

## Fall 2022 Request for Applications Novel PET Tracer Development Program



### 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 over the coming decades. PD is highly heterogeneous: individuals experience a wide array of motor and non-motor symptoms, many of which depend on disease severity and duration. Though our understanding of PD and its causes is growing, many questions remain. There are no drugs available for Parkinson's that alter the progression of the disease, and current symptomatic treatments provide limited relief but come with complications and side effects.

The Michael J. Fox Foundation (MJFF) funds research to better define, measure, and treat Parkinson's disease as well as critical tools and other resources to advance that research. Positron emission tomography (PET) has become an integral part of medicine because it can be used for detecting, staging and monitoring disease and is the only technique available for evaluating the regional distribution of structural and functional changes in the brain in living patients. PET imaging can potentially be used for disease diagnosis, and as a biomarker or surrogate outcome to longitudinally monitor disease progression and the effects of a PD therapy on progression. Importantly, it is possible to use imaging to identify individuals at risk for PD because imaging changes can be detected in the brain several years in advance of clinical symptoms. One of the goals of the MJFF Imaging Program is to develop and validate PET imaging techniques utilizing multiple different PET radiotracers with a variety of disease relevant targets that can ultimately be implemented in clinical practice and clinical trials. The purpose of this Request for Applications (RFA) is to develop PET tracers for high priority PD targets. Potential targets of interest include but are not limited to pathologic proteins, inflammation (astrocytes, NLRP3, microglia, etc.), and other therapeutic targets (neuronal receptors, GBA, mitochondria, etc.). The goal of this program is to accelerate the early development of novel PET tracers.



## PROGRAM GOAL

The Novel Tracer Program seeks to accelerate early tracer development work for high priority targets to support specific therapeutic approaches by serving as target engagement and/or efficacy markers. Projects should be aimed at developing novel PET tracers as opposed to prospective studies to collect data using existing tracers. Examples of projects that are appropriate for this program include early screening efforts and early in vitro and in vivo validation of newly developed tracers.

For this round, MJFF **will not consider** proposals focused on human studies.



## FUNDING AVAILABLE

**Duration:** 12 to 24 months

**Award Amount:** Up to \$500,000. Requested support should be commensurate with work proposed.

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 [Application Guidelines](#) and [FAQ](#).



## DEADLINES & REVIEW SCHEDULE

- Pre-proposals Due: April 26, 2022, 5 p.m. US ET
- Full Proposal Invitations: Week of June 6, 2022
- Full Proposals Due (by invite only): August 11, 2022, 5 p.m. US ET
- Anticipated Award Announcement: Week of November 14, 2022
- Anticipated Funding: November 2022

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



## 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 (PI) 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.



## DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION (DEI)

In pursuit of our mission to accelerate the development of better treatments and a cure for Parkinson's disease, MJFF aims to support a rigorous research agenda reflecting a wide and diverse range of perspectives on Parkinson's disease and carried out in diverse populations. Diversity may refer to characteristics including, but not limited to, race, religion, ethnicity, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic circumstance, nationality, geographic background, ability and disability, political ideology and age. Parkinson's is a complex problem; the more angles from which we attack, the greater the chances of finding innovative scientific solutions to benefit everyone living with the disease. As such:

- The Foundation encourages applications from diverse investigators representing groups historically underrepresented in the research enterprise.
- Because research shows that diverse teams outperform homogeneous ones, we urge applicants to share information about the composition of the team that will carry out the funded work.



## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The [Application Guidelines](#) provide general guidance on applying for funding from MJFF, though the RFA always supersedes information contained in the Application Guidelines.

MJFF holds an [open access publication policy](#) requiring articles resulting from MJFF-funded work to be published in a preprint repository, then in an open access forum with free and immediate readership rights.

MJFF 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.

For questions about the application process or project suitability for this call for applications, please email [grants@michaeljfox.org](mailto:grants@michaeljfox.org).