

Funding Opportunity For Conference Grants

PA 15-04



PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENT

08.01.15



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Objective

The mission of California Institute for Regenerative Medicine (CIRM) is to accelerate stem cell therapies to patients with unmet medical needs.

The objective of this program announcement (PA) is to create a highly competitive opportunity for CIRM to support valuable mission-specific scientific conferences. A scientific conference is defined as an organized event where persons physically assemble to exchange scientific information and explore a defined scientific subject relevant to CIRM's mission. Support of such conferences is contingent on the fiscal and programmatic priorities of CIRM at time of submission.

Under this program, CIRM will only accept applications for review of conferences aligned with CIRM's short and long-term goals. In addition, CIRM may issue specific requests for applications to develop a conference in collaboration with CIRM to fulfill a specifically defined need.

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Award Information

What activities will CIRM support?

CIRM resources will support the following activities under this opportunity:

- ✓ Conferences addressing critical issues and bottlenecks related to stem cell-based therapy and discovery/stem cell biology.

CIRM resources cannot be used to support the following activities under this opportunity:

- ✗ Conferences outside of California
- ✗ Academic departmental retreats
- ✗ Conferences not directly relevant to CIRM's mission

This PA will support the development and conduct of scientific conferences relevant to regenerative medicine via two funding mechanisms. CIRM plans to allocate up to \$2,000,000 biennially to this program via the following mechanisms:

A. Mechanism 1

Under Mechanism 1, the grantee will be solely responsible for planning, directing, and executing the proposed conference.

It is anticipated that the size and duration of each award will vary. The total amount awarded and the number of awards will depend upon the number, quality, and timing of applications, the costs of the proposals received, and on CIRM programmatic priorities. The maximum award amount for this category is the lesser of \$50,000 or 50% of the conference budget.

Awards via Mechanism 1 must provide complimentary registration for at least 3 CIRM scientific staff, patient advocates, and/or ICOC members. If this is not possible, the grantee is encouraged to provide access via webcasting or teleconferencing to CIRM.

B. Mechanism 2

Under Mechanism 2, the grantee retains the primary responsibility for planning, directing, and executing the proposed event; however, the CIRM team will work closely with the grantee to design and implement an event that is responsive to a specific CIRM need.

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CIRM will use this mechanism to request specific conferences to address an area or need important to the Institute or to seek advice on an emerging scientific issue(s) in regenerative medicine. For this type of conference, CIRM will solicit proposals from prospective applicants through a specific announcement. The maximum award amount for this category will be stated in the announcement.

For all conference grants awarded, CIRM requires a final report on the conference including outputs (e.g., DVD, abstract book or webcast) and an assessment by attendees of the presentations, overall quality of the conference as well as a financial report. Please note that CIRM requires appropriate acknowledgement on marketing and conference materials.

How will funds be awarded?

Awards to applicants will be in the form of a grant. Awards will be made no earlier than 60 days before the conference start date. Successful applicants will have thoughtfully accounted for foreseeable risks and developed contingency plans that do not involve additional funding from CIRM. Information regarding an applicant's contingency plan should be included in the application.

Eligibility

What types of projects are eligible for partnering?

To be eligible, the proposed conference must satisfy the following requirements:

(1) Must establish relevance to CIRM's Mission

For Mechanism 1, applicants must provide justification as to how the proposed conference will help accelerate stem cell therapies to patients with unmet medical needs.

For Mechanism 2, CIRM will call for specific meetings to be organized that are aligned with its mission. The applicant will be asked to justify how its proposal will ensure that the meeting will be conducted efficiently and will achieve the aims of the announcement.

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California-based and non-California-based organizations (for-profit and non-profit) may use CIRM funds for eligible conference costs incurred in California. Foreign institutions are not eligible to apply for conference grant support.

An international conference can be supported through a California-based or non-California-based non-profit organization of an established international scientific or professional society. Non-profit organization means either:

- (1) a governmental entity of the State of California; or
- (2) a legal entity that is tax exempt under Internal Revenue Code section 501(c) and California Revenue and Taxation Code section 23701d.

Program Director Qualifications

A Program Director (PD) is any individual with the skills necessary to direct the planning and execution of the proposed conference. The PD may be an employee or partnered with the applicant institution. The applicant must provide the PD's qualifications at time of application submission.

(3) Must show or have applied for other funding sources (Mechanism 1 applications only)

For Mechanism 1 applications, CIRM requires the applicant to have applied for or have obtained other sources of funding. The maximum funding CIRM will allow is the lesser of 50% of a conference budget or \$50,000 for any Mechanism 1 application. The co-funding may come from any funding source arranged by the applicant. Documentation demonstrating the commitment and/or application for funds to cover the co-funding amount must be provided upon application submission. Only funds that will be spent concurrently with CIRM funds will qualify towards the co-funding requirement. CIRM will not release funds until the applicant has demonstrated to CIRM's satisfaction that it has access to the required co-funding.

For Mechanism 2 applications, CIRM does not require co-funding. CIRM will specify an award amount in the announcement that will serve as the maximum budget for the conference.

(4) Must be submitted on or before the closest submission date that is 90 days before the conference begins.



Schedule And Deadlines

Applications must be submitted AT LEAST 90 days prior to the first day of the proposed conference.

For conferences occurring prior to December 1, 2015 (and after September 30, 2015), applications must be submitted by 2:00 pm (PDT/PST) September 1, 2015.

Applications Due	2:00 pm (PDT/PST) on the first business day of March, June, September, December
Presidential Review and Approval	Approximately 45 days post submission
Award Start	Earliest is 60 days before the conference start date

Application Review Information

What is the process for evaluating an application?

Pre-submission Consultation

In accordance with CIRM's mission, the Institute is committed to funding scientific conferences that focus on leading edge research (Discovery and Clinical) and/or critical bottlenecks in regenerative medicine. Prospective applicants are encouraged but not required to contact CIRM with questions to discuss their proposal, including its eligibility, before applying for a Conference Grant.

Eligibility Review

CIRM will assess whether the application meets the eligibility parameters required under this program. If CIRM determines, in its sole discretion, that an application does not meet the eligibility parameters of the program, CIRM will notify the applicant of its decision and cease all further action on the application.

Application Review

CIRM's governing board, the Independent Citizens Oversight Committee (ICOC), has delegated to the President of CIRM authority to review and make funding decisions for grants up to \$50,000 for Mechanism 1 awards. The ICOC will make funding decisions on applications for conference grants in excess of \$50,000, if recommended for funding by the President. In the case of Mechanism 2 awards, the ICOC has delegated funding decisions to the President. The President will publicly

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report to the ICOC semi-annually on the award and disbursement of conference grants.

The availability of funds is a key determinant of the number of applications funded in any year. CIRM may choose not to fund any applications during a review cycle. Once all allocated funds are expended, the Conference Grant Program will close for the remainder of the fiscal year.

The following criteria will be considered in the review of applications and funding decisions:

A. Relevance, Impact, and Significance: The conference must address the following questions:

- (1) Will this conference create opportunities to accelerate the development of stem cell therapies to patients?
- (2) How will this conference increase the likelihood of a successful treatment reaching patients?
- (3) How is the focus of the conference addressing an unmet clinical need?
- (4) What has the applicant done to ensure the meeting is organized and budgeted efficiently?

B. Approach and Setting: Are the format, duration, scope, scale, timing, target audience, and speakers for the conference appropriate for achieving the goals of the conference? How appropriate is the conference site? Do the proposed conferences, exhibits, interactions, etc., take advantage of unique features of the environment or employ useful collaborative arrangements? Has the applicant raised funding from other sources to support this conference?

C. Qualifications of Personnel and Applicant Organization: Does the Program Director and applicant institution have the experience and resources to facilitate a successful conference?

Confidentiality

CIRM's confidentiality and conflict screening rules apply to everyone who will have access to applications or who will attend any review conference in which confidential information is discussed, including but not limited to CIRM team members, reviewers and members of the ICOC. (Per Gov. Code §6254.5(e) non-public records may be disclosed to government agencies under confidentiality agreements.)



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Appeals

All decisions of CIRM and the ICOC are final. Given the open opportunity to amend and re-submit rejected applications, requests to appeal the outcome of a GWG review will be limited to demonstrable conflicts of interest as defined in CIRM's Conflict of Interest Policy for Scientific Members of the GWG (http://www.cirm.ca.gov/files/files/funding_page/Reg100003_Conflict_of_Interest_0.pdf).

Application Components And Submission

How does one apply?

Applications must be completed and submitted online using the CIRM Grants Management Portal at <https://grants.cirm.ca.gov>. Any prospective PI must create a login in the system to access application materials and apply. Applications are available in the system only to the PI. A PI may submit only a single application in a given review cycle and may not submit additional applications during the review period.

Applications are due by 5:00pm (Pacific Time) on the last business day of each month. Applications received after the deadline will be deferred to the next monthly review cycle.

What components does an application include?

The Grants Management Portal provides instructions for completing all the necessary components and submitting a final application. The application is designed to collect information necessary to appropriately evaluate the proposal and for CIRM to rapidly initiate an award if approved for funding. Applicants are required to indicate key personnel involved in the project, describe how the proposal addresses the objective of the funding opportunity, provide a detailed plan of proposed activities, complete a budget, and provide reference materials

The application for CIRM Conference Grants consists of two parts:

Part A: Application Information and Proposal Form (Web-based document) and can be found at <https://www.cirm.ca.gov/researchers/funding-opportunities>

Part A includes: Conference Plan, Key Personnel, Budget and Related Business Entities (section numbers 1, 2, 3 and 4 below).

Part B: Supporting Documentation (PDF or MS Word upload. No template is provided) Provide the latest version of the conference agenda and details about financial support from other organizations. Attach documentation confirming the participation of key speakers/co-chairs/organizing committee members in the conference.



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The application for CIRM Conference Grant includes the following sections:

1. Provide a detailed justification for the conference, including the objectives, relevance, impact, and significance of the proposed conference to CIRM's mission (*To accelerate the development of stem cell treatments to patients with unmet medical needs*).

2. Conference Plan (5 sections in Part A) Describe the specific program including proposed and/or confirmed speakers, format and topics to be covered; and the contributions the conference will make. Identify related conferences held on the subject during the past two years.

Address the experience of the PD and the applicant organization in the organization and conduct of conferences. Describe the composition and role of the organizing committee. Provide the names for key participants in the conference. Attach documentation (Part B) of their agreement to participate in the conference.

Estimate the expected size and composition of the audience, as well as the method of selection.

Describe plans for publication of the proceedings. If this is one of a series of periodic conferences held by the applicant, briefly describe and evaluate the last conference in the series. Address how the conference will be evaluated.

Discuss the conference site and layout and how the venue will contribute to achievement of the goals of the conference.

Discuss the conference budget and funding needs and what sources, other than CIRM, have committed and/or will be approached for conference support.

3. Key Personnel (included in Parts A, B) Key personnel are the Program Director (PD) and those responsible for the scientific planning and organization of the conference. List all key personnel.

4. Budget (included in Part A) Provide all budget information requested in the budget section of the Application Information Form. All allowable costs for research grants are detailed in the CIRM Grants Administration Policy.

- Allowable Costs

Allowable costs include rental of a conference facility and necessary equipment (e.g., audio/visual and internet connectivity); transportation, lodging and per diem or subsistence allowances for the organizers and



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speakers and other costs; supplies needed for conduct of the conference (only if received for use during the budget period); conference services, and publicity and publication costs; as described in the CIRM Grants Administration Policy for Academic and Non-Profit Institutions (Chapter V, Section B-2).

- Non-allowable Costs

Non-allowable costs include purchase of equipment; visas; passports; entertainment; alcoholic beverages; food; meals not related to travel; personal telephone calls; laundry charges; dues; salary support for organizers; honoraria for speakers; cash awards; alterations or renovations. The CIRM Grants Administration Policy also indicates unallowable costs. Indirect Costs are not allowable on this award.

5. Related Business Entities (included in Part A) All applicants must provide information on related business entities for any application that, if awarded, would fund a for-profit organization as a subcontractor. If there is a for-profit subcontractor, include the following for each for-profit organization to be funded:

- A list of any parent organization that owns 50% or more of the for-profit's voting shares;
- A list of all subsidiaries in which the for-profit owns 50% or more of the voting shares; and
- A list of all other related business entities (i.e., entities with which the for-profit shares management and control, or shares a controlling owner).

Award Administration

Issuance of Award

A CIRM Conference Award is issued via a Notice of Grant Agreement, which is the formal contract that defines the terms and conditions of an award and documents the commitment of funds from CIRM.



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Reporting

Awardees will be required to provide written scientific and financial reports to CIRM upon completion of the conference. Awardees should include the final conference agenda or program.

Other Requirements

Conference organizers will provide the option for complimentary registration for at least 3 CIRM scientific staff, patient advocates, and/or ICOC members to attend the conference. If this is not possible, the grantee is encouraged to give access via webcasting or teleconferencing to CIRM.

CIRM staff will report on any significant findings or progress as well report on how the conference is conducted.

All confidentiality of scientific content will be maintained.

Contacts

For information about this PA or the review process:

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Definitions

“California organization” means: An entity, regardless of profit status, that has >50% of its employees located in, and paid in, the state of California, and conducts the award activities from the California location.

“For-profit organization” means: a sole-proprietorship, partnership, limited liability company, corporation, or other legal entity that is organized or operated for the profit or financial benefit of its shareholders or other owners. Such organizations also are referred to as “commercial organizations”.

“Non-profit organization” means: (1) a governmental entity of the state of California; or (2) a legal entity that is tax exempt under Internal Revenue Code section 501(c)(3) and California Revenue and Taxation Code section 23701d.

“Partner” means an organization that, in exchange for the right to the opportunity for a future financial return, has (1) agreed to provide matching funds for the proposed project or (2) entered into an agreement with the applicant organization relating to the commercialization of the proposed project.

“Subcontractor” means an organization (other than the applicant organization) that is expected to: (a) contribute to the scientific development or execution of the project in a substantive, measurable way *and* (b) receive \$50,000 or more through the proposed project. “Subcontractor” does not include suppliers of widely available goods.

“Suspension Event” means a pre-defined condition that triggers a hold of CIRM funding until the suspension event has been resolved, if resolvable.

Appendix

CIRM Regulations

Grant or Loan awards made through this PA will be subject to all applicable CIRM regulations. These regulations can be found on CIRM's website at <http://www.cirm.ca.gov/reg/default.asp>. The CIRM Grants Administration Policy for Clinical Stage Programs, which will govern this award, will be adopted by the ICOC at the end of January 2015.