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First Look Awards Request for Proposals

The First Look Awards are a collaboration between the Massachusetts Life Sciences Center (MLSC) and the Mary Horrigan Connors Center for Women's Health and Gender Biology at Brigham and Women's Hospital (BWH), Harvard Medical School. The goal of this grant program is to support translational research at Massachusetts research institutions that furthers our understanding of sex and gender differences especially for diseases or conditions that affect women exclusively, predominately, or differentially. The First Look Awards align with the Connors Center First.In.Women Precision Medicine Platform, which seeks to promote translational investigation to ensure that novel therapeutics are developed to optimize health for both women and men. Through this collaboration, the MLSC and Connors Center will conduct a review process that ends with announcement of the winner.

Up to \$150,000 is available for the awards program, and we anticipate making three awards of up to \$50,000, to support research performed by faculty at a Massachusetts not-for-profit research institution that are seeking to research and understand women's health conditions. Applications will open November 8, 2021 and are due by January 28, 2022.

Award Structure:

Applicants must be based at a Massachusetts not-for-profit research institution working to address a pressing life science question that furthers our understanding of sex and gender differences especially for diseases or conditions that affect women exclusively, predominately, or differentially.

- Up to \$150,000 is available for the awards program, and we anticipate making three awards of \$50,000
 - o Up to 15% of the award can be utilized for indirect costs
- Projects are anticipated to last about one year
- There is no limit on the number of proposals that may be submitted by each non-profit institution, however each individual is asked to only submit one application

Eligibility and Evaluation

Eligible applicants must meet the following criteria:

- Full Time or Part Time Faculty at Massachusetts Based Research Institution
- Primary appointment at a Massachusetts Research Institution

- Researchers must be proposing a project that is focused on increasing understanding of sex and gender differences in biology or developing solutions for diseases or conditions that affect women exclusively, predominately, or differentially.
- The project must have a human health focus with core technology and/or service in biotechnology, pharmaceuticals, medical devices, medical diagnostics or imaging, bioinformatics, digital health, genomics, nanotechnology, drug delivery, proteomics, regenerative medicine, etc.
- Funding must be used to support an experiment that increases the translational opportunity for the technology

An external panel of scientists from academia and industry with expertise in women's health will review applications on the following categories:

- Qualifications of the team
- Use of funds
- Value to our understanding of women's health and the Massachusetts ecosystem
- Proposed plan and approach to solving a key question
- Unmet need and translational opportunity

There may be a request of top applicants to meet with our review panel. Those applicants will receive a notification of that request.

Funding

- Up to \$150,000 is available for the awards program, and we anticipate making three awards of \$50,000
 - Up to 15% of the award can be utilized for indirect costs
- Allowable costs for MLSC funds may include: salaries, legal expenses, direct labor, clinical trials, consultants and subcontractors, materials, supplies, purchase of capital equipment, and project-related travel (up to 10%).
- Non-fundable expenses include: paying off debt, paying board members, paying for operating costs such as rent and utilities and activities funded by other funding sources.
- Following execution of the grant agreement, funds will be provided on.
- The MLSC reserves the right to adjust the requested amount of funding for each proposal.

Benefits from the BWH Connors Center

- Integration with the BWH Connors Center First.In.Women community, which comprises a broad network of researchers who support the BWH Connors Center's core vision to ensure that women benefit equally from all medical advances by conducting translational research on sex/gender differences and the health of women.
- The MLSC First Look Award recipient will participate in Connors Center First.In.Women work-in-progress meetings to exchange ideas with other researchers

conducting translational investigation focused on novel therapeutics to promote the health of women.

- The recipient of the MLSC First Look Award will have opportunities to showcase their research at Connors Center events, including but not limited to research symposia and virtual events.

Deliverables

Awardee(s) will be required to submit the following materials to the MLSC:

Six Month Update- Six months after award please submit a brief one-page report outlining the progress made using the grant. Templates will be provided to awardees upon execution of the grant agreement.

Progress Report- will be submitted by all Awardees at the conclusion of the grant expenditure. This report should describe progress made using the grant, as well as other metrics including, but not limited to, any patents filed, abstracts/publications submitted, follow on funding, etc. Templates will be provided to awardees upon execution of the grant agreement.

Post Progress Report- will be submitted by all awardees on the first and second year anniversaries of submitting the progress report and should describe the progress of the award after conclusion of the grant. The report should include additional funds raised by Awardee, relevant partnerships, IP status, resulting publications, etc. Templates will be provided to awardees upon execution of the grant agreement.

Confidentiality

MLSC is subject to the requirements concerning disclosure of public records under the Massachusetts Public Records Act, M.G.L. c. 66 (Public Records Act), which governs the retention, disposition and archiving of public records, such as written materials, financial statements, statistical tabulations and other documentary materials or data. As a result, applicants should be aware that any information submitted to MLSC is subject to public disclosure as set forth in the Public Records Act.

There are, however, exceptions. "Public records" do not, for example, include documents containing trade secrets, such as commercial or financial information regarding the operation of any business conducted by a company or other institution or regarding the competitive position of a company or other institution in a particular field. In the event that an applicant wishes to submit certain documents to MLSC and believes such a document or documents may be proprietary in nature, the applicant should identify such materials in its application as Confidential. MLSC's General Counsel is the sole authority within MLSC for making determinations on the applicability and/or assertion of an exemption to the Public Records

Act. All documents submitted by the applicant, whether designated as “Confidential Information” or not, are not returnable.

General Conditions

Contractual Requirements

The MLSC intends to enter into an Agreement with the Awardees containing certain standard provisions. The MLSC reserves the right to amend the Agreement. Please be advised that the MLSC will work with Awardee to arrive at a mutually-acceptable Agreement, however certain provisions will be non-negotiable because the MLSC is a state governmental entity.

*Please note, the MLSC will not include any intellectual property terms in its contract. We recommend all parties begin these discussions as soon as possible to avoid delay in executing the award.

Waiver Authority

The MLSC reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to waive minor irregularities in submittal requirements, to request modifications of the application, to accept or reject any or all applications received, and/or to cancel all or part of this solicitation at any time prior to awards.

Disclaimer

This solicitation does not commit the MLSC to award any funds, pay any costs incurred in preparing an application, or procure or contract for services or supplies. The MLSC reserves the right to accept or reject any or all applications received, negotiate with all qualified Applicants, cancel or modify the solicitation in part or in its entirety, or change the application guidelines, when it is in its best interests. An application does not constitute an award.

Changes/Amendments to Program

This solicitation has been distributed electronically using the MLSC's website. It is the responsibility of Applicants to check the MLSC's website for any addenda or modifications to the program to which they intend to apply. The MLSC, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and its subdivisions accept no liability and will provide no accommodation to Applicants who submit an application based on an out-of-date solicitation.