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HDF Transformative Research Award

Apply for a Transformative Research Award

Description of the Funding Opportunity

The HDF Transformative Research Award program developed by the Huntington's Disease Foundation will make funds available to advance transformational collaborative projects that will provide new insights into disease mechanisms or create or implement tools and technologies previously applied to Huntington's disease (HD) research for the advancement of therapeutics.

Description of this Request for Proposals

The program seeks to fund collaborative research teams to create innovative ways to study new pathogenic disease mechanisms and modalities in Huntington's disease. Funded projects will "significantly move the needle" and provide transformational new insights to the field. General areas include but are not limited to: whether modulation of somatic repeat instability is disease modifying, whether and how biochemical or molecular insights in HD systems are predictive of disease, or how to apply unexplored therapeutics for clinical applications (e.g., of biomarkers). Projects that discover disease modifying targets and incorporate novel tools or technologies are encouraged. Projects that explore how results could ultimately connect to therapies are also encouraged.

Objectives: Stimulating Revolutionary Advances

The HDF Transformative Research Award program is intended to stimulate revolutionary advances in discovering fundamental new disease mechanisms or conceptually novel therapeutic approaches. Exceptional novelty with a credible research path toward the envisioned clinical impact will impact HD research or HD therapies will be the most important factor in funding decisions. Incremental advances on research already described in the literature are excluded. This funding opportunity is exclusively to develop and test new ideas.

Proposers are expected to establish their own metrics and milestones to measure success and to provide justification for their choice of metrics. Progress metrics must be delineated.

Eligibility: Partnerships Strongly Encouraged

Investigators from academic institutions, companies, national laboratories, nonprofit institutes, and multi-institutional teams are welcome. Partnerships between academia and industry and those bringing scientific expertise from outside the HD field are strongly encouraged.

Funding Level: \$300,000-500,000

Annual funding can range from \$300,000-500,000 per award per year with appropriate justification for up to a two-year period. Funding is used for principal investigator, co-investigator, staff scientists, postdoctoral researchers and, where applicable, graduate students' salaries. Funding follows NIH guidelines for salary and allowable costs. Also allowed are costs for relevant laboratory supplies, open access publication fees, laboratory equipment, and vivarium expenses. Institutional indirect support will be capped at 15% of direct costs.

Development of collaborative teams from the same or multiple institutions is encouraged as it is anticipated that responsive applications will require integration of expertise from diverse disciplines. Funding will be contracted, managed, and reviewed as a team; nonetheless, teams from multiple institutions should select one individual to serve as lead PI.

Intellectual Property

The awardees will retain ownership of intellectual property created during performance of the program.

Overview of Application Process

A Letter of Intent (LOI) (<https://hdfoundation.org/tra-application/#button>) describing the project and team is required (*Max 500 words/3500 characters. Text only. No special characters or formatting*). LOIs should be submitted through ProposalCentral in line with the key dates below. HDF provides funding to researchers to advance the discovery and development of treatments for Huntington's disease and other brain diseases. LOIs should have a direct application to Huntington's disease. All LOIs related to Huntington's disease are reviewed by a committee comprised of members of the SAB, who independently review and score each LOI. Only the LOIs that the SAB review committee consider the most impactful will have a full application requested.

Submission of full proposals is by invitation only following review of the LOIs and a template for preparation and submission of a full proposal will be made available upon selection.

Key dates for 2026 applications

Letters of Intent open:

November 14, 2025

Letters of Intent due:

January 15, 2026

Invitation for Full Proposals:

February 27, 2026

Full Proposals due:

April 30, 2026

Award Announcements:

Summer, 2026

Project start date:

Awardees should plan to start their projects by August-September, 2026

LOIs must be submitted through ProposalCentral between November 14, 2025 and January 15, 2026.

Before You Apply

▼ Does the Huntington's Disease Foundation support international researchers?

▼ Who is eligible for funding?

▼ Is there a maximum number of applications that can be submitted by one person?

▼ Am I eligible for funding if I have current TRA funding?