The Hitchcock Foundation

One Medical Center Drive

Lebanon, NH 03756

*Supporting Research and Education since 1946*

The Hitchcock Foundation Policy and Guidelines for Pilot Research Grants

A Pilot Research Grant from the Hitchcock Foundation represents a joining of interests on the part of the Hitchcock Foundation and the Principal Investigator in the pursuit of a common objective supporting the **Hitchcock Foundation’s mission** "to aid and advance the study and investigation of human ailments and injuries, and the causes, prevention, relief, and cure thereof, and the study and investigation of problems of hygiene, health and public welfare, and the promotion of medical, surgical and scientific learning, skill, education and investigation, and to engage in and conduct and to aid and assist in medical, surgical and scientific research in the broadest sense.”

I. General Information

A. Scope:

The Hitchcock Foundation accepts applications for both biomedical and general health research projects that support its mission "to aid and advance the study and investigation of human ailments and injuries, and the causes, prevention, relief, and cure thereof...”

The Hitchcock Foundation funds Pilot Research Grants to address any of the broad areas of biomedical research, including basic, translational, clinical, and/or population-based studies.

The main goals of this funding mechanism are to:

* Develop pilot data to be used as the basis for submission of research applications to national funding sources;
* Encourage research by young investigators and those new to Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center who have not yet gained outside funding.

B. Applicant Eligibility:

Each proposal must have one principal investigator (PI). The PI is responsible for the preparation, conduct, and administration of the project.

All health and biomedical professionals of Dartmouth Health (DH) and the Dartmouth College (DC) academic community are eligible to apply.

Junior faculty, fellows, post-doctoral fellows, residents, early-career investigators (no more than 10 years beyond completion of their terminal degree), and those who have not yet gained outside funding are especially encouraged to apply.

Senior faculty and established researchers are eligible to apply with the understanding that preference and priority will be given to well-written and independently conceived proposals submitted by junior faculty, fellows, post-doctoral fellows, residents, early career investigators and those who have not yet gained outside funding.

To provide continuity, people with temporary or term appointments (e.g., fellows, post-doctoral fellows and residents) who wish to apply must have a sub-investigator who is a member of the permanent staff or faculty of Dartmouth Health or Dartmouth College. The sub-investigator will be responsible for the final report if the PI is unable to complete it.

Sub-investigators are permitted on all applications. Sub-investigators shall be employees of Dartmouth Health or Dartmouth College. Applications with sub-investigators shall include a description of the division of responsibilities.

Medical students, graduate and undergraduate students are not eligible for Pilot Research Grant awards.

An investigator (PI or sub-investigator) may submit only one letter of intent (LOI) and one application per grant cycle.

The Scientific Review Committee, in consultation with the Hitchcock Foundation’s executive director, has the authority to make the final determination regarding the eligibility of a principal investigator.

C. Proposal Eligibility:

The proposed project matches the scope of the program as described above and conforms to the submission guidelines.

The applicant is eligible to serve as the PI.

Proposals seeking program and/or operational support for DH, DC or outside entities are not eligible for this grant.

Proposals seeking a new award to continue a previously approved proposal are not eligible for this grant.

Proposals seeking funding for a project or research costs already incurred are not eligible for this grant.

Only one proposal may be submitted per grant cycle.

The Scientific Review Committee, in consultation with the Hitchcock Foundation’s executive director, has the authority to make the final determination regarding the eligibility of a proposal.

D. Priorities for Funding:

The Foundation will give preference to well-written and independently conceived proposals submitted by early career investigators as defined in the Applicant Eligibility section.

Established investigators with prior extramural funding are eligible to apply recognizing that significant preference and priority will be given to early career investigators who are in the process of securing reliable outside funding to establish or advance their research careers.

The Hitchcock Foundation is particularly interested in funding proposals that will develop pilot data to be used as the basis for submission of research applications to national funding sources.

Special consideration will be given to applications for clinical and immediately pre-clinical research

E. Deadlines:

There are two Pilot Research Grant cycles per academic year. Current deadlines are available on the Hitchcock Foundation website.

Applications must be emailed as a single PDF to:

[Tracy.L.Ostler@Hitchcock.org](about:blank) with a copy to [Karen.E.Jones@Hitchcock.org](about:blank) and received no later than 12:00 noon on the deadline date. 12:00:01 is considered late.

**No late applications will be considered.**

Applicants will usually be notified of the Trustees' decision within 12 weeks of the submission deadline.

F. Awards:

Awards are made two times per year.

Awards will not exceed $50,000. The Hitchcock Foundation will try to fund the greatest number of proposals recommended by the review committee within its own budget limits.

Proposal budgets must be detailed, justified and conform to the allowable and unallowable costs outlined in the Budget Conditions.

Pilot Grant awards are approved for a period of one year. Work proposed should be appropriate in scope to the budget and the one-year period of the award. Although discouraged, requests for a no-cost extension should be sent to the Hitchcock Foundation Executive Director.

Pilot Research Grants are not renewable.

II. Terms and Conditions

A. In accepting a Pilot Research Grant, the PI accepts responsibility for using funds for the purpose set forth in the application. Prior approval is required for changes that materially alter the scope, methods, or objectives of the original grant. Proposed revisions should be sent to the Hitchcock Foundation Executive Director.

B. If the PI relinquishes or expects to relinquish direction of the project, the Hitchcock Foundation must be notified immediately. The grantee may request that the grant be terminated, in which case a terminal progress report and expenditure report must be submitted within 30 days. Following a termination request, further expenditures may not be made without prior approval from the Foundation. The grantee may request that the project be continued under the direction of another investigator, in which case, the proposed new PI’s biosketch and other pertinent information should accompany the request.

C. Hitchcock Foundation Pilot Research grants shall not be transferred to outside entities.

D. Title to equipment purchased under Hitchcock Foundation grants shall vest in the PI’s department/section.

E. If copyrightable material or a patentable invention developed with the support of a Hitchcock Foundation grant produces income, the Hitchcock Foundation shall receive revenue in proportion to its contribution to the development of the material or invention.  The level of the Hitchcock Foundation participation shall be consistent with Dartmouth Health and Dartmouth College policies and will be negotiated in good faith among the parties.

F. **Warm Blooded Animals**: No funds from this award may be used for activities involving animals unless experiments are in compliance with Federal Guidelines for Animal Research.

Written approval from the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) is required before funds will be released.

If approval is suspended or revoked during the course of the study, the Hitchcock Foundation must be notified immediately. Failure to do so will result in termination of the study and prohibition from receiving further funding from the Hitchcock Foundation.

G. **Human Subjects**: If the project involves human subjects, written approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) is required before funds will be released.

It is not necessary to submit the protocol to the IRB prior to the submission of the application. However, the Hitchcock Foundation strongly encourages the PI to engage with the IRB early in the process.

*Please note: The IRB, not the PI, is responsible for determining whether the project meets the definition of human subject research requiring IRB review.*

If approval is suspended or revoked during the course of the study, the Hitchcock Foundation must be notified immediately. Failure to do so will result in termination of the study and prohibition from receiving further funding from the Hitchcock Foundation.

H. **Protected Health Information**: If the project involves protected health information, please review the Research Data Handbook and contact the Dartmouth Health SYNERGY Informatics group for additional information and/or assistance.

I. **Conflict of Interest disclosure for Hitchcock Foundation proposals**:If the proposal is funded, awardees must submit a conflict of interest disclosure pertaining to the proposal via either the Dartmouth Online Disclosure System or the D-H COI system, depending on the paymaster.

J. In the event that the grantee breaches any of the ABOVE conditions, the Hitchcock Foundation reserves the right to discontinue payment of the grant and to require the grantee to REpay any funds expended in contravention of conditions outlined in this policy.

III. Budget

1. The budget shall not exceed $50,000.
2. Grant funds may be budgeted and used for direct costs to support the project including the following:
   1. Salaries of technical and support personnel at Dartmouth Health or Dartmouth College (e.g., research coordinator, lab technician, data analyst, etc.)
   2. Salaries/wages of graduate students
   3. Purchase of equipment (title to vest with PI’s department/section)
   4. Supplies, including drugs and services
   5. Patient stipends
   6. Animal purchase and care
   7. Software purchase or software license for the term of the project
   8. Other specifically authorized direct expenses as may be essential to carry out the project
3. Grant funds may not be used for the following:
   1. Indirect costs
   2. Salaries other than those listed above (e.g. salary for personnel at institutions outside of Dartmouth Health or Dartmouth College)
   3. Salaries for investigators or sub-investigators
   4. Salaries for members of the faculty or professional staff of Dartmouth Health or Dartmouth College (exception for biostatisticians at Dartmouth College/Dartmouth-Health)
   5. Computer hardware
   6. Tuition
   7. Stipends or tuition remission of graduate students. This award shall not be used as a training grant
   8. Living expenses
   9. Operational expenses
   10. Publication costs
   11. Public information programs
   12. Costs of routine patient care
   13. Costs for travel to scientific meetings except by special approval of the Scientific Review Committee
   14. Books and publications
4. It is expected that distribution of costs between categories of expenditures will follow the budget included in the approved application. Transfers between categories of less than $500 may be made by the grantee without approval if such transfers do not materially change the character or scope of the project. Transfers between categories of more than $500 must be approved by the Hitchcock Foundation prior to implementation.
5. Project expenses must be incurred within the established project year unless an extension is granted.
6. Unexpended funds shall be returned to the Hitchcock Foundation.

IV. Payment Procedures

The Hitchcock Foundation will provide a grant account for expenses under this award. Funds will be maintained within the Hitchcock Foundation and expenses paid as they are incurred.

Requests for payment must align with the approved budget, include the principal investigator’s name, Hitchcock Foundation account number and itemized receipts and/or detailed back-up documentation. The Hitchcock Foundation will not process accounts payable requests without itemized back-up.

V. Publications and Publicity

Investigators are expected to make the results of the research available to the scientific and/or medical communities and to notify the Foundation of publications resulting from or related to their grants. Acknowledgment of Foundation support should be made when findings are reported to scientific audiences or scientific journals or when publicity is given to a project.

VI. Limitations

1. Amount of funds awarded will not exceed $50,000.

B. Proposals that require funding from both the Hitchcock Foundation and an additional source will be accepted but evidence of supplemental support should accompany the application. Funding received from all sources may not exceed 100 percent of budget.

VII. Final Report

Within 60 days of the one-year anniversary of the award, the PI will be responsible for submitting a final research project report, using the Hitchcock Foundation’s guidance. Please include a certification signed by the PI and his/her department chair indicating whether the time, effort and resources described in the funded application were actually committed to the project. If time and resources were not devoted to the project as planned in the application, please describe the deviations and why they occurred. Failure to submit these final reports within the prescribed time may make the PI ineligible for future Hitchcock Foundation funding.

In addition, the PI will be asked to present their project and findings to the Hitchcock Foundation Board of Trustees.

VIII. Research Application Protocol

1. Applications should be single-spaced using at least 10-point font. The entire application and appendices must be saved and submitted as a single pdf document. Be sure to define acronyms and abbreviations. Medical terms and jargon that may not be recognized outside of your specialty should also be defined. A Glossary is not required, but one may be included at the end of the Reference section.

Applications should adhere to the following outline:

1. **Lay Summary**. A clear and concise description of the proposal in lay language. Similar to the Executive Summary, the Lay Summary should include the problem to be studied, the methods to be employed, the expected outcomes and their potential impact on the problem being studied.

Write this section with non‐scientific reviewers in mind. It should contain enough essential information and be clear enough to enable a non-scientific reviewer to review and score the proposal.

Lay Language means simple, non-technical terms that anyone can understand. Avoid using jargon and complicated medical and scientific terminology. Be sure to define acronyms and abbreviations.

*The Lay Summary should not exceed one page.*

1. **Executive Summary**. Introduce the project and describe your approach. Include a clear statement of the of problem to be studied. Concisely present pertinent literature, state the goal(s), the specific aim(s), and the expected outcomes as well as the potential impact of the results and future directions. Finally, use this section to connect the project to the mission of the Hitchcock Foundation and the funding priorities for this grant mechanism.

*The Executive Summary should not exceed two pages.*

1. **Methods**. Describe how the proposed project will be completed, using the outline below for each of the project’s aims.

This section should include:

* A description of the project’s design.
* A description of the methods to be used, emphasizing innovative approaches, methodologies, instrumentation and/or interventions.
* A description of the expected outcomes, and their significance to the field.
* A description of any potential problems, alternate strategies and benchmarks for success.
* If appropriate to the project, a detailed description of the statistical analysis plan.

Research projects involving human subjects or protected health information (PHI) should also discuss the methods to protect the subjects and safeguard the PHI, along with information pertaining to the IRB review status.

Work proposed should be appropriate in scope to the budget and the one-year period of the award.

Include a timeline outlining the project’s milestones.

*The Methods section should not exceed five pages.*

1. **References**. Include references as appropriate. You may also add a Glossary to the end of this section.
2. **Facilities & Resources and Institutional Commitment**. Identify where the work will be done; describe essential equipment and confirm that it will be available.

Describe access to shared/core facilities and equipment. Avoid vague descriptions such as in “state of the art equipment.”

*The Facilities & Resources and Institutional Commitment section should not exceed one page.*

1. **Responsibilities**. If there are sub-investigators listed on the application, use this section to outline each sub-investigator’s individual responsibilities in the project.

Please enclose a letter of support from each sub-investigator (letters of support do not count toward the page limit for this section).

*The Responsibilities section should not exceed two pages.*

1. **Budget and Budget Justification**. Review the Budget information in Section III of this document, and provide a line-item budget, in table format, showing the category, payee, item, amount, quantity, and total costs for each section.

*Budget Example:*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Category** | **Payee** | **Item** | **Quantity** | **Amount** | **Total** |
| Salary | John Doe | Research Coordinator | 10 hours | $30/hr | $300 |
| Stipends | Patients | $20 Gas Card | 100 | $20 | $2,000 |

Budget Justification. The justification serves as the rationale for the project’s costs. Budget items should be based on real costs. If you have quotes, they may be included in the justification. Provide cost detail and describe the importance of each item to the overall project.

NOTE: It is the responsibility of the principal investigator to secure the most favorable prices for tests and procedures included in the proposal – not third party reimbursement rates.

*The Budget and Budget Justification section should not exceed two pages.*

1. **Other Funding Sources**. If applicable, name other funding sources approached for this application.

Include your plans for applications to be submitted to other funding agencies based upon work done under this protocol.

*The Other Funding Sources section should not exceed one page.*

1. **CVs**. Include CVs of the PI, sub-investigators, the mentor and key personnel in the **NIH Biosketch format**.

Key personnel are the PI and other individuals who contribute to the scientific development or execution of a project in a substantive, measurable way, whether or not they receive salaries or compensation under the grant. Typically, these individuals have doctoral or other professional degrees, although individuals at the masters or baccalaureate level may be considered key personnel if their involvement meets this definition. (nih.gov)

*Limit each Biosketch to five (5) pages. Please limit publications to the past 5 years.*

1. All applications must be signed by the applicant and the appropriate department chair. Dartmouth College applicants should consult with the Office of Sponsored Projects for review, approval and submission of their application: [Proposal Review & Approval Overview (dartmouth.edu)](about:blank)
2. The cover page must be the first page of the application. If you’re including a cover letter, it should go under the cover page.

The entire application (including Biosketches and letters of support) should be formatted into one pdf document and must be submitted by email to Tracy.L.Ostler@Hitchcock.org with a copy to [Karen.E.Jones@Hitchcock.org](about:blank) and received by 12:00 noon on the deadline date.

D. **Applications received after 12:00 noon and applications not following the guidelines outlined above will not be considered.**