

# Alpha Clinics Network Expansion Award

INFR4



**REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS**

**02.16.22 (revised 03.08.22)**



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# Alpha Clinics Network Expansion Award

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## Objective

The mission of the 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*. To support this mission, CIRM created the Alpha Clinics Network to deliver high-quality FDA-authorized stem cell clinical trials to patients. Network sites at University of California Davis, University of California San Francisco, University of California San Diego, City of Hope, University of California Los Angeles, and University of California Irvine have collectively delivered over one hundred clinical trials with over 750 patients enrolled.<sup>1</sup> These trials emanate from CIRM's funding pipeline as well as non-CIRM funded investigator and industry sponsored projects.<sup>2</sup>

In addition, the network has developed a number of systems to encourage and support diverse patient participation in the rapidly maturing regenerative medicine landscape.<sup>3</sup> These systems include a coordinated intake system for evaluating sponsors needs and identifying appropriate sites, outreach and navigation capacities to support the needs of California's diverse patient population, an IRB Reliance Agreement to support accelerated trial initiation, and protocol-specific collaborations among sites to manage GMP compliant processing of cell and gene therapy products.

The objective of this funding opportunity is to expand existing capacities for delivering stem cell, gene therapies and other advanced treatment to patients. The Alpha Clinics Network is designed to serve as a competency hub for regenerative medicine training, clinical research, and the delivery of approved treatments. Pursuant to this objective Alpha Clinics Network sites are expected to:

- ▶ Have a demonstrated ability to conduct FDA-authorized clinical trials involving cell and/or gene therapies
- ▶ Refine and expand Network systems to address emerging issues or needs in the field of regenerative medicine
- ▶ Support the career development of physicians, nurses, research coordinators or other medical professionals that are integral to the delivery of regenerative medicine clinical trials
- ▶ Develop lead offerings (core capabilities or competencies) that can be utilized by other Alpha Clinic Network sites

<sup>1</sup> As of October 2020.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.cirm.ca.gov/patients/alpha-clinics-network/alpha-clinics-trials>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.cell.com/action/showPdf?pii=S1934-5909%2818%2930225-X>



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Funds from this award shall be used to leverage existing assets within the medical center to support the objectives of this RFA. The award does not directly fund clinical trials or the construction of new facilities.

The program is open to medical centers in California. Applicants must already possess a set of core capabilities or competencies necessary to deliver FDA-authorized cell and gene therapy clinical trials. The Alpha Network is expected to work in collaboration with other CIRM Infrastructure Programs to support the delivery of transformative regenerative medicine treatments to all Californians.

Priority will be given to applications that offer matching funds or verified in-kind support, consistent with the highest medical standards, as established by the governing board of the institute.

## Award Information

### What is the CIRM funding allocation and project term?

The CIRM Governing Board has allocated \$80 million to support the operation and enhancement of the Alpha Network within California. Each award will provide up to \$8.0 million in total funding over a five-year period.

### What activities must be performed under the CIRM award?

- ✓ **Clinical Trials:** Applicant organizations must have a demonstrated ability to conduct FDA authorized clinical trials involving cell and/or gene therapies. This ability includes the ability to recruit and consent patients, deliver therapeutic products, support overall clinical operations and provide regulatory support.
- ✓ **Network Coordination:** Organizations funded under this award must participate in a coordinated effort to refine and develop Network systems intended to address emerging issues or needs in the field of regenerative medicine. An Alpha Clinics Network Steering Committee comprised of the Program Directors of each site and CIRM representatives will be responsible for leading this effort.
- ✓ **Regenerative Medicine Training:** Specialized training programs to support diverse teams necessary for the development or delivery of treatments. Programs may include fellowship or credential programs for MDs, nurses, patient navigators, clinical research coordinators or pharmacists (product preparation and delivery). Training or credential opportunities should be aligned with national standards. Applicants should consider how training and education opportunities could be extended to Alpha Network sites and Community Care Centers of Excellence (see below *How will the proposal contribute to the network overall?*)
- ✓ **Expanded Network Capabilities and Lead Offerings:** Applicant organizations must propose one or more lead offerings integral to the development and/or delivery of cell, gene or regenerative medicine therapies.



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**What expanded capabilities and lead offerings may be proposed?**

Applicants should propose the development of one or more **lead offerings** integral to the development and/or delivery of cell, gene or regenerative medicine therapies. The applicant must describe how these offerings will be made available to Network partners. Applicants must describe how these offerings will be sustained in their Business and Organizational Integration Plan. Services may be provided to network partners or other organizations on a fee-for-service basis or included in the budgets of other CIRM awards.<sup>4</sup> Specialized competencies considered to be responsive to the RFA include but are not limited to the following:

***Advanced Regenerative Medicine Research Platforms***

- ✓ Propose and describe systems or capabilities to develop novel clinical trial designs and protocols (basket trials, umbrella trials, platform trials) in a timely manner (corresponding with scientific readiness) to support the clinical research objectives described in the CIRM Strategic Plan.
- ✓ Proposing to lead, support or participate in clinical research collaborations seeking to utilize cell and/or gene therapies or other vital research opportunities to address unmet medical needs.
- ✓ Provide tissue banking or genomics services to enhance precision medicine and patient centered care. Services include patient genotyping with the aim of elucidating differential diagnosis, response, and outcomes. Proposals should discuss how data may be integrated into electronic health records and/or be shared to support clinical research and precision medicine.
- ✓ Provide imaging services to support diagnosis, delivery, and engraftment assessment / outcomes of regenerative medicine treatments. Proposals should discuss how data may be integrated into electronic health records and/or be shared and where deposited to support clinical research and precision medicine.
- ✓ Develop and provide tools, devices, and technologies for the delivery of therapeutics in pre-clinical and clinical trials studies. May be coupled with training or certification programs.
- ✓ Develop data analysis / on demand integration tools or analytic protocols for supporting the development of regenerative and personalized medicine. Optimally, such tools could be used to interrogate data across the Network to support queries, hypothesis generation, knowledge-based interpretations, or summarization.

***Advanced Therapy Development***

- ✓ Work in collaboration with other CIRM Infrastructure programs (e.g. CIRM GMP Facility Network) to develop platforms for accelerating the delivery of cell and gene therapies.

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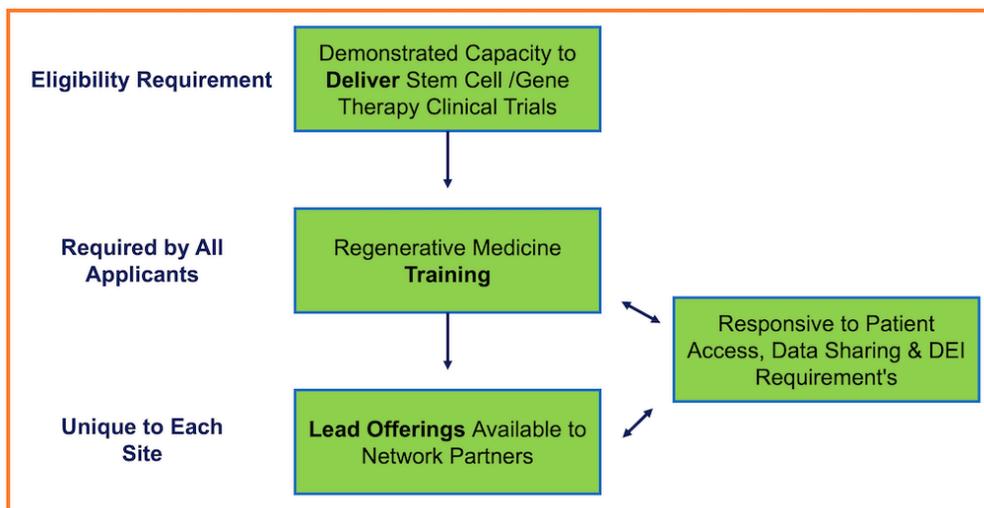
<sup>4</sup> For example, Alpha Network sites are encouraged to work with CIRM Clinical Trial Stage Award applicants to develop budget plans to support robust patient recruitment and retainment strategies necessary for clinical success including patient diversity objectives.



- ✓ Develop programs or platforms to support decentralized and/or point of care patient treatments. Proposals may include technical, financial, or regulatory aspects of delivering such treatments.<sup>5</sup>

**Access and Inclusivity**

- ✓ Model programs to promote access to clinical trials and cures arising from CIRM-funded research for California patients.
- ✓ Development of data and/or information platforms to support knowledge networks vital to the clinical success of regenerative medicine. Platforms include registries, navigation systems, follow-up including capture of patient reported outcomes / real world evidence. Such systems should be proposed to support (as feasible) future CIRM data sharing efforts.
- ✓ Additional proposals to substantially advance (1) the delivery of cell and gene therapy clinical trials, (2) the development of knowledge networks addressing information needs for regenerative medicine, (3) the participation of underserved populations in clinical research or (4) access to regenerative medicine products for California patients.



**How will the proposal contribute to the network overall?**

The Alpha Clinics Network Expansion Award is premised on the belief that California’s world-class medical research organizations can operate synergistically to deliver transformative regenerative medicine treatments safely and effectively. Applicants are encouraged to describe how their proposed center will strengthen Network operations including how other organizational assets may contribute to this objective.

<sup>5</sup> Proposals addressing regulatory aspects should describe activities intended to resolve general bottle necks or challenges related to design or delivery of clinical trials, the processing of therapeutic products or the recruitment and follow up of patients.



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Applicants may propose partnerships with one or more organizations to develop expanded capabilities or competencies.<sup>6</sup> Applicants proposing partnerships should include a memorandum of understanding describing each organization's commitment to the proposed partnership. If a partner organization is also an applicant for an Alpha Clinics Network Expansion Award, contingency plans should be included in the event one or more partner sites is not funded.

CIRM anticipates funding a future Community Care Centers of Excellence Program with the aim of promoting access to human clinical trials and the accessibility of treatments and cures arising from institute-funded research for patient in California by establishing geographically diverse centers of excellence.<sup>7</sup> Applicants are encouraged to discuss or describe how their medical centers have partnered with non-academic medical centers in communities. Where applicable, discuss the potential for your clinic to support clinical research, trials, or treatment delivery in collaboration with community providers. Further, generalized discussion for how your center's activities could support the aims of the future Community Care Centers of Excellence Program are encouraged.

#### **What activities will CIRM not fund?**

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

- ✘ Activities already covered by a prior, existing, or future CIRM award, i.e., budgetary overlap
- ✘ Construction or renovation of physical facilities including equipment
- ✘ Cost associated with the operation of individual clinical trials<sup>8</sup>

#### **How will funds be awarded?**

CIRM will disburse funds pursuant to a Notice of Award (NOA) and based on operational milestones. **Costs resulting from a delay or failure to meet an operational milestone will be the sole responsibility of the recipient.** Successful applicants will have thoughtfully accounted for foreseeable project risks and developed contingency plans that **do not** require additional funding from CIRM.

<sup>6</sup> For the purpose of this RFA, "partnerships" are considered to be formal collaborative agreements between two or more organizations. Agreements should include specific outcomes and/or milestones that can be measured objectively over the course of the award. Applicants are encouraged to consider how such agreements may be expanded over time as CIRM's clinical platforms grow.

<sup>7</sup> Reference CIRM 2022-27 [Strategic Plan](#)

<sup>8</sup> Clinical trial operating costs should be covered by the study sponsor. In the context of a CIRM-supported program such costs may be allocated in a Clinical Stage Program Award (e.g. CLIN2).



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## Eligibility

### **What are the eligibility requirements for partnering with CIRM?**

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

#### **(1) Must be ready to initiate work on the funded project within 90 days of approval**

Given the urgency of CIRM's mission, all approved awardees must initiate work on the funded project within 90 days of approval and authorization for funding by the Application Review Subcommittee of CIRM's governing board, the Independent Citizens' Oversight Committee ("ICOC").

#### **(2) Must have a California operating location**

Only non-profit organizations are eligible to apply. At the time of the application deadline, the applicant organization must be located in California and must have the appropriate hospital/clinics and facilities accreditations and operational medical facilities in California. If these requirements are not met, CIRM may terminate all further action on the application.

#### **(3) Must have demonstrated ability to perform patient-centered cell or gene therapy clinical trials**

The applicant organization must currently be conducting at least one clinical trial that meets the eligibility criteria for a CIRM [Clinical Trial Stage Projects](#). Applicants must identify two clinical trials that are active or would be initiated in 2022. The clinical trials must conform to the eligibility criteria for CIRM [Clinical Trial Stage Projects](#). Applicants must also provide a Pipeline Development Plan for attracting additional eligible clinical trials. Specific abilities necessary for performing patient-centered cell or gene therapy clinical trials include:

- ✓ **Patient navigation and informed consent:** Systems designed to identify and recruit patients including the use of medical records, patient registries and physician referrals. Teams experienced with patient navigation and education with the ability to support robust informed consent. Recruitment systems should include the capacity to effectively recruit and educate among California's diverse population.
- ✓ **Process and deliver cell and gene therapies:** Operations and management systems to address the unique technical needs of stem cell clinical trials – including but not limited to specialized platforms for cell processing and delivery – with the aim of achieving optimal clinical research outcomes.
- ✓ **Clinical trial operations and management services:** Work with sponsors to execute clinical trial agreements/contracts and required assurances. Provide coordinated care for patients enrolled in a clinical trial and clinical research coordination.
- ✓ **Regulatory support:** Demonstrated experience supporting regulatory submissions for clinical protocols such as Investigational New Drug Applications and associated FDA interactions.



**(4) Alpha Clinic must reside in an existing academic medical center with demonstrated capacity to conduct clinical trials**

Applicants must be located within an academic medical center<sup>9</sup>, licensed by the California Department of Public Health, that is currently performing regulated clinical trials registered on ClinicalTrials.gov. The medical center should consist of the necessary facilities and infrastructure to successfully implement stem cell and gene therapy clinical trials that meet the eligibility criteria for a CIRM [Clinical Trial Stage Projects](#).

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

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

**(6) Applicant must be in “good standing”**

In order to be eligible to apply for CIRM funding, an applicant must certify that it is in good standing.

- a. Organizations in existence for less than five years:
  - (i) The applicant’s Chief Executive Officer, Chief Financial Officer, and Program Director must not have been convicted of, or currently under investigation for, crimes involving fraud/misappropriation; and
  - (ii) The applicant must have accounting systems in place that are capable of tracking CIRM funds.
- b. All Applicants
 

The Center Program Director must not be currently under investigation for research misconduct by the applicant institution or a funding agency, and must not be currently debarred by HHS Office of Research Integrity.

**Who can serve as the Program Director (PD)?**

To be eligible, the PD must satisfy the following requirements:

- Must have an active California medical license and hospital privileges at the applicant institution’s medical center.
- Must propose a level of effort on the project consistent with achieving the project’s aims and not less than 30% on average over the project period (note: “project” includes both the CIRM-funded and applicant co-funded components). Any effort for which salary from CIRM is claimed must be expended in California
- Must be authorized by the applicant organization to conduct the proposed activities and assume the responsibilities of the PD
- Must not currently have another application pending review or approval under this funding opportunity

<sup>9</sup> Defined as a medical center that has an accredited medical school and/or accredited medical residency or fellowship programs and that conducts regulated clinical trials.



- Must not currently have another application that is substantially similar or has overlapping activities pending review or approval under any CIRM opportunity.

**Additional requirements**

**Addressing the Needs of Underserved Communities in CIRM-Funded Projects**

All applicants for the Alpha Clinics Network Expansion program will be required to provide a statement describing:

- How their Alpha Clinics Network site will support and facilitate outreach and study participation by underserved and disproportionately affected populations in the clinical trials they serve.
- How the assembled Alpha Clinics Network site team will bring diverse and inclusive perspectives and experience to the implementation of proposed activities.
- How well the research team demonstrates a successful track record for promoting and valuing diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI).

**Knowledge Sharing Plan**

Knowledge sharing has contributed to the success of the Alpha Clinics Network and is vital to advancing the field of regenerative medicine. Data or Knowledge Sharing Plans are required in all CIRM awards. Such plans include the collection, curation and preservation of data resulting from the conduct of the award. In the context of the Alpha Clinics Network award, applicants should develop plans intended to capture operational information vital to evaluating or replicating the (1) clinic's core competencies, (2) training programs and (3) lead offerings. Applicants should propose how this information can be made available to Network partners and the broader scientific community.

Applicants should describe their experience, resources and capacities to support data collection and for integration with established platforms such as registries, repositories, or other platforms in accordance with system standards such as the FAIR Principles of findable, assessable, interoperable and reusable data. CIRM expects applicants to facilitate sharing of knowledge to maximize the real-world impact of CIRM-funded programs. Thus, the sharing plan may include the ability to support other awardees utilizing the Alpha Clinic in meeting CIRM data sharing requirements (e.g., Clinical Stage Program Awards)

A 5-year strategic CIRM goal is to build knowledge networks that foster and advance novel research approaches to generate a healthy culture of team science. Applicants should describe how their proposed Alpha Clinic will contribute to this strategic goal. Applicants are encouraged to allocate funds in their proposed budget for personnel and/or activities related to managing and sharing knowledge.

**Organizational Integration Plan**

Individual sites will be expected to describe, in the form of a Business and Organizational Integration plan, how they aim to leverage these capabilities, so they become integral to clinical operations beyond the award period. In addition, the plan should describe operational synergies between the Alpha Clinics Network site and



other CIRM infrastructure, research, and patient access programs. For example, the plan may discuss how proposed offerings may be supported by CIRM clinical trial awards and other clinical trial agreements.

Prop 14 requires *applications for Alpha Stem Cell Clinic and Community Care Centers of Excellence grants to include a plan for enhancing access to clinical trials for California patients and making treatments and cures that arise from institute-funded research more widely available to California patients, including addressing how the applicant will support the ancillary hospital and access costs of patients participating in clinical trials to enhance access to trials for California patients, regardless of their economic means and geographical location.*

The Business and Organizational Integration plan should include a description of efforts to (i) maximize broad access to sponsors who are developing stem cell treatments, (ii) increase access to treatments to patients inflicted with the disease, (iii) integrate cell and gene therapy expertise into other clinical care units to minimize competing interests to support business development, (iv) enable network partners to access specialized core capabilities and (iv) ensure broad access to treatments for all Californians. The Business and Organizational Integration plan should be modified over the life of the award as specific capabilities become available in CIRM's clinical infrastructure and patient support programs generally, and experience is gained from network operations and the maturation of other programs.

## Schedule And Deadlines

<b>Applications Due</b>	2:00 pm (PST/PDT), June 9, 2022
<b>Grants Working Group (GWG) Review</b>	Approximately 60 days post submission
<b>ICOC Review and Approval</b>	Approximately 90 days post submission
<b>Award Start</b>	Must start within 90 days of award approval (i.e., approximately 175 days post submission)

## Application Review Information

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

#### **Pre-submission Consultation**

In accordance with CIRM's mission, the agency is committed to helping develop promising stem cell-based technologies by partnering with world-class investigators. Therefore, prospective applicants may contact CIRM before applying with questions or to discuss their project's eligibility.



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### **Eligibility Review**

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

### **Budget Review**

CIRM will review the proposed budget to assess how the proposed costs compare with established market rates for similar activities, how well the costs are justified when market rates are not established and to confirm that costs designated as Allowable Project Costs comply with CIRM policies. When a proposed budget differs significantly from market rates, is not well justified or does not comply with Allowable Project Cost policy, adjustments to the budget will be required by CIRM prior to further review of the application. Applicants will be notified of the specific discrepancies and applications will not be forwarded for scientific review until an amended budget has been submitted and approved by CIRM. Additionally, project budgets may be subject to further adjustments prior to issuance of an award based upon assessments of the GWG, the CIRM team, or by the Application Review Subcommittee of the ICOC.

### **Scientific Review**

The scientific merit of each application will be assessed by the GWG, which is composed of fifteen subject matter experts from outside California, seven patient advocate or nurse members of the ICOC, and the Chair of the ICOC. The list of scientific members who may participate in the GWG review can be found at [http://www.cirm.ca.gov/WorkingGroup\\_GrantsReview](http://www.cirm.ca.gov/WorkingGroup_GrantsReview). The composition of the ICOC can be viewed at <http://www.cirm.ca.gov/GoverningBoard>.

The fifteen participating scientists on the GWG will evaluate the applications and score them according to scientific and technical merit, applying the review criteria described below. The GWG will score each application and make one of the following specific recommendations to the ICOC's Application Review Subcommittee: 1) fund the project based on the proposal's exceptional merit; 2) do not fund the project but may be resubmitted to address areas for improvement if the Application Review Subcommittee has not approved an application for funding following the Grants Working Group's review; or 3) do not fund the project and do not allow resubmission.

The ICOC's Application Review Subcommittee will make final funding decisions giving consideration to the GWG recommendations and any CIRM team recommendations.

### **Consideration of Related CIRM Award Information (If Applicable)**

The GWG may consider information from a previously funded and related CIRM award as part of its review. CIRM will provide the GWG with objective information regarding a related award that CIRM, in its sole discretion, deems relevant, including but not limited to achievement of specific milestones, data, and outcomes for a related CIRM award or awards.

A "related CIRM award" includes: (1) an award for which the applicant PI served as the PI, a co-PI, a co-investigator, or otherwise substantially participated in the conduct of the award; (2) an award involving the same research project or product; or (3) an award that includes overlapping team members.



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**Confidentiality**

CIRM's confidentiality and conflict screening rules apply to everyone who will have access to applications or who will attend any review meeting 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)

**How will the scientific merit of an application be evaluated?**

Scientific members of the GWG will evaluate and score applications based on the following key questions:

**1. Does the proposal offer a significant value proposition that would enhance the ability of the Alpha Clinics Network to accelerate clinical research consistent with CIRM's mission?**

Would the proposed clinic accelerate and/or expand patient access to stem cell and/or gene therapy clinical trials? Would the proposed clinic expand the value of the Network, for example, broadening the Network's geographic reach, providing expertise in new disease areas, providing new/unique technical capability, or other elements that accelerate/support stem cell and gene therapy clinical trials. Does the proposed center offer a sufficient, impactful, and practical value proposition for patients, trial sponsors and/or health care providers?

**2. Is the proposal well planned and designed to successfully implement the Alpha Clinic core activities, regenerative medicine training, expanded capabilities and lead offerings?**

Is the operation of the clinic appropriately planned and designed to provide meaningful, accelerating, and impactful resources dedicated to stem cell and/or gene therapy clinical trials? Does the regenerative medicine training program serve to develop the workforce integral to the delivery of regenerative medicine clinical trials? Are the lead offering(s) integral to the development and/or delivery of cell, gene or regenerative medicine therapies. Does the applicant possess the capacity to deliver the lead offerings to other Network partners? Does the application propose enhancing activities that will increase the value of the Network?

**3. Is the proposal feasible?**

Is the proposed plan, including the training program and lead offerings, feasible and likely to be implemented within the proposed timeline? Is the proposed team appropriately qualified and staffed and have access to all the necessary resources to establish, operate, and maintain the clinic? Will the clinic have the capability and resources to support clinical research, training and lead offering(s)? Does the team have a viable Organizational Integration plan? Does the applicant have the necessary resources and capacities to support robust data sharing?

**4. Will the proposed Alpha Clinic effectively serve the needs of underserved and disproportionately affected communities?**

Has the applicant developed effective services to support and facilitate outreach and study participation by underserved and disproportionately affected populations in the



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clinical trials they serve? Does the applicant team offer effective tools and resources to recruit, retain and track demographically diverse patient cohorts? Does the project team bring diverse and inclusive perspectives and experience to the implementation of proposed activities? Does the project team demonstrate a successful track record for promoting and valuing diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI)?

## 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 PD must create a login in the system to access application materials and apply. Applications are available in the system only to the PD. A PD 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 June 9, 2022.**

### 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 objectives of the funding opportunity, provide a detailed plan of proposed activities, complete a detailed budget, and provide reference materials that confirms the status of the project. In the Organizational Integration Plan applicants should provide a financial contingency plan that addresses how the applicant will cover possible funding shortfalls.

The main body of the proposal contains the following sections:

1. **Program Summary:** A brief description of the overall structure and objectives of the proposed Alpha Clinic.
2. **Add value for Stem Cell and Gene Therapy Clinical Trials.**
  - a. Describe how the proposed Alpha Clinic will accelerate the initiation and completion of clinical trials.
  - b. Describe how the proposed Alpha Clinic will support regenerative medicine training.
  - c. Describe how the proposed Alpha Clinic will expand patient access to clinical trials for a diverse California.
3. **Add value for the Alpha Network.**
  - a. Describe how the proposed Alpha Clinic's lead offering(s) provide specialized assets and core competencies for the delivery of cell and gene therapies that address existing gaps or challenges for the field and would expand the value of the Network.
  - b. Describe how the clinic will coordinate with the Network partners to bring new clinical trials to the Network and leverage, improve upon, and scale



up the services, lead offering(s) and unique resources provided by the Network.

- c. Describe how your clinic will partner with other medical centers to increase access to clinical trials and to approved regenerative medicine treatments, especially to diverse and underserved patient populations.
4. **Value Proposition:** Describe the value proposition for trial sponsors, patients, and/or health care providers above that already provided by the organization's clinical trial offerings that will lead to preferential utilization of the Alpha Clinics Network and positively affect the delivery of treatments to patients throughout California. Provide examples of how this program has improved operational efficiencies in the conduct of regenerative medicine clinical trials and, based on past experience supporting these types of studies, what additional innovative operational efficiencies it will implement. Describe how this program proposes to work with its network partners to accelerate the successful initiation and completion of regenerative medicine clinical trials.
  5. **Organizational Integration Plan:** Describe how the clinic will integrate into organizational operations to (i) maximize broad access to sponsors who are developing regenerative medicine treatments, (ii) increase access to treatments to those patients most likely to benefit, (iii) integrate cell and gene therapy expertise into other clinical care units to minimize competing interests to support business development, and (iv) ensure broad access to treatments for all Californians.
  6. **Timeline:** Provide an activities-based timeline for clinic set-up, establishment of training program(s) and development of lead offerings in Gantt chart-like format
  7. **Project Plan:** Describe the project plan, including the description of how required core services will be provided to achieve the objectives of the RFA and to add value to the existing Network.
    - a. **Patient access, recruitment, education and consent.** Describe how the proposed clinic will enable patients in California to access the Alpha Clinics Network, maintain systems designed to identify and recruit patients, provide education services to support robust informed consent, including the capacity to effectively recruit and educate among California's diverse population.
    - b. **Clinical trial operations and management services.** Describe how the proposed clinic will work with sponsors to facilitate clinical trial agreements/contracts and required assurances, provide coordinated care for patients enrolled in a clinical trial, develop operations and management systems to address the unique technical needs of stem cell clinical trials – including but not limited to specialized platforms for cell processing and delivery – with the aim of achieving optimal outcomes.
    - c. **Regenerative Medicine Training.** Describe how the proposed clinic will deliver training and career development opportunities for individuals seeking to support or perform regenerative medicine clinical trials.
    - d. **Expanded Network Capabilities and Lead Offerings.** Describe the proposed clinic's expanded capabilities and lead offering(s). Explain how the offering(s) will (1) address an existing gap or bottleneck in clinical research or personalized medicine, (2) address financial or regulatory issues that limit or delay access to clinical trials or treatments, and (3) advance access and inclusivity in clinical trials or the delivery of approved regenerative medicine treatment. Describe the team's or



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institution's unique experience or assets that demonstrate an ability to successfully develop the offering.

- e. **Network Participation and Development.** Describe proposed partnerships with other organizations and Network clinics, including how the partnership(s) will enhance the clinic's expanded capabilities and competencies or the effective utilization of proposed lead offerings. Describe how proposed partnerships would increase geographic reach and improve access to clinical trials and treatments to underserved and underrepresented communities. Describe how the applicant organization has previously contributed to clinical research networks. How has such participation served to support the development of new therapies and/or patient access to clinical trials?
- f. **Pipeline Development.** Describe the pipeline development plan. Forecast and align capacity with demand for services for clients across the state. Describe how the clinic will optimally support the CIRM pipeline of projects while building a business that includes non-CIRM funded projects.

**8. Project Team.**

- a. Describe the qualifications and staffing of the team that support its ability to establish, operate, and maintain the clinic according to the proposed project plan and timelines.
- b. Describe the team structure, leadership, and communications plan.

**9. Organizational Experience, Capacity, and Resources.** Describe organizational experience, capacity, and resources that demonstrate the capacity to deliver clinical trials and that will enable the proposed clinic to implement the proposed plan and enhance the value of the Network as a whole including.

- a. Identify active or previously conducted clinical trials that meets the eligibility criteria for a CIRM [Clinical Trial Stage Projects](#).
- b. Describe available organizational capacities and resources that will enable the team to successfully implement the proposed project plan.

**10. Addressing Underserved Communities.** Provide a statement describing:

- a. How the Alpha Clinics Network site will support and facilitate outreach and study participation by underserved and disproportionately affected populations in the clinical trials they serve. Provide performance metrics that demonstrate and or support the magnitude of impact of the proposed approaches.
- b. How the assembled Alpha Clinics Network site team will bring diverse and inclusive perspectives and experience to the implementation of proposed activities.
- a. How well the research team demonstrates a successful track record for promoting and valuing diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI).

**11. Knowledge Sharing Plan:** Describe experience, resources and capacities to support data collection and for integration with established platforms such as registries, repositories, or other platforms in accordance with system standards such as the FAIR Principles of findable, assessable, interoperable and reusable data. Describe the ability to support CIRM awardees in fulfilling data sharing requirements in the context of Clinical Stage Program Awards. How could the proposed Alpha Clinic contribute to CIRM's strategic goal of broad data sharing.



**12. Contingency Plan:** Summary of potential risks, costs associated with those risks, and mitigation strategies, together with a financial contingency plan outlining viable funding sources in the event that costs exceed the amount of funding disbursement.

**13. References:** List all references used in the body of the proposal.

**Who are Key Personnel?**

In the application, we ask you to identify by name pertinent Key Personnel and their specific roles on the project. Key Personnel are defined as (1) the principal investigator or program director; or (2) any other person, including an independent consultant or an employee of a Subcontractor or Partner, who is expected to contribute to the scientific development or execution of the project in a substantive, measurable way *and* who is expected to: (a) receive or has been promised income, or anything else of value, of \$10,000 or more per year for his or her contribution to the project or (b) contribute one percent (1%) or more effort to the proposed project. “Key Personnel” does not include a person who is expected to be involved in the proposed project but who does not satisfy conditions (1) or (2).

Individuals who do not meet the definition of Key Personnel may be supported with CIRM funds, but should not be identified by name in the application. Such unnamed personnel may be referenced indirectly by their role on the project (e.g., technician). The budget includes a line item for requesting support for unnamed personnel.

**What should one know before preparing the budget?**

A specific and well-justified budget must be provided that clearly outlines the total costs of the project, including those costs not proposed to be funded by CIRM. The corresponding budget justification should provide enough detail to allow budget professionals to determine the appropriateness of the costs in relation to the activities being performed. Allowable Project Costs for research funded by CIRM are detailed in the [CIRM Grants Administration Policy](#). Generally, project costs for personnel, supplies, travel, equipment, and subcontracts may be claimed. Limits for specific cost categories must be observed.

**What are the rules for spending CIRM funds outside of California?**

**California Based Organizations**

California non-profit organizations may use CIRM funds for Allowable Project Activities conducted both in California and outside of California. “Allowable Project Activities” means those activities that are conducted in California, and for activities outside of California, those activities over which the California organization exercises direction, supervision and control, including activities performed by a wholly owned subsidiary of the California organization outside of California. It does not include activities undertaken by a separate organization outside of California that retains intellectual property or publication rights in connection with the performance of those activities, including a research collaboration in which the research is conducted outside of California.



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### **What are Direct Facilities Costs?**

Direct Facilities Costs are the general operating costs of the Awardee's facilities attributable to housing all elements of the CIRM-funded project or activity. Facilities costs for non-profit applicant organizations are limited to the current applicable, federally negotiated rates for the organization as defined by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-21 or A-122. Facilities rates for for-profit applicant organizations are limited to 35% of the direct project costs. Facilities rates are applied to direct project costs exclusive of the costs of equipment, tuition and fees, research patient care costs, as well as the costs of each individual subcontract, consultant, and service agreement in excess of \$25,000. The facilities cost rates approved and in place at the time of the application are to be applied to the entire award project period.

### **How much can an applicant claim for indirect costs?**

Indirect Costs will not be funded by this RFA.

## Award Administration

### **Issuance of Award**

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

### **Operational Milestones and Payment**

CIRM funds under the award will be disbursed based on achievement of specific Operational Milestones established by CIRM. An "Operational Milestone" is an objective event that is indicative of project progress occurring as proposed in the application. CIRM establishes Operational Milestones for inclusion in the Grant or Loan Agreement based upon information provided in the Application. Upon issuance of the award, funds budgeted to achieve the initial Operational Milestone will be disbursed. Upon the successful completion of the initial Operational Milestone and each successive milestone, additional funds will be disbursed. If funds allocated to a specific Operational Milestone (including both CIRM funds and the required applicant co-funds) are exhausted prior to achievement of that milestone, the Awardee will be responsible for covering any remaining costs. CIRM expects that the applicant's contingency plan will identify project timeline and budget risks and will provide details for covering such costs, including the source of funding. CIRM reserves the right to make adjustments to the timeline for inclusion in the Notice of Award to ensure that funds are appropriately dispersed across Operational Milestones.

If CIRM determines, in its sole discretion, that an awardee has failed to satisfy an Operational Milestone within four months of the date that the Operational Milestone was scheduled to have been completed, or if the delay is not addressed to CIRM's satisfaction, CIRM may permanently cease disbursements and terminate the award.



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### **Suspension Events**

CIRM reserves the right to hold or terminate disbursements if CIRM determines, in its sole discretion, that a Suspension Event has occurred. A “Suspension Event” means a pre-defined condition that triggers a hold of CIRM funding until the suspension event has been resolved, if resolvable. Following a Suspension Event, the Awardee is expected to provide CIRM with a plan to resolve the issue that triggered the Suspension Event. CIRM establishes Suspension Events for inclusion in the Notice of Award based on information provided in the Application.

### **Reporting**

Grantees will be required to provide periodic written progress and financial reports to CIRM.

### **Other Requirements**

#### **CIRM Regulations**

Grant or Loan awards made through this program announcement will be subject to all applicable CIRM regulations. These regulations can be found on CIRM’s website at <http://www.cirm.ca.gov/reg/default.asp>.

#### **Change in Status**

Applicants are required to notify CIRM of any material change in status while the application is pending review, e.g., the applicant has commenced the trial that is the subject of the award, the applicant no longer qualifies as a California Organization, etc.



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## Contacts

For information about this RFA:

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For information about the application and 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.

“Operational Milestone” means an objective event that is indicative of project progress occurring as proposed in the application.

“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.



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## Revisions

Revision Date	List of Changes
02/24/22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Revised section “What components does an application include?”:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Clarified instructions on items 3, 4, 7e, and 10.</li></ul></li></ul>
03/08/22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Application deadline date changed to June 9, 2022</li></ul>