

# Funding Opportunity for Conference Grants

EDUC 1



**PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENT**  
06.30.23



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## Objective

The mission of California Institute for Regenerative Medicine (CIRM) is to accelerate world class science to deliver transformative regenerative medicine treatments in an equitable manner to a diverse California and world

The objective of this program announcement (PA) is to create a highly competitive opportunity for CIRM to support valuable mission-specific scientific conferences. A scientific conference is defined as an organized event where persons physically assemble to exchange scientific information and explore a defined scientific subject relevant to CIRM's mission. Support of such conferences is contingent on the fiscal and programmatic priorities of CIRM at time of submission.

Under this program, CIRM will only accept applications for review of conferences aligned with CIRM's short and long-term goals. In addition, CIRM may issue specific requests for applications to develop a conference in collaboration with CIRM to fulfill a specifically defined need.

## Award Information

### What activities will CIRM support?

CIRM resources will support the following activities under this opportunity:

- ✓ Conferences addressing critical issues and bottlenecks related to stem cell-based therapy and discovery/stem cell biology.

CIRM resources cannot be used to support the following activities under this opportunity:

- ✗ Conferences outside of California
- ✗ Academic departmental retreats
- ✗ Conferences not directly relevant to CIRM's mission

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This PA will support the development and conduct of scientific conferences relevant to regenerative medicine via two funding mechanisms. CIRM plans to allocate up to \$2,000,000 biennially to this program via the following mechanisms:

#### **A. Mechanism 1**

Under Mechanism 1, the grantee will be solely responsible for planning, directing, and executing the proposed conference.

It is anticipated that the size and duration of each award will vary. The total amount awarded and the number of awards will depend upon the number, quality, and timing of applications, the costs of the proposals received, and on CIRM programmatic priorities. The maximum award amount for this category is the lesser of \$50,000 or 50% of the conference budget.

Awards via Mechanism 1 must provide complimentary registration for at least 3 CIRM scientific staff, patient advocates, and/or ICOC members. If this is not possible, the grantee is encouraged to provide access via webcasting or teleconferencing to CIRM.

In addition, applicants must allot a 30-minute speaking slot for a CIRM team member. This speaking slot is intended to be an opportunity for CIRM to inform attendees about its mission, current funding opportunities, and recruit potential projects. To be eligible for funding, applicants for a Mechanism 1 Conference Grant must commit to include this slot in the program agenda.

#### **B. Mechanism 2**

Under Mechanism 2, the grantee retains the primary responsibility for planning, directing, and executing the proposed event; however, the CIRM team will work closely with the grantee to design and implement an event that is responsive to a specific CIRM need.

CIRM will use this mechanism to request specific conferences to address an area or need important to the Institute or to seek advice on an emerging scientific issue(s) in regenerative medicine. For this type of conference, CIRM will solicit proposals from prospective applicants through a specific announcement. The maximum award amount for this category will be stated in the announcement.

CIRM Mechanism 2 Conference grants will allow funds to be budgeted and spent for meals and beverages during the conference (as specified in the RFA), honoraria for invited speakers, up to 10% salary support for the PD's time spent conducting conference-specific activities, and reasonable salary support for administrative staff time conducting conference-specific activities.

Mechanism 1 Conference Grants (applicant-initiated conferences) will remain unchanged in these areas.

For all conference grants awarded, CIRM requires a final report on the conference including outputs (e.g., DVD, abstract book or webcast) and an assessment by attendees of the presentations, overall quality of the conference as well as a financial report. Please note that CIRM requires appropriate acknowledgement on marketing and conference materials.



### How will funds be awarded?

Awards to applicants will be in the form of a grant. Awards will be made no earlier than 60 days before the conference start date. Successful applicants will have thoughtfully accounted for foreseeable risks and developed contingency plans that do not involve additional funding from CIRM. Information regarding an applicant's contingency plan should be included in the application.

## Eligibility

### What types of projects are eligible for partnering?

To be eligible, the proposed conference must satisfy the following requirements:

#### **(1) Must establish relevance to CIRM's Mission**

For Mechanism 1, applicants must provide justification as to how the proposed conference will help to accelerate world class science to deliver transformative regenerative medicine treatments in an equitable manner to a diverse California and world.

For Mechanism 2, CIRM will call for specific meetings to be organized that are aligned with its mission. The applicant will be asked to justify how its proposal will ensure that the meeting will be conducted efficiently and will achieve the aims of the announcement.

#### **(2) Must be held in California by an eligible institution and have a qualified Program Director (PD)**

California-based and non-California-based organizations (for-profit and non-profit) may use CIRM funds for eligible conference costs incurred in California. Foreign institutions are not eligible to apply for conference grant support.

A conference can be supported through a California-based or non-California-based non-profit organization of an established international scientific or professional society. Non-profit organization means either:

- (1) a governmental entity of the State of California; or
- (2) a legal entity that is tax exempt under Internal Revenue Code section 501(c) and California Revenue and Taxation Code section 23701d.

### Program Director Qualifications

A Program Director (PD) is any individual with the skills necessary to direct the planning and execution of the proposed conference. The PD may be an employee of the applicant organization or be accountable for the conduct of the proposed project to the applicant organization through a formal contract. The applicant must provide the PD's qualifications at time of application submission.



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**(3) Must show or have applied for other funding sources (Mechanism 1 applications only)**

For Mechanism 1 applications, CIRM requires the applicant to have applied for or have obtained other sources of funding. The maximum funding CIRM will allow is the lesser of 50% of a conference budget or \$50,000 for any Mechanism 1 application. The matching funds may come from any funding source arranged by the applicant. Documentation demonstrating the commitment and/or application for funds to cover the matching funds amount must be provided upon application submission. Only funds that will be spent concurrently with CIRM funds will qualify towards the matching fund requirement. CIRM will not release funds until the applicant has demonstrated to CIRM's satisfaction that it has access to the required matching funds.

For Mechanism 2 applications, CIRM does not require matching funds. CIRM will specify an award amount in the announcement that will serve as the maximum budget for the conference.

**(4) Must be submitted on or before the closest submission date that is at least 90 days before the conference begins**

**(5) Application must be accurate and complete.**

All required components of the application must be completed and may not contain false or inaccurate information.

## Schedule and Deadlines

Applications must be submitted AT LEAST 90 days prior to the first day of the proposed conference.

<b>Applications Due</b>	2:00 pm (PDT/PST) on the last business day of February, May, August, November
<b>Presidential Review and Approval</b>	Approximately 45 days post submission
<b>Award Start</b>	Earliest is 60 days before the conference start date

## Application Review Information

### What is the process for evaluating an application?

#### Pre-submission Consultation

In accordance with CIRM's mission, the Institute is committed to funding scientific conferences that focus on leading edge research (discovery to clinical) and/or critical bottlenecks in regenerative medicine. Prospective applicants are encouraged but not required to contact CIRM with questions to discuss their proposal, including its eligibility, before applying for a Conference Grant.

#### Eligibility Review

CIRM will assess whether the application meets the eligibility parameters required under this program. If CIRM determines, in its sole discretion, that an application does not meet the eligibility parameters of the program, CIRM will notify the applicant of its decision and cease all further action on the application.

#### Application Review

CIRM's governing board, the Independent Citizens Oversight Committee (ICOC), has delegated to the President of CIRM authority to review and make funding decisions for grants up to \$50,000 for Mechanism 1 awards. The ICOC will make funding decisions on applications for conference grants in excess of \$50,000, if recommended for funding by the President. In the case of Mechanism 2 awards, the ICOC has delegated funding decisions to the President. The President will publicly report to the ICOC semi-annually on the award and disbursement of conference grants.

The availability of funds is a key determinant of the number of applications funded in any year. CIRM may choose not to fund any applications during a review cycle. Once all allocated funds are expended, the Conference Grant Program will close for the remainder of the fiscal year.

The following criteria will be considered in the review of applications and funding decisions:

**A. Relevance, Impact, and Significance:** The conference must address the following questions:

- (1) Will this conference create opportunities to accelerate the development of stem cell therapies to patients?
- (2) How will this conference increase the likelihood of a successful treatment reaching patients?
- (3) How is the focus of the conference addressing an unmet clinical need?



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- (4) What has the applicant done to ensure the meeting is organized and budgeted efficiently?

**B. Approach and Setting:** Are the format, duration, scope, scale, timing, target audience, and speakers for the conference appropriate for achieving the goals of the conference? How appropriate is the conference site? Do the proposed conferences, exhibits, interactions, etc., take advantage of unique features of the environment or employ useful collaborative arrangements? Has the applicant raised funding from other sources to support this conference?

**C. Qualifications of Personnel and Applicant Organization:** Does the Program Director and applicant institution have the experience and resources to facilitate a successful conference?

**D. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion:** Does the applicant organization promote diversity, equity, and inclusion in the development and implementation of the conference? Has the applicant organization outlined a plan to conduct outreach that will ensure inclusivity and diversity of participants?

#### Confidentiality

CIRM's confidentiality and conflict screening rules apply to everyone who will have access to applications or who will attend any review conference in which confidential information is discussed, including but not limited to CIRM team members, reviewers and members of the ICOC. (Per Gov. Code §6254.5(e) non-public records may be disclosed to government agencies under confidentiality agreements.)

## Application Components and Submission

### How does one apply?

Applications must be completed and submitted online using the CIRM Grants Management Portal at <https://grants.cirm.ca.gov>. Any prospective PI must create a login in the system to access application materials and apply. Applications are available in the system only to the PI. A PI may submit only a single application in a given review cycle and may not submit additional applications during the review period.

**Applications are due by 2:00pm (Pacific Time) on the last business day of February, May, August, and November.** Applications received after the deadline will be deferred to the next review cycle.



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### **What components does an application include?**

The Grants Management Portal provides instructions for completing all the necessary components and submitting a final application. The application is designed to collect information necessary to appropriately evaluate the proposal and for CIRM to rapidly initiate an award if approved for funding. Applicants are required to indicate key personnel involved in the project, describe how the proposal addresses the objective of the funding opportunity, provide a detailed plan of proposed activities, complete a budget, and provide reference materials

The application for CIRM Conference Grants consists of three parts:

Part A: Application Information and Proposal Form (Web-based document)

Part B: Agenda

Part C: Supporting Documentation

The application for CIRM Conference Grant includes the following sections:

#### **1. Relevance of Conference to CIRM Mission (included in Part A)**

Provide a detailed justification for the conference, including the objectives, relevance, impact, and significance of the proposed conference to CIRM's mission (*To accelerate world class science to deliver transformative regenerative medicine treatments in an equitable manner to a diverse California and world.*)

#### **2. Impact and Significance of the Conference (included in Part A)**

Describe how the proposed scientific conference addresses an important topic in stem cell or genetic therapy research and how it will move research forward compared to other conferences that also address the topic. Provide a detailed justification for the conference, including the scientific need, timeliness, and usefulness of the meeting to the scientific community. Identify related meetings held on the subject during the past two years.

#### **3. Approach and Setting (included in Part A)**

Describe the format, duration, scope, scale, timing, target audience, speakers, and publicity plans for the meeting. If this is one of a series of periodic meetings held by the applicant, briefly describe and evaluate the last meeting in the series. Address how the conference will be evaluated. Where appropriate, describe how proposed events or exhibits will take advantage of unique features of the environment or employ useful collaborative arrangements.





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#### 4. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Describe efforts to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion in the development and implementation of the conference. Describe how the applicant will conduct outreach to ensure inclusivity and diversity of people participating in the conference across all levels from speakers to audience members.

Because CIRM is prohibited from taking race, ethnicity, national origin, and gender into account in making grant decisions, applicants should refrain from describing the race, ethnicity, national origin, or gender of applicant organization personnel. However, applicants may describe other characteristics of diversity such as individuals who: (a) grew up in low-income families or come from socioeconomically disadvantaged communities; (b) are the first in their family to attend college; or (c) have overcome educational, economic, physical (e.g., disability), or other barriers to opportunities.

#### 5. Qualifications of Organizers and Applicant Institution (included in Part A)

Describe the Program Director's experience and track record in the successful organization and implementation of comparable conferences. Describe the qualifications of additional personnel and the appropriateness of selected speakers/participants. Describe the resources and experience of the applicant institution to facilitate a successful conference.

#### 6. Key Personnel (included in Parts A, C)

Key personnel are the Program Director (PD) and those responsible for the scientific planning and organization of the conference. List all key personnel.

#### 7. Budget (included in Part A)

Provide all budget information requested in the budget section of the Application Information Form.

All allowable costs for research grants are detailed in the [CIRM Grants Administration Policy](#).

##### Allowable Costs

Allowable costs include rental of a conference facility and necessary equipment (e.g., audio/visual and internet connectivity); transportation, lodging and per diem\* or subsistence allowances for the organizers and speakers and other costs; supplies needed for conduct of the conference (only if received for use during the budget period); conference services, and publicity and publication costs; as described in the CIRM Grants Administration Policy for Academic and Non-Profit Institutions (Chapter V, Section B-2).

##### Non-allowable Costs

Non-allowable costs include purchase of equipment; visas; passports; entertainment; alcoholic beverages; food (except Mechanism 2); meals not



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related to travel; personal telephone calls; laundry charges; dues; salary support for organizers; honoraria for speakers (except Mechanism 2); cash awards; alterations or renovations; gifts. The CIRM Grants Administration Policy also describes specific costs that are unallowable. Indirect Costs are not allowable on this award.

#### **8. Meeting Agenda (included in Part B PDF upload)**

Provide the latest version of the conference agenda, including (if available) panel titles, speaker names, speaker topics and 30-minute CIRM speaking slot. There should be sufficient detail to show concordance with CIRM's mission.

#### **9. Supporting Documentation (included in Part C PDF upload)**

Provide details about financial support from other organizations, e.g. letter(s) of support. Also, attach documentation confirming the participation of key speakers/co-chairs/organizing committee members in the conference, e.g., letter or email confirming agreement to participate.

\* Please note all meal costs must comply with the maximum per-person expenditures for meals and light refreshments according to CIRM's Business Meeting Expenditure policy. [https://www.cirm.ca.gov/sites/default/files/files/funding\\_page/Business%20Meeting%20Expenditure%20Policy%2020221205.pdf](https://www.cirm.ca.gov/sites/default/files/files/funding_page/Business%20Meeting%20Expenditure%20Policy%2020221205.pdf)  
Please refer to <https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates> for the maximum allowable hotel rates by city.



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## Award Administration

### Issuance of Award

A CIRM Conference Award is issued via a Notice of Grant Agreement, which is the formal contract that defines the terms and conditions of an award and documents the commitment of funds from CIRM.

### Reporting

Awardees will be required to provide written scientific and financial reports to CIRM upon completion of the conference. Awardees should include the final conference agenda or program.

### Other Requirements

For Mechanism 1:

- Conference organizers must acknowledge CIRM sponsorship on the conference website, printed program, lead-in slides, and any other relevant conference materials.
- Conference organizers will provide the option for complimentary registration for at least 3 CIRM scientific staff, patient advocates, and/or ICOC members to attend the conference. If this is not possible, the grantee is encouraged to give access via webcasting or teleconferencing to CIRM.
- In addition, applicants must allot a 30-minute speaking slot for a CIRM team member. This speaking slot is intended to be an opportunity for CIRM to inform attendees about its mission, current funding opportunities, and recruit potential projects. This should be reflected in the agenda appended to the application.
- The option for complimentary space for CIRM will be provided if the conference features exhibitor space such as booths or tables.
- CIRM reserves the right to distribute CIRM materials to conference attendees and collect contact information of all participants.
- CIRM staff will report on any significant findings or progress as well report on how the conference is conducted. All confidentiality of scientific content will be maintained.

For Mechanism 2, refer to the RFA for other requirements, including CIRM team member participation. The CIRM team will work with Mechanism 2 awardees to review and approve the design and implementation of the event during the planning phase to make sure it is responsive to specific CIRM needs.



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## Contacts

For information about this PA or the review process:

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## Definitions

“California organization” means: An entity, regardless of profit status, that has >50% of its employees located in, and paid in, the state of California, and conducts the award activities from the California location.

“For-profit organization” means: a sole-proprietorship, partnership, limited liability company, corporation, or other legal entity that is organized or operated for the profit or financial benefit of its shareholders or other owners. Such organizations also are referred to as “commercial organizations”.

“Non-profit organization” means: (1) a governmental entity of the state of California; or (2) a legal entity that is tax exempt under Internal Revenue Code section 501(c)(3) and California Revenue and Taxation Code section 23701d.

“Partner” means an organization that, in exchange for the right to the opportunity for a future financial return, has (1) agreed to provide matching funds for the proposed project or (2) entered into an agreement with the applicant organization relating to the commercialization of the proposed project.

“Subcontractor” means an organization (other than the applicant organization) that is expected to: (a) contribute to the scientific development or execution of the project in a substantive, measurable way *and* (b) receive \$50,000 or more through the proposed project. “Subcontractor” does not include suppliers of widely available goods.

“Suspension Event” means a pre-defined condition that triggers a hold of CIRM funding until the suspension event has been resolved, if resolvable.



## Appendix

### **CIRM Regulations**

Grant or Loan awards made through this PA will be subject to all applicable CIRM regulations. These regulations can be found on CIRM's website at <https://www.cirm.ca.gov/our-funding/cirm-stem-cell-grant-regulations>.

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