

## 2017 Pilot and Research Awards — Request for Applications (RFA)

### SFARI mission

The mission of the Simons Foundation Autism Research Initiative (SFARI) is to improve the understanding, diagnosis and treatment of autism spectrum disorders (ASD) by funding innovative research of the highest quality and relevance.

To this end, we solicit applications for SFARI Awards from individuals who will conduct bold, imaginative, rigorous and relevant research.

### Objective of the SFARI Awards

Grants awarded through this RFA will fund a broad range of ASD-relevant science. We are seeking applications that are grounded in biology and will complement our grants portfolio, which aims to connect autism etiology to brain function and behavior.

We strongly advise applicants to familiarize themselves with the [work that SFARI currently supports](#) and to think about how their proposals might complement existing grants. Considering SFARI's significant efforts targeted at understanding the genetics of ASD, we encourage applications that propose research to link genetic or other ASD risk factors to a molecular, cellular, circuit and behavioral-level understanding of ASD. See also the SFARI blog post "[SFARI's 2017 funding priorities](#)," where we discuss our funding priorities and other considerations for successful proposals.

Access to the [Simons Simplex Collection \(SSC\)](#) and the [Simons Variation in Individuals Project \(Simons VIP\)](#) — resources of rigorously characterized phenotypic data, genetic data and biospecimens — will be available to all approved scientists through [SFARI Base](#). We encourage applicants to use these resources. [Policies](#) regarding data requests and the acquisition of biospecimens are available online.

We seek applications from independent investigators who can devote a substantial portion of time to this effort. While we will not require a minimum Principal Investigator (PI) effort, we expect the PI to commit to a level of effort that reflects a leading role in the project. We encourage applications from researchers who are not currently working on autism but who have expertise that could be brought to bear on this complex disorder. We will also accept collaborative grants involving multiple investigators.

We expect SFARI Investigators to share renewable reagents and data developed using Simons Foundation funds with other qualified investigators. The quality of the data-sharing plan will factor into the review and affect funding decisions.

### SFARI Pilot Award

Application type for innovative, high-impact proposals requesting support for small-scale projects or early-stage experiments that will build on preliminary data or a prior track record and lead to competitive applications for funding by SFARI or other organizations. Investigators

new to the field of autism are encouraged to apply for Pilot Awards. The maximum budget is \$150,000, including indirect costs, per year for up to two (2) years. Please note that SSC and Simons VIP biospecimen costs are not included in the maximum budget.

### **SFARI Research Award**

Application type for competitive proposals from investigators with demonstrated expertise requesting support for compelling, high-impact research on experimental hypotheses for which, in most cases, preliminary data have already been gathered. The foundation will also consider projects focusing on a central hypothesis where success depends on close collaboration between two or more labs. We expect to fund proposals for a maximum of \$275,000, including indirect costs, per year for up to three (3) years, but under exceptional circumstances will consider proposals at higher levels. We realize that clinical studies can be costly and will consider clinical and translational proposals with budgets of up to \$350,000 per year if justified in the budget. (This grant mechanism is not intended to support large, randomized clinical trials of medications.) We strongly encourage PIs considering such studies to discuss their proposals and budgets with SFARI science staff before submission (please contact [scienceRFA@simonsfoundation.org](mailto:scienceRFA@simonsfoundation.org)). Proposals with unusually high budgets are subject to heightened scrutiny. Please note that SSC and Simons VIP biospecimen costs are not included in the maximum budget.

### **Note for investigators applying for renewal of three (3)-year Research Awards**

SFARI will prioritize the funding of high-risk and novel experiments, seeking to critically enable studies that have potentially high mission impact. With this in mind, we will prioritize new grant applications and provide only limited funding for renewal of three-year Research Awards. After three (3) years of support, grantees are encouraged to seek continued funding from the NIH and other agencies. SFARI will work with its more senior investigators to identify other funding sources for autism-relevant projects; will continue to welcome their attendance at SFARI-sponsored meetings, workshops and other activities; and will consider limited transitional funding when justified by exceptional progress. SFARI does encourage recipients of SFARI Pilot or Explorer Awards who have achieved success in their initial studies to apply for three-year Research Awards.

### **Eligibility**

All applicants and key collaborators must hold a Ph.D., M.D. or equivalent degree and have a faculty position or the equivalent at a college, university, medical school or other research facility. Applications may be submitted by domestic and foreign nonprofit organizations; public and private institutions, such as colleges, universities, hospitals, laboratories, units of state and local government; and eligible agencies of the federal government. There are no citizenship or country requirements.

### **Instructions for Submission**

Applications must be completed electronically and submitted using forms provided at [proposalCENTRAL](#). Please log in as an applicant, go to the GRANT OPPORTUNITIES tab, scroll to Simons Foundation and click APPLY NOW for the SFARI Pilot Award or the SFARI Research Award program. For assistance, please call 800-875-2562 or email [pcsupport@altum.com](mailto:pcsupport@altum.com).

Prospective applicants must submit a letter of intent (LOI) using the LOI template via [proposalCENTRAL](#). Instructions for LOI submission as well as application requirements can be found in our instructions or on [proposalCENTRAL](#).

Successful LOI applicants will be invited to submit a full proposal. Only then will applicants have access to the full application on [proposalCENTRAL](#). Instructions for full proposal submission as well as application requirements can be found in our instructions or on [proposalCENTRAL](#).

**Deadline and notification schedule**

Application Available	LOI Deadline	LOI Notification	Full Proposal Deadline	Award Notification	Award Start Date
September 15, 2016	December 9, 2016	February 15, 2017	March 22, 2017	Mid-June, 2017	August 1, September 1, October 1 2017

**Contacts:**

Administrative inquiries:	<a href="mailto:grants@simonsfoundation.org">grants@simonsfoundation.org</a>	646-654-0066
For scientific inquiries and requests regarding budgets over \$275,000:	<a href="mailto:sciencerfa@simonsfoundation.org">sciencerfa@simonsfoundation.org</a>	646-654-0066
proposalCENTRAL:	<a href="mailto:pcsupport@altum.com">pcsupport@altum.com</a>	800-875-2562
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