Spring 2020 Targeted RFA

Use of Parkinson’s Disease Biosamples

BACKGROUND

Parkinson’s disease affects 1 million people in the US and over 6 million worldwide, and those numbers are expected to rise over the coming decades. Parkinson’s 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 Parkinson’s and its causes is growing, many questions remain. Currently, there are no drugs available to slow or stop the progression of Parkinson’s; standard symptomatic treatments provide limited relief but come with complications and side effects.

The Michael J. Fox Foundation (MJFF) funds research to define, measure and treat Parkinson’s disease and supports the development of critical tools and other resources to advance that research. The purpose of this Request for Applications (RFA) is to provide a single access point for applicants to request human biosamples and accompanying funding from any of the MJFF-affiliated collections. Some collections contain limited associated clinical information and are best suited for use in assay development and optimization efforts, while others with extensive clinical and longitudinal follow-up are designed for testing biomarkers of Parkinson’s progression. Biospecimens are critical to linking putative molecular targets to disease and can be used for discovery or validation of targets for Parkinson’s. Developing, optimizing, replicating and validating biomarkers that improve diagnosis, objectively track the progression of disease, enrich for subject populations or more precisely detect a treatment response or target engagement remain critical priorities to the Foundation. Such biomarkers would transform clinical trial design and improve the interpretation of trial results. For more information about MJFF collections, including intent of use, availability of supporting data and biospecimen type, please visit MJFF’s [Biospecimen](https://www.michaeljfox.org/biospecimens) and [Biorepository Inventory](https://mjffbiobank.org/#!/biospecimens-and-data) websites.

DEADLINES & review schedule

* Pre-proposals Due: September 24, 2019, 5 p.m. US ET
* Full Proposal Invitations: Week of November 22, 2019
* Full Proposals Due (by invite only): January 17, 2020, 5 p.m. US ET
* Anticipated Award Announcement: April 2020
* Anticipated Funding: April 2020

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

FUNDING AVAILABLE

**Duration:** One- to two-year grants

**Award Amount:** Up to $300,000. Requested support should be commensurate with work proposed. These budgets include direct and indirect costs. For academic and for-profit institutions, no more than 25% or 10%, respectively, may go to indirect costs. Additional details about MJFF's indirect cost policy can be found in the [Administrative Guidelines](https://www.michaeljfox.org/page.html?administrative-guidelines) and [FAQ](https://www.michaeljfox.org/foundation/faq.html?navid=footer-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 principal investigator who directs the laboratory in which the fellow will conduct research. The administrative 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.

Program GOAL

The Use of Parkinson’s Disease Biosamples RFA seeks to support research focused on target and biomarker development using previously collected human biosamples. Proposals can request human biosamples from the following MJFF-affiliated cohorts:

* Interventional trials: SURE-PD 2, SURE-PD 3, Steady PD-3, FS-Zone, AV8112, CERE-120, & DATATOP
* Prodromal cohorts: Parkinson’s at Risk (PARS), Parkinson’s Progression Markers Initiative (PPMI)
* Genetic studies: LRRK2 Cohort Consortium (LCC), LRRK2 PBMC & Urine Biobank, Parkinson’s Progression Markers Initiative (PPMI)
* Longitudinal studies: Parkinson’s Progression Markers Initiative (PPMI), Parkinson’s at Risk (PARS), LRRK2 Cohort Consortium (LCC), DATATOP
* Timecourse study: 24-Hour Biofluids
* Peripheral tissue study: Systemic Synuclein Sampling Study (S4)
* Cross-sectional PD cohort: BioFIND

More information about each of these resources can be found on MJFF’s [Biospecimen](https://www.michaeljfox.org/biospecimens) and [Biorepository Inventory](https://mjffbiobank.org/#!/biospecimens-and-data) websites.

Please note that biosample types differ by collection, and include cerebral spinal fluid (CSF), serum, plasma, whole blood, blood pellet, DNA, RNA, saliva, urine, fibroblasts, peripheral blood mononuclear cells (PBMCs), induced pluripotent stem cells (iPSCs) and biopsies from the skin, submandibular gland and colon.

Program PRIORITIES

Applications must focus on developing, optimizing, or validating targets or biomarkers for Parkinson’s.

Specific areas of interest to MJFF include, but are not limited to:

**Human Target Biology & Validation**

* Measure change of putative molecular targets (e.g., DNA polymorphism, RNA isoform, modified protein) in human biospecimens that would provide evidence linking the target to Parkinson’s disease.

**Biochemical Assays and Outcome Measures**

* Develop or validate target/pathway-based biochemical assays that would assist with subject stratification, pharmacodynamic readouts or determination of therapeutic efficacy.
* Develop or validate new assays or assay platforms to analyze tissues or biofluids that could aid with diagnosis, tracking disease progression, and/or disease subtyping.
* Develop predictive models of therapeutic response, disease progression, phenoconversion for Parkinson’s and/or risk for disease penetrance for prodromal individuals.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Our [Administrative Guidelines](https://www.michaeljfox.org/page.html?administrative-guidelines) provide general guidance about applying for funding from MJFF. Please note that the RFA always supersedes information contained in the Administrative Guidelines.

MJFF will host an informational webinar on September 12, 2019, at 12 p.m. ET to clarify and explain the goals of our funding opportunities and answer applicant questions. The webinar will also be available to view on-demand after the live airdate. To register, please visit the Use of Parkinson’s Disease Biosamples RFA webpage.