



Parkinson's Foundation Research Centers of Excellence

Program Overview

The Parkinson's Foundation believes interdisciplinary research is a key approach to finding a solution to Parkinson's disease (PD). Parkinson's is a multifaceted and extremely complex disease, and it is likely no one scientist or laboratory has the answer. Moreover, team science involving experts with diverse backgrounds can shed new light on the disease in a way that could not be done by individuals alone.

The goal of the Parkinson's Foundation Research Centers of Excellence is to provide funding for innovative team science at institutions working on a thematic area of Parkinson's disease. The Foundation is interested in proposals that tackle critical issues or problems that are impeding progress in the field of PD research.

The Parkinson's Foundation's vision and mission stand on three pillars: understanding Parkinson's through research, ensuring better care for people with Parkinson's, and educating and empowering the community. As such, proposals that touch upon these pillars (for example, studies unraveling the pathophysiology of PD, preclinical work towards disease-modifying therapies, or symptomatic therapy for unmet clinical needs) will be given priority.

Level of Support

Awards are \$500,000 a year for 4 years, for a total award of \$2,000,000. Up to 10% (\$200,000) of the total award may be used towards indirect costs. It is anticipated that 2-4 centers will be funded through this RFA for the 2018-2019 cycle.

The goal of the Center award is to provide as much flexibility as possible. As such, applicants are only required to submit a full budget for Year 1. Awarded centers will be able to submit a new budget for proposed work for the following year as part of the annual progress report. In addition, each year, \$50,000 of this award should be reserved for pilot work and new collaborations. These can be proposed as part of the application process, or at a later time during the award year. Carry over of unused funds from year to year is permitted.

This award is not meant to fully support any single PI salary 100%, and as such, the award can support up to 40% effort for individual PI salaries; PI salaries are subject to the NIH cap of \$189,600. The salary of other personnel is not limited. Consideration will be given to the ability to provide matching funds.

Some institutions applying for this award may already have center funding from or be developing a proposal for another mechanism (e.g., Udall Centers). In these cases, the applicant must clearly state and justify how Parkinson's Foundation funding will be utilized to

leverage existing support. That is, applicants must be able to answer how Foundation support will be complementary and synergistic to existing support. Applicants must state how the proposed projects differ from or build upon projects being funded by other sources. At least one of the projects proposed must be de novo (i.e., not funded by any other source).

Eligibility and Requirements

This award program is open to institutions that have or can recruit a team of scientists working in the field of Parkinson's disease. The team may all reside in the same geographical area and work at the same institution, or through a virtual center with scientists spread across regions and institutions. Preference will be given to applications which demonstrate cross-departmental or cross-institutional collaboration, bringing new approaches and perspectives to solving PD. Institutions that hold a Parkinson's Foundation Center of Excellence designation are also welcome to apply.

Applications must indicate the institutions that will be involved in the center, the scientists from each institution and a clear justification for each team member and indication of how their expertise is essential to the proposed research. Each applicant must also designate a center director who is a recognized expert in Parkinson's disease research. The role of the Center Director will be to oversee all work conducted at the center. Key to this, the Director will maintain control of the overall budget and will have the final decision in removing or replacing any PI at the Center. Centers may not designate a new Director without written approval from the Parkinson's Foundation. In cases where applicants also hold another center designation (e.g., NINDS Udall Center, Parkinson's Foundation Center of Excellence) the Research Center Director does not need to be the same person. International applicants are welcome to apply.

The team:

- Principal Investigators (PI) on the team should be faculty-level, established investigators who have made significant and unique contributions to the research being proposed. Teams should have at least 3 Principal Investigators.
- Other team members should include postdoctoral fellows, graduate students, and research technicians who will be involved in the research.
- Interdepartmental and inter-institutional collaborations are highly encouraged, bringing outstanding individuals outside the field of PD to the team.
- If team members are all housed at the same institution, they should come from at least two different groups (i.e., separate sources of funding and laboratory space).
- Teams should have access to core facilities at the institution.

Other requirements:

- Research proposed can be basic science or clinical research. However, research that combines both basic and clinical research in some capacity is highly encouraged.
- At least 3 projects should be proposed for the first year.
- Individual projects should cut across multiple disciplines of research and should be intertwined and reliant upon one another (i.e., address the same problem or hypothesis using different and complementary approaches)
- The research proposed should have the potential to be transformative in the field of Parkinson's research, and should be synergistic across projects such that no one PI could carry out the work alone. For each project, one PI should be designated as the lead.
- Proposals must include a budget for Year 1, and a multi-year plan outlining the research plan to be completed Years 1-4. Each year, centers will propose a budget for the projects for the upcoming year of the award. As flexibility is one aspect of this award, proposed projects for Years 2-4 can be modified as necessary via the annual progress report.
- Budgets should include the following amounts at these approximate levels: \$400,000 for research projects, \$50,000 for indirect costs, and \$50,000 for proposed or future pilot research and collaborations.
- Awarded Centers will be subject to a yearly review by the Foundation.
- Members of Awarded Centers are required to have key members (Center Director and/or PI) participate in an annual meeting hosted by the Foundation.
- At the end of the award period, Centers will be eligible to apply for a competitive renewal if the Foundation continues and opens a new award cycle.

Application Instructions and Deadlines

LOI opens: 10/15/18

LOI due: 12/17/18

Invited, Full applications due: 4/1/19

Award decisions will be made in late May 2019.

Funding begins: 7/1/19

Letters of Intent:

Letters of Intent will be used as a screening process to determine which applicants will be invited to submit a full application. Letters of intent should be 3 pages in length with a minimum of 11pt font Arial, and should include the following sections:

- Proposed research
- Expertise that each PI brings to the Center and proven track record in research
- Synergy between PI, departments, and institutions (if applicable)

NIH biosketches of all team members at the proposed Center should be included, as well as a letter of support from the head of each department involved to demonstrate institutional support.

Invited, Full Applications:

Full proposals should be a maximum of 20 pages at a minimum of 11pt font Arial, clearly readable, with each proposed project described in a maximum of 5 pages. Full-applications will undergo further review and short-listed applicants will be invited to present their proposal to the review committee via teleconference.

Questions and Additional Information

Please contact grants@parkinson.org with any questions regarding this award.