



MASSACHUSETTS LIFE SCIENCES CENTER

NEW INVESTIGATOR 2009 MATCHING GRANT PROGRAM FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

GENERAL

1. What is the New Investigator Matching Grant Program?

The Massachusetts Life Sciences Center (MLSC), the quasi-public agency tasked with implementing the State's \$1 billion Life Sciences Initiative, has launched a second round of applications for the Center's New Investigator grant program. The new grant round was authorized by the MLSC's Board of Directors today with endorsement from the Center's Scientific Advisory Board. The solicitation for the grant program and application materials will be available on the MLSC web site at www.masslifesciences.com by Monday, March 9th.

The MLSC's New Investigator Grants seek to spur innovative new research and advance the careers of new investigators who are working on cutting-edge life sciences research at Massachusetts colleges, universities, and affiliated research institutions. Under the New Investigator Matching Grant Solicitation, the MLSC will provide an award of up to \$100,000 per year for each selected grant, for up to two years. Each investment includes a 1:1 match from the participating academic institution. The grants will support research that could lead to life saving therapies and commercialized products, and will further the goal of sustaining and growing the state's vital life sciences super cluster.

Last year the MLSC awarded eleven grants totaling over \$3.1 million to new researchers affiliated with ten different institutions across the Commonwealth.

2. How much funding is available in this round?

MLSC's Board of Directors allocated \$2 million to the New Investigator Matching Grant Program.

3. How many awards will be made?

It is anticipated that up to 10 awards will be made for the New Investigator Grant. The number of awards will be determined by the quality of the proposals.

4. Do grant recipients need to re-apply to receive funding for year 2?

No. Applicants are required to submit a budget with estimated project costs for up to two years as part of the initial submittal. Grant recipients will be assured funding for the term of their project, provided that all reporting and contractual requirements are met.

5. Who owns the intellectual property from the project?

The MLSC has no present intention of taking ownership in any of the intellectual property resulting from the project. The research institutions' policies will govern intellectual property issues.

6. Should I be submitting patentable research as part of my application?

The MLSC is subject to the requirements of the Massachusetts Records Law, M.G.L. c.66, which governs the retention, disclosure, disposition and archiving of public records. As a result, most information submitted to the MLSC is subject to public disclosure. Whenever possible, we would advise you not to submit sensitive information. Please refer to the MLSC's Policy Regarding the Public Records Law and Disclosure of Information that is Attachment A to the Appendix C: General Terms and Conditions on our website.

SCHEDULE

7. When will the solicitations be launched, and what are the application deadlines?

The solicitation for the second round of the New Investigator Matching Grant will be launched by Monday, March 9, 2009. The deadline for submission of applications is April 17, 2009.

8. When does the MLSC anticipate making award announcements?

The MLSC is committed to processing grant applications as expeditiously as possible while ensuring a thorough and expert review. The current timetable anticipates that award announcements for the New Investigator Grant will occur in June of 2009.

ELIGIBILITY

9. What institutions are eligible to apply?

Any college, university, or non-profit research institution or hospital located in Massachusetts is eligible to apply.

10. Who is the applicant?

The Massachusetts college, university, or non-profit research institution or hospital is the applicant. The principal investigator is responsible for preparing the New Investigator proposal in collaboration with his/her institution. Newly hired principal investigators are eligible to submit proposals provided that they meet the requirements at the commencement of the term of the Grant Agreement.

11. What are the grantee's contractual obligations?

Successful applicants will be required to execute a standard contract (Grant Agreement) with the MLSC that sets forth the requirements of the funding. For example, the contract will obligate the research institution/grantee to pay the required match funds, irrespective of whether the grantee anticipates using match funds provided by a collaborating institution or foundation. Awards are made on a cost-reimbursement basis.

12. How many proposals may an eligible research institution submit for consideration?

Each eligible research institution may submit 5 proposals.

13. What constitutes an eligible research institution?

The MLSC decided that different campuses of a university would be treated as separate institutions. Therefore, the Boston University and Boston University's Medical School are considered two separate institutions. Each of the 5 campuses of the University of Massachusetts will be allowed to submit five proposals per solicitation. In addition, independent 501(c)(3) research institutions with affiliations to universities and colleges will be treated as separate institutions. For example, the Joslin Diabetes Center is a separate research institution despite its affiliation with Harvard Medical School..

14. What role does the research institution play in endorsing applications?

The MLSC will require that each application submitted by an eligible research institution receives the written endorsement of the highest-level administrator responsible for research (e.g., Provost, Vice or Associate Provost for Research, Vice President for Research, Chief Academic Officer, etc.). The MLSC will consider no more than five proposals from any eligible research institution and the MLSC reserves the right to disqualify all proposals from any institution that submits more than five proposals. Each institution is responsible for vetting and selecting proposals and insuring that no more than five proposals are submitted from your institution.

15. Are principal investigators required to have a faculty appointment at a university or college in Massachusetts?

No. To be eligible, all principal investigators must have a position at an eligible research institution.

16. What type of degree must new investigators have to be eligible to apply for the New Investigator Grant?

New Investigators must have an advanced degree in a life sciences field such as a Ph.D., M.D., D.V.M., or D.D.S.

REVIEW PROCESS

17. What is the process for reviewing grant applications?

The peer review process for reviewing grant applications will be transparent, competitive, and based on sound science. The MLSC has modeled the process on the NIH review process that is widely recognized by researchers in the life sciences.

There will be a Peer Review Panel (PRP) that will assess and rank each proposal based upon the explicit criteria in the solicitation, and make decisions as to which proposals proceed to the next level of review with the Scientific Advisory Board. Members of the PRP will be selected based upon their authoritativeness in their scientific field; their dedication to a high quality, fair, and objective review; and their experience in research grant review. These rankings and the results of the PRP's deliberations will be made available to a MLSC Scientific Advisory Board who will make final recommendations to the MLSC Board of Directors who will make the final award decisions.

The review process will be overseen by a Scientific Review Officer (SRO), a scientist with experience managing a competitive, peer review process of scientific proposals. The SRO will review all applications to assess compliance with threshold qualifications and evaluate the scientific or engineering area of focus for selection of appropriate reviewers. He or she will recruit reviewers in consultation with members of the Scientific Advisory Board. In addition, the SRO will manage review meetings through the discussion, scoring of proposals, and preparation of summary statements to convey the findings of the Initial Review Panel to the Scientific Advisory Board. The SRO will also serve as an expert resource to members of the Scientific Advisory Board and the MLSC Board of Directors.

18. What is the role of the Peer Review Panel; and how will the members of this panel be selected for the New Investigator solicitation?

The Peer Review Panel will be comprised of well-known scientists and engineers broadly chosen from Massachusetts universities, research institutes, and companies engaged in the life sciences, with experts chosen to represent the diversity of disciplines in the proposals. Members will absent themselves from reviewing, commenting on, or scoring any grant proposal from their own institution. Members of the Peer Review Panel will be selected based on the SRO's knowledge of experts in the field, recommendations from the Scientific Advisory Panel, and outreach to the scientific and bio-engineering community based on the areas of focus represented in the proposals.

19. What is the composition and role of the Scientific Advisory Board?

The Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) will consist of a group of distinguished academic and industry researchers who will conduct the final review and present its findings and recommendations to the MLSC Board. The SAB will rank all of the grants and contracts in numerical order for funding based in large measure on the priority scores given by the Peer Review Panel, but also considering policy issues as articulated by the Board of Directors such as areas in which research is encouraged, geographic distribution, size of company or research institution, etc.

20. Who will be making the award decisions?

The MLSC Board will be approving final grant awards, taking into account the findings and recommendations of the Scientific Advisory Board.

SELECTION CRITERIA

21. What criteria will be applied in making the award decisions?

The official selection criteria will be included in the solicitation documents, to be published at the MLSC website www.masslifesciences.com. Selection criteria depend on the solicitation, and are summarized in the summary document. This summary, however, should not be construed as part of the final solicitation documents and may be subject to change.

22. How will applications be scored against the criteria?

The Peer Review Panels and the Scientific Advisory Board will score each proposal against the criteria, using their expert scientific knowledge and peer review experience to guide them. Criteria will not be weighted and the Peer Review Panels will assign a priority from 1 (best) to 10 to each proposal within its pool of applicants. The Scientific Advisory Board will then rank all proposals by solicitation based on these priority scores and other policy objectives as articulated by the

MLSC Board of Directors (e.g. institutional & regional distribution; mix of technology focus areas).

- 23. Eligible research institutions are required to match the investment by the MLSC in a 1:1 ratio. If a university or industry exceeds the 1:1 ratio, will that application be viewed more favorably by the decision makers?**

The degree to which research institutions commit resources to a project are evidence of their confidence in the project. At the same time, state funding is not intended to substitute for an investment that would otherwise be made by the research institution. The expert review panel will evaluate the applications against all of the selection criteria and apply their best judgment in making a determination.

- 24. One of the criteria for new investigators is that they not have current awards exceeding \$150,000 per year from external sources. What if a new investigator is awarded an external grant that exceeds \$150,000 per year after they have been awarded the MLSC grant?**

The criterion that New Investigators not have external funding exceeding \$150,000 per year is intended to provide resources to those investigators who have not been able to secure a certain level of funding for independent research from extramural sponsors. A new investigator who secures an external grant exceeding \$150,000 per year after the MLSC grant has been awarded will not be required to forfeit the MLSC grant. The primary purpose of the new investigator funding is to support career advancement. Receipt of major independent research grants will be interpreted as success for both the new investigator and the MLSC Matching Grant Program.

ALLOWABLE COSTS, INDIRECT COSTS, AND MATCH REQUIREMENTS

- 25. What costs can be considered as part of the research institution or industry match?**

As the matching requirement is fundamental to these solicitations, any successful grant application must follow the guidelines addressed in the budget instructions and complete the budget template provided in the solicitation documents.

- 26. Can tuition remission be considered part of the research institution match?**

Yes. Tuition remission will be considered part of the research institution match. However, indirect costs may not be charged on tuition remission.

- 27. How will indirect costs be accounted for?**

Indirect costs related to the overhead, administration and management of the project may be charged, as applicable, to (1) the MLSC grant and/or (2) the research institution matching funds columns in the budget template (which is provided in the solicitation documents).

For the New Investigator Grant, the indirect cost rate is capped at 20% of direct costs for the use of both the MLSC funds and the use of other funds recognized as the required "1:1" match. This means that in the context of a total project budget (indirect costs included) of \$200,000 (\$100,000 in MLSC funds and \$100,000 in matching funds), non MLSC funds spent on indirect costs would be recognized as match up to \$16,700, which is approximately equal to 20% of \$83,300 in direct costs. On the MLSC grant side of the budget, the grantee could use up to \$16,700 of the grant funds to pay its indirect costs provided that the remaining \$83,300 in grant funds were allocated to

allowable direct costs. Indirect costs that exceed the 20% caps in either the MLSC or matching funds portions of the budget must be absorbed by the grantee.

Indirect costs may not be charged on tuition remission provided by universities or colleges.

- 28. Will universities and colleges be able to frontload the build-out and equipment costs since such costs will most likely be accrued in the 1st year, provided that they remain below the 25% cap for the 2-year period? For example, if they spend 75% of their 1st-year match on build-out and equipment and nothing for year 2, will they still be within the 25% cap?**

Yes. Compliance with “cap” requirements will be based on the 2-year grant period, and not on an annual basis.

- 29. What sources of funding may a research institution use towards its match?**

A New Investigator principal investigator may use resources from their start-up recruitment package to fund the match.

Foundation funding may be used by the research institution in meeting its 1:1 match requirement for the New Investigator Grant.