



Innovation Award Request for Applications

What:

To be awarded \$55,000 in direct costs. No portion of these funds shall be used to cover indirect institution costs.

When:

RFA released: Wednesday, **January 19, 2024**

Letter of intent deadline: **Friday, March 1, 2024 midnight ET**

Full application deadline: **Friday, April 5, 2024 midnight ET**

Announcement of Award: **~August 2024**

Eligibility:

- Must be an early career investigator (less than 8 years since completion of last degree)
- Applicant must hold a full-time position at a university/institution or an organization with 501c3 status
- Applicants must have an MD, PhD, or MD/PhD. Applicants with a master's degree in life sciences are also eligible only if they are in a full-time professor position.
- Applicant must be the sole PI on the application, no Co-PIs are allowed. A Co-PI is someone who would share the responsibility of the application equally.
- Applicant must have a mentor, who will write a letter of support and send in their CV/biosketch as part of the application (see below).
- Co-Investigators are allowed. Co-Investigators are not required and should only be included if specific expertise/resources are needed that are not possessed by the applicant or mentor. Mentors cannot serve as

Co-Investigators. Applications without co-Investigators will not be at a disadvantage.

- International applicants welcome to apply
- Applicant and/or any team member of applicant cannot be involved in more than one PMSF grant application type per year

Description:

We are seeking highly novel grant applications which explore an understudied area of Phelan-McDermid syndrome research. Successful proposals will open new avenues of research in the field. Applications with clinical relevance will be preferred. Applications can be focused on any topic, but areas of special interest to families include: research across other neurodevelopmental disorders, development of tools for monitoring or managing symptoms, peripheral nervous system studies, identification of new drug candidates, implication of new cell types, and understanding of genes aside from *SHANK3*. Project feedback can be requested by email to kate@pmsf.org but no guarantee of funding can be made.

Important notes:

Applications which do not have all components or are not submitted on time will be disqualified. Applicants must submit a letter of intent by March 1, 2024 in the form of a scientific abstract (250 word limit) describing their project *prior* to full submission of their application on April 5, 2024. All applicants are invited to submit both a letter of intent and full application without review from PMSF. The purpose of the letter of intent is to allow PMSF to find grant reviewers and gauge the volume of applications and is thus required. A letter of intent should only be submitted if the applicant is planning to submit a full application. **Early submissions of letters of intent prior to March 1st are highly encouraged.**

Applications will be reviewed by members of the PMSF Scientific and Medical Advisory Committee and the wider Phelan-McDermid syndrome research community. Applications will also be reviewed by families of individuals with Phelan-McDermid syndrome. It is strongly encouraged that applications are highly relevant to families and include well-written lay abstracts.

Submission process:

All required components should be sent as a combined PDF email attachment to PMSF's Scientific Director, Dr. Kate Still (kate@pmsf.org), and CC Amanda Bergen (amanda@pmsf.org) with the subject line: [Grant title; last name of applicant; part of application]

There are four parts to each application, requiring four separate emails: (Letter of intent, full application, two separate letter of support emails).

Required Components:

By March 1, 2024:

- **Letter of Intent** – scientific abstract describing the proposed project (<250 words)

By April 5, 2024 (full application components):

The following documents should be organized in this order within the PDF:

- **Title page** (see template [here](#))
- **Lay abstract** (<250 words)
- *Important: Families of individuals with Phelan-McDermid syndrome will review applications– successful applications will have lay abstracts which fully encompass the work, including methods, and will be written in a digestible way
- **Scientific abstract** (<250 words) – can be the same as letter of intent or have minor updates
- **Argument for Innovation** (< 1 page)
 - Explain why the proposal is novel in the context of ongoing research in the Phelan-McDermid syndrome field (relevant references encouraged – they do not add to the page limit)
 - What new research directions would this project open?
 - Should be engaging for both scientists and Phelan-McDermid syndrome family members
- **Research strategy** - (<3 pages not including references)
 - Should include background/rationale, preliminary data (if applicable), project aims and methods

- References should be included and do not count towards the page limit (no limit)
- All graphs/charts must fit within the 3 page limit.
- **Early Career Investigator Statement** (< 1 page)
 - Explain career goals, how they will be achieved, and how Phelan-McDermid syndrome could continue to be a focus after completion of this award
- **Budget** (<1 page or spreadsheet)
 - Exact budget allocations as line items
 - \$2,000 must be included to facilitate travel of the Principal Investigator to a Phelan-McDermid syndrome conference or gathering to present findings.
- **Budget justification** (<1 page)
 - Short descriptions explaining budget line items
- **2 letters of support (<1 page each)** – sent to kate@pmsf.org and amanda@pmsf.org separately by references. We will add these to the application. ****Important:** One of these letters must be from the applicant’s mentor. Another can be from a colleague, collaborator, etc.)
- **Principal Investigator CV or NIH-format biosketch**, either is accepted (< 5 pages)
- **Mentor CV or NIH-format biosketch**, either format is accepted but MUST be <5 pages. The role of the mentor is to help guide the applicant. The mentor should not be taking a leadership role in performing the work itself, or be receiving financial support within the budget.
- **Co-Investigator(s) CV or NIH-format biosketch (if applicable, not required)**. Either format is accepted but MUST be <5 pages.

Review process:

Initial review will be done to remove incomplete applications. Further review will occur based on scientific merit including reviewers from the PMSF Scientific and Medical Advisory Committees and from the wider Phelan-McDermid syndrome research community. Phelan-McDermid syndrome families will also review grants. Applications will be scored on similar categories to those listed below. These are a guideline and are subject to change.

- Investigator background
- Research strategy

- Impact of grant to family members of an individual with Phelan-McDermid syndrome
- Grant-specific statement (e.g., Argument for Innovation)
- Reasonable budget

Successful applicants will be notified in the summer of 2024. Applications not selected for an award will receive a summary of reviews in an anonymous fashion in the fall of 2024.

For Grant-Related Inquiries, Contact: kate@pmsf.org