

Stem Cell Research Project
2009 Request for Applications (RFA)

Issue Date:
May 13, 2009

Application Due Date:
June 12, 2009

Main Contact:
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Application Instructions for the 2009 Stem Cell Research Project

Description

In the 2008 legislative session, the Stem Cell Research Act (LB 606) was passed. This Act established the Stem Cell Research Advisory Committee. The Committee is responsible for developing a grant process and making grant awards to Nebraska institutions or researchers to conduct stem cell research that does not use human embryonic stem cells. The Act defines the types of research projects that are acceptable. The Act states that:

No state facilities, no state funds, fees, or charges, and no investment income on state funds shall be used to destroy human embryos for the purpose of research. In no case shall state facilities, state funds, fees, or charges, or investment income on state funds be used to create a human embryo by somatic cell nuclear transfer for any purpose.

For purposes of the Act, human embryo means the developing human organism from the time of fertilization until the end of the eighth week of gestation and includes an embryo or developing human organism created by somatic cell nuclear transfer; somatic cell nuclear transfer means a technique in which the nucleus of an oocyte is replaced with the nucleus of a somatic cell.

Eligibility

Grants will be awarded to Nebraska institutions or researchers as defined below:

- Sponsoring Institution. Proposals for funding may be submitted by an institution in Nebraska that has an ongoing, large-scale research program that is conducive to the completion of a complex project in stem cell research that does not use human embryonic stem cells (e.g., the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Creighton University, the University of Nebraska Medical Center, and Boys Town's National Research Hospital).
- Principal Investigator. The leader of a project is the "principal investigator". Researchers with a doctoral degree in science (PhD or equivalent), or a professional degree in a medical field (MD, DMD, DVM, or similar), are eligible to submit a proposal to the Stem Cell Research Advisory Committee as a Principal Investigator (PI). The PI must be employed at an institution in Nebraska that meets the criteria for "Sponsoring Institution" (see above). Researchers that are classified as Post-doctorates or Fellows are not eligible.

Availability of Funds and Matching Requirements

The amount of money for new grant awards is \$970,000. Applicants may apply for a one or two year grant award. The maximum grant award is \$100,000 for one year or \$150,000 for two years. No single institution or researcher is eligible to receive more than 70 percent of the funds available for distribution.

Each Sponsoring Institution or researcher is responsible to provide a dollar-for-dollar match. The matching funds must be obtained from sources other than funds provided by the Stem Cell Research Act (e.g., principal investigator's salary provided by the sponsoring institution, other research grants from federal sources, stipends for students and post-doctorates).

Prior to Submission

- Each proposal must be vetted and approved by a local committee appointed by the Sponsoring Institution before it is accepted by the Stem Cell Research Advisory Committee for full review. The composition of the committee is at the discretion of the higher education institution.
- Approval of the application by the Sponsoring Institution should be based upon the degree to which the proposal appears to meet the selection criteria outlined below.

Submission

- Proposals that have been vetted and approved by the Sponsoring Institution are submitted via their office of sponsored programs to the Division of Public Health of the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services.
- Each Sponsoring Institution may submit a maximum of five (5) proposals in a given funding cycle.
- No Principal Investigator may hold more than a single award.
- Unfunded applicants may resubmit for funding on subsequent grant cycles.

Application Format

Although there is no page limit for the total application, some sections have page limitations. Grant applications that exceed the specified page limits will not be reviewed. The application will consist of the following components and should be prepared based on the enclosed attachment:

1. Face Page: one page maximum
2. Table of Contents: one page maximum
3. Abstract and Specific Aims of the Project: maximum of 30 lines of text
4. Description of Key Personnel: two page maximum
5. Biographical Sketches: two page maximum per researcher (may use NIH 398 form)
6. Previous and Current Related Projects Funded: may use NIH 398 form
7. Research Plan Description: five page maximum
8. References: the citations should be single-spaced with no page limits
9. Budget and Budget Justification: the applicant may request a one year grant for up to \$100,000 or a two-year grant for up to \$150,000. The maximum allowable amount for equipment is \$7,500.

Professional salaries for the Principal Investigator and doctoral level co-investigators as well as clerical or administrative assistance are NOT allowed. Allowable budget items include non-professional salaries (e.g., laboratory assistants, post-doctorates, and graduate assistants), equipment, travel, and other expenses such as consultant costs. There is a two page maximum on the budget justification.

Selection Criteria

- **Significance**: Does this study address an important problem? If the aims of the application are achieved, how will scientific knowledge be advanced?
- **Approach**: Are the conceptual framework, design, methods, and analyses adequately developed, well-integrated, and appropriate to the aims of the project? Does the applicant acknowledge potential problem areas and consider alternatives?
- **Innovation**: Does the project employ novel concepts, approaches, or methods? Are the aims original and innovative? Does the project challenge existing paradigms or develop new methodologies or technologies?
- **Principal Investigator**: Is the PI appropriately trained and well suited to carry out this work? Is the work proposal appropriate to the experience level of the PI and other researchers (if any)?
- **Environment**: Does the scientific environment in which the work will be done contribute to the probability of success? Do the proposed experiments take advantage of unique features of the scientific environment or employ useful collaborative arrangements?

Proposal Evaluations

- Proposals are evaluated by the Stem Cell Advisory Committee using the current NIH scoring system from 100 to 500 where the lowest scores indicate the highest level of merit (http://grants.nih.gov/grants/peer_review_process.htm). The Committee's recommendations are then forwarded for funding to Nebraska's Chief Medical Officer who will notify all applicants of their funding status.
- The Committee may seek outside expertise and assistance in providing the most knowledgeable and fair evaluations of the grant proposals.
- The Committee will provide a brief summary statement to justify the score.

Submission Instructions

1. The completed application must include all of the items listed on the checklist shown on page 7 of this document.
2. If any portion of the application is received after the due date and time, that portion of the application will not be reviewed.
3. The narrative sections must be typed on 8 ½" x 11" size pages that are single-spaced with one-inch margins and font no smaller than 12 point, such as Times New Roman or Tahoma (as in this document).
4. Do not exceed page limits identified on page 4 of this document and repeated on the checklist, page 7. The pages must be numbered consecutively from the face page to the last page of the application.
5. The applicant is required to submit the application electronically as a PDF or Word document no later than 4:00 pm on June 12, 2009.

Timeline

May 13, 2009	Notice of availability of funds is distributed to the appropriate institutions
June 12, 2009	Deadline for submission of applications
June 25, 2009	Selection of awards
July 1, 2009	Grant period begins

Contact Person

RFA material requests or questions about the grant program should be directed to:

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This RFA, including all templates, is also available in Microsoft Word/Excel format by contacting Pat DeLancey at (402) 471-2353 or patti.delancey@nebraska.gov

Notification

When the evaluation process is complete, the Chief Medical Officer of the Division of Public Health will notify all applicants about the funding status of their respective applications. The start date for these grants will be July 1st of each year.

Checklist for the 2009 Stem Cell Research Project

Do not include this form in your application. It is for your use only to be sure you have included the required information in the required manner. The information must be in your application in the following order:

- ___ Face Page: use one page form in the Attachment
- ___ Table of Contents: one page maximum
- ___ Abstract and Specific Aims of the Project: maximum of 30 lines of text
- ___ Description of Key Personnel: two page maximum
- ___ Biographical Sketches: two page maximum per researcher (may use NIH 398 form)
- ___ Previous and Current Related Projects Funded: may use NIH 398 form
- ___ Research Plan Description: five page maximum
- ___ References: single-spaced but no page limit
- ___ Budget: use one page form in Attachment
- ___ Budget Justification: two page maximum

Application due date is June 12, 2009.

Attachments

The application format and selected instructions are attached. Applicants should use this format and follow the instructions.