



# Shannon O'Boyle Memorial Grant Neuropsychiatric Illness Request for Applications

## What:

To be awarded \$100,000 in direct costs. No portion of these funds shall be used to cover indirect institution costs.

## When:

RFA released: **Wednesday, January 22, 2025**

Letter of intent deadline: **Friday, March 7, 2025 midnight ET**

Full application deadline: **Friday, April 11, 2025 midnight ET**

Announcement of Award: **~August 2025**

Earliest Award start date: **~October 2025**

## Eligibility:

- This opportunity is open to all stages of investigators working in a relevant field (neurology, psychiatry, or psychology, and/or a focus in neurodevelopmental disorders or rare disorders).
- Applicants 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.
- International applicants are welcome to apply.
- Co-Principal Investigators (Co-PIs) who share equal responsibility on the application are allowed. Co-investigators (Co-Is) who bring additional expertise but do not have primary responsibility for the application are

also allowed. Neither Co-PIs, nor Co-Is are required. Applicants without these team members will not be at a disadvantage.

- Early-stage career investigators (e.g., post-doctoral fellows, instructors, or assistant professors <5 years terminal research degree or end of post-graduate clinical training, whichever is later) applying as PI are strongly encouraged, but not required, to have a specified mentor on the application as co-I. Note that the PI and the study team are considered during the review process.
- Applicants and/or any team member of applicant cannot be involved in more than one PMSF grant application type per year.

### **Description:**

The PMSF Board of Directors has established an annual research grant of \$100,000 in honor of Shannon O'Boyle and to acknowledge her family's significant contributions. The grant will be used to advance research in neuropsychiatric illnesses and to keep Shannon's legacy alive by inspiring and offering hope to all.

A successful proposal will advance research in either neuropsychiatric illness, challenging behaviors, or skill regression in Phelan-McDermid syndrome. Proposals can include foundational basic research in laboratory models or highly clinical studies in people with Phelan-McDermid syndrome, or translational studies bridging the basic science and clinical research gap. Regardless, applications should highlight clinical relevance.

Grant funding will be for a minimum of one year (12 months) and maximum of two years (24 months). Applications must specify length of time requested for funding in the Research Strategy as well as in the more detailed Study Timeline. Please note that the same amount of funds (\$100,000) will be allocated regardless of length of project. Projects with shorter (or longer) timelines will not be weighed differently so long as the application appropriately demonstrates needs for specific length of time requested.

PMSF is committed to increasing diversity, equity, and inclusion in research. We are actively seeking applications from institutions and researchers traditionally underrepresented in Phelan-McDermid syndrome research. In addition, we are seeking applications that target participants from underrepresented backgrounds. If applicable, please highlight in your full

application how your study helps increase diversity, equity, and inclusion in the Phelan-McDermid syndrome field.

Rich data sources which can be leveraged for proposals exist via the NIH-funded Developmental Synaptopathies Consortium (DSC), a Natural History Study focused on Phelan-McDermid syndrome within the Rare Disease Clinical Research Network: (<https://dsc.rarediseasesnetwork.org/research-study/7902>), and/or the Phelan-McDermid syndrome Neuropsychiatric Consult Group (<https://pmsf.org/neuropsychiatric-consultation-group/>). Collaboration with either of these groups, or other neurodevelopmental disorder groups which may have psychiatric phenotypes is encouraged.

Project feedback can be requested by email to [lauren@pmsf.org](mailto:lauren@pmsf.org), but no guarantee in funding can be made.

### **IMPORTANT NOTES:**

Applications which do not have all components or are not submitted on time will be disqualified.

### **Letter of Intent:**

Applicants must submit a Letter of Intent by March 7, 2025, in the form of a scientific abstract (250 word limit) describing their project *prior* to full submission of their application on April 11, 2025. 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 7st are highly encouraged. **Full applications submitted *without* prior Letter of Intent will not be disqualified.**

### **Resubmissions:**

Resubmissions of previously submitted applications that did not receive funding are allowed. In addition to the required components listed below, we also request a brief response (250 word limit) indicating how the application has been updated to respond to reviewer's comments. If you are a PI who has

previously submitted an unfunded application and are submitting a new application with different primary aims, this letter is not required.

### **Submission Process:**

All required components should be sent as a combined PDF email attachment to PMSF's Chief Science Officer, Dr. Lauren Schmitt ([lauren@pmsf.org](mailto:lauren@pmsf.org)), and CC Amanda Bergen ([amanda@pmsf.org](mailto:amanda@pmsf.org)) with the subject line: [Grant title; last name of applicant; part of application]

There are four parts to each application, each requiring its own separate emails

- 1) Letter of Intent
- 2) Full application
- 3) Two separate letters of support

### **Required Components:**

#### ***By March 7, 2025:***

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

*As indicated above the purpose of this letter is to gauge the number of and type of expertise required of reviewers.*

#### ***By April 11, 2025 (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
- **Research Strategy** - (<3 pages not including references)

- Should include background/rationale, preliminary data (if applicable), project aims and methods. Using NIH format of Specific Aims, Significance, Innovation, and Approach is preferred
- References should be included and do not count towards the page limit (no limit)
- All graphs/tables must fit within the 3 page limit.
- **Early-Stage Investigator Statement** (if applicable, <250 words)
  - Early stage investigators are required to briefly indicate how this project, if awarded, will help their career and training in the Phelan-McDermid syndrome field. Specific training activities and/or guidance from your mentor also should be mentioned.
  - If you are unsure whether you qualify as an early stage investigator, please reach out to [lauren@pmsf.org](mailto:lauren@pmsf.org)
- **Study Timeline** - (½ page)
  - Funding period is between 12 - 24 months, this *must* be specified in both the Research Strategy and Study Timeline
  - Anticipated study timeline should include major milestones, plans for dissemination and/or other deliverables, and plans for future grant submissions (e.g., R21, R01)
  - Please note that funds will not be released until IRB is approved, so including IRB submission/acceptance is implied and should not be part of timeline
- **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 [lauren@pmsf.org](mailto:lauren@pmsf.org) and [amanda@pmsf.org](mailto:amanda@pmsf.org) separately by references (colleague, collaborator, etc.) in PDF format.
  - If you are an early-stage investigator with a specified mentor on the project, one letter *must* be from the mentor and outline your promise as an investigator in the field and how this award mechanism will provide the training and experience necessary for you to have a successful future research career

- **Principal Investigator NIH-format biosketch**, older or updated format is accepted (< 5 pages)
- **Co-PI or co-I NIH-format biosketch(es)**(if applicable), older or updated format is accepted (< 5 pages)

### Review process:

Applications will be reviewed by members of the PMSF Scientific and Medical Advisory Committees and the wider Phelan-McDermid syndrome research community. Applications also will 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.

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. In addition, Phelan-McDermid syndrome families will review grants. Applications will be scored on similar categories to those listed below. These are guidelines and are subject to change.

- Research strategy
- Impact of grant to family members of an individual with Phelan-McDermid syndrome
- Principal Investigator's and study team's background
- Addressing diversity, equity, and inclusion
- Likelihood that project will form basis of larger future grant(s)
- Reasonable budget

Successful applicants will be notified in the summer of 2025. Applications not selected for an award will receive a summary of reviews in an anonymous fashion in the fall of 2025.

For all grant-related inquiries, contact: [lauren@pmsf.org](mailto:lauren@pmsf.org)