2021 Human Cognitive and Behavioral Science – Request for Applications

Grants awarded through this RFA are intended to produce foundational knowledge about the neurobehavioral differences associated with ASD, which will directly inform the development or refinement of tools needed for translational efforts, such as biomarkers and outcome measures. Special emphasis is placed on objective, quantitative measures that may be used in conjunction with standardized clinical measures and genomic information to better triangulate phenotypic and neurobiological variability within and across individuals with ASD.

The maximum budget is $750,000 or less, inclusive of 20 percent indirect costs, over a period of up to three years.

Policies and Procedures
Application Deadline
May 3, 2021

Maximum Budget

Over a period of up to three years
Maximum of $750,000

Important Dates

Application Available
March 1, 2021

Informational Zoom Meeting
March 24, 2021

Application Deadline
May 3, 2021

Award Notification
August 2021

Award Start Dates
September 1, 2021
October 1, 2021
November 1, 2021

Eligibility +

1. Am I eligible to be a principal investigator (PI) on a SFARI award? +

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. See the "Personnel FAQ" section for more information on the responsibilities of a SFARI principal investigator.

Principal investigators (PIs) who do not have substantial ASD clinical expertise should include a close collaborator with such expertise on their grant application (e.g., multi-PI application).

2. Can postdoctoral associates apply as PIs? +

No, postdoctoral associates may not apply as PIs even if your institution is willing to submit an application on your behalf.

Senior postdoctoral research associates who are interested in pursuing an independent career in autism research are encouraged to apply for SFARI's Bridge to Independence Award RFA.

3. Can foreign institutions apply for a grant? +

Yes, foreign institutions may apply. Please see Simons Foundation policies regarding international grants.

4. I am a recipient of the SFARI Bridge to Independence (BTI) award. Am I eligible to apply as a PI to +
the Human Cognitive and Behavioral Science RFA?

BTI awardees may not apply to be PIs on a SFARI application within two years of the BTI grant start date. However, BTI awardees may be named in other personnel roles, including co-investigator and consultant. After the two-year moratorium, BTI awardees may apply as a PI for any SFARI grant program. Note that this moratorium applies only to SFARI grants and no other grant award programs within the Simons Foundation, such as the Simons Collaboration on the Global Brain or the Klingenstein-Simons Fellowship Awards.

Personnel +

1. What is the difference between a principal investigator (PI) and a co-investigator? +

Principal Investigator
The individual(s) judged by the applicant organization to have the appropriate level of authority and responsibility to direct the project or program supported by the grant. All PIs 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. He or she is responsible and accountable to the applicant organization and SFARI for the proper conduct of the project or activity, including the submission of all required reports. He or she will act as the main point of contact for the foundation.

Co-investigator
An individual involved with the PI in the scientific development or execution of a project. The co-investigator must hold a Ph.D., M.D. or equivalent and be employed by, or affiliated with, the applicant/grantee organization or another organization participating in the project under a consortium agreement. A co-investigator is considered key personnel, but the Simons Foundation does not require a minimum effort from the co-investigator. The designation of a co-investigator, if applicable, does not affect the PI's roles and responsibilities, nor is it a role implying multiple PIs.

2. Is there a minimum percent effort for PIs or co-investigators? +

We seek applications from independent investigators who can devote a substantial portion of time to this effort. There is no minimum percent effort required for any personnel, but we expect personnel, in particular PIs and co-investigators, to have efforts that reflect their roles in the project.

3. Can multiple PIs apply for a grant? +

When relevant, the applicant organization may designate multiple individuals as PIs who share the authority and responsibility for leading and directing the project, intellectually and logistically. Each PI is responsible and accountable to the applicant organization or, as appropriate, to a collaborating organization, for the proper conduct of the project or program, including the submission of all required reports. The presence of more than one identified PI on an application or award diminishes neither the responsibility nor the accountability of any individual PI.

Principal investigators (PIs) who do not have substantial ASD clinical expertise should include a close collaborator with such expertise on their grant application (e.g., multi-PI application).

The first PI listed, under whose name the application is submitted, will serve as the contact PI for administrative purposes. The contact PI must be affiliated with the institution submitting the application. The contact PI will be responsible for communication between SFARI and the rest of the leadership team.

The role type "Co-PI" will not be used by SFARI.

4. How do I designate multiple PIs on the application?   +

- Applications with multiple PIs from different institutions that would like to be paid separately must upload the following items in the proposal attachments section:
  - Signed signature page for each PI (available for download in the "Proposal Attachments" and "Download Templates & Instructions" sections).
  - Budget template for each non-applicant PI (available for download in the "Proposal Attachments" and "Download Templates & Instructions" sections).
  - The direct costs for all non-applicant PIs must be included in the "Budget Period Detail" section in the "Consortium & Contractual Direct" section, and indirect costs for all non-applicant PIs should be included in the "Indirect Costs" section. Please add a separate line for both direct costs and indirect costs for each non-applicant PI.
- Applications with multiple PIs from different institutions who will be paid directly by the contact PI's institution are considered subcontracts. Subcontracts must submit:
  - Subcontract Detailed Budget (available for download in the "Proposal Attachments" and "Download Templates & Instructions" sections) for each subcontract.
  - Subcontract direct costs must be included in the "Consortium & Contractual Direct" section, and subcontract indirect costs should be included in the "Indirect Costs" section. Please add a separate line for both direct costs and indirect costs for each subcontract.
  - Only one signature page from the institution of the applicant PI submitting the application is required.
- Applications with multiple PIs from the same institution do not need to submit additional materials. Additional non-applicant PIs should be listed as key personnel in the "Key Personnel" section and in the "Budget Period Detail" section, and only one signature page is needed.

5. As the contact PI, should I be listed as key personnel in the application on proposalCENTRAL (pC)?   +

No, please list only additional key personnel on the application (i.e., co-investigators, non-contact PI(s), postdoctoral research associates, etc.).

6. Where do I enter additional co-investigators and additional key personnel?   +

You can save personnel details in the "Key Personnel" section on the application.

7. Can co-investigators and additional personnel be listed on multiple applications?   +

Yes, co-investigators and additional personnel can be listed on multiple applications.

8. Does the Simons Foundation require letters of support or collaboration?   +

We do not require letters of support or letters of collaboration from co-investigators. If a letter is prepared, it can be uploaded as "Appendix – In-press papers on related topics."

Submission   +

1. What is the submission schedule?   +

The submission schedule is as follows:
- March 1, 2021 RFA Opens
- May 3, 2021 Full Application Submission Deadline

2. Where do I submit the proposal?   +

New users first need to register on proposalCENTRAL (pC). For all users, log in and select "Create New Proposal" or click on the "Grant Opportunities" tab. The SFARI programs will be listed during the submission period. Click "Apply Now" to start the application and access the template. After all sections are completed and your application PDF is uploaded, you will be able to hit the "Submit" button to send the application.

3. How do I create a proposalCENTRAL user account?   +

Go to https://proposalcentral.com/ and click "Create An Account Now." Fill in the required fields, check the boxes to agree to proposalCENTRAL's "Terms of Service and Acceptable Use Policy" and then click "Save."

4. Can I email or mail a proposal?   +

No, the Simons Foundation accepts only applications submitted online through pC.

5. Can someone else (assistant, staff member, etc.) submit my application for me? +

Yes, you can add users with administrator access to the pC application so that someone other than the principal investigator (PI) can edit and submit the application.

6. Can I change the contact PI? +

Yes, linked instructions for how to change the contact PI can be found in the application.
The person who starts an application will be named as the PI on the Applicant/PI page. If the Applicant/PI section does not show the correct person (e.g., someone else started the online application and you are the PI, or you started the application and someone else is the PI), you must update this section before submitting.

7. Does the PI need to sign the signature page? +

No, only the signing official is required to sign the signature page.

8. Where is the Submit button? +

The "Submit" button is located in the last section of the application. You will be unable to submit if you have not provided all the required information. If the submission deadline has NOT passed, use the "Validate" button to check for missing requirements. If the problem persists, please contact pcsupport@altum.com.

If the deadline has passed, the submission period has closed and you will not be able to submit.

9. I get an error message citing a missing section when I try to submit. +

The "Validate" button reviews your application for missing sections. The submission instructions list the required sections and attachments. You must complete the missing sections listed. If you are still receiving error messages after completing and saving the indicated sections, please contact pcsupport@altum.com.

10. Are deadline times adjusted for time zones? +

No, please be advised that application deadlines on the application are in Eastern Time. We recommend registering early and submitting applications with ample time for corrections prior to the deadline hour. Site traffic can slow page-load times. The "Submit" button will not work after the deadline time has passed.

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11. Is there a confirmation email when I submit? +

A confirmation email is sent upon submission of the application. Please contact pcsupport@altum.com if you submitted your application and have not received a confirmation email within 10 minutes. Make sure that spam filters allow emails from pcsupport@altum.com. The application will be in the Submitted tab when you next log in.

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12. Can I make changes to the application once it has been submitted? +

Before you can make changes to your submitted application, you must first contact the Simons Foundation. Please email sfgrants@simonsfoundation.org or call (646) 654-0066. Applications can only be changed prior to the deadline.

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13. Is validating my proposal the same as submitting it? +

No. "Validating" the proposal checks for errors and omissions and will alert you to missing requirements of your application. If the application is complete, you must then click the "Submit" button. You will receive an email within 10 minutes and should contact pcsupport@altum.com if you do not receive confirmation and do not see your application in the SUBMITTED tab or with the status changed to Submitted.

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14. The funding notification date has passed, and I haven't received a notification. What is the status of +
my proposal?

You should receive notification within 24 hours of the deadline. Please check your spam filter settings if you have not received notification by then.

Proposal +

1. What should be included in the Specific Aims Page? +

The Specific Aims Page should be a summary of the proposed project focused on the research aims of the project, including a concise rationale for the hypothesis, description of preliminary data and experimental approach, and impact on autism research.

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2. What is the page limit for the Specific Aims Page?   +

The Specific Aims Page should not exceed one (1) page of single-spaced, size 11 text, 0.5 margins.

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3. What is the page limit for the Proposal Narrative?   +

Proposal Narratives should not exceed five (5) pages single-spaced, size 11 text, 0.5 margins. Figures, figure legends and references should follow the narrative text and will NOT count towards the page limit.

How should the Proposal Narrative be organized?

The Proposal Narrative should be considered an expanded version of the Specific Aims Page and used to provide more detail on the following:

- Relevant scientific background
- Preliminary results when applicable
- Specific aims
- Experimental design
- Pitfalls and alternative strategies
- Project significance and relevance to autism
- Timeline and milestones

SFARI considers the following information crucial for the evaluation of a project and encourages including the following details (where relevant):

- Patient cohorts used (including source of participants, sample size and availability of genetic data). Investigators should also complete the Human Participants Study Information Sheet. Applicants are strongly encouraged, but not required, to use SPARK or Simons Searchlight Research Match as part of their participation recruitment strategy.
- Datasets or biospecimen collections to be used (including SFARI resources) and their availability
- A brief statement of statistical power

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4. Are references, figures and figure legends included in the Proposal Narrative page limit? How   +
    should they be included?

References, figures and figure legends are not included in the page limits for the Proposal Narrative, although we have a limit of five (5) figures (each fitting on a single page). Please attach them at the end

of the narrative in the same PDF file. The Simons Foundation's preference is for figures to follow the narrative rather than be embedded in the text. References should be in *Journal of Neuroscience* format, including full author list, title and a link to Foundation does not require a minimum.

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5. What can I include as an appendix?   +

In-press papers can be included as appendices, as well as any papers that you consider essential for the work of the review committee, but include no more than three (3) papers. Any other material should be included, if possible, in the narrative. If you have video attachments for your proposal, please upload them as an appendix (all file types are accepted).

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6. I plan to recruit human participants for my proposed study. Do I need to provide more information   +
    beyond what is included in my Proposal Narrative?

Yes. All applications proposing to recruit human participants must complete the Human Participants Study Information Sheet available in proposalCENTRAL.

Budget   +

1. I plan to use SPARK or Simons Searchlight Research Match as part of my participant recruitment   +
    strategy. Do the services provided in this program include cost savings to my study team?

Most likely. Research Match includes services for identifying and contacting participants on behalf of your study. As such, some study team costs which are typically budgeted to a PI's grant may be reduced with the use of Research Match. Simons Foundation will work, as needed, with applicants selected for funding through this RFA to arrive at mutually agreeable budget terms.

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2. What do I do if there is a subcontract on the application?   +

Applications with a subcontract (including PIs who will be paid directly by the contact PI's institution) must submit:

- Subcontract Detailed Budget (available for download in the "Proposal Subcontract Detailed Budget" and "Download Templates & Instructions" sections) for each subcontract.
- Subcontract direct costs must be included in the "Consortium & Contractual Direct" section, and subcontract indirect costs should be included in the "Indirect Costs" section. Please add a separate line for both direct costs and indirect costs for each subcontract.

3. Are indirect costs included in the budget limits? +

Yes. The total budget is $750,000 or less, inclusive of 20 percent indirect costs, over a period of up to three (3) years. Please note that indirect costs cannot be taken on equipment with a unit cost of more than $10,000.

We strongly encourage investigators to tailor their requested budgets and duration to levels appropriate for the scope of their specific aims. As with all SFARI-funded projects, it is at Simons' discretion to modify final budgets as needed. It is to the investigator's advantage to include realistic budget estimations in their initial grant application.

Accessing Simons Collection Resources (i.e., SSC, Simons Searchlight, SPARK and AIC) +

1. How can I apply to recruit SPARK and Simons Searchlight participants for my research studies? +

Researchers may submit an application on SFARI Base. The SPARK and Simons Search Searchlight Participant Access Committee considers applications on a quarterly basis, but applications may be submitted at any time. Please refer to the SPARK recruitment process document for more details and email collections@sfari.org with any questions.

2. How can I find out more about the data collected from SPARK and Simons Searchlight participants? +

Please see the SPARK and Simons Searchlight webpages for more information about each respective cohort and their available data. You can access and request information about the data collected from SPARK via SFARI Base. If you do not have a SFARI Base account, you must create one. If you have problems with the login or have questions regarding the collections, please email collections@sfari.org.

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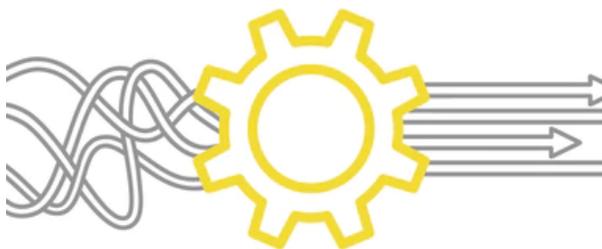
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