Spring 2022 Request for Applications

THERAPEUTICS PIPELINE PROGRAM - PRE-CLINICAL

## An Edmond J. Safra Core Program for PD Research

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. The purpose of this Request for Applications (RFA) is to support the research and development of new therapies with potential for significant impact for people with Parkinson’s disease.

DEADLINES & REVIEW SCHEDULE

* Pre-proposals Due: September 28, 2021, 5 p.m. US ET
* Full Proposal Invitations: Week of November 15, 2021
* Full Proposals Due (by invite only): January 13, 2022, 5 p.m. US ET
* Anticipated Award Announcement: Week of April 18, 2022
* Anticipated Funding: April 2022

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

FUNDING AVAILABLE

**Duration:** 1 to 2 years

**Award Amount:** Up to $500,000

Final budgets will be determined based on review of proposed work and MJFF role. MJFF may not be able to support all costs for a proposed therapeutic development plan and applicants are encouraged to leverage additional sources of funding and resources.

This budget includes 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](https://www.michaeljfox.org/news/application-guidelines) and [FAQ](https://www.michaeljfox.org/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 not eligible to apply as co-investigators in this call.

As programs may require many kinds of expertise, MJFF encourages industry and academic collaborations when appropriate.

PROGRAM GOAL

The *Therapeutic Pipeline Program* seeks to build the development of Parkinson’s disease therapeutics with potential for fundamentally altering disease course or significantly improving treatment or management of non-motor or motor symptoms beyond current standards of care.

**Please note, this round, we will fund only pre-clinical projects. We will review applications for clinical projects in future rounds of this program.**

Funding will support projects that aim to:

* Identify, validate, or develop novel approaches and/or new treatments or interventions with potential for significant impact for people with Parkinson’s.
* Repurpose or reposition approved or clinically safe therapies from other disease indications.

**This cycle, MJFF is particularly interested in:**

* Efforts focused on identifying and/or developing **novel** therapies and/or approaches to modify motor and non-motor symptoms of Parkinson’s disease.

Program Priorities

* Assay development, early screening campaigns, hit-to-lead and lead optimization studies with the purpose of identifying approaches to selectively target disease features and mechanisms with strong and compelling rationale for PD.
* Proof-of-concept studies validating the potential benefits of a therapeutic strategy in pre-clinical models of PD and/or PD-relevant pathogenic mechanisms.
* Projects that aim to characterize promising therapeutic approaches by obtaining data on PD-relevant pharmacokinetics, pharmacodynamics, safety and other features critical for progress into future clinical testing stages.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Our [Application Guidelines](https://www.michaeljfox.org/news/application-guidelines) provide general guidance about applying for funding from MJFF, though the RFA always supersedes information contained in the Application Guidelines. Please note that MJFF updated our publication and indirect costs policies in early 2020. The new [open access publication policy](https://www.michaeljfox.org/sites/default/files/media/document/MJFF%20Open%20Access%20Publication%20Policy_0.pdf) requires articles resulting from MJFF-funded work publish in a preprint repository then in an open access forum with free and immediate readership rights.

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.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION

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.

BIOSAMPLE REQUESTS

Applicants may propose studies designed to assess PD targets in pre-clinical models, human cellular models, and human tissue and fluids. 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](https://mjffbiobank.org/#!/) and [biorepository inventory catalogue](https://mjffbiobank.org/#!/biospecimens-and-data). Groups requesting access to samples only (without funding) should contact [resources@michaeljfox.org](mailto:resources@michaeljfox.org).

Informational Webinar

MJFF will host an informational webinar on August 24, 2021, at 12 p.m. ET 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. Please register [here](https://www.michaeljfox.org/webinars-researchers).

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