

2018 Pilot and Research Awards – Request for Applications

Grants awarded through this RFA are intended to provide funding for investigators conducting bold, creative and rigorous research into the underlying biology, causes and treatment of autism spectrum disorders.

Pilot Awards are intended for investigators who are 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 these awards. The maximum budget is \$330,000, including indirect costs, for two (2) years.

Research Awards are intended for investigators with demonstrated experience who are requesting support for compelling, high-impact research on an experimental hypothesis for which preliminary data have already been gathered. The maximum budget is \$975,000, including indirect costs, for three (3) years.

[Policies and](#)

[Procedures](#)

[LOI Deadline](#)

[December 1, 2017](#)

[RFA](#) [Instructions for Submission](#) [FAQ](#) [Past Awards](#)

[SFARI Mission](#)

[Objective of the SFARI Awards](#)

[SFARI Pilot Award](#)

[SFARI Research Award](#)

[Note for Investigators Applying for Renewal of Three-Year Research Awards](#)

[Eligibility](#)

[Multiple Applications](#)

[Instructions for Submission](#)

[Deadline and notification schedule](#)

Contacts:

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 research projects that SFARI currently supports [<https://www.sfari.org/research/funded-projects>] 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 molecular, cellular, circuit or behavioral mechanisms of ASD. See also the SFARI blog post "SFARI's 2018 funding priorities [<https://www.sfari.org/2017/10/02/sfaris-2018-funding-priorities/>]," where we discuss criteria for successful proposals.

Access to the Simons Simplex Collection [<https://www.sfari.org/resource/simons-simplex-collection/>] (SSC), Simons Variation in Individuals Project [<https://www.sfari.org/resource/simons-vip/>] (Simons VIP) and SPARK [<https://www.sfari.org/resource/spark/>] cohort — resources of phenotypic data, genetic data and in some cases biospecimens — will be given to all approved scientists through SFARI Base [<https://www.sfari.org/resource/sfari-base/>]. We encourage applicants to use these resources. Further information about data requests and the acquisition of biospecimens is available online [<https://www.sfari.org/resource/sfari-base/>].

We seek applications from independent investigators who can devote a substantial portion of time to their proposed project. While we do 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 applications for 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 affect funding decisions.

SFARI Pilot Award

This application type is 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 total maximum award amount is \$330,000, including indirect costs, for two years. Budgets for individual years can vary as long as the budget over two years does not exceed the maximum total award amount. Please note that SSC and Simons VIP biospecimen costs are not included in the maximum budget.

SFARI Research Award

This application type is 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 total award amount of \$975,000, including indirect costs, for three years, but under exceptional circumstances we will consider proposals at higher levels. Budgets for individual years can vary as long as the budget over three years does not exceed the maximum total award amount. We realize that research involving human subjects can be costly, and we will consider proposals with budgets of up to \$1,200,000, including indirect costs, for three years 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). 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-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 years of support, grantees are encouraged to seek continued funding from the National Institutes of Health 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. In addition, eligible applicants must have independent lab space at their institution. Applications may be submitted by domestic and foreign nonprofit organizations; public and private institutions, such as colleges, universities, hospitals, laboratories, and units of state and local government; and eligible agencies of the federal government. There are no citizenship or country requirements.

Multiple Applications

Investigators may submit multiple applications (for Research or Pilot Awards) on different topics. However, it is highly unlikely that two awards will be made to the same PI within one RFA cycle. If you plan to submit an application for an Explorer Award while a decision on your application for a Pilot or Research Award is pending (or vice versa), we will consider the Explorer Award application independently as long as it is for a distinct project, but again, we are unlikely to make two awards to the same PI within one RFA cycle or given year.

Instructions for Submission

Applications must be completed electronically and submitted using forms provided at [proposalCENTRAL \[https://proposalcentral.altum.com/\]](https://proposalcentral.altum.com/). 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.

Applicants must submit a one-page letter of intent (LOI) using the LOI template via [proposalCENTRAL \[https://proposalcentral.altum.com/\]](https://proposalcentral.altum.com/). Instructions for LOI submission as well as application requirements can be found in our instructions or on [proposalCENTRAL \[https://proposalcentral.altum.com/\]](https://proposalcentral.altum.com/).

Successful LOI applicants will be invited to submit a full proposal. Only then will applicants have access to the full application on [proposalCENTRAL \[https://proposalcentral.altum.com/\]](https://proposalcentral.altum.com/). Instructions for full proposal submission as well as application requirements can be found on [proposalCENTRAL \[https://proposalcentral.altum.com/\]](https://proposalcentral.altum.com/).

Deadline and notification schedule

Application Available	LOI Deadline	LOI Notification
October 2, 2017	December 1, 2017	January 23, 2018
Full Proposal Deadline	Award Notification	Award Start Date
February 26, 2018	Mid-June 2018	August 1, September 1, October 1, 2018

Contacts:



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