



THE PERRY & RUBY STEVENS PARKINSON'S DISEASE CENTER OF EXCELLENCE

In collaboration with

THE CENTER FOR INNOVATIVE DRUG DISCOVERY

REQUEST FOR LETTERS OF INTENT

PARKINSON'S DISEASE DRUG DEVELOPMENT PILOT PROJECTS

Deadline: July 29, 2024

Overview

The Perry & Ruby Stevens Parkinson's Disease Center of Excellence, in collaboration with the Center for Innovative Drug Discovery (CIDD), is soliciting Letters of Intent (LOIs) that present pilot project concepts focusing on discovery and development of novel drugs for Parkinson's disease (PD). The primary goal of this program is to accelerate PD research at UT Health San Antonio (UTHSA) by supporting innovative projects aimed at slowing the progression of PD and/or improving functional status for those living with progressive PD.

This program is supported by an award from The Perry & Ruby Stevens Charitable Foundation. The Institute for Integration of Medicine & Science (IIMS) serves as the administrative home of the program. CIDD will provide consultation as well as access to facilities, equipment, and expertise.

Eligibility

Applicants as Principal Investigators must hold full-time UTHSA faculty appointments. Collaborative projects involving co-investigators within UTHSA or from other regional institutions are strongly encouraged.

Project development sequence

- LOI submission (**July 29, 2024**).
- Consultations with CIDD scientists to aid in development and submission of full proposals (approximately September, 2024).
- Peer review, selection, funding of projects.
- PI and research team work closely with CIDD on target validation, assay development, computer-aided drug design, high-throughput screening, hit to lead transition, lead optimization, ADME/DMPK studies, drug formulation, and pre-clinical efficacy studies.
- Long-term objective – prepare for IND-enabling studies.

Submission, terms, and conditions

Applicants must adhere fully to the guidelines and formats stipulated in this RFLOI, as non-complying applications may be administratively inactivated. **An individual applicant may submit no more than one project during a given application cycle.**

All applications (both letters of intent and full proposals) must be **submitted through the Survey Monkey Apply** platform (<https://apply-uthscsa.smapply.io/>). The funding opportunity at that site is listed as: 2024-2025 Parkinson's Drug Development.

Awards will be made initially for a one-year project period, with consideration for extensions to a total of two or three years, depending on progress. Progress reports will be required six months (brief) and 12 months after the initiation of funding, as well as periodically after that. Some projects may eventually use vertebrate animals, at which time IIMS must be provided with a copy of the official letter of approval from the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC). Applicants must also be up to date on compliance with institutional research training and conflict of interest disclosure policies.

Budgets and financial policies

The Stevens Foundation has committed a total of \$500,000 over four years (beginning ~July 2024), with the expectation of supporting four projects @\$125,000 each (dependent on interval progress from year to year). Facilities and Administrative (F&A, indirect cost) expenses will not be reimbursed. Funds cannot be used to support faculty salaries. There is no minimum effort requirement for the PI (or Co-PI/Co-I, if applicable).

Budget details are not required for the LOI submission. Since much of the work will make use of the staff and facilities of the CIDD, it is anticipated that funds will be substantially allocated accordingly. However, it is expected that funds will also be allocated to the PI's laboratory for work that can be most effectively carried out in that setting. This collaborative approach will provide the flexibility needed to optimize workflow and ensure successful project completion. Specific expenditures may include staff salary and fringe benefits, laboratory supplies, core facility fees, software, and publication expenses. Tuition is not an allowed budget item. Account management will be centralized within IIMS with expenditures and encumbrances being committed as they are incurred.

LOI requirements and format

LOIs should be prepared in Survey Monkey Apply, including PDF uploads of items listed below. Font size can be no smaller than 11 point, preferably Arial. The font size for figures, figure legends, charts, and tables may be smaller, but must be clearly legible. Margins all-around should be at least 0.5". Pages of uploads should be numbered sequentially. The length of the Research Plan (narrative with illustrations and tables included) is limited to 2 single-spaced pages. The organization of the proposal should be as follows:

- Complete [SurveyMonkey Apply](#) – **2024-2025 Parkinson's Drug Development**
- Attach Forms:
 - Biographical sketch for PI (maximum 5 pages; use [NIH template](#))
 - Biographical sketches for other key personnel (maximum 5 pages each)
 - [Research plan](#) (maximum 2 pages)
 - Identification of PD-relevant disease pathway and drug target
 - Background and rationale
 - Preliminary data, if available
 - Drug development strategy
- [Literature citations](#) (optional; maximum 1 page – use continuation page)
- Appendices are **not** allowed
- A UTHSA Certificate of Proposal (COP) is **not** required at the time of submission

Responsibilities of the Principal Investigator

The principal investigator of funded projects is required to:

- Abide by program rules and regulations, as well as institutional policies
- At the time of funding, provide a complete list of other support, including other pilot project mechanisms, along with explanations of any potential scientific or budgetary overlap
- Submit complete and timely progress reports

- Acknowledge support from The Perry & Ruby Stevens Parkinson's Disease Center of Excellence and the Center for Innovations in Drug Discovery in all publications and reports generated with pilot project resources (details to be provided at the time of funding)

Questions

If you have any questions, please contact Cindy Castilleja (castillejac@uthscsa.edu) at 210-562-4010.