

Smith Family Awards Program for Excellence in Biomedical Research

A Program of the Richard and Susan Smith Family Foundation

Pre- Application Informational Session

Applications Due:

Tuesday, June 23 at 12 PM ET

SmithExcellence@hria.org

www.hria.org/tmf/smith



**HEALTH
RESOURCES
IN ACTION**

HRiA partners with individuals, organizations, and communities to transform the practices, policies, and systems that improve health and advance equity.



Agenda

- Program Goals
- Eligibility
- Program Overview
- Review Criteria
- Proposal Writing Tips
- Example of Reviewer Feedback
- Q & A



Smith Excellence was created to support:

“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.”



Program Goals



Short Term

Launch the careers of newly independent
biomedical researchers



Long Term

Achieve biomedical breakthroughs

Eligibility

Applicant

- Applicant has less than \$350K per year in external funding
- Received first independent faculty (tenure-track assistant professor) appointment on or between October 1, 2024 and April 1, 2027
- Based at a nonprofit academic, medical, or research institution in MA or at Brown or Yale University

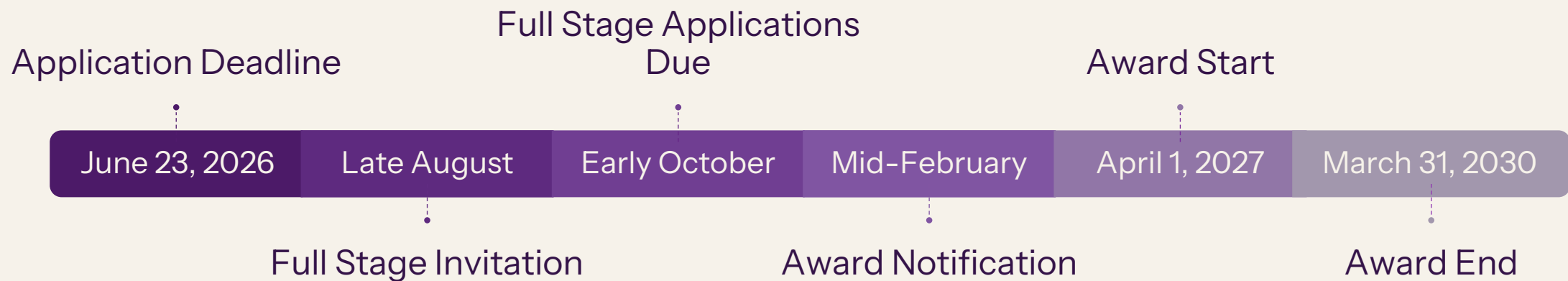
Research

- Basic or translational biomedical research
- Clinical trials are beyond the scope of this program

Program Overview

Award Duration: 3 years

Award Amount: \$400,000
(including 5% indirect costs)



Review Criteria



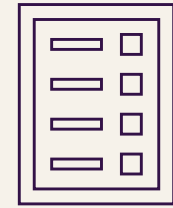
APPLICANT

Fully capable of carrying out the proposed research
Institutional commitment



IMPACT

Important problem
Will advance biology
Potential for medical breakthrough



PROJECT

Clear question and rationale
Appropriate and feasible design
Makes sense in context of the field



Proposal Writing Tips



Clear, concise,
logical



Understandabl
e language



Novelty



Distinct from
ongoing work



Goals and
metrics of
success



Long-term
goals

Example Reviewer Feedback - Critiques

- **Unclear** how the proposed experiments will serve as a **model system that is relevant** to this study
- The aims are **open-ended**, and in some cases, **not novel**
- While the hypothesis is biologically interesting, the proposed **approaches lack clarity** and, even if they are successful, it is unclear how they will directly support the hypothesis
- Although the hypothesis is clearly stated and the objective are feasible, it is **unclear how the proposed research will be transformative in the long-term**
- My biggest concern is that **I don't think the proposed studies will directly answer some of the questions** the applicant poses.

Example Reviewer Feedback - Critiques

- **Implications in medicine could have been made clearer, feasibility of the highest-risk elements unclear**
- Unclear how the proposed research differs from **many other labs and companies conducting similar experiments**
- Proposal includes a large quantity of **unexplained acronyms and hyper-technical jargon** making it difficult to understand what exactly is being proposed in some areas.
- **The investigator should be more ambitious** to obtain useful data. At the scale proposed here, it is not clear that much of value will be achieved.

Example of Reviewer Feedback - Strengths

- The **depth of the analysis and creativity is clear**, this one really stands out in regards to it **helping build the PI's career.**
- The **approach is unique**, the proposal is strong and multifaceted.
- The research proposal is clearly defined and comprises a straightforward plan. **The PI has assembled a team which is well qualified to help with the effort.**

Questions?

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