



**Date Issued:** September 13, 2023

**Submittals accepted until:** 4:00 PM (PT), October 11, 2023

**Contact Person:** Peter Choi, Andy Hill CARE Fund

**Contact Email:** [peter@wacarefund.org](mailto:peter@wacarefund.org)

*If you are interested in this RFP, please submit your name and email address to the Contact Person listed above to request that your organization receive any amendments and question and answer documents. In the event it becomes necessary to revise or clarify any part of this RFP, addenda will be provided via email to all individuals who have made the Contact Person aware of their interest in this RFP. The addenda may also be published on CARE Fund's and/or ESI's website.*

## Request for Proposals: Scientific Peer Review Services

On behalf of its sponsored project, the Andy Hill Cancer Research Endowment (CARE) Fund, Evergreen Social Impact is soliciting proposals from those qualified and interested to:

- Facilitate and conduct the scientific and technical evaluation of grant proposals for cancer research and recommend grants to be made by CARE Fund; and
- Advise the CARE Fund on scientific and other matters in furtherance of grantmaking to support and promote cancer research in Washington State.

The selected contractor will work in partnership with CARE Fund staff to provide scientific peer review services and consultations to CARE Fund to result in the objective, independent, scientific peer review of grant proposal applications to the CARE Fund. The results of the peer review will be used by CARE Fund to make grant award decisions. The anticipated duration of the contract is through June 30, 2025.

### Background

The Andy Hill Cancer Research Endowment (CARE) Fund was established by the Washington Legislature in 2015 to promote and invest in cancer research to improve the quality of life for the people of Washington. The Fund's objectives are to optimize the use of public funds to prioritize research with the greatest potential to improve health outcomes; leverage our state's cancer research facilities, talent, clinical and therapeutic resources; and positively impact our economy through requiring matching funds, creating jobs, encouraging investments, and advancing our biotech, medical device, and health care information technology industries. The CARE Fund typically makes grant awards totaling up to \$8 million per year.

CARE Fund grants may only be awarded after an independent scientific review of grant proposals by a scientific review committee and upon a majority vote of the committee to recommend a grant award. The independent scientific review committee must consist of individuals with nationally recognized expertise in the scientific, clinical, ethical, commercial, and regulatory aspects of cancer

research, prevention, and care. [Note: The CARE Board must appoint the committee and the final decision to make an award rests with the CARE Board.]

## Scope of Work

### *Project*

In support of CARE Fund grantmaking, the Contractor shall advise CARE Fund on scientific and other matters in furtherance of promoting cancer research in Washington State. Contractor will facilitate and oversee the review of grant proposals submitted to CARE Fund to provide an independent, expert scientific review of the scientific and technical merit of each grant proposal, including substantive qualitative feedback aimed at the strengths and weaknesses of each proposal and recommending improvements to its competitiveness. Contractor evaluations will inform CARE Board of Directors' award decisions. All work performed by Contractor under this Agreement must be in accordance with applicable laws of the State of Washington, including Chapter 43.348 of the Revised Code of Washington (RCW).

1. General consultation relating to peer review. Provide consultation to CARE Fund in the grantmaking process, which may include the development of funding opportunity Request for Proposal (RFP) and refining the scientific peer review process.
2. Scientific Peer Review of Grant Proposals. Contractor will facilitate and provide an independent expert scientific peer review of grant proposals and provide recommendations to the CARE Board to inform its grant award decisions. CARE Fund requires that three (3) subject matter experts are assigned to each proposal and that final scores and ratings are determined after a chairperson-led panel discussion with all reviewers in the cohort of proposals.

### *Deliverables*

- Provide consultation and support as requested by CARE Fund to support its grantmaking and promoting cancer research in Washington State.
- For each RFP grant cycle:
  - Provide anonymized descriptions of candidate reviewers', including chairperson's, relevant experience and qualifications, sent electronically to CARE Fund staff for CARE Board approval.
  - Facilitate, complete, and validate final scientific reviews for each proposal and the cohort of proposals, and deliver the cohort summary and individual summaries electronically to CARE Fund staff.
  - Provide payments and issue appropriate IRS forms (e.g., 1099-MISC) to reviewers as required.
  - CARE Fund anticipates approximately two (2) RFPs per grant cycle, with cycles announced January and June each year.

### *Process*

CARE Fund generally uses the following grant process to review and award grants.

1. Funding opportunity Request for Proposal (RFP) is announced.

2. Proposals are submitted to CARE Fund. Application period is approximately 8 weeks.
3. CARE Fund screens proposals for completeness and eligibility before sending to the Contractor.
4. Contractor reviews proposals and identifies and recruits candidate reviewers with the relevant nationally recognized expertise in the scientific, clinical, ethical, commercial, and regulatory aspects of cancer research, prevention and care to review the proposals in accordance with Chapter 43.348 RCW. (Approximately 4 weeks)
5. Contractor provides an anonymous description of professional title(s) and relevant expertise for each candidate reviewer and chairperson selected by the Contractor for CARE Board approval and appointment.
6. CARE Board reviews the candidates' qualifications prior to their approval and appointment to the review committee. (Approximately 3 weeks)
7. CARE Fund notifies the Contractor of CARE Board's appointment of candidates
  - a. Contractor shall comply with all federal, state, and local laws related to the use, sharing, transfer, sale, or disclosure of Confidential Information and Protected Health Information under the federal Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA).
  - b. Contractor ensures appropriate confidentiality agreements and conflict-of-interest disclosures are completed and documented prior to providing reviewers with access to the proposals.
8. Contractor conducts the scientific review process of the grant proposals, which should follow this general framework. (Approximately 8 weeks)
  - a. Three (3) reviewers with the appropriate subject matter expertise are assigned to each proposal.
  - b. Reviewers evaluate and score their assigned proposal(s) individually.
  - c. All reviewers are convened for a chairperson led discussion of the cohort of proposals. Final scores and ratings are determined after the panel discussion of all proposals.
9. Contractor provides CARE Fund, a narrative summary review and scores of the cohort of proposals; individual narrative summary review and scores of each proposal (which will be shared with the applicant); and recommendations for award for each proposal to CARE Fund.
10. CARE Fund provides the reviews and recommendations to the CARE Board for final award decision at a public board meeting.

### *Resources*

The work to be conducted by the Contractor will be done in coordination with CARE Fund staff and with input from CARE Board or authorized members of the board.

### *Estimated Timeline*

September 2023: Issue RFP for contract for services.

October 2023: Select Contractor and contracting.

October 2023 – June 2025: Ongoing through the contract period, actual dates and specific activities to be determined based timing and number of RFPs (i.e., grant opportunities).

## Proposals

Required components:

1. A proposed scope of work. Outline the steps and resources to be used in providing scientific peer review services as outlined in the Process section above. Please also include prior experience and qualifications for providing peer review services and consulting with grantmaking entities in the life sciences sector.
2. Estimated timeline for completing a review cycle, including for each of the Contractor steps in the review process.
3. A detailed budget for consultation and scientific peer review services that includes:
  - a. The estimated hours and hourly rate for consultation services
  - b. The cost for scientific peer review of one cohort of 6 proposals to an RFP. Please note any cost adjustments that would be needed if the number of proposals in a cohort increases or decreases.
  - c. A total not to exceed amount. Please provide the cost for work through June 30, 2025. Assume 6 total cohorts of 6 proposals over the life of this scope of work.
4. Resume(s), CV(s), or link to LinkedIn profile that highlight the capacity to successfully provide the services outlined in this RFP.
5. Identify if the proposal is from a registered minority-owned, women-owned or veteran-owned small business.

Proposals should be submitted via email, **no later than 4:00 PM (PT), October 11, 2023** with "Scientific Peer Review Services RFP" in the subject line, to Peter Choi at [peter@wacarefund.org](mailto:peter@wacarefund.org). Questions regarding this RFP may also be addressed to this same email address.

Finalists may be asked to submit additional materials, including references.

Total compensation under this contract will be inclusive of travel and other routine business expenses.

ESI will prioritize proposals with one or more of the following: Expertise in providing scientific peer review services for grantmaking in the life sciences sector; experience providing scientific peer review services for government institutions.

### ABOUT EVERGREEN SOCIAL IMPACT

Evergreen Social Impact (ESI) Evergreen Social Impact was founded in 2021 to fiscally sponsor public/private partnerships and charitable projects with a social impact mission in the Pacific Northwest. ESI provides fiduciary services, including governance, funds management, and other administrative services to projects with social-impact missions. ESI can act as a long-term administrative home for new or established projects, or as a 'nonprofit incubator' for projects seeking to become independent nonprofit organizations. By providing an administrative and operations hub, it supports sponsored projects in focusing on their missions and building capacity.