

October 1, 2014

**The Paul G. Allen Family Foundation
Request for Proposals (RFP)
Allen Distinguished Investigators (ADI) Program
Life Science Focus – 2015**

RFP release date: October 1, 2014
RFP submission deadline: January 30, 2015

Purpose

The Allen Distinguished Investigator (ADI) Program seeks to fund a select group of investigators to pursue new, pioneering research that collectively ‘moves the needle’ towards answering broad scientific questions. **The most promising proposals will incorporate novel, creative, and ambitious approaches.** For this reason, the program is especially interested in proposals that are unlikely to receive funding from traditional government sources.

This 2014 request for proposals (RFP) focuses on the basic biology of Alzheimer’s Disease.

We expect to fund between 5 and 7 projects with a total funding of \$1M-\$1.5M, for each project, spanning a 3-year period. The Paul G. Allen Family Foundation has a 0% indirect cost policy. 2015 ADI Life Science awards have an expected combined total of \$7.5M. Funding is intended to provide a sustainable funding stream for one or more investigators allowing them sufficient time to investigate big questions in-depth using risky, novel approaches.

Research Initiative Details

ADI 2015 Life Science Focus: Alzheimer’s Disease

Description: We seek proposals whose focus would provide insights into the basic biological foundations of Alzheimer’s Disease, with an emphasis on cellular biology.

Alzheimer’s disease is the most common type of dementia, with an estimated 5.2 million Americans suffering from Alzheimer’s in 2014. While there has been a wealth of knowledge gained in previous years, many questions remain about the precise biological changes that occur prior to and at the earliest stages of disease onset, basic understanding of disease progression and resistance, and how to prevent or delay Alzheimer’s disease onset.

We are seeking revolutionary new ideas to push the field in new directions or even to invent new fields of research, with an emphasis on the cellular biology on Alzheimer’s Disease. This call is **limited to interdisciplinary teams** that include researchers in the field of Alzheimer’s Disease paired with researchers in other fields (e.g. lipid biology, immunology, cerebro/vascular biology, bioenergetics, biostatistics, biomedical engineers, etc.).

Lines of Inquiry include (but are not limited to):

- The interplay/relationship between contributors to Alzheimer’s pathology. This may include some combination of protein pathologies, mitochondrial dysfunction, lipid biology, immune system, trafficking, vascular biology, etc.
- Consequences of transmission and spread of Alzheimer’s Disease pathology
- Investigation into the APOE-Amyloid-Tau interaction and roles in disease progression
- Upstream contributors that lead to downstream proteinopathies, oxidative stress, etc.
- Investigation into why some cell types more vulnerable/resistant than others; bolstering the protective ability of neurons
- Development of new cellular biology methods or techniques that will change or enhance capabilities in Alzheimer’s Disease research

Proposal Format

We request that all submissions be on 8 1/2 x 11 paper, using Times New Roman, 12 point font, single spaced, with 1” margins top, bottom, left and right. Submissions will have the following proposal sections and associated length limits:

- | | |
|---|------------------------------------|
| a. Technical project summary | Short paragraph – (200 word limit) |
| b. Lay project summary and big picture impact | Short paragraph – (200 word limit) |
| c. Project description* | 5 pages |
| d. Biographical sketch | 3 pages (for each PI and co-PI) |
| e. Facilities and leverage** | 2 pages |
| f. Risk/innovation assessment | 1 page |
| g. Technical project milestones [†] | 2 pages |
| h. Related prior and current grants | 1 page |
| i. Collaboration | 2 pages |
| j. Budget [‡] | 3 pages (including narrative) |
| k. Letter of support from Provost or Office of Research | |

*References are not included in the page count of the project description. Up to 10 figures are permitted. The figures must be included in an appendix, and will not count towards the page count.

**The term leverage is used in regards to the utilization of any resource to further the proposed research. Such a resource could be physical (equipment, a unique product/reagent, tissue line, etc.) or theoretical (expertise, people, skills, new results etc.) in nature.

[†]Technical project milestones should be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound.

[‡]**The Paul G. Allen Family Foundation has a 0% indirect cost policy.** Please note that the Foundation does supply a standardized budget template.

Program Goals

The primary goal of the ADI Program is to advance the state of the art and increase human knowledge and understanding in the targeted topic areas. The program also seeks to have a lasting impact on the direction of research, aiming to serve as a catalyst upon which future research is founded.

One mechanism used by the program to promote the goal of lasting impact is supporting young faculty members. Early stage scientists often have significant hurdles to overcome that include building a new research group, teaching, writing proposals, and establishing themselves in a highly competitive research community. Receiving a significant award can be a substantial boost in their careers and seed ideas in their labs that may last a lifetime. A second mechanism used by the program is to support more established researchers who have creative, ambitious, and potentially high impact ideas, where those ideas remain unfunded due to their high degree of risk and/or mismatch with traditional funding sources' goals. In all cases, the ADI program seeks to enable scientists to take risks with new ideas and approaches.

The ADI Program strongly believes in interdisciplinary approaches that allow scientists to look beyond their own disciplines, and to explore approaches with colleagues in other disciplines in order to bring new perspectives to challenging problems where traditional approaches within a discipline may be 'stuck.' For the purposes of this call, **only proposals submitted by interdisciplinary teams** will be considered. Only one member of the team need be from the invited institution. Team collaborations should delineate the effort of each group and collaborations of two or three laboratories should clearly specify the value and integration of such a union.

Methodological and technological advances are often necessary complements to scientific advance and yet these are often difficult to fund through traditional sources. The ADI Program encourages and supports researchers including novel methodological, theoretical and technological elements in their proposals. Supported projects are expected to have interim milestones and clearly described anticipated outcomes. Scientific goals in the topic area should be achievable within the award period.

Program and Award Structure

The ADI Program expects to issue a Request for Proposals through our academic and other research partners periodically. The question posed for each round may continue or refocus a previous research agenda or may focus on a new topic area.

The Foundation's Science Advisory Board (SAB) develops the question(s) defining the research agenda for a given cohort within topic areas of interest to The Paul G. Allen Family Foundation Board. The Foundation Board makes the final approval of all scientific questions.

Each cohort generally consists of between 5 and 7 projects with an average total funding of up to \$1.5M for each project over a 3 year period. (Cohort size may be expanded if warranted.) Funding is intended to provide a sustainable funding stream for investigators allowing them sufficient time to investigate big questions in-depth using risky, novel approaches.

Distribution of funds is made over the period of the grant based on the budget submitted with the proposal.

Eligibility Requirements

Scientists at any stage of their career may apply. The Foundation has a particular interest in both supporting the careers of exceptional young scientists showing particular promise as thought leaders in their fields and supporting more established researchers with ambitious, high-risk ideas that could have a revolutionary impact in the field but remain outside the scope of traditional funding sources.

Nomination and Application Process

Only invited institutions and organizations may nominate proposals for submission to the application process. The ADI Program does not accept unsolicited applications or nominations from uninvited institutions. The Foundation may, at its discretion, solicit proposals directly from researchers.

Invited institutions may submit proposals from up to two qualified applicants/groups. The program seeks novel approaches and encourages risk taking to address the target area specified by the question. The most creative proposals are most likely to succeed

Applications must include a description of the proposed project, an explanation of how the proposed project fits with the research agenda focused on a topic area and why it has significant potential to 'move the needle' towards answering a broad scientific question posed for the cohort. The interdisciplinary elements of the project should be described. **The proposal should also include an explanation of why the proposed project is unlikely to receive funding through traditional sources.**

Proposals are due by midnight PST on January 30, 2015 and can be submitted at:

<https://easychair.org/conferences/?conf=adiad2015>

The proposal, budget, and letter of nomination must be sent as a **single PDF** file with the following filename: Investigator name (first initial.last name)_Institution name_2015ADI.pdf

Example: *J.Smith_University_2015ADI.pdf*

Questions

Please submit questions to LifeScienceADI@pgfamilyfoundation.org. Subject: Question. Questions must be submitted by midnight PST on December 01, 2014. Questions received after this date may not be answered. Responses will be sent no later than December 5th, 2014.

Selection Process

Nominated proposals are reviewed by an ADI Panel of Experts tailored for each RFP topic, and this panel will make recommendations to the Foundation Board. The Board has the final decision on the Allen Distinguished Investigator awards.

Members of the Allen Distinguished Investigators Panel of Experts and any advisors serve anonymously. Their identities as well as correspondence, evaluations and deliberations are kept confidential. This policy enables advisors and evaluators to provide their honest impressions independent of outside influence. Past ADI recipients may be asked to act as future evaluators and advisors.

Post-award Activities

Primary Investigators granted awards are named “Allen Distinguished Investigators.” The Foundation will announce awards and release biographies of investigators along with summary descriptions of their projects to the press and on the Foundation website and other communication channels.

The Foundation believes post-award engagement is important and seeks to build a relationship with investigators. We strive to promote interaction among awardees to stimulate idea exchange around the broad scientific question asked of the cohort. Recipients are required to participate in an annual symposium of the Allen Distinguished Investigators.

Current Allen Distinguished Investigators may be asked to help identify and refine the topic areas and questions for future cohorts and offer advice for improving the program

Reporting Requirements

Recipients are required to provide annual reports describing progress towards milestones and anticipated outcomes as well as any barriers encountered since the last report and how they are being addressed.

The Foundation will typically conduct annual site visits of current awardees to gain first-hand understanding of progress and gather information for promotion of the ADI Program through Foundation communication channels.

A final report must be submitted at the end of the grant period describing the results of the project, including successes, barriers encountered and anticipated next steps. The final report should also include a discussion of how the outcomes attained ‘moved the needle’ towards answering the question posed for the cohort.

We require recipients to provide annually updated budget information as well as identify and explain any major deviations (>10%) from previously reported budgets.