



2025 Pilot and Exploratory Studies Award

Budget and Budget Justification Guidelines

Budget Details

- Use the appropriate ASCENT Pilot and Exploratory Studies Award budget template:
 - [One-year budget template and example](#) (dated 12/9/2025)
 - [Two-year budget template and example](#) (dated 12/9/2025)
- The full application should include an excel sheet in the budget template format and a final PDF of the budget (round numbers only).
 - If you need a template formatted in academic and summer Months, please reach out to ascentadmin@cuanschutz.edu for assistance.
- Must not exceed direct costs of \$250,000 per year for a maximum duration of 2 years
 - Examples:
 - Smaller pilot studies may have a direct cost of \$100,000 and a duration of 1 year
 - Larger exploratory studies may have a direct cost of \$250,000 per year and a duration of 2 years
- **Please note the following budget guideline update for Indirect costs (Facilities & Administrative costs):** If applicable, applicants are required to use their federally negotiated rate agreement as stated in [NIHGPS7.4: Reimbursement of Facilities and Administrative Costs](#). If your organization does not have a federally negotiated rate, you may use a de minimis rate of 10%.
- Earliest award start date is May 1, 2026
- Allowable costs include:
 - Salary support and fringe benefits (investigator, co-investigators, and study staff)
 - When applicable, use current NIH salary cap of \$225,700
 - Research project costs such as supplies, equipment, data management, and research personnel
 - Subcontract costs (must collect indirect on first \$25,000 of subcontract)
 - Tuition and training expenses
 - Travel to conferences related to the proposed research or career development
 - Travel to ASCENT Scientific Annual Meeting (required) (plan for 2-day meeting in DC-area)
 - Publication expenses
 - Consultants
- Unallowable costs without special justification include:
 - Dues or membership fees
 - Basic office supplies (e.g. laptops/computers)
 - Meals (unless highly justified and research related)
 - Entertainment costs
 - Foreign subcontracts
 - Foreign travel
 - [Other NIH unallowable costs](#)

Budget Justification

- Use the [ASCENT Pilot & Exploratory Study Award budget justification template](#) (dated 12/12/2025)
- Provide a detailed explanation of how each cost category listed on the budget supports the project. (2-page maximum)
- If your proposal will leverage non-ASCENT resources, please describe the relationship with another funding source and what parts of your research leverage those resources.
- Upload as a PDF with your full application