TRI-INSTITUTIONAL STEM CELL INITIATIVE

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS
2020 TRI-INSTITUTIONAL STEM CELL INITIATIVE (TRI-SCI) GRANT COMPETITION
FUNDED BY THE STARR FOUNDATION

Date of Issue of RFA	**September 29, 2020**
Deadline for receipt of Letter of Intent	**December 10, 2020**
Deadline for receipt of Applications	**March 2, 2021**
Expected Award Date	**June 1, 2021**

Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, The Rockefeller University, and Weill Cornell Medicine invite proposals in response to the 2020 Tri-Institutional Stem Cell Initiative (Tri-SCI) RFA for collaborative research projects to explore the basic biology and therapeutic potential of stem cells derived from humans and model organisms. Support for these projects is possible through the third generous gift of $50 million from The Starr Foundation to the Tri-SCI. This RFA provides funding for a broad range of stem cell projects, and highly encourages applications from investigators whose work demonstrates strong translational research components.

Tri-SCI welcomes applications from eligible candidates who share a commitment to fostering a culture of fairness, equity and belonging. The RFA is open to faculty at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center (Assistant Member and above), The Rockefeller University (Research Assistant Professor and above), and Weill Cornell Medicine (Instructor and above). The Tri-SCI welcomes applications from junior faculty.

This RFA provides opportunities for support of research aimed at deriving and using human embryonic stem cells (hESCs), including both NIH Registry and non-Registry hESC lines, research to generate and use human induced pluripotent cells (hiPSCs), research involving germ-line stem cells, somatic cell nuclear transfer, self-organizing hESCs and hiPSCs, embryoids and organoids. Also included is research on adult stem cells, stem cell niches, organ development, organ regeneration, reproductive medicine and chimeras. The Tri-SCI recognizes that certain projects that qualify for support under this RFA may currently be restricted for funding by the NIH. Investigators are encouraged to submit applications that fall under these categories as well.

The Tri-Institutions have established specialized stem cell core facilities that will enable and facilitate execution of basic, pre-clinical and translational studies with human stem cells. Facilities for distribution of established stem cell lines; derivation, characterization and propagation of registered and non-registered normal and abnormal (pre-implantation genetic diagnosis) human embryonic stem (hES) cells and human pluripotent stem cells (hPS) are available to support investigators in various research areas. (website links below).

Weill Cornell Medicine
https://research.weill.cornell.edu/core-facilities/starr-foundation-tri-institutional-stem-cell-derivation-laboratory
Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center:
http://stemcells.mskcc.org/
In addition, the Tri-SCI supported the development of a cGMP facility within the Center for Cell Engineering at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center.
https://www.mskcc.org/research/ski/core-facilities/cell-therapy-cell-engineering
The Rockefeller University:
For information about services offered through the Stem Cell Derivation Core at The Rockefeller University:
http://xenopus.rockefeller.edu/Human_Pluripotent_Stem_Cell_Core

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS:
Proposals submitted in response to this RFA must describe substantive collaborative projects between investigators from at least two of the Tri-Institutions and must provide details of the contributions of the PI, CO-PI(s) and collaborators to the research plan. Each collaborating investigator must be essential to the project.

- Investigators can submit no more than two applications. 3 options can be considered:
  1. Only one application as PI; or
  2. One application as PI and one as Co-PI; or
  3. Two applications as Co-PI.
- Up to 10% of the annual direct costs may be used to support the work of collaborative investigators at external institutions who are contributing significantly to the project. A full description of the role of a collaborator must be included in the LOI and the application.

Please submit a Letter of Intent (LOI) by completing the information requested in the Qualtrics form no later than **December 10, 2020.**
https://weillcornell.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_cItLXda1zjST4P3

Funding Guidelines:

- Budgets can be submitted for 1 or 2 years;
- The maximum funding that can be requested is $200,000 direct costs each year;
- Twenty percent overhead is provided to each institution on all awarded grants;
- When developing budgets, investigators should consider all of the application elements listed below to assure that funding requests are consistent with project period proposed (1 or 2 years) and what can be accomplished during that timeframe. Budgets must be fully justified.
- Investigators may request an additional year of support no later than 90 days prior to the end of the project period. The Tri-SCI Executive Committee will review these requests, including the results described in the annual scientific progress reports, and will make a decision regarding additional funding for the project. The maximum budget for one more year cannot exceed $200,000 direct costs.

The applications must contain the following elements and adhere to word limitations for each section as indicated below. Please use 11 point font (e.g. Arial) and 1-inch margins.

- Project title
- Name and Institution of PI, Co-PI(s), and collaborators
- Abstract (up to 250 words)
- Rationale and Significance (up to 250 words)
- Specific Aims (up to 250 words)
- Project Description (up to 3000 words, up to 5 figures and tables; no appendix permitted)
- Statement of how the project research is transformative (up to 250 words)
- Collaboration description (up to 500 words)
- Timetable and milestones
- Statement of what can be accomplished during project period (up to 250 words)
- Bibliography
- Budget
- Budget Justification
- Biographical sketches of Investigators and Key collaborators (NIH 5-page format)
- Other support for PI and Co-PI(s)
- Data and Resource Sharing Plan
- Letters of Collaboration from each of the participating investigators
- Statement explaining and justifying participation in two applications (if applicable); (up to 250 words)
- Certification of proposal/Conflict of Interest

Application forms will be available by December 1, 2020 and can be downloaded from the intranet website: www.trisci.org

Please also include:

- Descriptions of use of vertebrate animals and use of materials from human subjects, if applicable
- Data & Resource Sharing:
  The Tri-SCI requires compliance with NIH policy and rules on reagent and data sharing, including the Genomic Data Sharing Policy. Investigators should include their plans for following data sharing guidelines in the application Data and Resource Sharing Plan.

REVIEW PROCESS:

Tri-SCI Executive Committee will approve the selection of the external review committee. The Committee will include investigators not affiliated with the Tri-Institutions and their critiques will include consideration of the following aspects of the proposals:

1. Significance of the research proposed
2. Expertise of the investigators
3. Strength of the inter-campus collaborations
4. Strength of the innovative aspects of the project
5. Consideration of whether project can be accomplished during project period

This committee will provide recommendations to the Tri-SCI Executive Committee who will make all final funding decisions.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:
All applications are subject to review and approval by appropriate regulatory committees (e.g. IACUC, IRB, IBC, and the Tri-SCI ESCRO for those applications that propose the use of hES cells and, in some cases, hPS cells). These regulatory requirements do not impact the final scientific score.

- All grantees will be required to submit an annual scientific progress report and report of expenditures and acknowledge support from this initiative in all publications that derive from this research.
- Because the nature and scope of the research applications will vary, funding levels for awards may also reflect these differences.

This RFA also appears on the Tri-SCI intranet: www.trisci.org

If you have any questions about this RFA, please contact:
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