

Types of Awards, Peer Review, and Funding Decisions

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Outline

- Types of Awards
- Anatomy of a Competitive Grant
- Peer Review
- Grant Funding Decisions

Types of Awards

- Seed Grant Awards
- Established Investigator Awards
- Group Project Awards
 - a) Group Project Awards
 - b) Disease-Directed Collaboration Group Project Awards
- Core Facility Awards

Seed Grant Awards

- Up to \$200,000 (\$160,000 direct costs) over 2 years
- Supports early stages of a project with the goal of increasing competitiveness for larger-scale funding
- Intended for junior or established investigators in academic institutions, companies and hospitals
 - Established stem cell investigators developing new directions
 - Established investigators new to stem cell research
 - Stem cell expertise provided through collaboration with ESC cores or experienced stem cell researchers
 - Junior faculty at the start of their independent careers
 - Postdoctoral researchers with the support of a sponsor
- Project Description is limited to 5 pages (Objectives, Significance, Project Plan)

Established Investigator Awards

- Up to \$750,000 (\$600,000 direct costs) for up to 4 years
- Intended for established investigators with a track record of independent grant support and regular publications.
 - Typically, experienced in stem cell research but may bring expertise through collaboration with ESC cores or experienced stem cell researchers
- Broader research scope supported by preliminary data
- Individual lab or collaborative effort between labs
- Project Description is limited to 10 pages (Objectives, Significance, Project Plan)

Group Project Awards

- Intended to support coordinated approaches to ambitious research objectives beyond the scope of a single lab
- Two types of Group Project Awards
 - a) Group Project Awards
 - Unspecified research focus
 - Up to \$1.5 million (\$1.2 million direct costs) for up to 4 years
 - b) Disease-Directed Collaboration Group Project Awards
 - Specific disease focus
 - Collaborations between multiple research entities (academic, medical, biotech)
 - Intention of beginning FDA review within 4 years of awarding of the grant
 - Up to \$2 million (\$1.6 million direct costs) for up to 4 years
- Priority will be given to disease-directed collaborations
- Project Description is limited to 50 pages (Objectives, Significance, Project Plan)

Core Facility Awards

- Intended to provide shared core facilities for stem cell researchers across Connecticut
- The Advisory Committee recognizes the essential functions of the Yale and UConn/Wesleyan hESC Cores.
- In the upcoming grant cycle, total funding for Core Facility Awards will not exceed \$1 million.
 - Intent is for cores to increasingly rely on funds from other sources (fee-for-service, institutional support, donations, programmatic grants from other agencies. etc.)
- Each application may request up to \$1 million (\$800,000 direct costs) for up to 2 years
 - Funds may be used to cover equipment, salaries, supplies and other costs associated with operating a core (e.g. service contracts)
- Project Description is limited to 50 pages

Anatomy of a Competitive Grant

- Demonstrate experience and efficacy
 - Expertise of PI, collaborations, institutional support
- Understandable to expert reviewer who is not in your specific field
 - Significance, Methodologies, Rationale
- Discuss possible results, interpretations, pitfalls and alternative strategies
- Human source materials
 - CT Legislation: "...grants-in-aid...for the purpose of conducting embryonic or human adult stem cell research..."

Peer Review

- Peer Review Committee comprised of diverse group of stem cell researchers that collectively have broad expertise in stem cell research
 - Expertise in ESC, iPSC, tissue-specific stem cells, animal models, basic and translational research
- Each grant is critiqued by at least two reviewers.
 - Divergent opinions/scores warrant a third review.
- NIH scoring scale (1-9) is used (<http://grants.nih.gov/>)
- Five individual criteria are evaluated
 - Significance, Approach, Investigator(s), Innovation, Environment
- A composite score, along with the critiques, is provided to the applicant and the Advisory Committee

Grant Funding Decisions

- Funding decisions are made by the Stem Cell Research Advisory Committee
- Funding deliberations are conducted over a 1-2 day period (July, 2012 anticipated) and are open to the public.
- Each “competitive” grant is presented by two committee members to begin deliberations.
 - Any grant can be nominated for discussion by a committee member.
- Scientific merit is a key, but not exclusive, consideration.
 - Other considerations: relevance to human health, use of human source materials, commitment of host institution, conformance to high ethical standards
- The Advisory Committee has not targeted particular areas of research or diseases for funding
- Budgets may be modified at the Advisory Committee’s discretion.