

Sponsoring Organization

**The Maryland Stem Cell Research Commission, on behalf of
The Maryland Stem Cell Research Fund ("MSCRF")**

Title

**Post-Doctoral Fellowship
for Basic, Translational and Clinical Stem Cell Research
In Support of Medical Therapies**

Request For Applications (RFA) Number

RFA-MD-12-3

The Maryland Stem Cell Research Commission strongly encourages collaborations between for-profit and not-for-profit organizations and researchers. Projects leading to advances in regenerative medicine will receive the highest priority.

Key Dates

Required Letter of Intent Submission Deadline: 11:59 P.M., November 14, 2011

Application Submission Deadline: 11:59 P.M., January 16, 2012

Peer Review Date(s): March 2012

Commission Review Date: May 7, 2012

Earliest Anticipated Start Date: June 2012

Introduction

Stem cell research offers extraordinary promise for new medical therapies and a better understanding of debilitating human diseases and conditions. The development of new medical strategies for the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of human diseases and conditions through human stem cell research is a high priority for the State of Maryland.

The Maryland Stem Cell Research Fund was established by the Maryland General Assembly, under the Maryland Stem Cell Research Act of 2006 ("Stem Cell Act"), to promote State-funded human stem cell research and medical treatments through Grants to public and private entities in the State. The Maryland Stem Cell Research Commission ("the Commission") sets policies and administers the MSCRF.

The Commission has established several research funding mechanisms, including: Investigator-Initiated Research Grants, Exploratory Research Grants and Post-Doctoral Fellowship Research Grants. **Investigator-Initiated Research Grants** are designed for Investigators with preliminary data supporting the Grant Application, who wish to conduct basic, translational and/or clinical research on human stem cells. **Exploratory Research Grants** are designed for Investigators who are new to the stem cell field (young Investigators and Investigators from other fields), and for new hypotheses, approaches, mechanisms or models that may differ from current thinking in the stem cell field and have little or no preliminary data supporting the Application, and wish to conduct basic, translational and/or clinical research on human stem cells.

This Request for Applications, **RFA-MD-12-3**, is soliciting Applications for **Post-Doctoral Fellowship Grants**. These Grants are for post-doctoral fellows who wish to conduct basic, translational and/or clinical research on human stem cells.

The MSCRF supports projects involving human stem cells of all types, as defined in the Stem Cell Act. All State-funded stem cell research must be conducted in Maryland.

Any one candidate may apply for only one new MSCRF Award in any given year.

Applicants must commit to make the results of their MSCRF-funded research available to others, through publications (preferably), public presentations or other methods of dissemination.

Funding Objectives

The purpose of this RFA is to fulfill the provisions of the Stem Cell Act by providing State funds to train the next generation of human stem cell researchers and expand the biotechnology community in Maryland. There is currently a need for more investment in basic, translational and clinical research to pursue the potential of stem cell therapies.

Eligibility

Exceptional pre-doctoral students and post-doctoral fellows who wish to conduct basic, translational and/or clinical research in Maryland on human stem cells and have institutional support are eligible to apply for this Award. The Applicant and all other MSCRF-funded personnel must be employed or retained by an eligible Maryland-based organization while conducting this work. Such affiliations may be permanent or temporary, full-time or part-time. Maryland-based research organizations of all types may serve as Post-Doctoral training locations. Such locations include public and private for-profit and not-for-profit organizations (e.g., universities, colleges, research institutes, companies and medical centers).

Organizations based outside the State of Maryland are not eligible for funding. However, collaborations with non-Maryland based organizations or persons may be allowable if the Applicant can demonstrate that none of the MSCRF funding will be used to support work performed outside of Maryland.

The Applicant is the Principal Investigator ("PI"), and the Mentor of the Applicant will have responsibilities under the Grant Agreement. Letters of support from the Applicant's Mentor and sponsoring institution, company, or organization are mandatory.

Individuals from underrepresented minorities and individuals with disabilities are encouraged to apply.

Award Size and Duration

Each Fellowship Award will provide up to fifty-five thousand dollars (\$55,000) per year, for up to two years, and will include all direct, indirect and fringe benefit costs.

Application Requirements

The Application must include the following:

- I. **Applicant information**, to be completed by the Applicant
 - A. Applicant's **Biosketch** (NIH format), not to exceed four (4) pages
 - B. Proposed **Project Description**, not to exceed four (4) pages. The project description should be organized according to the guidelines of the Investigator-Initiated Application (RFA-MD-12-1), and include sections on **Significance, Innovation, Approach, Translational Potential, Bioethics** and, if applicable, **Collaborative Plan**
- II. **Mentor and training program**, to be completed by the Mentor
 - A. Mentor's **Biosketch** (NIH format), not to exceed four (4) pages
 - B. Proposed **Training Program** and training **Environment**, not to exceed two (2) pages
 - C. List of up to five (5) previous **Trainees**, their current employment and any involvement in stem cell research
 - D. **Evaluation of the Applicant** and his/her potential to conduct stem cell research, not to exceed one (1) page
 - E. Letter of institutional/organizational support
- III. Two (2) **Letters of Recommendation** from individuals other than the Mentor, to be uploaded electronically by the Applicant through the TEDCO Funds System (see www.tedcofunds.org), describing the qualifications, commitment and potential of the Applicant in the field of stem cell research
- IV. The Project Number(s), Title(s) and Funding Source(s) of all **Currently Supported Research**, and a short paragraph summarizing each Project.

Letter of Intent

- I. To be eligible to submit a Grant Application, a prospective Applicant must first submit a Letter of Intent ("LOI"). The LOI may not exceed one (1) page and must include the following information:
 - A. Descriptive **Title** of the proposed research
 - B. **Name, Address, Telephone Number** and **Email Address** of the PI

- C. Name of **Sponsoring Organization(s)** and **Site(s)** of proposed research
- D. Type of Grant Application (**Post-Doctoral Fellowship Grant**) and RFA number (**RFA-MD-12-3**)
- E. Brief description of the **Proposed Research**
- F. Targeted **Disease(s) or Condition(s)**, if applicable
- G. **Human Stem Cell Type(s)** to be used (e.g., hESC, ASC or iPS)
- H. Whether the proposed research is **Basic, Translational, or Clinical**
- I. The area(s) and type(s) of **Expertise Necessary to Evaluate the Proposal**, including key words that identify elements of the research Proposal (such as disease focus, technical approaches, research fields and disciplines).

Applicants will not receive feedback on their LOIs. LOIs will not be used by reviewers or considered in the evaluation of Applications. The purpose of the LOI is to enable the Commission to plan its workload, select the optimal number of peer reviewers, and ensure that the Scientific Review Committee has the requisite range of expertise to conduct the review.

Application and Submission Information

I. **Application Information** is available electronically on the MSCRF Web site (see www.msccrf.org)

II. **Telecommunications for the hearing impaired** is available at TTY 443-539-0180

III. Methods of Submission

- A. A **Letter of Intent** (LOI) must be submitted electronically, no later than 11:59 P.M., **November 14, 2011** through <http://submissions.marylandtedco.org/LOI>.
- B. The **Grant Application** must be submitted electronically, no later than 11:59 P.M., **January 16, 2012**, using the TEDCO Funds System (see www.MSCRF.org and click on the TEDCO Funds icon).

Fellowship instructions are posted on the MSCRF Web site. Do not wait until the last day to become familiar with the TEDCO Funds System. Please note that final submissions in a university system are done by the Research Administration office and not by the PI.

One paper copy of the Fellowship Grant Application shall be submitted by mail (see address below). Deliveries in person will not be accepted.

Maryland Stem Cell Research Fund
Maryland TEDCO
5565 Sterrett Place, Suite 214
Columbia, MD 21044

All electronic submissions must be received by their respective due dates. The paper copy of the Application must be postmarked no later than one business day after the submission deadline, January 16, 2012. Late submissions will not be reviewed.

Review Criteria

I. The Scientific Review Committee will use the NIH scoring system of 1-9 to rank each of the following criteria and the overall impact/priority of the Application. In this scoring system, “1” indicates the highest impact/priority and “9” indicates the lowest impact/priority.

- A. The Applicant’s qualifications and potential to conduct stem cell research
- B. The scientific merit of the proposed training project with respect to Significance, Innovation, Approach, Translational Potential, Bioethics and, if applicable, Collaborative Plan. (See section 5 of RFA-MD-12-1 for a more detailed description of the review criteria.)
- C. The potential of the proposed project to train the Applicant
- D. The Mentor’s training record and qualifications, including stem cell biology
- E. The training environment

Collaboration Between For-profit and Not-for-profit Organizations

The Commission strongly encourages research collaborations between for-profit and not-for-profit organizations in Maryland, and will give preference to scientifically meritorious Applications that include such collaborations (e.g., collaborative research projects, sharing of resources and/or equipment, training of for-profit employees in an academic institution, or training of academic personnel in a for-profit company).

Award Notices

The Commission will review the scientifically scored Applications and make its funding recommendations to the TEDCO Board of Directors. After the TEDCO Board has approved the Commission's recommendations, a formal notification, in the form of a Notice of Award (NOA), will be sent via email to each successful Applicant.

No Applicant should assume receipt of funding for a project until a Grant Agreement has been signed by the Applicant's sponsoring institution, company or organization and TEDCO. A template for the MSCRF Grant Agreement will be posted on the TEDCO Web site before the Awards are announced (see www.MSCRF.org).

Questions

Questions about this RFA must be submitted by email to: mscrinfo@marylandtedco.org. Telephone inquiries will not be accepted.