

## NextGen Cancer Scholars: ACS Cancer Research Fellows Program Application Guidelines 2026

The NextGen Cancer Scholars: ACS Cancer Research Fellows Program is a two-year, full-time, paid fellowship designed to prepare recent college baccalaureate graduates - particularly those from underrepresented backgrounds - for doctoral-level training in cancer research and health-related professions. Fellows will engage in intensive mentored research, professional development, and graduate-level learning while supported by a \$50,000 annual stipend. Fellows will receive a certificate upon completion of the fellowship.

### Program Highlights

#### Mentored Research Experience

Fellows will be matched with a faculty mentor and research team in cancer biology, population science, clinical research, or other related disciplines. Under close mentorship, fellows will:

- Design and conduct original, hypothesis-driven cancer research
- Gain hands-on laboratory or data analysis experience using modern techniques and tools
- Develop and submit a research proposal with iterative mentor feedback
- Prepare written reports (preliminary, mid-point, and final), a draft manuscript, and a final manuscript suitable for publication
- Present findings at internal seminars and national conferences
- Build skills in critical thinking, scientific writing, data interpretation, and presentation

Fellows are expected to dedicate 90–95% of their time (35–38 hours/week) to their research activities, with limited time allocated to coursework and professional development.

#### Professional Development Opportunities

Participation in training designed to enhance fellows' readiness and competitiveness for doctoral degree programs, including sessions on applying to graduate school, crafting compelling applications, and securing funding.

#### Graduate-Level Learning

Participation in seminars and coursework where fellows engage with cutting-edge cancer research topics and methodologies.

#### Networking and Collaboration

Opportunities to build professional connections with peers, mentors, and role models in the cancer research community, fostering long-term relationships and collaborations.

The USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center has received funding to support **four fellows**, each receiving a **\$50,000 annual stipend** (\$100,000 total for two years).

The fellowship begins in September 2026. To be considered for the 2026 – 2028 cohort, your statement of Interest is due by **Friday, May 29, 2026**.

### Eligibility Requirements:

1. *Underrepresented Status:* Applicants must identify as members of racial or ethnic groups underrepresented in biomedical research, as defined by NIH.
2. *Educational Background:* Applicants must be a current senior or a recent graduate (within one year) with a bachelor's degree in any STEM field.
3. *GPA Requirement:* A minimum of 3.0 cumulative GPA in the final academic year is required.

4. *Career Goals:* Applicants must intend to pursue a doctoral degree in any STEM (science, technology, engineering, or mathematics) discipline, medicine, or health profession
5. *Program Exclusivity:* Applicants must commit to participating full-time in the fellowship program. Fellows are allowed to take up to two courses per semester.

### How to Apply:

Step 1: Submit your [Statement of Interest](#). To be considered for the 2026 – 2028 cohort, the deadline to submit your application is Friday, May 29, 2026.

Step 2: If selected by the Committee, you will be informed and matched with a mentor.

Step 3: Collaborate with your mentor on submitting your IDP and Research Proposal 2 weeks before the start of your program.

### After Acceptance:

1. Once accepted, you will work with your mentor to:
  1. Complete any required compliance steps, such as HIPAA certification or lab safety training
  2. Discuss your project, obtain background reading
  3. Develop and submit an Individualized Development Plan (IDP) and a Research Proposal
    1. The Individualized Development Plan and the Research Proposal are due 2 weeks prior the program start's date. Note that you will be able to update both the IDP and the research Proposal as needed (IDP needs to be updated annually at least)
  4. Develop and submit a Deliverable Timeline
    1. You will provide a timeline for all deliverables you will submit during your program (Mid-Project Report, Draft Final Report, Final Report); this is due 2 weeks after the program start date.

### During the Program:

1. You will be required to submit:
  - a. A preliminary progress report for your manuscript
  - b. A mid project report for your manuscript
  - c. A draft final report for your manuscript
  - d. A final report for your manuscript
  - e. An IDP
2. You will present your research
3. You will prepare your project data for publication in peer-reviewed journals and for presentation at national/international meetings.
4. You are expected to spend the majority of your time (at least 90-95%; 35-38 hours per week or more) on your research, spending on average only half an afternoon per week in other organized educational activities.
5. You will attend workshops, training activities, NCCC Program research meetings, seminars
6. You can take for credit classes relevant to cancer research (two classes a semester)

## NextGen Cancer Scholars: ACS Cancer Research Fellow Program's FAQ

### **Q: How do I find a faculty mentor?**

*First Step:* Submit your Statement of Interest

*Second Step:* The USC NCCC Review Committee will match you with a mentor.

### **Q: When is the application deadline?**

*Statement of Interest:* Friday, May 29, 2026

### **Q: How long is the program?**

The program is 2 years long, beginning in August 2026.

### **Q: How much is the stipend?**

Interns will receive a \$50,000 stipend per year.