

## **Hearing Health Foundation Policy on Emerging Research Grants**

### **I. GENERAL POLICIES AND OBJECTIVES**

Hearing Health Foundation (HHF) awards grants once a year for the project period of July 1 - June 30. A grant represents a mutual joining of interests on the part of HHF, the grantee, and his/her associated institution in the pursuit of a common objective furthering hearing and balance science. HHF Emerging Research Grants are intended primarily for promising researchers who are in the early stages of their careers.

The primary purpose of this award is to enable the investigator to become established or produce quality research that will allow him/her to successfully compete for NIH Grants or grants from other sources.

Applications will be considered for research directed to investigation of specified research topic areas of the auditory and vestibular systems to be listed in the Request for Application; both fundamental and clinical research proposals are welcome. HHF grants up to **\$30,000 per year** for each research project and provides a maximum of one year of support.

Priority is given to new investigators in the field of hearing and balance and to projects that are likely to open new lines of inquiry. New and innovative projects developed by established scientists will also be considered.

The Council of Scientific Trustees (CST) in conjunction with the Scientific Review Committee (SRC) of HHF will consider the subject of the research, the quality of its design including the data collection and evaluation components, its potential for significant advancement in basic knowledge or clinical application, the available facilities and personnel at the institution in which the research will be carried out, and the qualifications of the investigators. In accepting a research grant, the institution and the applicant are responsible for using grant funds only for those purposes set forth in the application and approved in the HHF award letter.

### **II. SUPPORT OF A RESEARCH PROJECT TERMS & CONDITIONS**

*A. Approved Project:* This is an identified activity or program approved by HHF for support for a specified period of time.

*B. Project Year:* This is the one year period for which funding has been awarded. Double dipping is not allowed. If requested before the end of the initial project year by the applicant and approved by HHF, the project year may be extended, up to one year, without additional funding. No additional extension beyond one year will be approved.

*C. Project Period:* This is the estimated length of time that it will take to complete the research project; it may be one year and cannot exceed two years.

D. *Awards:* An Award will be made in an amount estimated to be needed for one project year up to a maximum of \$30,000. Awards will only be funded in the research topic areas specified in the Request for Applications.

E. *Available Funds and Budget:*

Grant funds may only be used for the direct costs of carrying out approved projects such as:

- salaries of technical and supporting personnel;
- limited alteration and renovation of existing facilities;
- purchase of equipment (cost of equipment should be equal to/greater than \$5,000);
- supplies including drugs and services; and
- other specifically authorized expenses as may be essential to carrying out the project.
- If an institution requires an allocation for indirect costs that amount may not exceed \$3,000 (10% of the total grant award); regardless of the indirect amount, the HHF award will not exceed \$30,000.

Grant funds may not be used for the following:

- salary of applicant, co-investigator or individuals with a doctorate degree;
- travel;
- living expenses;
- reprints;
- overhead costs exceeding 10% of project costs; and
- public information, education programs or training costs (including tuition).

The Council of Scientific Trustees and the Scientific Review Committee of HHF will evaluate and approve the proposed itemized project budgets.

HHF expects that the applicant's institution, in authorizing expenditures for the research project, will follow the budget proposed approved within the application. The investigator and institution may transfer dollars from one budgeted category to another with specific approval from his/her institution within the categories specified by HHF. HHF should be notified immediately and, a revised budget and justification of changes as well as the approval from the Institution should be provided to HHF. A letter from the PI should also be provided to HHF explaining the changes between budgeted categories with justification for these changes. Any proposed change in the direction of the project must first receive written approval from HHF. All obligations of grant funds must be incurred within the project year unless otherwise granted by HHF.

F. *Publications & Publicity*

- Investigators are expected to make the results of their research promptly available to the scientific public. Acknowledgment of HHF support must be made when findings are reported to scientific audiences or scientific journals or when publicity is given to a project.
- Publications resulting from work supported in whole or in part by HHF must contain a credit line to that effect. Two PDF copies should be submitted to HHF.

- When a project is awarded, HHF has the right to publish its abstract and results, when available, on its website, in its Annual Report, and through other public information vehicles.

#### *G. Reporting*

- **Mid-Year Report:** All HHF grantees are required to submit a mid-year grant report by January 15, 2016. If a mid-year report is late or not submitted, final payment to the institution will be withheld until report is received. The mid-year report must be submitted in accordance with the instructions accompanying the report.
- **Terminal Report:** All HHF grantees must submit a Terminal and Expenditure report due three months after the termination of grant in accordance with the instructions accompanying the report. Unless otherwise authorized by HHF, unexpended funds must be returned to HHF with this report.

### **III. ELIGIBILITY, APPLICATIONS, NOTIFICATION & PAYMENT**

#### *A. Eligibility:*

Applicants should demonstrate experience and strong research training as well as sufficient institutional support (facilities, time, and mentorship) to carry out the proposed work. Applicants should hold an M.D., Ph.D., Au.D. or equivalent degrees. Principal investigators should be in the early stages of independent research careers.

Further, applicants must meet the following eligibility criteria:

#### *Candidate:*

If the applicant is a post-doctoral fellow, it is expected that he or she be at the senior level. Further, the applicant must demonstrate in the application that he or she is on a pathway to independence. Specifically, the applicant should indicate how the proposed aims will help with his or her transition toward independence from the mentor, including how the proposed research is distinct from the mentor's research program.

No prior or current services as Principal Investigator on a major independent research award (e.g., R00, R03, R21, R01, VA Merit, DoD, or equivalent). Prior appointment on fellowship/training grants or prior service as a Principal Investigator on a mentored career development award is allowable.

Appointment at a non-profit educational, governmental or research institution within the US. Appointments may include faculty, postdoctoral fellow, or clinical/research fellow. Graduate students and medical residents are not eligible to serve as Principal Investigators.

Proposed research related to one of the hearing and balance topics advertised in the ERG Request for Applications. A required Letter of Intent must provide justification for the relevance of the proposed research to the designated ERG topic area.

*Subject Matter/Scientific Merit:*

Proposed research that is significant and innovative, addressing a question or a set of questions in the new designated topic area that are new and emerging, or that applies an innovative approach to an established question or set of questions. If the applicant is a post-doctoral fellow, the proposed project must address a question or set of questions that are distinct from the mentor's (or Co-PI's) lines of research. Principal investigator with relevant experience and strong research training. If applicable, research team should demonstrate complementary expertise.

Institutional and scientific environment suitable for the proposed research, including mentorship as appropriate. Institutional support, equipment, core facilities, research subjects, and other resources should be adequate for the proposed research and available to the investigators.

*Total duration of HHF funding allowed:*

An individual applicant is eligible to receive one year of funding from the HHF.

Proposed experiments with sound strategy, methods, and analyses plans. Project timeline should not exceed one year. Applications for continuations of research supported by prior ERG or other awards or for bridge funding will not be considered.

**B. *Ineligibility:*** Applications from those researching at institutions outside of the United States. Graduate students are not eligible. Applications for research continuation or bridge funding should not be submitted. Applicants concurrently receiving research support of (>\$75,000 per annum in direct costs of research sponsorship) from any other (combined) source(s) are not eligible. Funding of pending awards during the HHF award period may necessitate the return of the balance of HHF award. Applications from investigators with R00, R01, R03, R21 or equivalent funding within the past five years will not be considered. Applicants who have received one or more years of HHF support are not eligible. Second year applicants are no longer eligible.

**C. Application Deadlines**

For the 2017 Funding Cycle (subject to change):

- Letter of Intent deadline: **October 28, 2016**
- Full Application deadline: **December 2, 2016**

**D. *Other Funding:*** An application to HHF for grant support of a research project shall state whether the same project is receiving support from another source, and whether an application has been submitted to another source for such funding. If, after application to or funding by HHF, this same project receives support from another granting agency, the applicant and the grantee institution shall promptly notify HHF of such funding and make provisions to return any unexpended HHF funds.

**E. *Notification:*** In the Spring, HHF will notify each applicant whether or not his/her project has received a grant for the upcoming project year, and if so, the amount of that grant.

F. *Payments*: Grants will be paid in three equal payments disbursed in July, November, and April.

G. *Budget Deviation*: Any budget deviation during the program year requires an updated budget and justification of change. In the interim, remittance of payment cannot be provided.

H. *Conflict of Interest*: An institution awarded a grant from HHF must sign and submit a Conflict of Interest statement to be provided by HHF.

#### **IV. PROJECT CHANGES**

A. *Transfer of Institution*: No research grant can be transferred from one institution to another without the written approval of HHF. If a grantee wishes to have such transfer made, that grantee must:

- request, in writing, the approval of HHF for the transfer;
- secure written approval for this transfer from the fiscal officer at the present grantee institution;
- submit an expenditures report covering the project period at the present institution up to the time of the transfer approved by HHF, and provide for the return to HHF of all unexpended funds received by the present institution for the grant;
- provide HHF with the name and address of the fiscal officer of the new institution;
- secure from the appropriate chairman at the new institution both a confirmation for HHF of the investigator's new appointment, and confirmation that the new duties and the available facilities and personnel will permit the prompt continuation of the research project;
- letter of support from mentor at the new institution; and
- submit a progress report on the work done at the present institution since the beginning of the grant period (July 1st).

B. *Change of Objective*: If the applicant wishes to make changes, which could alter the approved objectives for which the original grant was made, prior approval of HHF is required.

C. *Change of Investigator*: If the investigator relinquishes or expects to relinquish active direction of the project, HHF must be notified immediately. The grantee institution may:

- request that the grant be terminated, in which case a terminal progress report and an expenditures report must be submitted, and unexpended funds must be returned to HHF, or;
- with the approval of HHF, the grantee institution may continue the project under the direction of another investigator. In the latter instance, biographical data, an interim progress report, and other pertinent information required by HHF should accompany the request for such continuation.

D. *No-Cost Extension*: The applicant must request a no-cost extension on his/her institution's letterhead before the end of the initial project year (June 30). The request must be approved by HHF. The letter must include the reason for a no-cost extension and the duration of the

extension. The project year may be extended, up to one year, without additional funding. No additional extension beyond one year will be approved.

## **V. LIMITATIONS**

A. *Geographical*: Grants are limited to institutions within the United States of America.

B. *Time*: Awards are approved for a period of one year.

C. *Amount*: A grant cannot exceed \$30,000 for one project year.

D. *Grant*: HHF applies a policy of funding grants receiving a high priority score without the number limitation based on available funds.

E. *Non Tax-exempt organizations*: Grants will be made to non-profit, tax-exempt institutions, public or private, to support research directed at those institutions by investigators who are on their staff or are otherwise formally attached to them. Awarding grants to for-profit companies would disqualify HHF for tax-exempt status.

F. *Institution Awards*: HHF will fund no more than a total of five (5) grants annually to an institution. The funding will be limited to the five (5) grants of the highest priority as determined by HHF.

G. *Funding*: HHF grants are for the support of research endeavors carried out by investigators who are beginning to work in the field of hearing and balance.

## **VI. CONDITIONS**

In the event that the grantee breaches any of the provisions of the policy described above, HHF reserves the right to withhold further payments of the grants, and to require the grantee to repay to HHF any funds expended in contravention of such provisions.