

Regenerative Medicine Research Fund FAQs

General

What is the Regenerative Medicine Research Fund?

- The Regenerative Medicine Research Fund is the new name for the previously established Stem Cell Research Fund. It was authorized in the Connecticut General Statutes 19a-32d through 19a-32g during the October 2014 legislative session and supports the advancement of embryonic or human adult stem cell regenerative medicine research in Connecticut.
- The Stem Cell Research Fund was the direct result of legislation passed by the General Assembly in 2005 (Connecticut General Statutes 19a-32d through 19a-32g). This legislation provided public funding in support of stem cell research on embryonic and human adult stem cells and banned the cloning of human beings in Connecticut.
- With the passage of this legislation, Connecticut became just the third state in the nation to provide public funding in support of embryonic and human adult stem cell research.

Why did the fund's name change?

- To allow for a broader array of research to be eligible for funding.

Who administers the Regenerative Medicine Research Fund?

- The fund is managed by Connecticut Innovations.

Who can apply?

- Connecticut researchers engaged in the advancement of embryonic or human adult stem cell research are encouraged to submit proposals. Except as specified, applicants at academic research institutions must be faculty members. Non-tenure track faculty members may apply if their institutional policies permit them to hold independent grants. Postdoctoral fellows may apply for seed grants with the support of a faculty sponsor.
- Applicants from hospitals or companies must be permitted by their organization to hold research grants.

What kind of research can be conducted?

- The Regenerative Medicine Research Fund supports embryonic and human adult stem cell research, including basic research, to determine the properties of stem cells.

Where can research be conducted?

- Research must be conducted at an eligible academic institution, hospital or company. Researchers at such entities may apply for any category of grants.
- Except under extraordinary circumstances, all research for which funds are requested must be conducted in Connecticut.

What are the selection criteria?

- The criteria to be employed in the evaluation shall include, but not be limited to, the following:
 - Scientific merit of the proposed research
 - Conformance to high ethical standards

- Ability to perform the proposed research
- Commitment of the host institution, hospital or company and (where applicable) collaborators to the proposed project, including cost sharing
- Potential for collaboration across disciplines and institutions, hospitals or companies
- Benefits (including financial benefits) to the State of Connecticut
- Alignment with funding priorities as determined by the Connecticut Regenerative Medicine Research Advisory Committee
- Consideration may be given to the number of Connecticut Regenerative Medicine Research Grants currently held by the principal investigator, and preference may be given to a principal investigator that does not currently have funding from the program.

Fund Governance

Is research that is not eligible for federal funding welcomed?

- Yes. Such research that is not currently eligible for federal funding is welcomed. However, the state is committed to the highest standard of ethical oversight and transparency, and expects all grant recipients to be in full compliance with all applicable laws, regulations and guidelines, including a review and approval by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) and Embryonic Stem Cell Research Oversight (ESCRO) Committee, when applicable, regarding this type of research.
- See below for information regarding establishing an ESCRO committee.

Does my institution, hospital or company have to establish an ESCRO committee?

- The grantee's institution, hospital or company must establish an ESCRO committee, or establish an affiliation with an existing ESCRO committee, established in accordance with the National Academies' Guidelines for Human Embryonic Stem Cell Research, as amended from time to time, http://www.nap.edu/catalog.php?record_id=12923, to oversee all hESC research at the institution, hospital or company.
- Each grantee's institution, hospital or company must submit a list of members of the ESCRO committee along with a copy of the policies and procedures of the ESCRO committee and the ESCRO committee approval for the research project prior to the execution of the assistance agreement and release of funds.
- The Advisory Committee reserves the right to delay or rescind funding if it is not satisfied that the ESCRO committee is appropriately established and constituted. If an applicant institution, hospital or company does not have an established ESCRO committee, the application must summarize the entity's plans and timetable for establishing or affiliating with an ESCRO committee.

What efforts are being made to assure the people of the state of Connecticut that all committee dealings and any research are ethically conducted?

- The State of Connecticut is committed to implementing the Regenerative Medicine Research Fund according to the highest ethical and scientific standards, and is committed to conducting all business activities in a transparent and consumer-friendly manner. Meetings of the committee where decisions are being made will comply with Freedom of Information Act requirements for public meetings and public records. Proceedings of all scheduled meetings of the advisory board will be transcribed and

made available to the public, and when possible, meetings will be televised via local public access television. Members of the Regenerative Medicine Research Advisory Committee are considered to be public officials and are subject to state ethics laws, which require full accountability and transparency. Both the peer review and advisory committees are responsible for overseeing the standards of research funded from this grant program. Reports on scientific progress are required of grant recipients. Annual financial disclosures are required for all members of the Regenerative Medicine Research Advisory Committee.

Application Process

When can I apply for funding?

- A request for proposal is issued annually; applicants are provided with a deadline date at that time.

What does the RFP consist of?

- The RFP contains general information related to the Regenerative Medicine Research Fund, proposal guidelines and a provided format to follow when completing the proposal.

Where can I find the RFP?

- The RFP can be found on the Regenerative Medicine Research Fund website: <http://ctinnovations.com/rmf>.

Funding

How much funding is available?

- It is expected that up to \$10 million will be available annually.

Where is the money coming from for this funding?

- Funds come from the Regenerative Medicine Research Fund. This fund will receive a total of \$100 million of state money over ten years. The General Assembly had set aside \$20 million of state money for the purpose of stem cell research through June 2007. An additional \$10 million a year over the subsequent eight years will come from the Connecticut Tobacco Settlement Fund. The Regenerative Medicine Research Fund may also contain any funds received from any public or private contributions, gifts, grants, donations or bequests.

What types of awards are available?

- **Seed Grant Awards:** These awards are intended to support the early stages of projects that are not yet ready for larger scale funding whether from federal or non-federal sources. Established investigators new to regenerative medicine (including stem cell research) or developing new research directions may apply for seed awards. Junior researchers in academic institutions, hospitals and companies are also encouraged to apply. In academic institutions, priority will be given to junior faculty members at the start of their independent careers. Postdoctoral fellows, or equivalent, may apply with the support of a faculty sponsor or equivalent. A letter from the sponsor indicating support of the proposal must be included with the application and must describe the applicant's level of independence, as well as other resources/funding available for the project.

- **Amount:** Requested funding for a Seed Grant Award may be up to \$200,000 (including indirect costs) and may be expended over 2 years.
- **Established Investigator Awards:** These awards are intended for well developed proposals supported with preliminary data from investigators with a track record of independent research and productivity.
 - **Amount:** Requested funding for an Established Investigator Award may be up to \$750,000 (including indirect costs) and may be expended over 4 years. Funding is encouraged to be evenly budgeted over the duration of the award.
- **Group Project Awards:** These awards are intended to support coordinated approaches to ambitious strategic goals that are beyond the scope of a single laboratory. Proposals should include explanations of the need for collaboration, along with plans for managing the collaborative process, including division of responsibilities among collaborators and timelines for achieving expected project milestones. If more than one institution, hospital or company is involved, the proposed budget must specify how funding is to be distributed between collaborating entities. As with other financial assistance, eligibility for funding is restricted to investigators at Connecticut institutions, hospitals or companies. Group Projects may have multiple co-investigators, but one individual must be identified as the principal investigator and serve as the primary contact with the Regenerative Medicine Research Fund. The Regenerative Medicine Research Fund encourages proposals that include collaborative arrangements between industry (e.g., biotechnology and pharmaceutical companies) and academic institutions (e.g., medical centers and universities). Priority will be given to highly meritorious projects for which, after successful completion of the proposed studies, clinical research or commercialization would be the anticipated next step with the goal of promoting the development of novel treatments for disease.
 - **Amount:** Requested funding for a Group Project Award may be up to \$1.5 million (including indirect costs) and may be budgeted for up to 4 years.
- **Core Facilities Awards:** These awards are intended to provide shared core facilities for regenerative medicine investigators (including stem cell researchers) at eligible Connecticut institutions, hospitals or companies. Preference will be given to applications sustaining existing core facilities previously established with the support of the Regenerative Medicine Research Fund; or, requesting additional support for new core technology development. Technologies and services provided by core facilities are to be made widely accessible to the Connecticut regenerative medicine and stem cell research community.
 - **Amount:** Requested funding for a Core Facilities Award may be up to \$1,000,000 (including indirect costs) and may be budgeted for up to 2 years.

Who is responsible for financial administration of a grant?

- The researcher's institution, hospital, or company must undertake responsibility for financial administration of the grant and for overall compliance with rules governing research at that entity.