

2023 Winter Pilot Award – Request for Applications

Grants awarded through this RFA are intended to provide early support for exploratory ideas, particularly those with novel hypotheses for autism. Appropriate projects for this mechanism include those considered higher risk with less assurance of ultimate impact, but with the potential for transformative results.

Investigators new to the field of autism are encouraged to apply for these awards. The total budget of a Pilot Award is \$300,000 or less, including 20 percent indirect costs, over a period of up to two (2) years.

[Policies and Procedures](#)

Application Deadline:
January 12, 2023

Maximum Budget

Over Two Years
\$300,000

Important Dates

Application Available:
October 17, 2022

Application Deadline:
January 12, 2023

Award Notification:
May 11, 2023

Award Start Date:

Awards may begin as early as July 1, 2023, but we encourage PIs to select a project start date that best accommodates the needs of their project. Funds are expected to be expended as requested during each annual budget period. Projects must begin on the first of the month.

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 Pilot Awards from individuals who will conduct bold, imaginative, rigorous and relevant research.

Objective of the Pilot Award

The goal of the Pilot Award is to provide early support for exploratory ideas, particularly those with novel hypotheses. Appropriate projects for this mechanism include those considered higher risk but with the potential for transformative results. Projects that represent continuations of ongoing work (whether funded by SFARI or other funders) are not appropriate for this mechanism.

This funding mechanism is particularly suitable for investigators who are new to the autism field, though we encourage those new to the field to consult with experts in autism research to ensure their projects are relevant to the human condition.

In particular, we encourage applications that propose research to link genetic or other ASD risk factors to molecular, cellular, circuit or behavioral mechanisms and set the stage for development of novel interventions. Please read more about [SFARI's scientific perspectives](#). We also strongly advise applicants to familiarize themselves with the [current projects](#) and other [resources](#) that SFARI supports and to think about how their proposals might complement existing efforts.

Scope of Pilot RFA and Other 2023 RFAs

SFARI will offer two calls for Pilot Award applications in 2023 — the 2023 Winter Pilot and the 2023 Summer Pilot. The 2023 Summer Pilot will open in June. As in previous years, SFARI will also be offering a separate call for [Human Cognitive & Behavioral Science](#) projects, which will open in February 2023. Projects involving behavioral and/or cognitive

assessments of human participants should be submitted to that request for applications (RFA) rather than the Pilot Award RFA. Projects proposing behavioral and/or cognitive assessments in both humans and a non-human species should be submitted, if within scope, to a new [Cross-Species Studies of ASD RFA](#) that will be open in 2023. In addition, SFARI will launch a third iteration of the [Genomics of ASD RFA](#). Projects that are a better fit for this RFA, e.g., those involving preclinical and/or clinical studies of gene-targeting therapeutic approaches, should be submitted when the 2023 Genomics of ASD RFA opens in the summer of 2023. The Pilot Award RFA is appropriate for exploratory projects that are not otherwise better suited for the [Human Cognitive & Behavioral Science](#), [Cross Species Studies of Autism](#) or [Genomics of ASD RFAs](#).

To get a better understanding of SFARI's various funding initiatives in 2023 and whether the Pilot Award may be the best mechanism to support your project, please read our blog post, "[Updates to SFARI's 2023 requests for grant applications](#)." Investigators who are unsure of which of the RFAs planned in 2023 would be the best fit for their project can also contact sciencerfa@simonsfoundation.org for further information.

Level and Duration of Funding

The total budget of a Pilot Award is \$300,000 or less, including 20 percent indirect costs, over a period of up to two (2) years. Allowable Indirect costs to the primary institution for subcontracts are not included in the \$300,000 total budget threshold (see [grant policies](#)). We encourage investigators to take advantage of the flexibility in budget and duration, tailoring the scope of the award as appropriate for their specific aims. Funds are expected to be expended as requested during each annual budget period. When provided with a compelling justification, we are willing to consider larger budgets for the Pilot Award. We strongly encourage investigators considering budgets that exceed our guidelines to consult SFARI before submission (please contact sfarigrants@simonsfoundation.org).

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, and units of state and local government; and eligible agencies of the federal government. There are no citizenship or country requirements.

Multiple Applications, Resubmissions and Renewals

Unsuccessful applications submitted to previous SFARI RFAs may be resubmitted to this RFA, if relevant. For all resubmissions, we ask principal investigators (PIs) to submit a statement of changes describing substantive changes to the application since the previous submission. If the previous application was externally reviewed, this document should include point-by-point responses to the reviewers' critiques. If the revised application does not include substantive changes, it is unlikely that the outcome will change. This is especially true for applications that were not externally reviewed, as this decision is often based on the relevance of the project to SFARI's mission. **We also will not accept applications that have previously been considered three or more times (regardless of which RFA they were previously submitted to).**

Investigators may submit multiple applications on different topics. However, **it is highly unlikely that two awards will be made to the same PI within one RFA cycle.**

Given the focus of this RFA on bold, imaginative new ideas, it is unlikely that a renewal of a currently funded project (either from SFARI or elsewhere) will be a good fit for this RFA. We encourage investigators to seek continuation support from outside funding sources. In exceptional cases where progress has been stellar, SFARI may provide continuation funding for projects of particularly high impact via a separate funding mechanism, at the discretion of the science team. Decisions on new proposals from current SFARI investigators will include the evaluation of progress on previous or ongoing SFARI grants.

Instructions for Submission

Applications must be submitted via the [Simons Award Manager \(SAM\)](#). Please click on the Funding Opportunities icon and navigate to the Simons Foundation Autism Research Initiative – Pilot call. Click the Create Application button to begin. Applications should be started and submitted under the applicant's own account in SAM.

Our Commitment to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Many of the greatest ideas and discoveries come from a diverse mix of minds, backgrounds and experiences. The Simons Foundation is committed to grantmaking that inspires and supports greater diversity and inclusiveness by cultivating a funding environment that ensures representation of all identities and differences and equitable access to information and resources for all applicants and grantees.

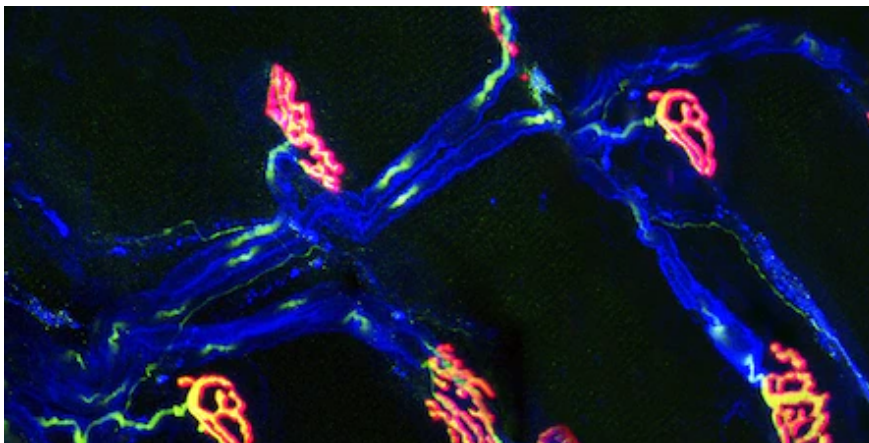
The Simons Foundation provides equal opportunities to all applicants for funding without regard to race, religion, color, age, sex, pregnancy, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic disposition, neurodiversity, disability, veteran status or any other protected category under federal, state and local law. The foundation also funds program directed at supporting scientists from disadvantaged backgrounds or underrepresented groups, often working closely with professional societies and other funding agencies.

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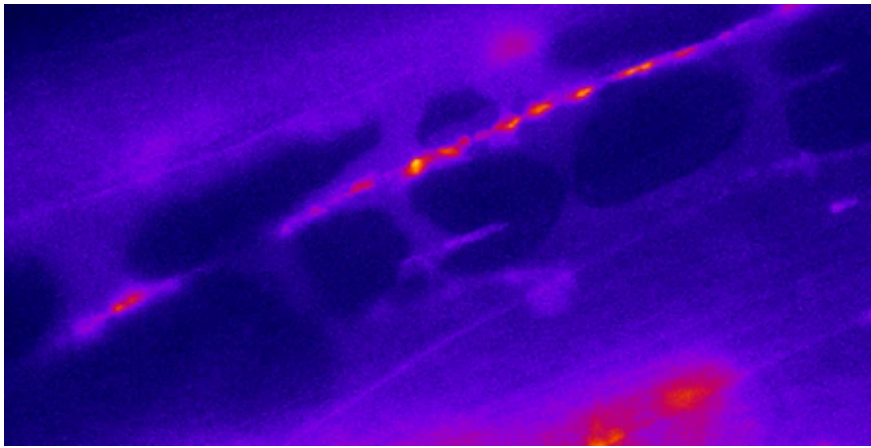
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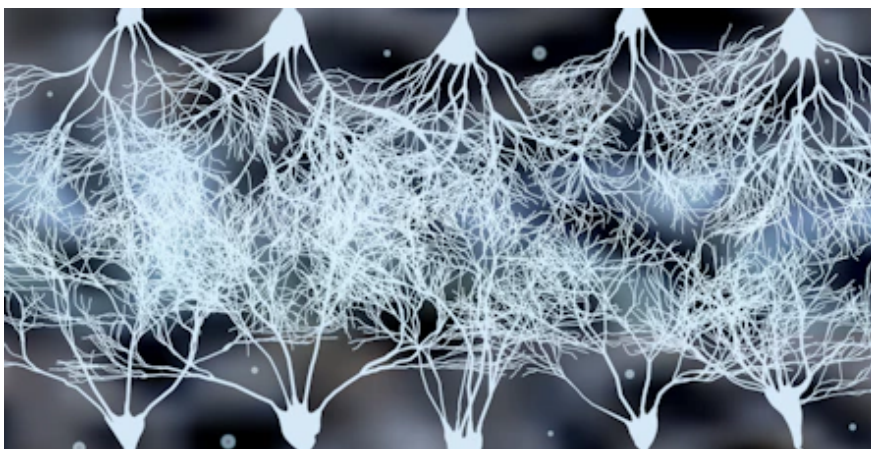
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