

Awards for Independent Investigators

The Parkinson's Foundation offers competitive awards for independent investigators:

- **Stanley Fahn Junior Faculty Award**: a three-year award providing a total of \$300,000.
- **Impact Awards**: funding for innovative projects that are in need of support to see their maximum impact on the Parkinson's community.
- **Conference Awards**: supporting the gathering of experts in the field working to address unsolved clinical or basic science problems relevant to Parkinson's.

Stanley Fahn Junior Faculty Award

The Stanley Fahn Junior Faculty Award honors longtime Parkinson's Foundation Scientific Director Stanley Fahn, MD, renowned for his clinical abilities and commitment to training the next generation of Parkinson's scientists.

Program Overview

The Stanley Fahn Junior Faculty Award acts as a bridge to ensure promising early-career scientists stay in the Parkinson's research field, helping us solve, treat, and end the disease. In today's funding environment, as young scientists navigate the path from mentored to independent research, they face a "valley of death" between their scientific potential and the funding they need to make it happen. This award strives to avert Parkinson's research talent loss. In conjunction with their institution's commitment, the award gives junior investigators the support they need to secure their independent funding source (such as an NIH R01) and stay in the PD field. Becoming a career-long independent research leader in PD is the ultimate goal.

The Parkinson's Foundation seeks clinical, pre-clinical, or basic research proposals from promising early-career scientists that will directly impact the understanding of PD. Successful projects should include novel PD research hypotheses and be inventive in methodology or approach.

Level of Support

Each award provides \$300,000 in total costs, including up to 10% of indirect costs. Applicant salary support, up to 40% of the total salary, is permitted. The funds are awarded over three years, subject to annual progress reviews. Submission of an NIH R01 or equivalent on a PD-related project is a required award milestone at the end of year two, and the third year of funding is contingent upon this.

Eligibility and Restrictions

Junior faculty possessing a PhD, MD, or equivalent are eligible to apply. Applicants must meet the National Institutes of Health (NIH) definition of a "new investigator." The Parkinson's Foundation anticipates the typical applicant will hold an assistant professor level position. We will consider earlier stage faculty and those with more experience provided they meet the above eligibility criteria. Applicants from Parkinson's Foundation research centers are eligible to apply. We require a letter of support from the applicant's department chair to demonstrate the institutional commitment to the applicant.

We restrict this program to applicants, regardless of citizenship, who are residents and faculty members at institutions in the U.S. and Canada, with a current instructor or assistant professor post. As a career development initiative, the program is not open to current or prior holders of NIH R01 awards or their equivalent. Applicants must be in a tenure-track position, or if an instructor, must have the intent to begin a tenure-track position by the award start date as confirmed by a support letter from their department chair. Only one award will be granted per institution each year, though special exceptions may be considered. Awardees may not concurrently hold an award from another source with overlapping specific aims.

Applications from groups that have been historically underrepresented or excluded in the scientific workforce, including but not limited to racial and ethnic groups, sexual orientation and gender identities, individuals with mental/physical disabilities, and those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, are especially encouraged.

Applying and Deadlines

We encourage proposals from all areas of Parkinson's disease research. The application process is highly competitive. To make the process more efficient for both applicants and reviewers, the application is in two steps. The first step is a Letter of Intent (LOI). The Parkinson's Foundation will only consider applicants who submit complete LOIs by the specified deadline. If selected after peer review, the applicant will be invited to submit a full-length proposal.

An applicant may apply to only one program per funding cycle. In addition, an applicant may not submit multiple LOIs (with different projects) to the same program during the same funding cycle. Applications from multiple individuals within the same institution are permitted, but only one per institution may be awarded.

All components of the application must be submitted online through the Foundation's grant portal, ProposalCentral, where the LOI guidelines and the list of required components can be found ([Apply Now](#)).

APPLY NOW

Impact Awards

All great ideas in science begin with a seed that, when nurtured, can profoundly impact the community. However, without adequate funding, these ideas may never get started, grow, or be fully explored. Recognizing this, the Parkinson's Foundation supports innovative projects from their inception, providing the necessary resources to maximize their impact on the Parkinson's community.

Program Overview

The science underlying the Parkinson's Foundation Impact Award projects should be "outside the box" with the goal of bringing new light to the biology of Parkinson's disease (PD), a new approach to PD research, or testing a truly novel therapeutic idea. Projects should be based on groundbreaking or unconventional ideas that are unlikely to be funded through more traditional funding mechanisms. Our goal is to provide the support that will enable researchers to test new ideas with an impact on the PD community and generate compelling results that will facilitate continued investment from the Parkinson's Foundation and other funders. Both established researchers and newcomers to PD research are encouraged to apply.

Level of Support

Each award provides \$200,000 in total costs over 2 years (\$100,000 per year). Up to 10% (\$10,000 per year) of the total award may be used for indirect costs. The Principal Investigator (PI), Co-Principal Investigator (Co-PI), and Co-Investigator (Co-I) combined salary support is capped at \$35,000 annually. Salaries for the postdoctoral fellows, graduate students, and other key personnel are not capped. Tuition is not an eligible expense for any of the Foundation's awards. The funds are awarded over two years, subject to annual progress reviews.

Eligibility and Restrictions

This award is open to scientists with a PhD or MD, regardless of nationality or location. The Parkinson's Foundation Impact Awards are intended for researchers both established and new to the field of PD.

Only independent investigators are eligible to serve as PIs - applicants must hold a tenure-track position or equivalent. Non-tenure track faculty may serve as Co-PIs, and postdoctoral fellows are eligible to serve as Co-Is. Applications from Instructors will be considered if they can demonstrate that they will begin a tenure-track position by the award start date (as confirmed by a support letter from their department chair). The Foundation reserves the sole authority to determine an applicant's eligibility. Awardees may not concurrently hold an award from another source with overlapping specific aims.

All research proposals must demonstrate a significant research focus and impact on Parkinson's disease. We will consider proposals seeking to:

- **Bring new light to the biology of PD:** Research that enhances our understanding of the underlying mechanisms of PD.
- **Address an unmet need in PD research.** Projects that tackle gaps or unresolved issues in the current PD research landscape.
- **Test a new approach (methods or technology) to Parkinson's research:** Innovative methods or technologies that could advance PD research.
- **Identify new PD biomarkers:** Discovery of novel biomarkers that can aid in the diagnosis or monitoring of PD.
- **Identify new intervention targets:** Research aimed at finding new targets for therapeutic interventions.
- **Test a truly novel therapeutic idea (pharmacological, brain stimulation, cell or gene therapy):** Proposals that explore groundbreaking therapeutic concepts or techniques.
- **Understand the role of co-pathologies in PD:** Investigations into how co-existing conditions affect the progression or treatment of PD.

- **Use human subjects with already established cohorts:** Studies that utilize existing cohorts of human subjects to advance PD research.

Though important, the following areas are not within the scope of this award and will not be considered:

- **Complementary and supportive therapies:** Research focusing on diet, exercise, physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, psychotherapy, social work, and community support.
- **Clinical trials:** Proposals centered on clinical trial methodologies or conducting clinical trials.
- **Proposals whose scope does not fit the time frame of this award (24 months):** Proposals that cannot be completed within the specified time frame.
- **Want to use human subjects but don't have established cohorts:** Proposals that intend to use human subjects but lack established cohorts.
- **Meta-analysis of existing clinical studies:** Research that involves analyzing data from existing clinical studies rather than generating new primary data.

If you have questions about whether your proposal is eligible for the Impact Award RFA, please contact the Parkinson's Foundation's Research Grants Team (Grants@Parkinson.org).

Applications from groups that have been historically underrepresented or excluded in the scientific workforce, including but not limited to racial and ethnic groups, sexual orientation and gender identities, individuals with mental/physical disabilities, and those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, are especially encouraged.

Applying and Deadlines

The application process is highly competitive and divided into two steps to make it more efficient for both applicants and reviewers. The first step is a Letter of Intent (LOI) that is approximately 1 page long. The Parkinson's Foundation will only consider applicants who submit complete LOIs by the specified deadline. If selected after peer review, the applicant will be invited to submit a full-length proposal.

An applicant may apply to only one program per funding cycle. In addition, an applicant may not submit multiple LOIs (with different projects) to the same program during the same funding cycle.

For current application dates visit [**Award Deadlines**](#).

All components of the application must be submitted online through the Foundation's grant portal, ProposalCentral, where additional documents and details regarding the application process, including the LOI guidelines and the list of required components can be found ([**Apply Now**](#)).

Please contact [**Grants@Parkinson.org**](mailto:Grants@Parkinson.org) with any additional questions regarding this award. In addition, our website provides more information about the Foundation, our SAB members, peer reviewers, and previously funded grants.

Review and Decision

All submitted LOIs are subject to internal review by the Foundation's administrative and scientific staff. LOIs that are most strongly focused on PD research and best aligned with both the goals of the funding program and the Foundation's mission will be selected for external peer review. The peer review results will inform decisions about which LOIs will be invited to submit a full proposal.

Full proposals are subject to external peer review. They will be competitively ranked based on the potential impact of the proposed research on Parkinson's disease, scientific merit, the qualifications of the applicant, and alignment with the Foundation's mission. Final funding decisions are expected in June. The Foundation's funding year typically begins August 1 and ends July 31 of the following year.

APPLY NOW

Conference Awards

Conference Awards support the gathering of experts in the field working to address unsolved clinical or basic science problems relevant to Parkinson's disease.

Program Overview

All applications should demonstrate the potential to advance the field of Parkinson's research. We require publicly available meeting results. Applicants may use this award to:

- Identify or define emerging research questions
- Plan or organize a clinical trial
- Standardize research methods