CLIN2 Awards: Funding Opportunity for Clinical Trials

Summary

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<tr><th colspan="4">OVERVIEW</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Objective</td><td colspan="2">To accelerate clinical development of stem cell-based and genetic therapies to late-stage trials by encouraging innovative clinical trial designs, and incentivizing stage-appropriate market access strategies and pre-commercialization activities</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Scope</td><td colspan="2">All activities necessary for completion of a Phase 1, 2, or 3 trial, plus studies to understand mechanism of action and potency assay development, patient support activities, and data sharing activities. May support manufacturing for the next phase trial.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Program Recurrence</td><td colspan="2">Four times per year</td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="4">AWARD DETAILS</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Funds</td><td>Stage</td><td>First in Human*</td><td>Phase 2</td><td>Phase 3 or Pivotal</td></tr>
<tr><td>Max Award Amount</td><td>$8,000,000 (for-profit)
$12,000,000 (non-profit)</td><td>$15,000,000</td><td>$15,000,000</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Max Duration</td><td colspan="2">Up to 4 years</td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="4">ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Applicant Organization</td><td colspan="2">California or non-California-based for-profit or non-profit organizations may apply</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Applicant PI</td><td colspan="2">Must commit at least 15% effort</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Project Manager</td><td colspan="2">Must commit at least 50% effort</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Co-funding</td><td colspan="2"><table><tr><th>First in Human*</th><th>Phase 2</th><th>Phase 3 or Pivotal</th></tr><tr><td>30% (for-profit**)
None (non-profit)</td><td>50%</td><td>50%</td></tr></table></td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="4">SCHEDULES AND DEADLINES</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Application Due Dates</td><td colspan="2">Four times per year</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">GWG Review</td><td colspan="2">Approximately 90 days post submission deadline</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Award Approval</td><td colspan="2">Approximately 150 days post submission deadline</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Start Date</td><td colspan="2">Must be ready to start award activities within 60 days of award approval</td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="4">CONTACT AND ADDITIONAL RESOURCES</th></tr>
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https://www.cirm.ca.gov/researchers/funding-opportunities-clinical-trial-stage-research/
For additional information on the program or applications, contact clinical@cirm.ca.gov. For questions related to the review and approval of applications, contact review@cirm.ca.gov.

Additional requirements and definitions incorporated here by reference are available in [CIRM Common Requirements and Definitions – PENDING]

*For the purpose of this program announcement, a trial is considered First-in-Human if this is the first clinical trial using this therapeutic candidate in the proposed disease indication and proposed route of administration.
**Co-funding requirement also applies to for-profit partners of non-profit applicants.

Background

The mission of the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine (CIRM) is to accelerate world class science to deliver transformative regenerative medicine treatments in an equitable manner to a diverse California and world.

This opportunity is in support of CIRM's Strategic Allocation Framework (SAF) goals as approved by the Independent Citizens' Oversight Committee (ICOC) in September 2024, including the goal to propel 15-20 therapies targeting diseases affecting Californians to late-stage trials and the goal to advance 4-7 rare disease programs to the stage of filing a Biologics License Application (BLA) with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

Through the CLIN2 program, CIRM continues to create funding opportunities for the types and stages of clinical research that otherwise do not exist or are of limited scope and focus to advance the field of regenerative medicine. Existing federal funding opportunities for clinical trial stage activities are primarily driven by the internal priorities and interests of the administering body and, therefore, are unpredictable and limited in both scope and focus. The CLIN2 program is a part of CIRM's core product development programs that unlike other funding sources, provide reliable and predictable funding throughout the award period.

Objective

The objective of this funding opportunity is to support completion of a Phase 1, 2, or 3 trial (including registrational trials) for an innovative regenerative medicine-based therapy addressing a serious unmet need and with the potential for transformative benefits to patients, families and the health care system. The trial should be part of a clinical development program aiming for marketing approval, and which proposes stage-appropriate pre-commercialization activities, including development of an access and affordability strategy. The clinical development program for the supported trial should demonstrate a commitment to enrolling a patient population reflective of the demographics of the disease population. Further, the clinical development program should leverage CIRM-funded and externally funded infrastructure for data, resource or knowledge sharing to drive rigor, efficiency, and transparency of clinical trial results.

Scope and Structure

The CLIN2 award supports completion of an interventional Phase 1, 2 or 3 clinical trial for a stem-cell based or genetic therapeutic candidate and may also fund an associated natural-history comparator or lead-in normal healthy volunteer study. Applicants are encouraged to use accelerating trial designs where appropriate, such as basket trials or adaptive design dose-escalation protocols.

Program funding areas

The CLIN2 Program aims to advance clinical candidates that have the potential for transformative patient impact and that address barriers to access and affordability. To support this goal, certain modalities, disease areas and project features may be prioritized based on their potential to achieve these goals. On an approximately annual basis, the CIRM team will present recommendations for funding preferences informed by funding opportunity performance, award portfolios, and the evolving regenerative medicine scientific and regulatory landscape. The ICOC will review these recommendations and has the sole authority to approve preferences. Once approved, these preferences will be implemented through the CLIN2 pre-review qualification process (described below) and during programmatic considerations by the Application Review Subcommittee of the ICOC.

Program activities

Applicants may request funds to cover costs for research activities conducted wholly in California and may also request costs for research activities conducted outside of California, provided that the Awardee is a California Organization and exercises direction and control over the activities.

CIRM funds **will support** the following activities under this opportunity:

REQUIRED ACTIVITIES	
✓	All clinical operations activities needed to complete the trial according to the proposed timeline
✓	Outreach and inclusion activities to achieve trial enrollment demographics reflecting the patient population
✓	Treatment of patients with the therapeutic candidate (or control) and follow-up visits per the clinical protocol
✓	Sharing of any non-clinical as well as clinical data per the CIRM data sharing requirements
✓	Establishment and regular convening of a Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) with clinical development expertise to provide forward-looking strategic advice
✓	Activities associated with managing, preserving, and sharing data and knowledge from the study
ALLOWABLE ACTIVITIES	
✓	Natural history studies needed for baseline or control data for the interventional trial
✓	Lead-in studies in normal healthy volunteers for the interventional trial
✓	Studies to develop biomarkers, understand mechanisms of action and develop a potency assay
✓	Regulatory activities including FDA interactions and requests for designations
✓	Non-clinical studies required by the FDA (FDA documentation required)
✓	Strategic planning activities
✓	Manufacturing activities to supply the current clinical trial, including technology transfer and FDA-approved comparability studies, if needed
CONDITIONALLY ALLOWABLE ACTIVITY	
✓	Manufacturing for the next phase trial. Funding of that activity will be conditioned on 1) an interim evaluation by CIRM and a panel of independent experts of the clinical trial data to date, and 2) provision of 50% co-funding for this activity from the commercializing organization (either the applicant or a partner organization).

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

UNALLOWABLE ACTIVITIES	
✘	Project costs incurred before the date the ICOC approves the application for funding
✘	Discovery or translational research
✘	Activities already budgeted or paid for under a prior, existing or future CIRM award
✘	The costs of activities performed by a separate out-of-state organization that retains intellectual property or independent publication rights in any intellectual property (e.g., invention, technology, data) arising out of the CIRM-funded project

Award amount and duration

CLIN2 award amounts vary by trial phase and organization type as described below. The proposed project period must not exceed 48 months from the award start date, expected to be within 60 days of the ICOC approval. During the Project Period, CIRM funds shall only be used for allowable costs and activities.

	FIRST IN HUMAN	PHASE 2	PHASE 3 OR PIVOTAL
Co-funding	30% (for-profit*) None (non-profit)	50%	50%
Max Award (total cost)	$8,000,000 (for-profit) $12,000,000 (non-profit)	$15,000,000	$15,000,000

The amount of total project costs requested must be adequately justified. The requested amount is subject to adjustments prior to issuance of an award based on assessments of the Grants Working Group (GWG), the CIRM team, or by the Application Review Subcommittee of the ICOC.

Qualification process

In cases in which the number of applications submitted is in excess of the number that can be reasonably reviewed by the GWG panel, priority will be given to proposals that conform most closely to CIRM goals and that meet program funding areas defined above. CIRM staff will assess the application and assign a points value to each award during the review for eligibility and completeness. The highest scoring awards will proceed to full GWG review. In the event of a tie, GWG members (including scientific members and GWG Board Members) will conduct a pre-review of applications to identify which applications are most responsive to the funding opportunity and hold the most potential for impact.

Provisional timetable

CLIN2 funding opportunities will recur four times per year. The anticipated timeline of each funding cycle is as follows:

PROVISIONAL TIMETABLE	
Applications Open	Four times per year
Applications Due	Please visit Funding Opportunities on the CIRM website for current application deadlines

Grants Working Group (GWG) Review	Approximately 90 days after application deadline
Application Review Subcommittee (ARS) Award Approval	Approximately 60 days after GWG Review
Award Start	60 days after award approval

Eligibility

All the following requirements must be fully satisfied for an application to be accepted and considered for funding by CIRM. Requirements marked with a * incorporate by reference the requirements and definitions described in [CIRM Common Requirements and Definitions].

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS	
1	The applicant must propose an interventional clinical trial for a regenerative medicine-based therapeutic (stem cell-based or genetic therapy*)
2	For projects not progressing from a CIRM preclinical stage award, the IND application and clinical protocol must be cleared by FDA at the time the CIRM application is submitted. For projects progressing from CIRM preclinical stage award, the IND application must have been submitted to FDA by the time of the CLIN2 application and must be cleared to proceed within 30 days of the CLIN2 application submission.
3	The PI must commit a minimum of 15% effort and adhere to CIRM's requirements*
4	The project team must include an experienced project manager at 50% effort
5	The project team must include a key person with data management experience
6	The CIRM applicant must be the IND sponsor
7	The applicant must have at least one trial site located in California. California applicants must justify any trial sites outside of California
8	The applicant must be ready to initiate work on the funded project within 60 days of award approval
9	The application must be accurate and complete
10	The applicant must demonstrate the required level of co-funding* First in human: 30% (for profit), none (non-profit); Phase 2 or 3: 50% (all applicants)
11	For-profit organizations must demonstrate solvency*
12	The applicant must meet CIRM's requirements for "good standing" *