Smith Family Awards Program for Excellence in Biomedical Research
A program of the Richard and Susan Smith Family Foundation

Initial Proposal Guidelines 2022 Grant Cycle

Initial Proposal Deadline:
Tuesday, August 10, 2021
12:00 Noon, U.S. ET

Award Period: April 1, 2022 – March 31, 2025

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.

Applicants no longer need to be internally selected by their institutions.

The Smith Excellence Awards support promising junior faculty with the potential to transform their fields through their research. In order to ensure that the strongest research candidates from eligible institutions are able to apply, the Smith Family Foundation is piloting a two-stage application process in which the institutional nomination process is eliminated, and any eligible candidate is invited to submit an initial proposal. Applicant eligibility must be verified by the relevant department Chair and the institution’s Office of Sponsored Research or the initial proposal will not be considered. There is no limit on the number of applicants from a given institution. The Scientific Review Committee will select a subset of initial applicants to invite to submit full proposals.

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.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the eligibility period for the 2022 grant cycle has been extended by one year. This means that researchers who were promoted to their first tenure-track Assistant Professor appointment no more than 3.5 years prior to the award start date of April 1, 2022, are eligible to apply for this award in the current grant cycle. Eligible applicants must have less than $500,000 in combined
federal and non-federal funding in direct costs per year, excluding the institutional start-up package and other intramural support.

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 medical breakthroughs. Since 1992, the Program has funded 181 outstanding scientists and has provided $38.3 million in research support.

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.

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 research faculty appointment on or between October 1, 2018 through April 1, 2022.

We understand that there is a continuum of independence at many institutions beginning with emerging independence at the Instructor level. However, to level the playing field and ensure that all applicants have only one window of eligibility, we consider the tenure-track Assistant Professor appointment to be the first independent faculty 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 completed their postdoctoral training by the funding start date of April 1, 2022.

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.

**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 (4/1/22 - 3/31/23 or 4/1/23 - 3/31/24) 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 1/1/2022 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 1/1/22 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 medical breakthrough in the longer-term.

**Applicant**

- The applicant has high potential to carry out independent research and clear ability to develop a sound research plan.
The institution has demonstrated an appropriate level of commitment to her/him.
Collaboration is an additional, but not required, positive ancillary factor.

**Research project**
- Research question and hypothesis are clearly stated and are based on sound precedents and a clear rationale.
- Study design is appropriate to answer the question(s) and technically feasible.
- The proposal makes sense in the context of the pertinent literature and the work of other investigators in the field of study.

**Application Process**
The Smith Family Award for Excellence in Biomedical Research is a two-stage proposal process. Applicants submit an Initial Proposal by the designated deadline. Invited applicants will be asked to submit Full Proposals due in November. Funding begins on or about April 1, 2022. 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.

**Proposal Writing Tips**
Applicants are strongly encouraged to prioritize good grantsmanship in writing their initial applications, to maximize their chances of being invited to submit a full application. The Review Committee is composed of a diverse group of researchers who can assess a wide range of biomedical research 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 and essential information related to the study design and analysis are briefly summarized and 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 ensure that the initial proposal is clear and comprehensible to a scientific generalist as well as to specialists.

**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](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.
Application Instructions

APPLICATION DEADLINE
Tuesday, August 10, 2021 (12:00 PM, U.S. Eastern Time)

Before beginning the online submission, download and save the “Excellence Application Form” which can be found at https://hria.org/tmf/Smith.

Use one of the following links to begin or 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**

2. **Eligibility Quiz**

3. **Applicant Data**: Institution where proposed research will be conducted, Applicant’s contact information and educational background

4. **Key Personnel**: Co-Investigator/Collaborator information (if applicable)

5. **Research Project Information**: Project title, key words, non-technical overview, and experimental system(s), key tools, and techniques to be used.

6. **Institutional Contact Information**: Department/Division Chair and Authorized Institutional Representative

7. **Attachment (Document Upload)**: The Application Form and Biosketch 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.

A. **Application Form**
   - **Application Face Sheet**: The Application Face Sheet must be completed (type all information). The Face Sheet is the first page of the Document Upload.
   - **Table of Contents**: Follow the Table of Contents and number ALL pages consecutively. The Table of Contents is page 2 of the Document Upload.
   - **Initial Research Proposal**: Please complete the Initial Research Proposal as directed, using Arial 11 point font, single spacing within paragraphs, and double spacing between paragraphs. Do not change the page margins. Applications that exceed the stated word limits may be removed from consideration. Appendices and supplemental documents are not permitted.
   - **Applicant Independence/Institutional Commitment Form**: The Department or Division Chair must complete this form and sign at the bottom.
B. **Applicant Biosketch**: Use the latest NIH Biographical Sketch form, maximum of 5 pages ([https://grants.nih.gov/grants/forms/biosketch.htm](https://grants.nih.gov/grants/forms/biosketch.htm)). Applicants must disclose all current (active) and pending (not closed) grants, and **clearly indicate any potential research or budgetary overlap with the Smith Excellence proposal**. In cases of any potential overlap or duplication, a detailed explanation of project aims must be appended to the biosketch, exclusive of the biosketch page limit, to address any apparent overlap or lack thereof.

Please note: Supplemental materials are not permitted and will be removed (e.g., letters of collaboration or recommendation).