

Request For Proposals: Targeted Biomedical Research Exploring the Mechanisms for HIV Persistence and the Potential for HIV Eradication

Grantor: amfAR, The Foundation for AIDS Research

Closes: 9/16/2010

Maximum: \$125,000.00

Request For Proposals: Targeted Biomedical Research Exploring the Mechanisms for HIV Persistence and the Potential for HIV Eradication

Deadline: September 16, 2010

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—\$100,000 for direct costs plus up to 20 percent for indirect costs. The performance period for grants awarded under this RFP will be for one year starting March 1, 2011.

Fellowships—Each fellowship is funded for a total of up to \$125,000: A maximum of \$110,000 is allowed for project-specific direct costs (\$45,000 per year for salary and fringe benefits and \$20,000 over two years for laboratory supplies). It is expected that fellows will devote a minimum of 85 percent time and effort to the approved fellowship project. An additional \$3,636 is provided to support attendance at amfAR-designated consultations for a direct cost maximum of \$113,636. Institutional indirect costs may not exceed 10 percent of direct costs. The performance period for fellowships awarded under this RFP will be for two years starting March 1, 2011.

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, 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:

- * Novel strategies/approaches for preventing the establishment of, or eliminating, latent HIV virus. Use of known activators will not be considered responsive to the RFP.
- * Understanding and characterizing cellular and tissue locations of reservoirs and their relative importance in maintaining infection in face of ART and immune system activity
- * Understanding the extent to which persistence is due to true latency versus low level replication. How does effect of ART differ in each case? If true latency, does this mean ART intensification will ultimately not lead to eradication? If low level replication, does this mean ART could ultimately eradicate the virus?
- * Is there a threshold viral load below which infection will not be re-seeded?
- * Studies in elite controllers and/or acute infection cohorts that may help define new mechanisms of persistence that are not HLA-driven
- * Does persistent immune activation point to a need for long-term immune reconstitution strategies? Are there benefits to immune suppressive therapy?
- * Improved assays to quantify integrated versus unintegrated DNA. Do these differ between tissues, in treated versus untreated patients, or in progressors versus controllers?
- * Improved assays to more efficiently and inexpensively measure extremely low viral load (e.g., to 0.01 copies/ml)
- * Deep sequencing approaches to compare viruses in different tissue compartments with those in plasma following treatment interruption, with a view to identifying sources of viral rebound
- * What are the consequences of chronic immune activation, in the presence or absence of ART, on tissues such as the gut, and can the damage be reversed if immune activation is controlled?

Types of Funding and Qualifications:

Research Grants—Principal investigators for research grants must be faculty-level researchers affiliated with a nonprofit institution. 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. Research grants are awarded for one year without assurance of continued funding.

Fellowships—An amfAR fellowship is a grant that encourages the postdoctoral (M.D., Ph.D., or equivalent) investigator with limited experience in the field to advance a career in HIV/AIDS research. Fellowship grants are applied to direct costs incurred in the course of an amfAR-approved research project. Allowed costs are limited to laboratory supplies, the fellow's salary and fringe benefits, and costs incurred by participation in amfAR-designated consultations. Fellowships are awarded for two years and may not be renewed for additional funding. amfAR fellows and mentors must be affiliated with the same nonprofit institution. The applicant's interest in a career in HIV/AIDS will be demonstrated by previous relevant work at the postdoctoral fellow or instructor level and will be carefully evaluated. The fellowship applicant must

be mentored by an experienced investigator who: (a) is qualified to oversee the proposed research; (b) has successfully supervised postdoctoral fellows; and (c) is at the associate professor level or higher.

Submission Requirements and Deadlines

Letter of intent (LOI) forms and instructions may be obtained by sending an email to grants@amfar.org.

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

- * applicant's name
- * mentor's name (fellowship grants only)
- * institution
- * proposed project title

amfAR Grants

120 Wall Street, 13th Floor

New York, NY 10005-3908, USA

An e-mailed (electronic) copy and signed hard copy of the LOI are required of all applicants.

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.

Link: <http://www.amfar.org/lab/grants/default.aspx?id=8978>

Categories: Basic Science, Chronic Diseases, Clinical Research, Disease-Specific Research, Fellowships, HIV/AIDS, Infectious Diseases, Sexually Transmitted Diseases, Translational Research

Audience: Junior Investigator, Junior Researcher, Junior Scientist, New Investigator, New Researcher, Physician Researcher, Young Investigator, Young Scientist