



2026 REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS: Misophonia Data Discovery Award

The [Misophonia Research Fund \(MRF\)](#) is dedicated to advancing a world where misophonia is scientifically understood, and effective treatments are available to help anyone who is suffering. The MRF is a program of The REAM Foundation, a private, US-based family foundation established to help people reach their full potential through support for health and wellness, education, and arts initiatives. For its eighth cycle, the MRF is now accepting applications for research projects that seek to better understand misophonia, characterize symptomatology and associated impairments, and assess interventional strategies to treat those with the disorder.

Misophonia Data Discovery Award | Description

The Misophonia Data Discovery Award supports innovative research to acquire important initial datasets to seed larger projects.

The MRF intends to award up to US\$250,000 in funding for Misophonia Data Discovery Awards in 2026. Each grant will provide up to US\$75,000 in total funding support, which may span one to two years, depending on the proposed project's needs.

The Misophonia Data Discovery Award supports investigators meeting the following eligibility requirements:

- Graduate-level (or medical) students (e.g., Ph.D., M.D., Psy.D., Au.D.) interested in gaining experience in misophonia research. Note that graduate-level students applying for this award are expected to develop their proposal with significant input from a senior PI/mentor. A maximum of two (2) awards will be funded in this category. Students in Master's-level programs will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- Independent investigators, at the faculty and postdoctoral levels, at qualifying research-based institutions who currently hold doctoral-level degrees (e.g., Ph.D., M.D., Psy.D., Au.D.). A maximum of two (2) awards will be funded in this category.

For any questions regarding eligibility, please contact info@MisophoniaFund.org.

Currently funded PIs may not be designated as the project PI but can be listed as project mentors or collaborators.

Proposals already submitted through this mechanism are not eligible for renewal.

[Misophonia](#) is a disorder of decreased tolerance to specific sounds or stimuli associated with such sounds. These stimuli, known as "triggers," are experienced as unpleasant or distressing and tend to evoke strong negative emotional, physiological, and behavioral responses generally not experienced by other people. Trigger stimuli are often repetitive and primarily, but not exclusively, include stimuli generated by another individual, especially those produced by the human body (such as chewing or sniffing). The expression of misophonic symptoms varies, as does the severity, which ranges from mild to severe impairments. Misophonia is under-studied and may be more common than previously realized, with some studies finding that as many as one in five individuals reports symptoms of misophonia.

For more information about misophonia, please visit the [MRF website](#).

Projects that may be selected for funding should display clear goals and a strong rationale for the collection of pilot datasets with a well-defined plan for advancing misophonia research, innovation, and feasibility within the scope of the available resources and time.

Scientific Focus

The Data Discovery Award supports early-stage research with a focus on providing key initial datasets that address clear gaps in the field and/or generating new knowledge about misophonia that is essential to the development of a large-scale research project. This grant seeks to advance the field by fostering novel approaches in studying the underlying mechanisms, diagnosis, and treatment of misophonia.

The scientific focus of proposals shall align with one or more of the MRF's prioritized focus areas in human, animal, or relevant research models. Proposals may generate pilot data in any of the following areas:

1. ***Characterization of Misophonia.*** Proposals may include a wide range of approaches to examine the following:
 - a. testable theories, basic animal models, and human translational models addressing why, how, and for whom misophonia develops;
 - b. underlying biological, behavioral, and/or environmental mechanisms (and their interactions) underlying the etiology, longitudinal development, maintenance, and/or treatment of misophonia;
 - c. expression and trajectory of symptoms, impairment, and related phenomena, including individual variability and trends within and between populations;
 - d. the use of multiple measurement methods (e.g., questionnaires, behavioral and physiological measurements) and the development of diagnostic criteria according to these measurements;
 - e. the epidemiology and prevalence of misophonia, as this may inform the scope and significance of misophonia as a public health problem;
 - f. individual differences in demographic factors, especially with underrepresented and marginalized populations;

- g. characterization of non-Western and/or non-US/UK/Canadian populations to understand the role of culture in misophonia; and
 - h. the influence of contextual factors on the development and expression of misophonia (e.g., family, friends, school, community).
2. ***Development or Validation of Objective Methods.*** Recent years have seen the development of multiple psychometrically validated questionnaires. Current proposals in this category may develop or validate physiological and/or behavioral methods (i.e., objective assessments) to assess misophonia. With the 2022 publication of the [consensus definition of misophonia](#) (the full article describing consensus definition development can be found [here](#)), the MRF expects applicants to integrate the definition throughout proposals and encourages applicants to apply, test, challenge, and/or modify the definition (with explanation) to contribute to the iterative understanding of misophonia and how it can be assessed and measured. Proposals should also aim to understand differences and overlap between misophonia and other sensory tolerance disorders (e.g., hyperacusis) and between misophonia and co-occurring mental health disorders (e.g., anxiety disorders).
3. ***Clinical and/or Animal Model Study of Interventional Approaches.*** Proposals should use rigorous experimental methods to develop and/or evaluate the acceptability, feasibility, and efficacy of interventions for misophonia. Clinically-oriented proposals may collect pilot data to inform future, larger randomized controlled trials but must still include rigorously constructed control and experimental groups. Creative interventional approaches are encouraged, including:
- a. development of interventions and/or treatments that will be ready in the near-term (this approach takes high priority),
 - b. early prevention and intervention,
 - c. multidisciplinary treatment models,
 - d. novel treatment approaches (e.g., pharmacotherapy, portable technology, digital health platforms, multimodal manual treatment strategies, augmented or virtual reality, gamification, etc.), and
 - e. controlled comparative efficacy trials of promising treatments.

For the 2026 grant cycle, proposals may also generate pilot data in the following area:

4. ***Artificial Intelligence (AI) discovery:*** As misophonia research expands, AI and machine learning offer a powerful opportunity to uncover new insights and patterns across behavioral, physiological, and neurobiological data. The Misophonia Research Fund seeks to catalyze innovation in this area by supporting projects that explore how AI can be most effectively applied to accelerate discovery, improve diagnosis, and inform future treatments. We especially encourage work that bridges human expertise with computational innovation, ensuring that advances in AI meaningfully contribute to scientific and clinical progress.

Applicants are highly encouraged to utilize innovative research design and novel approaches in their proposal. Submission of pilot data is not a requirement of this award mechanism. Both high-risk and proposals that support foundational research are acceptable.

Eligibility Criteria

1. Each applicant organization must be a nonprofit academic or research institution, including domestic and non-US nonprofit organizations, domestic and non-US public/private academic universities or institutions of higher learning (including colleges, universities, medical schools, and other related academic research institutions); certain qualified governmental agencies with active biomedical research programs may also apply.
2. All proposed research projects must be led by a Principal Investigator (PI) engaged in a graduate-level program (a graduate-level student), or a PI who holds a doctorate or related research doctorate degree (e.g., Ph.D., M.D., Psy.D., Au.D.), including postdoctoral fellows. PIs must be selected by and identified by the applicant organization.
3. Institutions can submit more than one proposal, but each proposal must be led by a unique PI. PIs may not be currently funded.
4. For purposes of this Request for Proposals (RFP), a “graduate-level student” is an individual who has completed a bachelor’s degree and is pursuing an advanced degree (Ph.D., M.D., Psy.D., Au.D., or equivalent) at a graduate school or university. A “postdoctoral fellow” is an individual who holds a doctoral degree (Ph.D., M.D., Psy.D., Au.D., or an equivalent degree), and who is engaged in a temporary period of mentored research for the purpose of acquiring the professional skills needed to pursue a career path of their choosing. **Note that additional application requirements apply for graduate-level students, postdoctoral fellows, and investigators new to the field of misophonia (investigators who have not yet published on the topic of misophonia).**

For any questions regarding eligibility, email info@misophoniarfund.org.

Budget

Applicant organizations may request up to US\$75,000 in total support that may span one to two years.

Application Requirements

All completed applications shall be submitted through the MRF’s online grant portal (see below). Below is a list of required components for an application to be considered complete. **Applications shall be single-spaced and formatted in Calibri 11-point font with one-inch margins, except where provided templates apply.**

All applicant organizations shall submit a full proposal, which will be reviewed by the MRF. Selected organizations that propose relevant projects will then be invited to submit a full application, as outlined below.

1. General Guidelines.

- a. Proposals are due Monday, January 12, 2026, by 11:59 p.m. Pacific Time.

- b. Proposals must include:
 - i. the applicant organization's legal name;
 - ii. PI name(s), degree, position, and contact information;
 - iii. an authorized institutional contact; and
 - iv. the organization's tax ID number (for US), registered charity number, or non-US country's equivalent.
 - c. Proposals must be submitted via the MRF's online grants portal, accessible via this link: <https://bit.ly/MRFDDataDiscoveryApp>. Click on the "Create account" link (below the email text box) to create a new account. If you save and exit the proposal form, you may click on the same link above to return to your proposal that is already in progress.
2. **Proposal.** A formal proposal outlining the intended project should be no more than three (3) total pages in length (excluding references) and should contain the below information. Note that the MRF will omit from review any pages in excess of the limit.
- a. **Cover Page** including:
 - i. Project title (a short title identifying the project and its intended area of focus);
 - ii. The PI's name, Co-I's names and emails, if applicable, and the applicant organization's name;
 - iii. Technical abstract.
 - iv. Lay abstract (provide a succinct, lay-friendly summary of the project).
 - b. **Scientific Background and Impact.** Describe the problem or gaps in misophonia research that the study aims to address and how the proposed research represents a novel/innovative approach to address these problems/gaps.
 - c. **Aims.** Summarize what the project aims to accomplish.
 - d. **Scientific Approach.** Outline the research methodology, including brief analytical plan, the PI intends to use in pursuit of the project.
 - e. **Next Steps Plan.** Describe the next sequential steps for data obtained through this proposal and how these steps will lead to an impactful advance in understanding of misophonia. Applicants are encouraged to consider the impact of all possible outcomes. Applicants should describe how results from this proposed work may be leveraged to obtain subsequent funding for a larger project that will continue to build the knowledge base of misophonia.
 - f. **Key Personnel.** List the key team members including PI, Co-Is, consultants, and other key personnel, as applicable. Utilize the [key personnel template](#) provided. One (1) page or less and not included in page limit.

- g. **References Cited.** Limited to one (1) page and not included in page limit.
- 3. **Additional Documentation Within the Online Form Shall Include:**
 - a. **Information About the Applicant Organization and the Lead Investigator.**
Contact information for the lead investigator and the authorized representative of the applicant organization that will receive the grant correspondence and funds.
 - b. **Budget and Justification.** Provide a detailed budget in USD with a narrative summary and justification for each item, including how the PI intends to spend their time on the project. Up to two (2) pages in length using the provided template and one (1) page in length providing narrative justification of budget items. The budget form should be submitted in an Excel-compatible format.
 - i. The maximum allowable budget is inclusive of indirect expenses.
 - ii. Acceptable expenditures will include salary commensurate with effort, purchase or rental of equipment for new research, graduate student tuition for students fully dedicated to research, software, patient recruitment, fringe benefits, percent effort for hired personnel, research-related travel, and up to 15 percent indirect expenses to support institutional infrastructure. Applicants are encouraged to set aside funds for travel-related expenses for the project PI to attend the annual MRF Funded Investigators Meeting (airfare and lodging), at a recommended US\$3,000 per attendee, per year for US-based institutions, and a recommended US\$4,500 per year for non-US-based institutions.
 - iii. Budget requests must be strongly justified.
Please note that the salary cap will be as follows:

10% salary cap for established PIs, with exceptions considered on a strongly justified case-by-case basis. Graduate students and postdoctoral scholars may request salary support exceeding the 10% cap.
 - iv. Prohibited expenditures will include all conference travel not related to the MRF Annual Convening, general telephone services and postage, purchase of laboratory or office furniture, purchase of periodicals and books, and dues and memberships for scientific societies.
 - v. If more than one institution is involved in the project, one shall be proposed as the applicant organization and the other included as a sub-grantee. When a proposal includes a sub-grantee, the maximum allowable indirect rate across both grantee and sub-grantee remains 15 percent of the total award budget.
 - vi. **For Non-US Applicants:** Please note grants will be made in US Dollars, and the MRF is not responsible for changes in conversion rates. Grants selected for funding will be made payable to the applicant organization. Under no circumstances will funding be paid to, or earmarked for, any individual.

- c. **Listed PI's Biosketch** (including Co-I, if applicable, and/or mentors for post-doctoral fellows) from the [NIH template](#). Five (5) pages or less using the NIH template (all pages over the limit will be omitted). Biosketches are only necessary for key personnel and mentors (where applicable).
 - d. **Institution Letter of Commitment** stating that applicant organization will be able to support the research led by the PI.
- 4. **Non-US-based Applicant Organizations** must provide:
 - a. A list of voting board members and officers, as well as the name of the organization's highest-ranking staff member (e.g., Chief Executive Officer).
 - b. Additional organization governing documents and other documentation via a secondary questionnaire following your proposal submission. MRF will make this request during proposal review. For more information, please visit <https://www.ngosource.org/how-an-ed-works>.
 - c. Any correspondence from the IRS confirming the organization's tax status, if applicable.
- 5. **US-based Governmental Organizations (excluding academic/research institutions that can apply as public charities)** must provide:
 - a. A full copy of the enabling statute that authorized the organization's creation.
 - b. A copy of the organization's governing documents (such as articles of organization or constitution and bylaws), if applicable.
 - c. Any correspondence from the IRS confirming the organization's tax status, if applicable.
- 6. **US-based Non-governmental Organizations (including academic/research institutions and public charities)** must provide:
 - a. A copy of the organization's IRS letter of determination that confirms the 501(c)3 status for the organization.
- 7. **Applicant organizations submitting grant requests for projects to be led by graduate-level researchers or postdoctoral fellows** must also submit the following regarding the selected postdoctoral fellows:
 - a. Research training information outlining the training or individual development plan and the working environment. One (1) page or less.
 - b. One (1) mentor/sponsor letter of support.
- 8. **Applicant organizations submitting grant requests for projects to be led by an independent research scientist that has completed their postdoctoral fellowship, but who is new to the field of misophonia** (researchers without current misophonia-related publications) must also submit the following:

- a. A research partnership plan outlining collaboration or mentorship from researchers with significant experience within the field of misophonia research. One (1) page or less.
 - b. One (1) collaborator/mentor letter of support.
9. **Disclosure of AI Use:** While the MRF permits usage of Large Language Models (LLMs; e.g., ChatGPT, Copilot) in the development of research proposals, we believe that these tools should be used simply to assist in proposal writing and that critical thinking, review, and analysis must be done without the use of AI. Applicants must disclose the use of AI and describe the way in which AI was used (e.g., ChatGPT was used to proofread and refine the data sharing policy). This disclosure will not negatively impact the review of the proposal.

If the MRF determines that AI was used in a proposal without disclosure, the proposal will be subject to withdrawal.

IRB (for human studies) or IACUC (for animal studies) approval will be required before initial payments are made for any project that the MRF, in its sole discretion, selects for funding.

The MRF shall strictly enforce formatting and length. Any submissions that exceed the page limit or do not follow the requirements above shall not be considered for review.

Proposal Review

Data Discovery grants will be reviewed by the MRF's Board of Scientific Advisors. All applications will be reviewed based on the following domains:

1. **Scientific Merit, Impact, and Innovation:** the quality of the scientific rationale to rigorously evaluate the central scientific question or test the stated hypothesis/hypotheses. Experimental design is highly rigorous, and the study design is appropriate to produce meaningful initial datasets to seed a subsequent larger-scale project. The research addresses important challenges or questions in the field and has the potential to generate important data for future scientific investigation.
2. **Feasibility and Cost Realism:** the project is feasible within the time frame and proposed budget. Budget adequately supports personnel, equipment, overhead, and other needs to successfully carry out the project.
3. **Innovation and Novelty:** a proposal's ability to bring new ideas, knowledge, or perspectives to the misophonia field and develop unique avenues to understand, characterize, and/or treat misophonia.
4. **Team Capabilities and Competencies:** the research group's ability to address the research question, support the research, and recruit and manage study participants in a feasible way.
5. **Sustainability and Future Funding Potential:** a proposal's ability to generate data that may lead to future funding or larger-scale research projects. Well-identified next steps to continue the research beyond the seed funding period.

Key Dates and Timeline

1. **Monday, January 12, 2026:** Applicant organizations shall submit their full proposals via the online grants portal by 11:59 p.m. Pacific Time.
2. **April 2026:** MRF will notify applicant organizations of funding decisions.
3. **June 2026:** Grant period begins. Grantees complete administrative tasks and IRB approval process.

Grant Terms

Each funded organization will be required to countersign and agree in writing to the MRF's grant terms within thirty (30) days from receipt of notice of the award and prior to funds being released. The MRF's grant terms include the following:

1. Signature confirming that the information provided in the grant proposal is true, complete, and accurate. False or fraudulent statements may subject the funded organization to criminal, civil, or administrative penalties.
2. Any substantial changes to the project, including activities, budget, grant period, or PI, require written approval from the MRF before proceeding with such activities, spending, or committing any remaining funds from the grant.
 - a. Any funds not expended or committed for the purposes of the grant must be returned to the MRF unless otherwise agreed by the MRF in writing.
 - b. If a funded organization proposes to supplement any funds provided by the MRF with funds provided by a third-party, the organization must first provide notice to the MRF.
3. The funded organization must be able to receive awarded funds and allocate them exclusively toward the funded misophonia research project.
4. Funded organizations must agree to, and timely deliver on, the following reporting requirements to receive funding from the MRF:
 - a. Annual submission of full written narrative and financial reports following the initial award payment, which shall, among other things, include a signed statement by an authorized representative of the funded organization and its PI confirming that the funded organization, the PI, and any other applicable employees or contractors who have worked on the project during the reporting period have submitted information that is true, complete, and accurate and have adhered to the Data Sharing Plan set forth in the proposal.
 - b. Mid-year submission of brief written updates describing major project highlights.
5. **IRB (for human studies) and/or IACUC (for animal studies) approval is required before initial payments are made.** Evidence of protocol submission within six (6)

weeks of grant funding notification may be requested. IRB approval must be maintained for the duration of the granting period.

Data and Intellectual Property

Each funded organization would own the rights in all intellectual property developed by or on behalf of that organization under the MRF funding, in accordance with such organization's applicable intellectual property policies. The MRF would have the right to use and to practice all such intellectual property for internal, non-commercial research purposes, and would also have the right to publicly disclose research results in press releases, announcements, and otherwise (subject to the funded organization's advance approval if any such public disclosure will occur prior to publication of the applicable results).

Funding Awarded in the MRF's Discretion

Responding to this RFP, submitting a proposal does not entitle any individual or institution to receive funding from the MRF. Funding, if any, would be provided in the MRF's sole discretion pursuant to the terms of a written grant agreement executed by the MRF and the selected grantee organization, the terms of which the MRF may require to be acknowledged by the PI.

Contact Information

For clarification about the online process, documentation needed, scientific priorities or eligibility requirements, please contact: info@MisophoniaFund.org.

An automated email confirmation is generated upon submission of the application. If you do not receive a confirmation within 24 hours of submitting your application, please check spam filters and then contact info@MisophoniaFund.org.