-supported and other activities consistently. Grantee institutions should provide documentation demonstrating the effect of the COVID-19 disaster.

This authorization applies to stipend payments made in the fiscal quarter March 1 – May 31, 2020. CPRIT will reassess the authorization for the fiscal period beginning June 1, 2020.

**Can I charge non-refundable travel costs and/or conference costs to a CPRIT grant not taken or attended because my employer limited employee travel or the event was cancelled due to coronavirus?**

CPRIT will reimburse otherwise eligible costs associated with non-refundable grantee travel not taken because of the COVID-19 disaster. CPRIT will also reimburse otherwise allowable non-refundable registration fees for conferences, seminars, or symposiums that the event host cancelled due to the COVID-19 disaster.

Grantees must maintain records and documentation to support charges to the CPRIT grants for non-refundable travel and/or non-refundable registration costs resulting because of the COVID-19 disaster.

This authorization does not apply to travel booked or for event registrations made on or after March 20 (or the date that a grant organization implemented a no travel policy for its employees and students, if earlier than March 20.) The grantee should make every effort to minimize future non-refundable travel and event registration costs booked on or after March 20, and CPRIT reserves the right to reject a grantee's reimbursement request if the grantee has failed to adequately protect against future non-refundable travel and event registration costs, even those related to the COVID-19 disaster.

**May we use CPRIT grant funds to purchase laptops for grantee personnel to maintain work on the grant project while our staff must work remotely due to COVID-19?**

CPRIT will consider requests to purchase supplies and equipment the grantee considers necessary to maintain work during COVID-19 related business closures on a case-by-case basis. Please contact your program manager to discuss the request.