

Smith Family Awards Program for Excellence in Biomedical Research

A program of the Richard and Susan Smith Family Foundation

\$300,000 Awards over three years (\$100,000 per year), inclusive of 5% overhead

Invited Full Proposal Guidelines

INVITATION ONLY

Only invited applicants may apply to the second stage of the Smith Excellence Program.

Award Period: April 1, 2021 – March 31, 2024

Online Application Deadline: Wednesday, December 9, 2020 at 12:00 PM, Eastern Time

Up to five \$300,000 three-year awards will be made to newly independent junior faculty in nonprofit academic, medical, and research institutions in Massachusetts as well as at Brown University and Yale University.

Research projects must be conducted at the site within the School/College or other entity that is submitting the application. Award funds will go to that entity. For example, if an applicant submits from Harvard Medical School, the research project must be conducted at Harvard Medical School and not at an affiliate location (such as Massachusetts General Hospital or Boston Children's Hospital).

Health Resources in Action promotes diversity of gender, ethnicity, and perspectives, among many other forms, across its grant programs. Applications from women and people of color are particularly encouraged.

Program Overview and Mission

The Smith Family Foundation is committed to effecting permanent positive change in the lives of the residents of Greater Boston, particularly individuals and families in economically disadvantaged communities. In the area of health, the Foundation supports the advancement of biomedical research and the expansion of access to high-quality health care at safety net institutions serving low-income individuals and communities of Greater Boston.

The Smith Family Awards Program for Excellence in Biomedical Research was created in 1991 to launch the careers of newly independent biomedical researchers with the ultimate goal of achieving biomedical breakthroughs. Since 1992, the Program has funded 175 outstanding scientists and has provided \$36.5 million in research support.

Research Focus

The three-year Award supports newly independent faculty engaged in basic biomedical research. Investigators in the physical sciences (physics, chemistry and engineering) whose projects focus on

biomedical science are also encouraged to apply. While basic research projects involving human subjects, data, and samples are eligible, clinical trials research is beyond the scope of this Program.

In recognition of the importance of research collaboration within the scientific community, collaboration is an additional, but not required, positive ancillary factor. These projects may involve researchers within and/or outside the applicant's institution.

Eligibility Requirements

United States citizenship is not required.

Applications will be accepted from full-time faculty who have received or will receive their first **independent** faculty appointment on or between October 1, 2018 through April 1, 2021. For the purpose of this Award, the first independent faculty appointment is the Assistant Professor appointment.

If an Applicant has been on medical or family leave, or if research was interrupted for other reasons, this period of absence does not count towards eligibility. Please address any gaps in work history in the Personal Statement on the Biosketch. The Department or Division Chair must also confirm the leave of absence as well as applicant eligibility in the "Applicant Independence/Institutional Commitment Form".

All applicants must have started their Assistant Professorship by the funding start date of April 1, 2021.

The Applicant's **level of independence** is critical. The "Applicant Independence/Institutional Commitment Form" must be completed by the Department or Division Chair and must describe space, start-up package, and institutional commitment. This form will be used by the Scientific Review Committee in evaluating independence. Although it is expected that a national search will have been conducted for the Applicant's position, candidates may have been promoted within their current institutions. If the Applicant was promoted internally, the Chair must clarify why a national search was not conducted. **Institutional commitment** is also important. In addition to describing the Applicant's qualifications, the Department or Division Chair must explain how the institution will contribute to the Applicant's research career.

The Applicant Independence/Institutional Commitment Form should not be repurposed as a Letter of Recommendation. Unsolicited Letters of Recommendation will not be considered by the committee. Letters of Recommendation are not requested or required for this program.

Current, Pending and Post Award Funding

Concurrent Federal and Non-Federal Support

Applicants are ineligible if, at the time of application, they have combined federal and non-federal funding totaling \$500,000 or more in direct costs in either of the first two years (4/1/21 - 3/31/22 or 4/1/22 - 3/31/23) of the three-year Smith Award. This figure refers to external funding only and not an Applicant's start-up package, other intramural support or the Smith Award.

Applicants are also ineligible if they were previously or are currently a Principal Investigator or Multiple PI (NIH), Co-PI (NSF), or equivalent on an R01, P01, Pioneer Award, New Innovator Award or similar large awards from other federal agencies or national foundations.

Pending Federal and Non-Federal Support

Applicants who have pending R01s or other large applications to the NIH and other agencies are encouraged to submit proposals to the Smith Family Foundation.

If **notified on or prior to 1/1/2021** that they have been successful in securing federal or non-federal grant support which, when combined with other support, totals \$500,000 or more in direct costs in either of the first two years of the Smith Award, applications to the Program will be ineligible for review. Notification of funding **after** 1/1/21 will not impact eligibility for a Smith Family Award. **It is the responsibility of all applicants to contact LCarver@hria.org as soon as any new funding is received.**

Award Selection Criteria

The Scientific Review Committee uses the following criteria to evaluate applications.

Impact

- The proposed research addresses an important problem and has high potential for generating a biomedical breakthrough in the longer-term

Applicant

- Applicant's potential to carry out independent research and clear ability to develop a sound research plan
- Applicant's level of independence and Institutional commitment to her/him

Research project

- A clearly stated hypothesis, based on sound precedents and supported by relevant literature
- Objectives that are technically feasible and personnel who are qualified to carry out the proposed research
- Project's scientific merit and the applicant's familiarity with the pertinent literature and the work of other investigators in his/her field of study
- Collaboration is an additional, but not required, positive ancillary factor

Proposal Writing Tips

While the number of applicants invited to submit a full proposal is low in the second stage of review and the anticipated success rate is 38-46%, all invited applicants are strong candidates and therefore the level of competition is high. **Applicants are strongly encouraged to prioritize good grantsmanship in writing their full applications, in order to maximize their chances of being funded.**

The Review Committee is composed of a diverse group of researchers who can assess a wide range of biological proposals, such as bacterial and eukaryotic geneticists, immunologists, neurobiologists, developmental biologists, cancer biologists, and experts in transcriptional regulation. Characteristics of a well-written proposal include the following:

- Main points are communicated clearly and concisely. The big picture of what will be done, why it is important, and how it will advance the field is clear.
- The language is understandable to a general scientific audience. When jargon must be used, it is clearly explained, and complex technical points are put in context.
- Concise/essential background, hypotheses, aims, experiments, and analysis plan are connected with clear logic, and key choices are justified.
- For applicants in crowded fields, the proposal makes clear how the study will bring a fresh perspective.
- Goals and metrics of success are well-defined.
- While the work must be feasible, top-scoring proposals typically have at least one ambitious aim. Creativity and innovation are encouraged.
- The impact of the work and how it will lead to a fundamental advance in basic biology or a substantial advance in translational biology should be clear.
- Any scientific or budgetary overlap with other current or pending support is clearly described, including a plan to avoid duplication of funding.

Applicants are encouraged to seek grant writing advice within their institutions and externally, and to read examples of successful proposals, such as those found in the grant-writing tip sheets for NIH research grants. Institutions and colleagues may also be willing to provide examples of well-written and successful grant applications.

Suggested resources:

Secrets to Writing a Winning Grant: <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-019-03914-5>

NIH grant writing tips:

<https://www.nlm.nih.gov/ep/Tutorial.html>

<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/funding/grant-writing-and-application-process/grant-writing-tips.shtml>

<https://grants.nih.gov/grants/how-to-apply-application-guide/format-and-write/write-your-application.htm#Important%20Writing%20Tips>

Application Process

Invited applicants have been asked to submit Full Proposals due on December 9, 2020. Funding begins on or about April 1, 2021. The online application system will notify applicants once the application is received and will be used to communicate with applicants about the status of their applications.

PLEASE NOTE: If the Applicant is unable to accept the Award, the Award will not be transferred to another investigator involved in the research project.

Acknowledgement of Support

The Award Recipient and Institution are encouraged to announce receipt of this Award entitled, the **Smith Family Award for Excellence in Biomedical Research** and credit financial support to the **Richard and Susan Smith Family Foundation, Newton, MA.**

Publications

Publications or presentations resulting from research supported by this Award must also acknowledge support from the **Richard and Susan Smith Family Foundation, Newton, MA.**

Terms of the Award

Please download “Terms of the Award” from <https://hria.org/tmf/Smith> for information regarding use of the Award funds, indirect costs, payment schedule, reporting schedule, and other Awardee and Institutional requirements.

A listing of prior **Award Recipients** and their research summaries as well as **Frequently Asked Questions** may also be found at this site.

The Smith Family Awards Program for Excellence in Biomedical Research is managed by The Medical Foundation at Health Resources in Action (HRiA). HRiA is a nonprofit organization in Boston that advances public health and medical research.

Application Instructions

APPLICATION DEADLINE

Wednesday, December 9, 2020 (12:00 PM, U.S. Eastern Time)

Before beginning the online submission, **download and save the “Excellence Application Forms”, “Excellence Template F”, and “Excellence Template G”, which can be found at <https://hria.org/tmf/Smith>.**

Use the following link to continue the application process:

Continue a Saved Application: https://www.GrantRequest.com/SID_738?SA=AM

The following sections must be completed for the online submission:

1. Institution’s Tax ID Number

Please review and update the following tabs in the online form:

2. Application Data: Institution, Contact, Educational Background Information
3. Key Personnel: *This is read-only based on the names entered in the Initial Proposal. If this section needs to be edited, please email the Grants Officer with the correct information.*
4. Research Project: Project Title; Key Words; Research Project Summary; Non-Technical Summary; Non-Technical Overview; Experimental System(s), Key Tools, and Techniques to Be Utilized; Impact Statement; and Brief Biographical Statement
5. Institutional Contact Information: Department/Division Chair and Authorized Institutional Representative; Institutional Officer to Receive Funds

6. Attachment (Document Upload): The following documents and forms listed in items A-I must be combined and converted into ONE PDF file, in the order noted, for upload. This document must be named LastName, FirstName.pdf (for example, Doe, Jane.pdf). Make sure all pages are numbered sequentially starting with the Face Sheet as Page #1.

Document Upload

- A. Application Face Sheet:** The Application Face Sheet must be completed (type all information). The Face Sheet is the first page of the Document Upload.
- B. Table of Contents:** Follow the Table of Contents and **number ALL pages consecutively**. The Table of Contents is page 2 of the Document Upload.
- C. Research Project Summary, Performance Sites, Non-Technical Overview, and Impact Statement:** Complete this form according to the instructions on the templates. The Research Project Summary will be posted on our website if the project is funded (*suggested length of 200 words*).
- D. Applicant Biosketch:** Use the latest NIH Biographical Sketch form and include all pending support (<https://grants.nih.gov/grants/forms/biosketch.htm>). Make sure that all active and

pending support matches the support listed on the “Current and Pending Support” Form (Template G).

- E. **Applicant Independence / Institutional Commitment Form:** The Department or Division Chair must complete this form, sign at the bottom, and forward to the Applicant for upload. This form is **not** a request for a Letter of Recommendation. The Committee has requested that Chairs answer the questions directly, and do not paste in a Letter of Reference. If unsolicited information was provided in the preliminary application, **please remove it and provide only the requested information**.
- F. **Budget, Budget Summary, and Budget Justification (Template F):** Complete this form for the three years of the project. For projects whose total costs exceed \$100,000 per year, list the other sources of support in the last row. Indirect costs (institutional overhead) may not exceed 5% of direct costs or \$4,762 per year. Total support from the Smith Family Foundation, including overhead, is \$100,000 per year for three years.
- G. **Current and Pending Grant Support (Template G):** Use a separate form for each active or pending grant. If the grant is pending, include the date of notification. **If the Smith Applicant is the PI on any current or pending grant, the total grant amount (*direct costs only*) must be included when calculating “Total active grants” and “Total pending grants.” If the Smith applicant is not the PI, include only those direct costs allocated to the Applicant’s research.** Do not include a start-up package, other intramural support or the Smith Award. **Clearly describe any scientific or budgetary overlap with the proposed Smith project and outline a plan to avoid duplication of funding.**
- H. **Research Proposal:** A maximum of 5 pages is permitted (3-5 pages suggested), **excluding a bibliography of references**. Proposal sections include Specific Aims, Background and Significance, Preliminary Data (*if available*), Research Design and Methods, Potential Limitations, Project Timeline, Future Direction of Laboratory over Next Five Years, and Bibliography.

Include all figures, graphs, tables, and images related to the project in the 3-5 pages. For any projects involving collaboration, please include a brief description of these efforts within the 3-5 pages.

Format this section with **Arial 11** as the font and size. Use single or double line spacing within paragraphs, double line spacing between paragraphs, and one inch or larger margins on all four sides. Figures, legends and tables may use a font size of 8. Include the Applicant’s name at the top of each page.

- I. **Letter(s) of Collaboration/Confirmation of Outside Resources:** (*forwarded to the Applicant for inclusion in the document upload*)

Collaborations are not required but are encouraged. If the Applicant has collaborators, letters of collaboration must be forwarded to the Applicant for inclusion in the document upload. These letters must confirm the availability of resources outside the Applicant’s institution and confirm any significant collaborative relationship, either within or outside the Applicant’s institution. These are brief letters (up to one page) addressing the collaboration.