



University of
Pittsburgh®

School of Medicine
Department of Medicine

KARAT Catalytic Grant Application

PI Name: _____

Division/Institute: _____

Current Funding Mechanism (e.g., NHLBI K23, Foundation CDA, etc.): _____

Email Address: _____

Title of Project: _____

Total Funds Requested: _____

IACUC or IRB Approval Numbers (if applicable): _____

Primary Mentor's Name: _____

Mentor's Division/Institute: _____

Additional Materials

In addition to this completed application form, please provide the following items:

1. Current NIH Biosketch.
2. Specific Aims (1-page maximum). Outline in detail how this research will facilitate an independent line of research for a potential R-level application.
3. Research design and methods (1-page maximum).
4. Budget and budget justification (1-page maximum). Provide as much detail as necessary for reviewers to determine appropriate use of funds.
5. Statement of support from your primary mentor.

Email the completed application form and additional materials as a single PDF by 5pm on October 16th, 2026

Matt Freidhoff

Project Manager II

Department of Medicine, Office of the Chair

University of Pittsburgh

Phone: 412-760-4981

mjf49@pitt.edu



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Call for Applications

The KARAT funding mechanism provides Catalytic Grant support to help K/CDA awardees develop innovative, independent lines of research. The Department of Medicine currently has an unprecedented number of talented K/CDA junior faculty transitioning into our next generation of independent PI leaders. This transition from mentored junior faculty to independent researcher, however, is a precarious and difficult period of the academic career pathway — awardees must generate a novel line of research and body of supporting work that is clearly distinct from their mentor's. This Catalytic Grant is designed to support exactly that step, giving K/CDA awardees the resources to build the exciting, independent research programs that will carry them toward extramural funding.

K Awardee to R Advancement Training (KARAT) Program

The Department recently initiated a K Awardee to R Advancement Training (KARAT) Program under the leadership of Aditi Gurkar, PhD, the Associate Vice Chair for Academic Advancement. The KARAT program provides a broad range of career development activities and academic support including grant writing workshops, grant reviews, academic skills training, networking, and peer support for our K/CDA awardees. Only participants in the KARAT program who have completed their first year of mentored training are eligible to apply for this mechanism of Catalytic Grant funding.

Award Information

The Department supports up to \$500k per year in funding for the Catalytic Grants this year. Dr. Gurkar will oversee peer-review of applications, and awards will range from \$10-50k per year, depending on budget justification of the applicants (note: funding cannot support the salary of the Principal Investigator). Priority will be given to applications that present a clear vision for how the proposed work will lead to a competitive R01 application. Grants will be reviewed by the DOM Faculty under direction of Dr. Gurkar. Those applicants awarded KARAT Catalytic Grant support are expected to attend KARAT meetings and present at a Department-wide symposium after completion of their studies.

Due Date

Applications are due by 5pm on **October 16th, 2026**. The completed application should be sent as a single PDF to Matt Freidhoff (mjf49@pitt.edu).

KARAT Catalytic Grant Program

Application Questions

Applicant Name: _____

Please respond to each question below. Responses will be reviewed by the KARAT Leadership Council.

1. Independence from Mentor

How does the proposed line of research represent a novel direction that is clearly independent of your current mentor's work? What specifically distinguishes this project from your mentored research?

2. Path to R01 / Independent Funding

What is your vision for how the preliminary data and experience generated by this Catalytic Grant will directly support a competitive R01 (or equivalent) application? Please describe the anticipated timeline.

3. Budget Justification

How will the requested funds (\$10–50k/year) be used to generate the preliminary data or resources needed to advance this project? Please justify each major budget category (note: funds cannot support PI salary).