



## THE FOUNDATION FIGHTING BLINDNESS

### INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE PREPARATION OF PROGRAM PROJECT AWARD (PPA) APPLICATIONS

This document provides instructions for the preparation of Program Project Award applications to the Foundation Fighting Blindness (FFB) via the online application portal. These instructions follow the sections of the online application portal.

Applications for the Individual Investigator Research Awards may be submitted ONLY by those individuals who have been invited by the FFB.

#### **GENERAL INFORMATION AND KEY DATES**

##### **KEY DATES:**

**Application Receipt Date: Applications must be received by February 27, 2024**

**Review of Applications: June 2024**

**Earliest Anticipated Award Date: September 2024**

#### **ELIGIBLE INSTITUTIONS AND PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS**

Principal Investigators must hold an M.D., D.M.D., D.V.M., D.O., Ph.D. or recognized foreign equivalent and occupy a faculty position or equivalent position at a college, university, medical school, or other public or private research institution/facility. Application is not limited to the U.S. or U.S. citizens. Applicants who are not U.S. citizens and reside and work outside the U.S. may apply.

#### **FFB CONTACT FOR INQUIRIES**

Direct inquiries regarding the application and review process and required application components and forms to [grants@FightingBlindness.org](mailto:grants@FightingBlindness.org).

#### **Program Overview**

##### **Project Leader**

One of the senior investigators on the FFB Program Project Award (PPA) proposal is required by FFB to assume the role of Project Leader. The Project Leader will be the primary contact with FFB, responsible for timely submissions and responses, overall

scientific leadership and management of the PPA, and ensuring that progress and financial reporting requirements are met.

### **Program Information**

Please provide a full title for the proposed program for which funding is being requested.

### **Overall Research Goals and Hypothesis**

Define the overall research goal that addresses a targeted area of research relevant to the mission of the FFB. Clearly state the central hypothesis of the program that will unify each project.

### **Therapeutic Development**

If a therapeutic is being developed under this program, please complete the Target Product Profile section.

### **List of Investigators Included in the Program Project Award Application**

**Not including the Project Leader**, provide the full name of EACH investigator that will serve as Principal Investigator of EACH Individual Project Proposal, include (Last Name, First Name, Middle Initial). For example:

If the Project Leader is Carol Washington **and** she is a project PI include the following:

Project 1: Smith, Jane, S

Project 2: Washington, Carol,

Project 3: Lowe, David, R

If Carol Washington is the Project Leader but NOT a project PI, do not include their information here

Define each investigator's role in the PPA, and their institutional affiliation. FFB uses the following definitions for investigators: **Project Leader** is an investigator who will be responsible for overall scientific leadership and management of the PPA, ensuring that progress and financial reporting requirements are met and for submitting the PPA Application to FFB. The Project Leader may, if they wish, nominate a Principal Investigator as a Co-Project Leader to be responsible with the Project Leader for scientific leadership and management of the PPA. Salary requests up to 30% of the annual project budget are allowed for the Project Leader and co-Leader. **Principal Investigators** are those investigators who will be scientifically responsible for one or more of the individual projects listed. Salary requests up to 20% of the project budget are allowed for the PI of each component. Co-Investigators are investigators who may be responsible for a sub-component of a project or core. **Collaborators** are

investigators who provide expertise, resources or services to a project or core. They do not receive Foundation funds from the project. The collaborator must provide a letter to be submitted with the Full Application which describes the specifics of the collaboration.

### **Lay Summary**

Provide up to a one page summary of the Program Project Award application, written in lay terms for a non-scientific audience. The abstract should contain non-confidential material that can be posted publicly if the application is funded.

Please Include:

1. The goal of the research
2. The IRD population who might benefit
3. The clinical significance of the proposed research
4. What is novel and innovative about the proposed research
5. The nature of the collaboration(s) proposed and the strength it brings to the research

Include KEYWORDS at the bottom of the document to be uploaded.

### **Individual Project Proposals**

A minimum of three research projects are required for consideration for the Program Project Award.

1. The fields below for **each project** should be completed by the Program Leader.
  - a. Title of Project
  - b. Personnel
    - i. List the investigators included in this Individual Project application. The number of rows in the table can be adjusted as required. Provide the full name of the investigator (Last Name, First Name, Middle Initial), that investigator's role in the project from the pull-down menu, and his/her institutional affiliation.

Signatures of key personnel will be uploaded in the Facepage Upload section. A signature by that person on the proposal signifies that they agree to diligently carry out the responsibilities of the role assigned to them as described in the PPA proposal.

- ii. Please note that FFB uses the following definitions for investigators: Principal Investigators are those investigators who will be scientifically responsible for one or more of the individual projects listed. Salary requests up to 20% of the project budget are

allowed for the PI of each component. Co-Investigators are investigators who may be responsible for a sub-component of a project or core. Collaborators are investigators who provide expertise, resources or services to a project or core. They do not receive funds from the project. The collaborator must provide a letter to be submitted with the Full Application which describes the specifics of the collaboration.

2. The Program Leader must provide the **Individual Project Proposal template** to each project PI to complete and return for upload (single PDF file). The completed Individual Project Proposal and related attachments should be returned to the Project Leader for uploading into the application (comprising upload of a single document for each individual project) The template includes the following items which are required for submission:

### **Individual Project Proposal template:**

#### **Scientific Abstract (maximum of 1 page)**

Background, Objectives, Summary of Research Plan, Anticipated Results and Outcomes

#### **Research Proposal (maximum of 10 pages)**

- Background and Project Goal
- Preliminary Data
- Goals and Objectives
- Specific Aims and Hypothesis
- Technologies and Methodologies
- Project Time Plan
- Synergies with other Components of the Program
- List of References
  - Provide a complete list of relevant references for the preceding sections. The reference must include the full title of the paper. There is no page limit for the list of references.

#### **Appendices**

- Letters of Collaboration – There is no page limit for the letters of collaboration.
- Up to Five Key Publications and Submitted Manuscripts (Note: These items should NOT be included in the final Individual Project Proposal PDF; submit these separately to the Project Leader.

### **Program Budget**

Application Budget Applicants must use the FFB Program Project Award Budget Form. This form is provided as an Excel template and can be downloaded on this page. Provide an itemized program budget for each individual project in the Excel worksheet, and the relevant budget justification text on the Budget justification form. Complete the tables with a single dollar amount per year for each of the following categories: Personnel, Supplies, Animals, Patients, Travel and Other.

**Budget Limitations:**

1. Requested budgets must not exceed \$2,500,000 over a five year timeframe.
2. The support requested for the Project Leader and co-Leader must not exceed thirty percent (20%) of the total annual budget.
3. The Program coordinator/manager should be included in the Program Cost budget and not in the Individual Project budget
4. The support requested for the Principal Investigator must not exceed twenty percent (20%) of the total annual project budget.
5. The award may be used to support the salaries of research trainees (graduate students, postdoctoral or clinical fellows), technical staff and research supplies.
6. Purchase of significant equipment is generally not supported by the Program Project Awards. Significant equipment is defined as permanent or semi-permanent apparatus, devices or systems costing more than \$5,000 per item or system. Applicants must obtain prior approval from the Foundation Fighting Blindness to submit an application proposing to purchase equipment. All such equipment purchase requests must be well justified in the budget section of the application and in the description of proposed project.
7. The Foundation Fighting Blindness does not pay indirect or overhead charges, nor does FFB provide support for building construction or renovation.
8. Final approved budgets may be restructured post-award based on reviewer recommendations and funding availability.

**Budget Application:**

1. Personnel support, listed by name and degree with percent effort, salary, and fringe benefits requested;
2. Supplies, itemized by general category, e.g. glassware, molecular biology reagents;
3. Patient Costs, itemized by number of patients and per patient cost;
4. Animal Costs, itemized by number, type, and length of housing;
5. Travel funds up to \$2,000 may be requested for meetings and conferences;
6. Other costs should be clearly itemized.

**Program Cost:**

The final section of the budget worksheet is for the Program Budget cost not covered in the Individual project section:

1. Salaries of program coordinator/manager
2. Travel and meetings
3. Other cost

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1. Salaries of program coordinator/manager
2. Travel and meetings
3. Other cost
  - I. The following cannot be paid from Foundation PPA funding:
    - a. Indirect costs such as overhead or infrastructure
    - b. Entertainment or hospitality costs
    - c. Activities by researchers not part of the application

**Budget Justification**

Upload a detailed budget justification in the following upload fields for the budget requests made on the “FFB PPA 2019 FULL APPLICATION – Budget – PROJECTLEADERNAME” Excel workbook. Provide a justification for each of the submitted sections of the application in the following order:

1. Program costs
2. Individual Projects – provide a separate section for each project

For “Personnel Support” justification:

- List all scientific and technical personnel involved in the proposed project;
- Clearly designate roles of all personnel;
- Clearly identify key personnel and co-investigators;
- For each person identified as key personnel provide information on all other sources of financial support, including both current and proposed projects. For each source (federal, private or commercial) provide:
  - Title of grant/award;
  - Grant/award number;
  - Percent effort;
  - Funding amount;
  - Budget period;
  - A short description of the project’s goals.
- Include a section for each project, detailing the budget request as outlined in the 2018 PPG Full Application Guide. Provide a justification for the budget requested for each category: Personnel, Supplies, Patients, Animals and Other.

**Appendices**

In the fields below provide a list of all the file attachments supplied with the Budget documentation, such as quotations, letters of commitment, and Statements of Work.

**Overall Program Description**

This section must be prepared and submitted by the Project Leader. Within the limit of ten pages, provide an overview of the program. Provide a background of current knowledge relative to the proposed research, with reference to relevant publications. Summarize the objectives of the proposal, and state why they are important and are novel. Describe the established and planned collaborations and provide a rationale why this application fits the criteria for a Foundations Program Project Grant. Explain how interrelated and synergistic the projects are in their work towards a common goal. The overall program must have the potential to achieve much more than the simple sum of its component projects. Describe how the program provides a valuable research training environment for students and fellows.

This section must include details of the following:

1. Work Plan: describe the management and oversight of the PPA; how will each PI contribute to the fulfillment of the project objective; what is the expectation for publications
2. Communication Plan: how will the Director communicate with the PIs and how often; how and when will the PIs communicate with each other
3. Data Sharing Plan: what is the mechanism of data sharing (research tools, model organisms, GWAS data sharing); how will the data be stored, curated and accessed; how will the data access and sharing be maintained beyond the end of the award

In regards to overlapping projects and funding sources, describe commitments made by any of the sponsoring institutions associated with this project that will be essential for the successful performance of this program, including the role of other partners or funders. Disclose relevant commitments made by and to those partners, for example, to give the partner preferred access to use a resource. State whether these commitments (collaborative and/or financial) are secured, requested but not yet secured, or are planned but not yet requested. Finally, describe the specifics of how this proposal fits with, integrates and synergizes with another program or activity at any of the sponsoring institutions. Provide a summary of the overlapping program's goals and participants.

### **Program Budget Summary**

Use the 3rd tab of the FFB Program Project Budget Award Form, called "5-YEAR OVERALL BUDGET SUMMARY", and copy that content into the fields on this form.

### **Key Publications**

Upload all key publications and submitted manuscripts directly related to the application. There is a limit of 5 key publications per project.

### **Curriculum Vitae**

All program applicants (Project Leader, Principal Investigators, and Co-Investigators) with the exception of collaborators, are required to submit CV (NIH biosketch acceptable). CVs can be combined into a single PDF document and uploaded.

### **Face Page**

The Face Page must be signed by the Principal Investigator and the responsible Institutional official. Prior to submitting the application, print the face page, obtain the appropriate signatures and upload as instructed below:

A signature by any person on the proposal signifies that they agree to diligently carry out the responsibilities of the role assigned to them as described in the PPA proposal. Please note that FFB uses the following definitions for investigators: Project Leader is an investigator who will be responsible for overall scientific leadership and management of the PPA, ensuring that progress and financial reporting requirements are met and for submitting the PPA Application to FFB. The Project Leader may, if they wish, nominate a Principal Investigator as a Co-Project Leader to be responsible with the Project Leader for scientific leadership and management of the PPA. Salary requests up to 30% of the annual project budget are allowed for the Project Leader and co-Leader. Principal Investigators are those investigators who will be scientifically responsible for one or more of the individual projects listed. Salary requests up to 20% of the project budget are allowed for the PI of each component. Co-Investigators are investigators who may be responsible for a sub-component of a project or core. Collaborators are investigators who provide expertise, resources or services to a project or core. They do not receive Foundation funds from the project. The collaborator must provide a letter to be submitted with the Full Application which describes the specifics of the collaboration.

### **Application Formatting Instructions**

Use the specified character limit as your guide for portal fields.

When uploading pdfs follow these instructions:

- Use an Arial typeface and a font size of 11 points or larger. (A Symbol font may be used to insert Greek letters or special characters; the font size requirement still applies.)
- Type density, including characters and spaces, must not exceed 15 characters per inch.
- Type may be no more than six lines per inch.
- Use 1" margins
- All page limits specified refer to single-spaced format using the above formatting requirements.
- **LAY SUMMARY:** up to 1-single-spaced page
- **SCIENTIFIC ABSTRACT:** up to 1-single-spaced page
- **RESEARCH PROPOSAL:** up to 10 single-spaced pages
- **TABLES & FIGURES:** up to 5 single-spaced pages included in appendices

### **APPLICATION SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS**

**All applications must be submitted online. Attachments are required and must be submitted through the application portal.**

**NOTE: The complete application must be SUBMITTED by February 27, 2024.**



## Online submission

**First create an account** on the site's homepage by selecting "Applicant Registration-start here" underneath the FFB logo. If you have previously created an account, this step is not necessary.

You may log out and return to your in-progress application as many times as you wish until it has been submitted. In order to be considered for the award, your online application must be complete and in SUBMITTED status no later than **by February 27, 2024 11:59 p.m. EST** .

### A. How to enter information

1. You may begin completing the application at any section. To begin, choose a section of the application from the left menu or click "Continue" at the bottom of the screen.
2. Text boxes will hold only a limited amount of text. Where longer answers are permitted, the number of available characters will be indicated. **Before submitting, we suggest you print and examine a hard copy of your application to be certain your responses are complete and accurate.**
3. The information you provide will be saved exactly as entered. Therefore, fill out the form carefully, paying attention to spelling, case (**do not use all caps**), punctuation, et cetera, and give special consideration when entering your contact information.
4. Begin typing all answers at the extreme left hand side of the response area or box; do not leave a space or indent at the beginning of your answer.

### B. How to SAVE and SUBMIT your data

1. You must **SAVE each time you leave a screen**. If you do not click on SAVE or SAVE & CONTINUE, anything entered since you last hit SAVE on that screen will be lost (any work from a previous session will be retained, but any new entries will be lost). The SAVE and SAVE & CONTINUE buttons are at the bottom of your screen.
2. You may work on your application over as many sessions as you wish, and the status of your application will be **IN PROGRESS** until you submit it. Once you are satisfied that your application is complete, you must go to the "Submit Application" screen and select **SUBMIT APPLICATION**.
3. When you have completed your application, we strongly suggest that you print and read it before submitting, to be sure there are no further revisions you wish to make. **If for some reason you need to make changes after your application is submitted, email [blindness@onlineapplicationportal.com](mailto:blindness@onlineapplicationportal.com).**
4. Your application status must appear as SUBMITTED **by February 27, 2024 11:59 p.m. EST** in order for your application to be considered. Information on your application status may be found on the Online Application Portal home page.

**PLEASE USE YOUR OWN E-MAIL ADDRESS IF POSSIBLE WHEN SUBMITTING THE LETTER OF INTENT SO THAT WE CAN INFORM YOU IN A TIMELY FASHION IF YOUR APPLICATION HAS BEEN SELECTED FOR SUBMISSION OF A FULL PROPOSAL. IN ADDITION, PLEASE ADVISE US AS SOON AS POSSIBLE OF CHANGES IN E-MAIL ADDRESSES.**