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How to apply for a FARA Research Grant

FARA accepts LOIs from investigators from public and private nonprofit universities, colleges, hospitals, laboratories, government agencies, biotechnology/pharmaceutical companies, other for-profit entities; irrespective of the country of origin. FARA particularly encourages junior investigators to submit LOIs. Junior investigators and postdoctoral trainees who would like support through the application process or general advice on grant writing may contact FARA at grants@curefa.org (mailto:grants@curefa.org).

FARA-funded research has accelerated the development of clinical and pre-clinical research resources such as animal models, cell models, antibodies, biorepositories, biomarkers and clinical endpoints. Our goal is to facilitate access to such resources and promote collaboration among FA investigators. Please see <https://www.curefa.org/researchresources> (<https://www.curefa.org/researchresources>) for more information on how to access available research resources in FA.

Overview of Grant Program Process

<p>- Letter Of Intent (LOI)</p>	<p>All LOIs must be submitted using FARA's grant submission portal (https://webportalapp.com/sp/fara_grants). The LOI must explain how the proposed research addresses FARA's grant program priorities (https://www.curefa.org/grant-priorities). This is a competitive, peer-review process, as such only a small number of applications are accepted past the LOI phase. The LOI should be sufficiently detailed to allow the reader to understand the validity and applicability of the project. This decision will usually be made within a month of receipt of the LOI. LOIs are accepted from forprofit organizations, non-profit organizations, public or private institutions, and foreign institutions. Please note the grant funding start dates for each cycle here (https://www.curefa.org/grant) and select your submission cycle accordingly.</p>
<p>A Letter of Intent (LOI) is required for all grant applications and must include two PDF files:</p> <p>The first PDF should describe:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The rationale for the proposed project and how the research fits within FARA's grant program priorities (up to 1 page); 2) The hypothesis to be tested and the specific aims (up to 1 page); 3) Key preliminary data of direct relevance to FA (no more than 2 pages); 4) References; 5) Estimate of budget request with justification. The budget limit for each grant type must be met. However, for General Research Grant applications, budgets exceeding \$125,000/year will be considered if adequately justified, for example in case of collaborations involving multiple PIs. The maximum direct salary that can be requested cannot exceed the NIH salary cap. Please note the grant funding start dates for each cycle here (https://www.curefa.org/grant) and select your submission cycle accordingly. <p>The second PDF should provide the CV/biosketch for Principal Investigator (including contact information) and all other key personnel.</p> <p>For Postdoctoral Fellowships and Postdoctoral Research Awards, this PDF file must also include a 1-2 page personal statement of career goals and how the proposed research and research training environment will facilitate achieving these goals.</p> <p>In addition, a mentorship plan developed jointly by the postdoctoral scholar and mentor(s) must be included, as well as letters of support from mentor(s).</p>	
<p>- Application</p>	<p>All applications must be submitted using FARA's grant submission portal (https://webportalapp.com/sp/fara_grants). This includes a lay summary of the project, budget and a timeline with detailed milestones. The project description, curriculum vitae/biosketch of each of the key investigators, letters of support, and other relevant documents must be submitted as PDF files.</p>

<p>Project Description</p> <p>The description of the project (excluding references to literature) should not exceed 10 pages, which includes the specific aims, background, preliminary data, and research plan, plus a brief statement on the suitability of the scientific environment and the availability of the necessary resources/equipment for the proposed research. This page limit excludes references and applies to grants less than \$150,000. Larger grants do not have page number restrictions. All grant proposals must provide adequate detail for reviewer evaluation.</p> <p>Budget</p> <p>A detailed budget must be submitted with all proposals, including a justification of all requested expenses. Allowable expenses are: personnel costs/salary with fringe benefits, laboratory reagents and supplies, equipment, animal expenses, publication costs, investigator travel to meetings and conferences and to facilitate collaborations, patient expenses directly related to study and not reimbursable by third party insurers, and patient travel. Expenses that will not be awarded include: indirect costs/overhead, tuition costs and memberships in scientific societies. Budget justification for investigator travel to meetings, conferences and to facilitate collaborations must include the destination, number of people traveling and dates or duration of stay for all anticipated travel, and clearly state how the travel is directly related to the proposed research. Budget limits for each grant type must be met. However, for General Research Grant applications, budgets exceeding 125,000/year will be considered if adequately justified, for example in the case of collaborations involving multiple PIs. The maximum direct salary that can be requested cannot exceed the NIH salary cap.</p> <p>Milestones</p> <p>All projects must have objective milestones that are clearly communicated. We appreciate that some projects, especially those that are more basic-science oriented, might need to have milestone adjustments based on specific experimental outcomes. If the proposal is funded, FARA will utilize the proposed milestones for scheduling progress reports and monitoring the project.</p> <p>Human Subjects</p> <p>If human subjects are used in the proposed study, the study must be approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) or equivalent. Full funding will not be provided until proof of IRB approval is demonstrated to FARA. Human subjects studied during research conducted under a FARA grant are under no circumstances a responsibility of FARA.</p> <p>Animal Research</p> <p>If animals are used, the proposed study must be approved by the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC), or equivalent, indicating that appropriate precautions have been taken to assure that proper treatment, care and humane conditions are provided.</p> <p>Other documents</p> <p>This can include all supporting materials such as appendices, institutional transmittal forms, letters of support, etc.</p>
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<p>- Award for Innovative Mindset</p>	<p>AIM grants do not require an LOI. Please submit your AIM proposal using the LOI submission form in FARA's grant submission portal (https://webportalapp.com/sp/fara_grants).</p>
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<p>Description</p> <p>The Award for Innovative Mindset (AIM) supports the initial exploration of innovative, high-risk, high-gain, and potentially groundbreaking concepts in FA research, that will foster new directions, bring new perspectives to the field and address neglected issues in FA research. Studies supported by this award mechanism are expected to lay the groundwork for future avenues of scientific investigation. The proposed research project should include a well-formulated, testable hypothesis based on strong scientific rationale and study design. The presentation of preliminary and/or published data is encouraged, but not required.</p> <p>The proposed research project should be innovative - introduce a novel paradigm, challenge existing paradigms, examine existing problems from novel perspectives, or exhibit other highly creative qualities. Research that is an incremental advance upon published data is not consistent with the intent of this award mechanism. It is the responsibility of the Principal Investigator (PI) to clearly and explicitly articulate how the proposed research project is innovative in the field of FA. Only a few research applications that are innovative and feasible, specifically address the critical needs of the FA community and are consistent with the mission of FARA will be considered for review and funding.</p> <p>Submission</p> <p>Please submit your proposal here (https://webportalapp.com/sp/fara_grants), by using the LOI submission form and uploading all required information. Please select "Award for Innovative Mindset" from the dropdown menu when submitting the application.</p> <p>Requirements</p> <p>The proposal has a four-page limit that applies to text and non-text elements (e.g., figures, tables, graphs, photographs, diagrams, chemical structures, drawings) used to describe the project. References are not included in the page limit. Describe the proposed project in detail using the outline below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rationale: Clearly articulate the rationale for the proposed research project. The presentation of preliminary and/or published data is encouraged, but not required. • Innovation: Provide a brief summary of the proposed research that emphasizes the innovation it brings to the field of FA and the potential impact of this line of investigation. • Hypothesis: State concisely the specific hypothesis that will be tested as it relates to a new concept, theory, paradigm, and/or method that addresses an important problem in FA research. • Specific Aims: Concisely explain the proposed research project's specific aims. • Research Strategy and Feasibility: Describe the experimental design, methods, and analyses, including appropriate controls, in sufficient detail for scientific peer review. Address potential problem areas and present alternative methods and approaches. State clearly how you are qualified to test the specific hypothesis you are putting forward. <p>The proposal should also include a brief lay summary and an estimate of the budget with justification (not included in the four-page limit), as well as the CVs/biosketches for the Principal Investigator (PI) and co-investigators (if any are included). The anticipated direct costs budgeted must not exceed \$100,000. FARA does not fund indirect costs. Investigators at all academic levels (or equivalent) may be named as the PI on the application. We particularly encourage junior investigators to apply.</p> <p>Only highly competitive proposals that are considered feasible will be peer-reviewed; no feedback will be provided for applications that are not reviewed. The award recipients will be announced by May 1 and the grant start date will be between June 1 and July 1.</p> <p>Review process</p> <p>All applications are first reviewed by the members of the FARA Scientific Review Committee (SRC), who score each application for innovation and impact. Those that rank highly then undergo full external peer-review. The external reviewers are selected by the SRC and each of the reviewers provides comments and scores for innovation, impact and approach.</p>
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<p>- Review and Decision Process</p>	<p>All grant applications submitted to FARA undergo a rigorous and confidential review procedure that is overseen by the FARA Scientific Review Committee (SRC).</p>
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1. The SRC makes a preliminary review and if the application is considered acceptable, it undergoes external peer-review by established researchers with the appropriate expertise. The reviewers are assigned by the SRC, often based on suggestions provided by the applicant. All reviewers confirm that they do not have a conflict of interest before reviewing a grant application. Click [here \(/../pdf/FARA-Conflict-Of-Interest-guidelines.pdf\)](#) to read FARA's guidelines on assessing conflict of interest
2. Each reviewer provides a score for the "Overall Impact" of the proposal, as well as scores for 5 specific criteria (significance, investigator, innovation, approach/methods, and environment/resources), and comments that justify the scores given for these criteria.
3. Sometimes reviewers raise questions to the applicants, questions that are critical to determine whether a proposal should be recommended for funding:
 - a) When these questions can be addressed quickly, the applicant is asked to provide a response to the reviewer comments, usually within a month. If the SRC finds the applicant's response to the reviewer comments satisfactory, the application will be moved forward.
 - b) If a more detailed response is required, the applicant will be asked to submit a response to the reviewer comments and a revised application by the next grant cycle deadline. This rebuttal will be sent back to the original reviewers or to additional reviewers for their comments. These revised applications will compete for funding with all applications received in the following grant cycle.
4. Following this thorough discussion of the reviews, as well as the significance and relevance of the proposed research to FARA's mission and strategic research priorities, the SRC submits those applications for which funding is recommended to the **FARA Board of Directors (/../leadership)** (Executive Committee).
5. In making a final funding decision, the FARA Executive Committee considers the reviewer comments, the SRC comments and recommendation, the importance and priority level of the proposed research to FARA's goals, and the availability of funds in the FARA treasury (including an assessment of future commitments and requirements).
6. Only applications that are recommended for funding by the SRC will be considered for funding by the FARA Executive Committee. The funding decision made by the FARA Executive Committee is final.

- Reporting Requirements

All FARA grantees must submit semi-annual scientific reports and annual financial reports using FARA's **grant submission portal** (https://webportalapp.com/sp/fara_grants). The required frequency of reports will be stated in the formal funding agreement with FARA. Each report must be submitted as a PDF file by using FARA's Grant program submission portal. Continuation funding will not be provided until all required progress reports are received and reviewed by the FARA SRC, and approved for funding by the FARA Executive Committee.

FARA also encourages investigators to present their FARA funded research at least once during the course of their grant at the FARA Forum, on a mutually agreed upon date. The Forum is a monthly webinar open to FARA grant awardees and the FARA Scientific Advisory Board and it is held on the second Tuesday of every month.

Instructions and format for Progress and Final Project Reports are as follows:

Progress Reports

Progress reports are due by the end of the annual project period (unless more frequent reports are requested). The progress report must include the following sections:

- **Lay summary** of progress towards achieving goals and research plans for the next year, including significance of work to the development of therapies for FA (maximum of 500 words).
- **Executive summary** that outlines in bulleted-format all proposed goals achieved and a results overview.
- **Assessment of milestone achievement** the year of work completed and — for grants awarded two years of funding — for the year of work to come.
- **Scientific report** of research results and progress against milestones and research objectives for upcoming term of grant (maximum of four pages)
- **List of publications and presentations** that have resulted from FARA funding for this project (Provide a PDF of each publication)
- **Patents received/pending and products** developed because of FARA funding for this project
- **Other grants** received by the FARA grantee for FA research projects over the past year (agency, title, funding period, overlap with this FARA project)
- **Budget status:**
 - Financial report documenting allocation/use of funds expended from grant during term of award
 - Amount and justification of request for the next project period

Final Report

This report is due no later than one month after the end of the grant. It must include:

- **Lay summary** - see progress report above.
- **Executive summary** that outlines in bulleted-format all proposed goals achieved and a results overview.
- **Assessment of milestone achievement** the year of work completed.
- **Scientific report** - see progress report above.
- **List of publications and presentations** - see progress report above.
- **Patents received/pending and products** - see progress report above.
- **Other grants** - see progress report above.
- **Budget status:**
 - Financial report documenting allocation/use of funds expended from grant (**unused** funds are to be returned to FARA)
 - As stipulated in the contractual agreement with FARA, an official financial statement from the recipient institution must be received no later than two months after the end of the grant

Request for a No-cost Extension and/or Carryover of Funds

A request for a no-cost extension of up to one year will be considered if the reason for the request is compelling. This request needs to be submitted as part of the progress report. The investigator must explain why the funds were not spent, why the extension is needed and how the carry-over funds will be used to advance the research project.

For a 2-year grant, FARA will consider a request for carry-over of funds at the end of the first year. The request must be submitted as part of the first year progress report, and a detailed explanation must be provided.

If circumstances arise during the funding period that interfere with the progress of the funded research and make it likely that a request will be made for a no-cost extension and/or carry-over of funds, the investigator is strongly advised to inform FARA immediately.

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General Policies

[Click here to learn more about FARA's general policies for research grants.](#)

LOIs and invited grant applications must meet the specified deadlines. Exceptions are made only for projects of high priority to FARA. With compelling justification for special consideration, investigators with high-priority projects may submit LOIs throughout the year and may also have a budget greater than \$125,000 per year. Please submit all special consideration requests and LOIs via email, grants@curefa.org (mailto:grants@curefa.org).

Occasionally FARA may issue Requests For Proposals (RFPs (/grant#p1)) targeting a high priority research area. Each RFP will have its own specific deadline and budget limit.

FARA funds only direct costs. Indirect costs will not be awarded.

Grant awards are made in one-year allocations. As stipulated in the contractual agreement with FARA, satisfactory progress reports (following the instructions under Reporting Requirements) must be received before FARA will provide funds for the second year of a 2-year project.

All unused funds at the end each year must be returned to FARA. In exceptional circumstances, FARA may approve a Request for a No-Cost Extension.

FARA reserves the right to terminate any grant award for inadequate progress, failure to submit reports, deviation in scope of the original research, and/or changes in FARA funding priorities. If an award is terminated, all unused funds must be returned to FARA.

General Guidelines for Junior Investigators

Click here to learn more about FARA's general guidelines for junior investigators applying for FARA research grants.

Growing and developing the FA research community is a priority for FARA. As such, FARA encourages applications from junior investigators and young clinicians. Reviewers consider the investigator's career stage and will review the grant application with this information in mind. For Postdoctoral Fellowships and Postdoctoral Research Awards FARA requires junior investigators to submit a personal statement describing their current position and plans for the future as it relates to FA research, with a description of career goals and how the proposed research and research environment will favor achieving those goals. A mentoring plan developed jointly by the junior investigator and mentor(s), as well as letters of support from all mentors are also required. If junior investigators would like support through the application process or general advice on grant writing, they may contact grants@curefa.org (mailto:grants@curefa.org).

General Guidelines for Industry

Click here to learn more about FARA's general guidelines for Industry (Biopharmaceutical Companies) applying for FARA research grants.

FARA will accept grant submissions from industry partners who have a demonstrated participation in the FA research community and are advancing therapeutic candidates for FA. FARA requires that a Letter of Intent (LOI) be submitted prior to the submission of a grant proposal. All projects/requests should be:

- Directly related to advancing a therapeutic candidate closer to clinic, and/or
- Addressing an FA-specific issue that could be of benefit to the entire field, such as biomarker validation or mechanism of action.

FARA will also accept proposals for direct patient-related expenses for clinical studies.



(https://webportalapp.com/sp/fara_grants)

Grant program updates and announcements

View special interest RFPs and other grant program updates and announcements **here** (/grant#p1).

Newly awarded grants

Gene & Stem Cell Therapy (/grant-awards#d2c)

Changfan Lin, PhD - Caltech

Engineering adeno-associated viral vectors to evade immune responses

Mechanism or Pathway of Disease (/grant-awards#d4c)

Sarah Robinson-Thiewes, PhD - St. Jude Children's Research Hospital

Illuminating how SynGRs liberate gene expression from heterochromatin

Anna Stepanova, PhD - Weill Cornell Medical College

Calcium communication among intracellular compartments in FA patient-derived cells

David Lynch, MD, PhD - Children's Hospital of Philadelphia

Understanding ketogenesis in FRDA: Pathophysiology, biomarkers and nutritional therapies

Outcome Measures & Biomarkers (/grant-awards#d7c)

Louise Corben, PhD - Murdoch Children's Research Institute
Measuring ataxia in children with Friedreich ataxia

Joseph Baur, PhD & Shana McCormack, MD - University of Pennsylvania and Children's Hospital of Philadelphia
Detection and enhancement of tissue NAD+ levels in Friedreich's Ataxia

Ankur Jain, PhD & Ricardo Mouro Pinto, PhD - Harvard Medical School and Massachusetts General Hospital
A New Ultrasensitive Single-Molecule Assay for Frataxin Measurement

Improving Clinical Outcomes (/grant-awards#d9c)

Manuela Corti, PhD & Tanja Taivassalo, PhD - University of Florida

Functional electrical stimulation (FES) cycling training to improve motor and cardiac functions in patients with Friedreich's Ataxia: a feasibility and efficacy study

Are you subscribed to our science newsletter, Friedreich's ataxia Community Research News?

If you are not a subscriber, please **click here** (https://visitor.r20.constantcontact.com/manage/optin?v=001LJMCW015jW0Cqv-E-0F0WijfO2UVCrFIX3pczFqWCMtvcJTgOKGsG2zBAXes_TUoixshzEcZ5gFWBdcasJfRtGbVa2W7bdADbTJ0uKFv43HAjL7MDQFvcCBxCdwCjFF1weGL6dymgKBuOjBTYUT1a) to sign-up!

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