



CONCEPT PLAN

RFA 15-05: Funding Opportunity for Bridges to Stem Cell Research and Therapy Awards (Bridges 2.0)

The mission of CIRM is to accelerate the development of stem cell therapies to patients with unmet medical needs. This program can serve CIRM's mission by:

- Producing well-trained, committed and "ready-to-start" laboratory professionals for both academia and industry to accelerate the development of stem cell treatments
- Heightening awareness and building bridges to patients in diverse communities through targeted outreach by trainees who can serve as educated advocates for stem cell therapy and regenerative medicine thereby addressing unmet medical needs
- Providing student access to positions in organizations and laboratories focused on stem cell therapy thereby increasing efficiency by linking educational programs to careers in regenerative medicine

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the Bridges 2.0 initiative are to:

- Enable training programs that will significantly enhance the technical skills, knowledge, and experience of a diverse cohort of undergraduate and Master's level students in the development of stem cell-based therapies
- Foster a commitment among trainees to the goal of accelerating the delivery of stem cell-based therapies to patients
- Broaden the participation in regenerative medicine of individuals representing the diversity of California's population

AWARD INFORMATION

What is the requested funding allocation, project funding and project term?



CIRM requests up to \$45.7 million to support up to 15 awards. Each award will support up to 10 trainees per year, and programs will be supported for up to 5 years. CIRM will provide each program with direct project costs of up to \$560,000 per year. The indirect cost rate will be set at 10%. Funding for years four and five will be dependent on review by CIRM and confirmation of appropriate program performance; CIRM requests \$27.4 million for years one through three, \$9.15 million for year four, and \$9.15 million for year 5.

How is the Bridges 2.0 training program structured?

Each Bridges 2.0 training program will be led by a qualified Program Director based at the awardee, “home” institution, which will be responsible for the management and coordination of all activities supported by the program as well as the recruitment of qualified students. The Bridges 2.0 program must be integrated into a degree or certificate program at the home institution. Research internships, which are a central component of these programs, will take place at partner or “host” institutions, which are biotech or pharmaceutical companies or research universities or institutes.

What activities will CIRM fund?

CIRM funds will support the following activities under Bridges 2.0:

- Trainee Expenses including
 - Stipends during internship period
 - Tuition and fees during internship period
 - Research-related funds
 - Techniques course fees
 - Travel expenses for program-related travel

- Program Expenses
 - Support for patient and healthcare engagement activities
 - Support for educational enhancement activities
 - Support for community outreach activities
 - Administrative support salaries

How will funds be awarded?

All applications for Bridges 2.0 programs will be considered in a single review cycle. Awards will be made in the form of a grant. CIRM will disburse funds pursuant to a Notice of Award. CIRM will only disburse trainee internship funds upon submission of a signed Intern Appointment Form for an eligible trainee.

ELIGIBILITY

What types of programs are eligible for funding?

To be eligible, the proposed program must have the following components:



1. Patient and Healthcare Engagement Activities designed to engage trainees with patients and provide insights into the challenges of developing new cell therapies and drugs. One component of these activities will be a required course on the regulatory pathway and therapy development process.
2. Internships in which trainees participate in human stem cell-related research or translational projects in internship-host laboratories.
3. Educational Enhancement Activities that prepare students for internship research and augment the internship experience.
4. Community Outreach and Education Activities in which trainees participate in educating diverse California communities about stem cells and regenerative medicine.
5. Stem Cell Techniques Course that will provide all trainees with hands-on training in methods for working with human stem cells.
6. Advising and Career Development Activities to equip and assist trainees in advancing to jobs and further opportunities in regenerative medicine.

Who may apply?

Applicant institutions must be California public universities or colleges or private, non-profit academic institutions, which did not receive a CIRM-funded Major Facility or Shared Research Laboratory Award (and, hence, do not have a major stem cell research program or a critical mass of stem cell researchers). Each eligible applicant institution may submit only a single application.

Who can serve as the Program Director?

The Program Director must be a full-time faculty member at the applicant home institution

SCHEDULE AND DEADLINES

Applications Due	October 1, 2015
Grants Working Group (GWG) Review	November 2015
ICOC Review and Approval	January 2016
Award Start	May 2016

