

FALL 2021 FUNDING PROGRAM

Promoting Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in Parkinson's Disease research (DEI-PD)

BACKGROUND

Parkinson's disease (PD) affects nearly 1 million people in the US and over 6 million worldwide, and those numbers are expected to rise considerably over the coming decades. Our understanding of the etiology, clinical presentation and treatment of PD is growing, but remains far from complete. Unfortunately, nearly all PD research performed thus far has included a relatively homogenous group of individuals, resulting in an incomplete picture of the pathogenesis of the disease, its clinical presentation, and how it affects patients and families across the racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, gender, sexuality, and geographic spectrum.

The Michael J. Fox Foundation (MJFF) funds research to better define, measure, and treat PD as well as critical tools and other resources to advance research. No rigorous evidence exists that overall PD incidence or mortality significantly differs in people by race/ethnicity, gender, sexuality, geography or deprivation, but representation of many groups is sorely lacking in the broader PD literature. These underrepresented groups include, but are not limited to:

- Black, Asian, Native American and other indigenous groups
- Latino
- Women
- Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex and asexual individuals
- Residents of areas underserved by current care and research efforts, and
- Individuals of low socioeconomic status

The purpose of this Request for Applications (RFA) is to study incidence, etiology and underlying pathology, diagnostic challenges, clinical presentation, healthcare behavior, health outcomes and/or disease burden in populations who are underrepresented in PD research. Increasing inclusivity in research will broaden our understanding of PD, which can only accelerate the development of strategies for reducing risk and treating the disease across our population.

DEADLINES & REVIEW schedule

- Pre-Proposals Due: April 21st, 5 p.m. US EST
- Full Proposal Invitations: Week of June 21, 2021
- Full Proposals Due (by invite only): August 5th, 2021 5 p.m. US EST
- Anticipated Award Announcement: November 2021
- Anticipated Funding: December 2021

Applicants are encouraged to apply early to allow adequate time to correct errors found during the submission process.

FUNDING AVAILABLE

Duration: 18 to 36 months

Award Amount: Applicants may request budgets starting from \$50,000, up to \$400,000, depending on the scope of work. MJFF encourages applications for projects of all sizes. Requested budget amount will

not correlate with prioritization for funding. Requested support should be commensurate with work proposed and must include clear explanation of costs. These budgets include direct and indirect costs. For academic and for-profit institutions, no more than 15% or 10%, respectively, may go to indirect costs. Additional details about MJFF's indirect cost policy can be found in the [Administrative Guidelines](#) and [FAQ](#).

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Applications may be submitted by researchers or clinicians in:

- U.S. and non-U.S. biotechnology/pharmaceutical companies, or other publicly or privately held for-profit entities; and
- U.S. and non-U.S. public and private non-profit entities, such as universities, colleges, hospitals, laboratories, units of state and local governments and eligible agencies of the federal government.
- Post-doctoral fellows are eligible to apply as co-investigators with the designation of an administrative primary investigator who directs the laboratory in which the fellow will conduct research. The administrative co-PI will be responsible for assisting in providing all institutional documents required for the project and will be required to sign any award contract. Training or mentoring-only proposals will not be considered. Post-doctoral fellows are not eligible to apply as co-investigators on awards over \$200,000.

As projects may require many kinds of expertise, MJFF encourages industry, academic, and/or non-profit collaborations when appropriate.

PROGRAM GOAL

The DEI-PD RFA supports research that will increase the knowledge around Parkinson's in populations that have thus far been excluded from or underrepresented in the conversation around Parkinson's. If the need is well-demonstrated, studies may propose prospective recruitment of study participants.

PROGRAM PRIORITIES

Applications should focus on studies in underrepresented populations around one or more of the following Parkinson's areas:

- **Disease burden:** Research toward robust estimates of PD incidence and/or prevalence
- **Risk and pathology:** Diagnostic, biomarker, and/or pathological evaluations to better understand Parkinson's risk and pathology, and discern how they intersect with the social determinants of health and structural discrimination
- **Assessments:** Evaluation of assessment procedures across different cultures and differential response to treatment
- **Clinical course:** Investigation of how Parkinson's disease progresses in different populations and likelihood of milestones for advanced disease such as cognitive impairment, refractory motor symptoms and loss of independence
- **Access to care:** Exploration of structural barriers that prevent access to neurology evaluations and care, and access to/uptake of device-aided therapies

The [Global Parkinson's Genetics Program \(GP2\)](#) is focused on further understanding the genetic architecture of Parkinson's through genotyping diverse patient groups. Applicants to the MJFF DEI-PD program are encouraged to consider collaborating with GP2 to maximize the opportunity to learn about the genetic basis of Parkinson's in their chosen patient population, although such collaboration is not a requirement. Indicating interest in GP2 collaboration at the preproposal stage does not commit the applicant to working with GP2. Declining to collaborate with GP2 will not negatively impact the consideration of your proposal in any fashion. Investigators already involved in GP2 may apply for support for efforts supplementing GP2 funded work, please see the "FAQ for GP2 Funded Investigators" document for more details.

Due to the large investment currently ongoing in [GP2](#), proposals focused solely around genetic studies of underrepresented populations will be de-prioritized under this RFA.

This program is well suited to those working in research on aging and health disparities in underrepresented groups, preferably in collaboration with PD researchers. Researchers and PD experts who self-identify as Black, Latino, Indigenous, or from other groups underrepresented in the scientific workforce are encouraged to apply.

Applicants proposing prospective recruitment of participants should do so in partnership with the communities they plan to recruit into their studies. As such, demonstration of effective partnering with representatives from underrepresented groups (e.g., formal letters of support from community organizations) will be an important component of the application review process.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Our [Administrative Guidelines](#) provide general guidance about applying for funding from MJFF. Please note that the RFA always supersedes information contained in the Administrative Guidelines.

Please note, MJFF now requires that the Principal Investigator be the primary applicant (i.e. the person who initiates and takes primary responsibility for the application). All application-related correspondence will be sent to the Principal Investigator.

MJFF will host an informational webinar on March 9, at 12 p.m. US EST to clarify and explain the goals of our funding opportunities and answer applicant questions. The webinar will be available to view on-demand after the live airdate. To register, please visit the [webpage](#). For questions about the application process or project suitability for this call for applications, please email grants@michaeljfox.org