

RFA 11-04 CONCEPT PROPOSAL: CIRM CREATIVITY AWARDS

Promoting science education and fostering the next generation of scientists are paramount to advancing progress in biological sciences and medicine. Innovation and scientific breakthroughs are often driven by creativity, “outside the box” thinking, and a fresh perspective. One way to stimulate enthusiasm for science and nurture creativity is to provide students with an early exposure to cutting-edge medical research. Such an early exposure was the driver for a CIRM-sponsored pilot program in which high school students were introduced to stem cell research through a summer research internship in 2011. In response to this program’s success, CIRM proposes to expand and extend this approach through the Creativity Awards, a program sponsoring internships for high school students in stem cell research labs. These awards are intended to broaden the education and participation in stem cell research by young individuals representing the diversity of California’s population and to enable the involvement of students who do not otherwise have opportunities to take part in summer research internships due to socioeconomic constraints. In particular, the program will encourage participation by students who have a strong interest in science and in a second discipline, in the belief that this fosters creative thinking and approaches.

The CIRM Creativity Awards will augment established summer high school science internship programs run by California academic and research institutions. These programs will provide science education and research experiences for California high school students during an 8 week summer internship. CIRM-supported students will participate in supervised, full-time research activities in laboratories engaged in stem cell and developmental biology research. Additionally, in order to foster creativity, the students will be encouraged to pursue a second discipline of their choice in tandem to their scientific research. At the conclusion of their program, all participants will present their research projects at a special CIRM sponsored poster day event.

The CIRM Creativity Awards initiative will be open to California non-profit institutions that have an established high school summer research internship program and that possess a sufficient number of active laboratories engaged in stem cell and developmental biology research. Applicant institutions may submit only one application.

CIRM Creativity Awards will provide funds for student stipends and stipends for their mentors (i.e. the researchers in each selected laboratory who directly supervise the high school students), for administrative costs, and for student travel to attend a CIRM sponsored poster day. CIRM proposes to fund up to 10 three-year awards with each supporting up to 10 students/year. Each award will provide direct project costs of up to \$67,500 per year. Indirect costs will be ten percent of direct costs consistent with the indirect rate for CIRM training programs. A total award (including indirect costs) will be up to \$222,750. The total requested for the CIRM Creativity Awards is \$2.2 million.

Provisional timetable*

- Release of RFA 11-04 November 10, 2011
- Applications due January 12, 2012
- GWG Review February 2012
- ICOC approval March 2012
- Earliest Funding of Awards May 2012