



Request for Proposals: Targeted Biomedical Research

Exploring the mechanisms for HIV persistence and the potential for HIV eradication

Deadline: September 27, 2012, 5:00 PM, EDT

[Available Support](#)

[Background and Areas of Interest](#)

[Qualifications](#)

[Research Grant Funding](#)

[Submission Requirements and Deadlines](#)

[Policies and Conditions](#)

Available Support

amfAR, The Foundation for AIDS Research, is pleased to announce the availability of targeted support for biomedical research projects relevant to **exploring the mechanisms for HIV persistence and the potential for HIV eradication**.

Funding will be available for:

Research Grants— \$180,000 maximum total costs including indirect costs of up to 20 percent of direct costs. The performance period for grants awarded under this RFP will be for one year starting February 1, 2013.

[\[BACK TO TOP\]](#)

Background and Areas of Interest

amfAR's research program is driven by the Foundation's mission to end the global AIDS epidemic through innovative research. amfAR plays a uniquely important role in AIDS research, identifying critical gaps in our knowledge of HIV and AIDS, and supporting groundbreaking studies that often lack the preliminary data required by more traditional funders. The Foundation's research program focuses on efforts to prevent HIV infection among vulnerable populations and to improve treatment, with the ultimate goal of eradicating the virus in people living with HIV infection.

This RFP solicits proposals relevant to exploring the mechanisms for HIV persistence and the potential for HIV eradication. Highly active antiretroviral therapy (HAART) has significantly impacted the health of individuals infected with HIV-1. However, if therapy is interrupted, there is a rapid resumption of viral replication. Understanding the mechanisms by which the virus is able to persist in the face of therapy is necessary in order to identify strategies that may interrupt viral persistence and ultimately lead to viral eradication. amfAR wishes to support basic, pre-clinical, clinical, and especially translational research exploring the mechanisms whereby HIV infection persists; the chronic nature of viral reservoirs and latency; and barriers to the eradication of HIV, with the potential goal of ultimately eliminating HIV infection.

Specific areas of interest include:

- Determine cellular and viral mechanisms that maintain HIV persistence
- Determine the tissue and cellular sources of persistent HIV in long-term ART-treated individuals
- Determine the origins of immune activation and inflammation in the presence of ART and their consequences for HIV persistence
- Determine host and immune mechanisms that control infection but allow viral persistence
- Study, compare, and validate assays to measure persistent infection
- Develop and test therapeutic agents or immunological strategies to safely eliminate latent infection in individuals on ART
- Develop and test strategies to enhance the capacity of the host response to control active viral replication

Definitions and exclusions:

Basic research

Applicants are encouraged to submit proposals using appropriate in vitro or ex-vivo techniques. Attempts to validate existing in vitro or ex vivo models, and to develop new models, including animal systems, are also encouraged.

Pre-clinical research

Applicants proposing studies involving nonhuman primates are encouraged to apply.

Clinical research

Applicants who wish to use amfAR funding to conduct a discrete clinical research project, for example as a definable, distinct part of an ongoing clinical trial, should clearly describe how amfAR funding can support the entire discrete project for which funding is sought. Proposals for which amfAR funding will represent a small fraction of pooled resources (i.e., to "top up" total funding of a clinical research project) will not be considered.

Translational research

Applicants are especially encouraged to design research studies in which the findings from basic science can be quickly and efficiently applied to medical practice. Such applications are likely to include multi-disciplinary collaboration and a description of the ways in which basic science findings generated with this funding can or will be tested (using this funding) in an appropriate non-human primate model or in patients.

Special notes

Please note that this RFP differs from recent ones in the following ways:

The total cost maximum is \$180,000

There is no direct cost maximum, however, indirect costs may not be greater than 20% of direct costs (i.e., allowed indirect costs are not 20% of total costs)

Research grant funding is for a one year period beginning February 1, 2013

Only proposals for individual research projects are solicited

It is not required that principal investigators hold a faculty-level position

[\[BACK TO TOP\]](#)

Qualifications

Research Grants—Principal investigators for research grants must hold a doctoral level degree and be affiliated with the applicant institution. If a proposal includes subcomponent projects, the principal investigator will be expected to lead one of the component projects, coordinate the development, implementation, and analysis of the project as a whole, and be responsible for the preparation and submission of required progress reports.

Please note that all applications will be considered together (i.e., proposals from non-faculty-level researchers will be in competition with proposals from faculty-level investigators).

[\[BACK TO TOP\]](#)

Research Grant Funding

Research grants are given to nonprofit institutions worldwide to support investigator-led projects approved by the Foundation. In general, funds are applied to direct costs of salaries and fringe benefits for professional and technical personnel, laboratory supplies and equipment, travel, and the publication of findings. This initiative will provide support for one year without assurance of continued funding.

[\[BACK TO TOP\]](#)

Submission Requirements and Deadlines

Interested applicants will be required to submit a letter of intent (LOI) **on amfAR-provided forms** as described below.

LOI forms and instructions may be obtained by sending an e-mail to grants@amfar.org.

Please include all of the following in the body of the e-mail:

Investigator's name, degree(s), and job title(s)

Name of the applicant institution

Proposed project title

We kindly request each potential applicant to send her or his own separate request for LOI forms and instructions.

LOI Components:

Face Sheet: completed and signed by the applicant; includes investigator and institution information, and project **abstract** (200 words) and **keywords**.

Relevance Description: 200 words or less addressing the significance of the proposal to one of the areas of interest identified in the RFP.

Biographical Sketch of the principal investigator.

Research Plan (submitted as a separate document): no more than 1,500 words (single spaced, one-inch margins, Times New Roman 12 point font) including background and rationale, preliminary studies, specific aims, experimental design, procedures, and data analysis to be used.

Detailed directions for the preparation and submission of an LOI are provided in the instructions.

Important Notice

Electronic (e-mailed) LOIs that are received late, are incomplete, or exceed word count or page limits (please see instructions for details) will not be accepted for review. Faxed or hard-copy-only submissions are not accepted. Deadline extensions are not available.

Submission of an LOI is not a guarantee of eligibility to submit a full application. The pre-application process is highly competitive. Only a limited number of investigators submitting an LOI will be invited to submit a full application.

Submission Deadlines

E-mail submission: September 27, 2012, 5:00 PM EDT

A complete LOI must be submitted by e-mail to grants@amfar.org

Hard Copy Submission: October 11, 2012

Signed hard copies of the face sheet must be received at amfAR no later than 5:00 PM.

Other Important Dates

Applications solicited
October 30, 2012 (tentative)

Electronic application submissions due
November 29, 2012 (tentative)

Funding decisions announced
February 9, 2013 (tentative)

Future requests for proposals:

[Click here to sign up for e-mailed GrantOpportunity announcements.](#)

[\[BACK TO TOP\]](#)

Policies and Conditions

To Whom Grants Are Made

Grants are awarded to nonprofit institutions; they are not awarded to individual investigators. Accordingly, an application, if solicited, must bear the signature of an official authorized to sign for the institution and, if requested, the applicant institution must submit proof of its nonprofit status. Applications are neither requested nor accepted from for-profit entities. **Institution signature is not required for Letters of Intent.**

By accepting an amfAR grant, the recipient institution will accept full responsibility for the conduct of the investigation and for the acts of the investigator(s). Both are under the direction of the institution and are subject to its medical and scientific policies. Similarly, project personnel compensated in full or in part with funds awarded by the Foundation are employees of the recipient institution; they are not amfAR employees.

Applicant investigators need not be U.S. citizens, and there are no restrictions as to age, color, creed, gender, medical condition, handicap, national origin, parental status, political affiliation, race, religion, marital status, or sexual orientation.

Members of the Foundation's board of trustees are not eligible as investigators in Foundation-supported research. Members of the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) are eligible. Members of the board of trustees and SAC must comply with the Foundation's policies regarding the avoidance of conflicts of interest.

Allowed Use of Funds

In general, a **research grant** is applied to direct costs of salaries for professional and technical personnel, laboratory supplies and equipment, travel, and the publication of findings.

Funds are not awarded for the following:

Major construction or the remodeling of facilities (minor alterations are allowed with adequate justification);

The direct cost of support services normally available at a sponsoring institution (e.g., telephone, office furniture, and supplies) except when directly allocable and essential to carrying out the proposed research;

The purchase, lease, rental, or servicing of office equipment;

Funding for dissertation research;

Indirect costs in excess of 20 percent of direct costs

Indirect Costs—Foundation grants are not meant to cover the total cost of a proposed research project. A grantee institution is expected to provide the necessary physical facilities and administrative services, as well as other supporting services normally available at a sponsoring institution. Expenses generally considered to be indirect costs may be budgeted as direct costs only when required for the operation of remote sites deemed necessary and leased or rented exclusively for conduct of the funded research. Such requests will be carefully assessed for appropriateness and are subject to peer review and administrative approval.

For this RFP, indirect costs are allowed at a maximum rate of 20% of direct costs.

When an application for project support is submitted to amfAR and also to other grant making agencies, accepted support from the Foundation and from another agency cannot be in duplication.

Recipient institutions agree not to promote or engage in violence, terrorism, or the destruction of any state, and to take prudent measures to insure that they do not provide support through sub-grants or other financing to any entity that engages in those activities.

Restrictions on the Use of Funds Awarded to Foreign Organizations

Unless written authority is obtained in advance from amfAR, funds from grants awarded to organizations outside of the United States (U.S.) may not be used to support (a) services performed in the U.S., or (b) travel to or from the U.S. Authorization to use funds for such purposes may be obtained by providing either of the following sets of documentation: (1) a copy of U.S. Internal Revenue Service (IRS) form W-8EXP bearing a valid International Taxpayer Identification Number or Employer Identification Number and either (a) an IRS determination letter or (b) written opinion of U.S. counsel that the organization is described in IRS Code section 501(c)(3); (2) alternatively, an applicant organization in a country that benefits from an exemption under a tax treaty with the U.S. should provide (a) a completed copy of IRS form W-8BEN and (b) an affidavit stating the treaty provision under which benefits are claimed and asserting facts pertinent to the treaty provision (e.g., facts to establish that the organization would qualify under IRS code section 501(c)(3)).

Although these documents are not required for LOIs, applicants should anticipate and prepare for their submission as part of the application or award process.

Source of Funds

Funds available to the Foundation are obtained principally from private donations.

Review and Approval Process

amfAR intends to encourage and support HIV/AIDS research of the highest quality. Therefore, every properly prepared and submitted LOI or application received in response to an amfAR solicitation is peer-reviewed by members of the Foundation's Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC). Each is subject to an overall conformance review by the Foundation staff. Those found to be inconsistent with the guidelines and instructions are eliminated at that time, and the investigator and the applicant institution's grants official are notified. Applications are solicited from investigators whose letters of intent have been recommended by the Foundation's SAC. Unsolicited applications are not accepted for consideration.

The SAC, a volunteer body of scientists who are experts in various fields of HIV/AIDS research, evaluates (1) the scientific merit of LOIs and applications; (2) the relevance of

the research to the control of the epidemic or to the benefit of patients with AIDS or HIV/AIDS-related conditions; (3) the qualifications, experience, and productivity of the investigator/sponsor; (4) the facilities available; and (5) the likelihood of success. The SAC's determinations are considered by the amfAR board of trustees, which holds the sole authority to approve project funding.

Submission of an LOI does not guarantee invitation to submit a complete application. The LOI process is very competitive and only a limited number of proposals are approved for additional review.

Written critiques are not available for LOIs.

Confidentiality

Throughout the review and award process, the Foundation respects the privacy of the applicant and endeavors to protect from disclosure any confidential or proprietary information contained in a submitted proposal. However, amfAR has in place no mechanisms to maintain or guarantee confidentiality and, as a not-for-profit corporation, lacks the financial resources to (1) institute such mechanisms or (2) accept liability for the disclosure of information. At the same time, the Foundation does not consider information on an application's project description form (lay-language summary) to be confidential. That information may be made public as a description of the project being funded by amfAR. Submission of an application or LOI is deemed acceptance of these provisions.

Human and Animal Subjects / Biohazards

Applicants are required to submit documentation of institutional approvals for research involving human or animal subjects or the use or production of biohazards. Research activity may not begin, nor may expenditures be made, until such approvals are received and forwarded to amfAR. Although these approvals are not required at the LOI stage, investigators should prepare to submit them with full applications.

[\[BACK TO TOP\]](#)

[About amfAR](#) [About HIV/AIDS](#) | [Financial Information](#) [Privacy Policy](#) [Terms of Use](#) [Sitemap](#) [For the Press](#) [Contact Us](#)

© 2012 amfAR All Rights Reserved