

Demystifying MRF Grants and OHSU Bridge Funding

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Outline

- Introduction
- Funding mechanisms (eligibility)
- How to apply
- Review process
- Funding decisions
- How to resubmit

Medical Research Foundation

The Medical Research Foundation of Oregon (MRF) was created by a group of physicians in the winter of 1942. Drs. Eugene W. Rockey, Warren C. Hunter, and Adalbert G. Bettman dreamed that the function of Oregon's MRF would be *"to promote, encourage, and aid scientific investigation and research in the state"*.

MRF became a parent organization for the Oregon Regional Primate Center in 1962 (now the Oregon National Primate Research Center), and continued to fund its expansion in the mid-1980s.

MRF supported development of biomedical research at the University of Oregon Medical School (which later became OHSU) and in other institutions within the state.

In 1994, MRF merged with the OHSU Foundation.

via Jon Hennebold, ONPRC

MRF grants

- Early Clinical Investigators (ECI)

- The principal investigator must be a post-doctoral trainee or fellow (with graduate degree, not a faculty), interested in a career in clinical research (clinical relevance).
- Research on animal models is considered if there is obvious relevance to human health.

- New Investigators (NI)

- The PI must be an independent scientist, assistant professor or equivalent.
- New to research and not, or has not been, the recipient of research grant funding as PI (career development award recipients are eligible) (similar to NIH Early Investigator Status).
- Applicants are expected to have strong support from their department/institute.
- The primary goal of the grant is to enable new faculty members to improve their likelihood of obtaining national support (e.g., NIH, NSF).

- Emergency Interim Support (EIS)

- Grants may be made to support ongoing research when an investigator with a well-established record of research funding as principal investigator is between grants.
- Department Chair should describe department's commitment, including institutional salary and research support during the interim period.

OHSU Bridge Funding

- Same as MRF EIS
 - More flexibility on definition of “well-established record of research funding as principal investigator”.
 - More emphasis on contribution to OHSU missions (research, education, service)
 - Departmental commitment is critical.

How to apply

- Competitive Application Portal: ohsu.infoready4.com
- Fillable form (title, abstract, names, etc)
- Upload ONE pdf file
 - Cover letter, previous MRF reviews (if resubmission)
 - Research plan (7 pages maximum), plus bibliography
 - NIH style biosketch
 - Budget justification
 - Current and pending other support
 - Other (letter of support and biosketches of collaborators)
 - Institutional approval (@OHSU = OPAM)
- April 15, August 15, December 15
 - If weekend, next working day
 - Support letters up to 7 days later

Questions?

before we discuss reviewing process and criteria

Review

- Scientific Review Committee

Anupriya Agarwal, Paul Barnes, Blair Darney, Robert Duvoisin, Kashayar Farsad, Alex Guimaraes, Nathalie Huguet, Yuangang Liu, Alina Maloyan, Scott Mist, Martina Ralle, Julie Saugstad, Ben Sivyer, Oleh Taratula, Kevin Wright, Jing Xu, Paul Yang, Katharine Zuckerman, & ad-hoc members.

3-year term

Alanna Lapp

- Funding decisions

MRF Research and Education Committee

Daniel Dorsa, Robert Duvoisin, Jeanne-Marie Guise, Jon D. Hennebold, Emily Ho, Jeffrey T. Jensen, David M. Koeller, Scott M. Landfear, Peter Mayinger, Brad J. Nolen, Jason Podrabsky, Virginia Tilden.

OHSU Research Development & Peter Barr-Gillespie

New Investigator Review Criteria

NIH R01

https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PA-20-185.html#_Section_V_Application

Overall Impact. Reviewers will provide an overall impact score to reflect their assessment of the likelihood for the project to exert a sustained, powerful influence on the research field(s) involved.

1 (best) to 9 (weakest)

1. Significance. Does the project address an important problem or a critical barrier to progress in the field? Is the prior research that serves as the key support for the proposed project rigorous?

If successful, will the proposed project's findings be significant or incremental? Is the project mechanistic or descriptive/correlative?

2. Investigator. Is the applicant an Assistant Professor or equivalent (not Instructor, not Associate Prof)? Usually applicant should be eligible for a Early Stage Investigator status when applying for an R award (thus recipients of K awards, or K99/R00, or VA Career awards are eligible for MRF NI award).

Was the applicant recruited following a national search? Does the applicant have a strong research record (publications, prior funding)?

Does the applicant have the appropriate experience for the proposed project? If not, has the PI identified collaborators with the missing expertise (are letters of support and biosketches included)?

Does the applicant have strong potential for federal grant funding?

Is there a career development plan, including applying for national grants? Is there a research/career mentoring plan?

New Investigator Review Criteria (2)

3. Innovation. Is the project conceptually innovative? Does the proposed project use or develop novel technologies?

4. Approach. Are the Specific Aims and hypotheses clearly articulated (focused)? Do later Specific Aims depend on feasibility of prior aims?

Are the preliminary data and figures sound? Does the project appear feasible? Are the overall strategy, methodology, and controls well-reasoned and appropriate to accomplish the specific aims of the project? Are interpretation of results described, are potential problems and alternative strategies presented?

Is sex as a variable considered?

Is the project sufficiently powered to produce significant findings, or is it a pilot study? Is the application clearly presented (well-written)? Is the project feasible within 1 year and with only \$50,000? Is the budget appropriate (and justified)?

5. Environment. Is the research environment strong; will it contribute to success? Is there strong institutional support?

Are collaborators indicated for areas of expertise beyond that of the applicant? Are their biosketches and letters of support included?

Does the department chair's letter describe independence, space, salary and research support, enough protected time for research? Is the PI requesting salary support? Is it well-justified, or does it reflect poor institutional support?

Early Clinical Investigator Review Criteria

NIH F32 https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PA-20-242.html#_Section_V_Application

1 (best) to 9 (weakest)

1. Trainee

25%

- Are the candidate's academic record and research experience of high quality.
- Does the candidate have the potential to develop into an independent and productive researcher?
- Does the candidate demonstrate commitment to a research career in the future?
- Does the research project reflect a significant contribution of the candidate to the originality of the project idea, approach and/or hypotheses?

2. Mentor, training program and environment

25%

- Does the mentor have a strong research experience (their Biosketch should be included with their letter of support)?
- Does the mentor have a strong training experience?
- Does the mentor's support letter describe a strong training/career development program?
- Are collaborators identified who provide added expertise? Are letters of support and biosketches included?
- Is the research environment strong (well supported by the Department chairperson)?
- Is the budget appropriate (only project-related travel)? (request for PI salary's is reflection of poor institutional support)
- Does the proposed project overlap with exciting funding? Are the mentor(s') research qualifications (including recent publications) and track record of mentoring individuals at a similar stage appropriate for the needs of the candidate?

Early Clinical Investigator (2)

3. Proposal

50%

- Is the project significant? Innovative?
- Is the approach well presented? Are the aims, rationale, hypotheses, methods, expected results and potential pitfalls and alternative approaches clearly described?
- Is the project clinically relevant, or if basic research is the clinical significance explicit?
- Is the path to an independent career in biomedical research described? (career development, grant applications?)

Emergency Interim Support OHSU Bridge

1 (best) to 9 (weakest)

Overall Impact. Reviewers will provide an overall impact score to reflect their assessment of the nature of the fiscal emergency, the quality of proposed research and the institutional impact of supporting the investigators research.

Does the PI have remaining funding? Is the department chair/institute director strongly supportive?

1. Significance. Does the project address an important problem? How will successful completion of the aims lead to renewed federal grant funding?

2. Approach. Are the overall strategy, methodology, and analyses well-reasoned and appropriate to accomplish the specific aims of the project? Are potential problems, alternative strategies, and benchmarks for success presented? If the project is in the early stages of development, will the strategy establish feasibility and will particularly risky aspects be managed?

3. Investigator. Does the PI have a long-term track record of significant contributions to scientific knowledge? Has the PI made important contributions to their Institution?

4. Likelihood of renewed funding. Is the project feasible and significant? Does the project address weaknesses described in prior Summary Statements applications? Will it lead to renewed federal grant funding? Are there other concerns?

Resubmissions

- Cover letter to explain how concerns are addressed (no length limit, but be respectful of reviewers)
- Include previous MRF reviews
- Include everything else. The previous application is not available to the new reviewers
- The chair's letter should also be resubmitted