

2021 Pilot Award – Request for Applications

Grants awarded through this RFA are intended to provide early support for exploratory ideas, particularly those with novel hypotheses for autism. Appropriate projects for this mechanism include those considered higher risk with less assurance of ultimate impact, but with the potential for transformative results.

Investigators new to the field of autism are encouraged to apply for these awards. The total budget of a Pilot Award is \$300,000 or less, including 20 percent indirect costs, over a period of up to two (2) years.

[Policies and Procedures](#)

LOI Deadline
May 6, 2021

Maximum Budget

Over Two Years
\$300,000

Important Dates

Application Available
March 10, 2021

LOI Deadline
May 6, 2021

LOI Notification
July 1, 2021

Full Proposal Deadline
August 12, 2021

Award Notification
October 28, 2021

Award Start Dates
December 1, 2021
January 1, 2022
February 1, 2022

SFARI Mission

The mission of the Simons Foundation Autism Research Initiative (SFARI) is to improve the understanding, diagnosis and treatment of autism spectrum disorders (ASD) by funding innovative research of the highest quality and relevance.

To this end, we solicit applications for SFARI Pilot awards from individuals who will conduct bold, imaginative, rigorous and relevant research.

Objective of the Pilot Award

The goal of the Pilot Award is to provide early support for exploratory ideas, particularly those with novel hypotheses. Appropriate projects for this mechanism include those considered higher risk but with the potential for transformative results. Projects that represent continuations of ongoing work (whether funded by SFARI or other funders) are not appropriate for this mechanism.

In particular, we encourage applications that propose research to link genetic or other ASD risk factors to molecular, cellular, circuit or behavioral mechanisms and set the stage for development of novel interventions. Please read more about [SFARI's scientific perspectives](#). We also strongly advise applicants to familiarize themselves with the [current projects](#) and other [resources](#) that SFARI supports and to think about how their proposals might complement existing efforts.

This year, SFARI is offering a separate [call for human cognitive and behavioral science](#) projects; projects involving human participants should be submitted to that RFA rather than the Pilot RFA. In addition, SFARI [is planning several targeted initiatives](#) on topics including: circuit and behavior analysis in genetically modified rat models of ASD; characterization of postmortem brain tissue from [Autism BrainNet](#); innovative uses of large numbers of [iPS cells](#) to elucidate ASD biology; the involvement of the [microbiome](#) in ASD; functional analysis of missense mutations; targeted gene intervention therapies for ASD; and genomic analysis in [SPARK](#). Projects related to one of these topics should **not** be submitted to the Pilot RFA. In addition, projects related to [sex differences](#) or the impact of [COVID-19](#) during pregnancy on autism prevalence should also **not** be submitted to the Pilot Award RFA, as SFARI has ongoing initiatives in these areas.

To get a better understanding of SFARI's various funding initiatives in 2021 and whether the Pilot Award may be the best mechanism to support your project, please read our recent [blog post](#), "Updates to SFARI's 2021 requests for grant applications."

Level and Duration of Funding

The total budget of a Pilot Award is \$300,000 or less, including 20 percent indirect costs, over a period of up to two (2) years. Allowable Indirect costs to the primary institution for subcontracts are not included in the \$300,000 total budget threshold (see [grant policies](#)). We encourage investigators to take advantage of the flexibility in budget and duration, tailoring the scope of the award as appropriate for their specific aims. For projects that propose two years of research, progress will be critically evaluated at the end of year one before support for the remaining year will be approved. When provided with a compelling justification, we are willing to consider larger budgets for the Pilot Award. We strongly encourage investigators considering budgets that exceed our guidelines to consult SFARI before submission (please contact sfarigrants@simonsfoundation.org).

Eligibility

All applicants and key collaborators must hold a Ph.D., M.D. or equivalent degree and have a faculty position or the equivalent at a college, university, medical school or other research facility.

Applications may be submitted by domestic and foreign nonprofit organizations; public and private institutions, such as colleges, universities, hospitals, laboratories, and units of state and local government; and eligible agencies of the federal government. There are no citizenship or country requirements.

Multiple Applications, Resubmissions, and Renewals

Unsuccessful applications submitted to previous SFARI RFAs may be resubmitted to this RFA, if relevant. For all resubmissions, we ask principal investigators (PIs) to submit a statement of changes describing substantive changes to the application since the previous submission. If the previous application was externally reviewed, this document should include point-by-point responses to the reviewers' critiques. If the revised application does not include substantive changes, it is unlikely that the outcome will change. This is especially true for applications that were not externally reviewed, as this decision is often based on the relevance of the project to SFARI's mission.

Investigators may submit multiple applications on different topics. However, **it is highly unlikely that two awards will be made to the same PI within one RFA cycle.**

Given the focus of this RFA on bold, imaginative new ideas, it is unlikely that a renewal of a currently funded project (either from SFARI or elsewhere) will be a good fit for this RFA. We encourage investigators to seek continuation support from outside funding sources. In exceptional cases where progress has been stellar, SFARI may provide continuation funding for projects of particularly high impact, at the discretion of the science team. Decisions on new proposals from current SFARI Investigators will include the evaluation of progress on previous or ongoing SFARI grants.

Instructions for Submission

Applications must be completed electronically and submitted using forms provided at [proposalCENTRAL](#). Please log in as an applicant, go to the "Grant Opportunities" tab, scroll to Simons Foundation and click "Apply Now" for the Simons Foundation Autism Research Initiative – Pilot Award program. For assistance, please call 800-875-2562 or email pcsupport@altum.com.

Applicants must submit a letter of intent (LOI) using the templates available in [proposalCENTRAL](#). Instructions for LOI submission as well as application requirements can be found in our [instructions](#) or in [proposalCENTRAL](#). Please note that the LOI will include all scientific information that is required for the entire application review process. All documents submitted as part of the LOI process will remain in place for the second stage of the review process (full proposal). There will **not** be a new or revised proposal requested or allowed at the full proposal stage of review.

Successful LOI applicants will be invited to submit a full proposal. The full proposal will include additional components required to complete the full application review process, including a detailed budget and

institutional sign off. Proposal narratives, along with additional scientific information, will be collected at the LOI stage. There will not be an additional proposal narrative required or allowed at the full proposal stage.

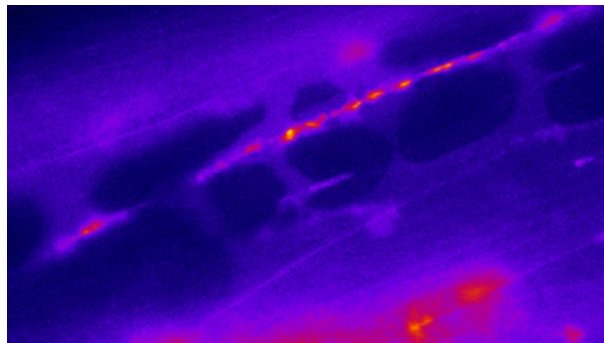
Details concerning application submission and requirements can be found in our [instructions](#) or on [proposalCENTRAL](#). In case of remaining questions, please take a look at our extensive [FAQ](#) section.

Related Content



Blog

Updates to SFARI's 2021 requests for grant applications



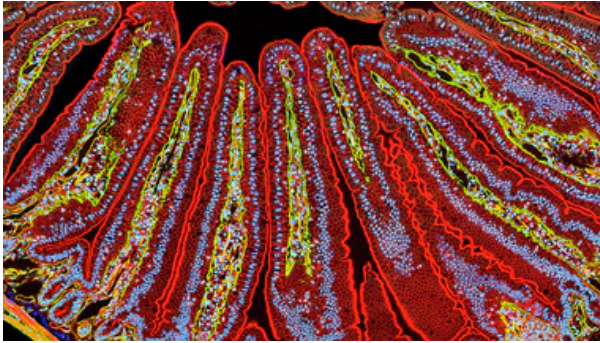
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