

2026 Request for Applications T2T Neuroinflammation Target Validation



BACKGROUND

Parkinson's disease (PD) affects nearly 1 million people in the US and over 8 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. The purpose of this Request for Applications (RFA) is to accelerate validation of high-priority neuroinflammation targets (STING, TREM2, TLR2) and address critical gaps limiting therapeutic progress in PD. To this end, MJFF believes that promoting coordinated, target-centric and pathway-informed studies will provide the mechanistic and translational evidence needed to advance these targets toward therapeutic development.



PROGRAM GOAL

The T2T Program seeks to build a robust evidence base for neuroinflammation targets with high potential relevance to Parkinson's disease. Funding will support projects to clarify human relevance, define mechanism in PD-relevant contexts, establish target engagement, or develop enabling tools and assays.

For this round, MJFF **will not consider** proposals focused on the following:

- Broad immunology discovery without a defined target
- Therapeutic development programs not directly tied to target validation



PROGRAM PRIORITIES

The T2T Program supports:

- Target modulation in cell and animal models to determine efficacy on PD phenotypes
- Generate evidence linking target biology to PD patient samples
- Clarifying the therapeutic mechanism of action
- Identify and test biomarkers to aid preclinical therapeutic validation and patient stratification
- Biological safety through animal model characterization

When considering proposals submitted to this program, MJFF prioritizes those that:

- Directly address known target gaps (e.g., human modulation, biomarker linkage, mechanism in α -syn biology and related PD pathology)
- Generate reproducible, translatable data that advances the target toward a therapeutic decision point



FUNDING AVAILABLE

Duration: 3 to 24 months

Award Amount: Between \$250K-\$2M. 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.



DEADLINES & REVIEW SCHEDULE

- Pre-proposals Due: Jan 16th 2025, 5 p.m. US ET
- Full Proposal Invitations: Week of Feb 16th 2025
- Full Proposals Due (by invite only): Mar 13th 2025, 5 p.m. US ET
- Anticipated Award Announcement: April 2025
- Anticipated Funding: May-June 2025



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 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.



BIOSAMPLE REQUESTS

Applicants may propose studies designed to assess human relevance of neuroinflammation targets using PD biosamples, including CSF, blood, postmortem tissue, and immune cell preparations. Investigators are encouraged to leverage existing tissue and biosample resources if possible. Studies requesting access to biosamples available through MJFF-sponsored biospecimen and cell line collections are eligible to apply to this initiative. In these cases, access to samples will be reviewed in parallel to funding requests by the committees overseeing the biospecimen collection(s) requested. To review MJFF's available biosample collections, please consult the MJFF biorepository [website](#) and [biorepository inventory catalogue](#). Groups requesting access to samples only (without funding) should contact resources@michaeljfox.org.



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. Grantees will be asked to provide proof of compliance with this policy, and future funding will be contingent upon adherence.

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.