DISCOVERY

CIRM
CALIFORNIA INSTITUTE FOR REGENERATIVE MEDICINE

DISC5: Funding Opportunity for Discovery Stage Research

Program Announcement
July 8, 2025

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DISC5 Awards: Funding Opportunity for Discovery Stage Research

Summary

OVERVIEW	
Objective	Discovery programs at CIRM support comprehensive discovery research across a diverse range of diseases and bottlenecks that will accelerate the development of potential therapeutics and biomarkers in regenerative medicine
Scope	DISC5 Awards fund exploratory and innovative foundational research led by pairs of investigators applying a range of technologies and approaches to address knowledge gaps or bottlenecks in stem cell biology or regenerative medicine
Program Recurrence	Once per year
AWARD DETAILS	
Critical Role(s)	1 Principal Investigator (PI) + 1 Co-Investigator (Co-I)
Amount	Up to $2,500,000 total costs
Duration	Up to 3 years
ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS	
Applicant Organization	Only non-profit or for-profit organizations* that meet CIRM's definition of a California Organization* are eligible to apply
Applicant PI and Co-I*	The PI and Co-I must be employed by a California Organization* at the time of application and throughout the project duration. The PI and Co-I must commit at least 5% effort each.
Required Role(s)	A Data Project Manager must be included on the team
Co-funding	Not required
SCHEDULES AND DEADLINES	
Opportunity Frequency	Once per year
GWG Review	Approximately 90 days post application due date
Award Approval	Approximately 150 days post application due date
Start Date	Must be ready to start award activities within 90 days of award approval
CONTACT AND ADDITIONAL RESOURCES	
https://www.cirm.ca.gov/researchers/funding-opportunities-discovery-stage-research/ For additional information on the program or applications, contact discovery@cirm.ca.gov. For questions related to the review and approval of applications, contact review@cirm.ca.gov. ***Additional requirements and definitions incorporated here by reference are available in CIRM Funding Opportunities: Common Requirements and Definitions.**	

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Background

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. In September of 2024, CIRM's Governing Board, the Independent Citizens' Oversight Committee (ICOC), approved a Strategic Allocation Framework (SAF) to guide and optimize the value of CIRM's current and future investments. One key outcome of this exercise was defining an ambitious goal for CIRM, through its discovery stage opportunities, to catalyze the identification and validation of at least 4 novel targets and biomarkers and ensure their integration into preclinical or clinical research for diseases in California.

The most important impediment to the development of effective treatments is the lack of well-validated or actionable therapeutic targets due to an incomplete understanding of disease biology. Due to the complexities of disease processes, sustained investments in foundational, cross-disciplinary research are necessary to identify high-quality targets for therapeutic development. In 2024, the ICOC approved a recommendation to support comprehensive discovery research through at least 2 new complementary award structures (DISC4 and DISC5) that promote innovative, collaborative research at varying levels of scale and maturity. These awards will fund a network of multidisciplinary research teams that will be further supported by CIRM to facilitate knowledge sharing and to leverage other CIRM-funded resources to ensure readiness for further translational efforts.

CIRM's Discovery Program seeks to build on rapid advances in stem cell biology and genetic research including:

1. Advances in stem cell biology and stem cell-derived models in basic and translational research, particularly in facilitating the study of human tissues, cells and genes.
2. Advances in the understanding of the genetic underpinnings of diseases and biological processes, including insights from human genetic studies and functional genomics tools to map genes to cellular functions and disease processes.
3. Advances in a broad range of research technologies (e.g., single-cell omics, imaging, AI/machine-learning etc.) that greatly enhance the study and use of human stem cells in research and medicine.

The DISC5 awards will capitalize on these advances by supporting synergistic collaborations at a scale that is conducive to high risk, high reward pursuits. CIRM aims to foster a robust discovery engine that will bring transformative regenerative medicines to communities in California and beyond.

Objective

The overarching objective of CIRM's Discovery Program is to support comprehensive discovery research across a diverse range of diseases and bottlenecks, thereby accelerating the development of potential therapeutics and biomarkers in regenerative medicine.

This vision is realized through distinctive funding opportunities supporting research at various scales and levels of maturity, with a primary emphasis on multidisciplinary innovation, knowledge sharing and leveraging synergies across CIRM-funded programs to catalyze the identification of targets and biomarkers and facilitate their transition into preclinical development.

Scope and Structure

The DISC5 Awards will support exploratory and innovative foundational research led by pairs of interdisciplinary investigators applying a range of technologies and approaches to address fundamental knowledge gaps or bottlenecks in stem cell biology and/or regenerative medicine. Proposals should aim to achieve one or more of the following outcomes:

- Advancing fundamental understanding of human stem and progenitor cells as they pertain to human health and disease.
- Advancing the use of stem cells to interrogate disease mechanisms to uncover biological insights that could enable therapeutic target and/or biomarker discovery.
- Gaining mechanistic insights to address key scientific or technical bottlenecks in stem cell, gene therapy, and/or other regenerative medicine approaches.
- Advancing applicability of stem cells, gene therapies, and/or other regenerative medicine approaches to all affected populations.

To maximize the impact of these project outcomes, CIRM requires that applicant teams appropriately manage and share data generated in the course of a DISC5 award.

Proposals focused on validating or optimizing a therapeutic approach or candidate are not aligned with this program's focus on foundational discovery. Applicants should consider all CIRM Funding Programs to find the best fit for their research goals.

Program activities

Applicants may request funds to cover costs for research activities conducted within and outside of California, provided that the California Organization exercises direction and control over the activities.

CIRM funds **will support** the following activities under this opportunity:

REQUIRED ACTIVITIES	
✓	Activities associated with managing, preserving, and sharing data and knowledge from the study
ALLOWABLE ACTIVITIES	
✓	Any basic research activities that meet the DISC5 objective to address knowledge gaps or bottlenecks in stem cell biology with relevance to human biology and disease, where human stem cells or genetic research is part of the central approach or hypothesis, and that seek to achieve one or more of the outcomes listed in "Scope and Structure."
✓	Partnering activities with patient-centered organizations or other project-relevant community groups.
✓	Travel and accommodation expenditures associated with attendance of CIRM organized meetings and conferences. See additional details in Discovery Program Meetings and Conferences, pg. 13.
✓	Activities to support outreach or communication of research plans or outcomes with the wider public.
✓	Engagement activities with trainees supported through CIRM's EDUC or INFR programs

CIRM **will not fund** the following activities under this opportunity:

UNALLOWABLE ACTIVITIES	
✘	Therapeutic or other commercial development activities including lead optimization, manufacturing, pre-clinical toxicology and pharmacology studies and other activities targeted by CIRM's PDEV and CLIN programs.
✘	Costs of activities performed by a separate out-of-state organization that retains intellectual property or independent publication rights in any intellectual property (e.g., invention, technology, data) arising out of the CIRM-funded project.
✘	Costs incurred on or before the date of ICOC approval.

✘	Activities already budgeted or paid for under a prior, existing or pending CIRM award or which are already supported by another funder.

Award amount and duration

The maximum amount of funding that may be requested for a DISC5 Award is $2,500,000, total costs. The maximum award duration is three (3) years. If the proposed budget is equal to or exceeds $900,000 in a single budget year, additional justification will be required. The requested amount must be adequately justified and is subject to adjustments prior to the issuance of an award based on assessments by the Grants Working Group, the CIRM team, or by the Application Review Subcommittee of the ICOC.

Funding Allocation

CIRM anticipates funding 20-25 DISC5 awards in FY26-27.

Provisional timetable

DISC5 awards will recur annually. The anticipated timeline of each cycle stage is as follows:

PROVISIONAL TIMETABLE	
Applications Open	Once per year
Applications Due	Approximately 90 days after applications open
Positive Selection	Approximately 30 days after application due date
Grants Working Group (GWG) Review	Approximately 60 days after application due date
Application Review Subcommittee (ARS) Award Approval	Approximately 60 days after Grants Working Group review
Award Start	90 days after award approval

Eligibility

All the following requirements must be fully satisfied for an application to be accepted and considered for funding by CIRM.

(1) The proposal must be in scope and meet one or more of the expected outcomes defined in the DISC5 Objective.

See ***Scope and Structure*** (pg. 4-5).

(2) The proposed project must include studies that employ human stem cells and/or genetic research as part of the central approach or hypothesis.

Applicants are encouraged to integrate a variety of approaches, models or technologies to maximize the scientific impact of the proposal. However, to ensure alignment with CIRM's mission, the overall project must include studies that employ human stem cells and/or genetic* research as part of the central approach or hypothesis.

CIRM defines genetic research as studies that alter genomic sequences of cells (edit, remove or add DNA sequences); or introduces or directly manipulates nucleic acids (e.g., coding and non-coding RNAs, antisense oligonucleotides) in human cells.

(3) A strong justification must be provided for any proposed use of non-human models.

DISC5 awards should be centered on human biology and employ human-derived cells, tissue or data where possible. However, CIRM acknowledges the utility of non-human models to achieve specific objectives. Applicants must provide clear justification for any proposed use of non-human models and include plans to validate such studies with a relevant human cell equivalent where possible.

(4) The applicant team must include one Principal Investigator (PI) and one Co-Investigator (Co-I) employed by a California Organization. Both must commit at least 5% effort and adhere to CIRM's requirements.

The applicant teams must include the following California-based investigators:

- One (1) Principal Investigator (PI) who will serve as primary point of contact between the team and CIRM staff
- One (1) Co-Investigator (Co-I)

The PI and Co-I must adhere to general eligibility requirements described in CIRM Funding Opportunities: Common Requirements and Definitions.

As to the PI and Co-I roles, and due to the collaborative nature of DISC5 Funding Opportunity for Discovery Stage Research Program, for any substantive modifications pertaining to the PI or Co-I within an awarded team, such as a change in PI or Co-I personnel or organization, CIRM will require the applicant to submit a prior approval request (PAR) in advance. Additionally, PIs and Co-Is cannot be changed within the first 6 months of the award period, except under extraordinary circumstances and with the prior written approval of CIRM.

(5) The Co-I must not currently be part of the same lab as the PI.

To facilitate interdisciplinary collaboration, the DISC5 PI and Co-I should not currently be members of the same laboratory. Applicant teams are encouraged to represent distinct but complementary areas of expertise, thereby enabling the achievement of project aims that would not be feasible through a single perspective.

(6) An individual may not serve as PI on more than one DISC5 application per funding cycle.

(7) An individual may not serve as PI or Co-I on more than two DISC5 applications per funding cycle.

An individual serving as the PI on one DISC5 application may be a Co-I on only one additional DISC5 application. An individual serving as a Co-I on one DISC5 application may serve as a PI or Co-I on only one additional DISC5 application.

(8) The applicant team must include an experienced data project manager.

To ensure effective and collaborative sharing and management of data, a Data Project Manager must be a member of the team personnel. This individual must have demonstrated experience in data handling and is responsible for interfacing with the data management team(s), interfacing with CIRM's data infrastructure, reporting progress on data management and sharing, and maintaining the integrity of data during ingestion. The Data Project Manager role can be distributed among multiple individuals and may be fulfilled by other Key Personnel.

(9) The applicant must be ready to initiate work on the funded project within 90 days of award approval.

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

(10) The PI and/or Co-I must not currently have another application that is substantially similar or has overlapping activities pending review or approval under any CIRM opportunity.

(11) The application must be complete and accurate.

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

(12) The applicant organization must meet CIRM's definition of a California Organization.

The applicant organization must be a California organization per CIRM's definition described in CIRM Funding Opportunities: Common Requirements and Definitions at the time of application.

An institution or organization may submit more than one application per funding cycle under this opportunity.

(13) For-profit organizations must demonstrate solvency.

Solvency requirements are defined in CIRM Funding Opportunities: Common Requirements and Definitions.

(14) The applicant must be in "good standing".

Applicants and their affiliates must represent and certify that they are in good standing, as described in CIRM Funding Opportunities: Common Requirements and Definitions.

Application Preparation

Consultations and Webinars

CIRM staff intends to host public webinar(s) and Q&A sessions following the dissemination of this program announcement. Prospective applicants are encouraged to subscribe to email alerts and register for these sessions on our website.

In accordance with CIRM's mission, the Agency is committed to facilitating the development of promising stem cell-based technologies and genetic therapies by partnering with world-class investigators. Therefore, prospective applicants have the opportunity to request consultations with CIRM Science Officers to address inquiries regarding eligibility, budgets and other topics to enhance alignment with program objectives and CIRM requirements. To start a consultation request, please email discovery@cirm.ca.gov.

How does one submit an Application?

All applications must be completed and submitted online using the CIRM Grants Management Portal at ***https://grants.cirm.ca.gov. A prospective PI must create a login in the system to access and submit application materials. Applications are available in the system only to the PI.***

What components does an Application include?

CIRM applications are comprised of an online form and document uploads. The application is designed to collect information for CIRM staff to assess eligibility, for Grants Working Group (GWG) reviewers to evaluate the project, and for CIRM to rapidly initiate an award if the project is approved for funding. In the online form, applicants must complete an eligibility form, indicate Key Personnel involved in the project, and provide budgetary information.

The document uploads page, found in the online application form, provides templates and guidelines for writing the Proposal, Budget, Budget Justification, Budget Worksheet, Biosketches, Project Milestone and Timelines, and other key components of the application. Applicants **must** use the provided templates and adhere to the prescribed page formatting and page limits.

Positive Selection Preview Page

The online form also includes the **Positive Selection Preview Page**. The information provided in this section will be utilized by GWG members to screen applications and select a subset of proposals to move forward to full review by the GWG. For more information on Positive Selection, see **Application Review Information** on page 11.

What are the contents of the Application Proposal?

The Proposal comprises the bulk of detailed information on the project, organized within the following sections:

1. **Objective and Specific Aims:** A concise description of the project's objectives, specific aims, and criteria for success.
2. **Statement of Significance and Innovation:** Description of how the proposed research, if successful, could advance our mechanistic understanding of human stem cells, progenitor cells, or genetic research approaches as they pertain to human health and disease. Applicants should highlight the innovative aspects of the approach and the unique advantages of the proposed collaboration, as well as any resources or datasets that would become available to the research community as a result of this work.
3. **Statement of Population Impact:** Statement describing how the project will broaden or extend the relevance of scientific discoveries to the spectrum of affected California patients or populations.
4. **Rationale and Research Plan:** Description of the scientific rationale for the proposed research and supportive preliminary data. A description of methods and techniques and analytical plan to be employed to achieve aims, and potential pitfalls and alternative approaches, with sufficient detail to assess feasibility.
5. **Data Sharing Overview:** A description of how raw data, processed data and metadata produced from the project will be made available to the research community consistent with FAIR (Findability, Accessibility, Interoperability, and Reusability) data sharing principles. Refer to CIRM Data Sharing and Management for additional information on how applicants should address data sharing and how the data sharing overview will be evaluated. The requirements described in CIRM Data Sharing and Management are incorporated here by reference.
6. **Team Expertise and Organization:** A description of the PI, Co-Investigator, Data Project Manager and most relevant Key Personnel. Key Personnel are defined in CIRM Funding Opportunities: Common Requirements and Definitions. This section should outline each team member's planned contributions and specific expertise as it relates to the project and highlight how the team's interdisciplinary strengths are integrated to achieve the project goals. This section should also include a communication plan and a detailed description of how the collaborative effort will be structured and managed.
7. **Resources and Research Environment:** A brief description of the resources available to the project and the environment where research will take place.
8. **References:** List of sources cited in the proposal.

What should one know before preparing the budget?

Budgets must be justified in detail, including all subcontracts and consulting fees, including, if applicable, any additional costs that would be funded from another source. Refer to CIRM Funding Opportunities: Common Requirements and Definitions for additional information and definitions to aid in budget preparation.

The total CIRM Award is subject to a total Award cost cap of Allowable Project Costs. Allowable Project Costs are detailed in the CIRM Grants Administration Policy for Discovery, Translation, and Education Projects and include Direct Facilities and Indirect costs. CIRM will not fund costs that exceed the specified Award amount. Generally, project costs for personnel, supplies, travel, equipment, data

sharing/management and subcontracts may be claimed. Limits for specific cost categories must be observed.

CIRM makes no prior stipulations on how funds are distributed among the Principal Investigator and Co-Investigator in the team. However, specific budget allocations for each member of the team (PI and Co-Investigator) must be delineated in the budget worksheet and should reflect relative contributions and project needs. This aspect of the budget will be subject to evaluation by the Grants Working Group.

What are direct facilities costs and how much can an applicant claim?

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 costs for for-profit awardees or any non-profit awardees without a federally negotiated Facilities & Administrative Rate agreement are limited to 35% of direct project costs and must be consistent with facilities rates applied to similar research awards at the organization. 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.

What are indirect costs and how much can an applicant claim?

Indirect Costs are administrative costs of the awardee incurred for common or joint objectives, which cannot be readily and specifically identified with a particular project. For-profit organizations cannot claim indirect costs. For non-profit organizations, indirect costs will be limited to 20% of allowable direct research funding costs awarded by CIRM (i.e., project costs and facilities 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 indirect cost rate budgeted at the time of application is to be applied to the entire award project period.

Change in Status

Applicants are required to notify CIRM of any material change in status while the application is pending review (e.g., a change in PI, the applicant no longer qualifies as a California Organization, etc.).

Application Review Information

What is the process for evaluating an application?

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 or that the submitted application is incomplete or contains false or inaccurate information, CIRM will notify the applicant of its decision and, if CIRM deems it appropriate, allow an opportunity to remedy. If CIRM deems it inappropriate, or if the applicant does not remedy the error in a timely manner, CIRM will terminate all further action on the application.

CIRM may exercise its authority to make eligibility determinations at any time before an award is executed.

Positive Selection

CIRM anticipates that the number of applications submitted will be very high for this competition. When the number of applications received in a cycle exceeds the number that can be reviewed by the GWG panel, CIRM will conduct the review in two stages. In the first stage, a pre-review of applications (called "Positive Selection") will be conducted by members of the GWG to identify applications that are most responsive to

the funding opportunity and hold the greatest potential for impact. The CIRM scientific team and CIRM President then determine whether any additional applications merit a full GWG review. The remaining non-selected applications are deemed to be denied.

Positively selected applications advance to the second stage of review, which involves assignment to specific reviewers on the panel, a full discussion at review meeting, and scoring by the GWG.

Scientific Review

The scientific merit of each application is assessed by the GWG, which is composed of fifteen subject matter experts from outside California, seven patient advocate or nurse members of the ICOC (called "GWG Board Members"), and the Chair of the ICOC. The list of scientific members who may participate in the GWG review can be found at https://www.cirm.ca.gov/about-cirm/working-groups/. The composition of the ICOC can be viewed on the CIRM website at https://www.cirm.ca.gov/about-cirm/governing-board/.

The fifteen participating scientists on the GWG evaluate the applications and score them on a scale of 1-100 according to scientific and technical merit, applying the review criteria described below. For purposes of making funding recommendations to CIRM's board, each application shall be assigned to one of two categories based on the median score as follows:

Median score 85 and above: The application has exceptional merit and warrants funding, if funds are available; or

Median score below 85: The application is not recommended for funding.

The Application Review Subcommittee of the ICOC makes final funding decisions.

Consideration of Past CIRM Award Information (If Applicable)

The GWG may consider information from a previously funded and related CIRM award as part of its review. CIRM provides 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.

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.

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?

Applications will be scored based on the following review criteria.

1. Significance: Evaluate the project's significance and potential for impact

- Assess the extent to which a successful project outcome would advance foundational knowledge of stem cell biology or regenerative medicine.
- Assess the extent to which a successful project outcome would reveal new paradigms or biological insights with broad implications beyond any single application.
- Assess the likelihood that a successful project outcome would generate mechanistic knowledge that could inform development of future therapeutics and/or biomarkers in regenerative medicine.

2. Innovation: Evaluate the project for innovation relative to the current state of research

- Assess the extent to which the project cuts across silos or employs a unique synergy of technologies or disciplines to achieve its objective.
- Assess the extent to which the project applies novel frameworks to stem cell biology or regenerative medicine.
- Assess the extent to which the project employs innovative stem cell or genetic research approaches.

3. Rationale: Evaluate the scientific rationale in the proposal

- Assess the fundamental soundness of the scientific rationale for conducting the proposed research.
- Assess the extent to which the rationale and feasibility are supported by the body of available data. For highly innovative and exploratory projects with limited preliminary data, assess whether the knowledge to be gained justifies the investment of resources.
- Evaluate the scientific rationale for choice of proposed experimental approaches (including non-human models).

4. Plan & Design: Evaluate the project plan and design

- Assess the extent to which the project is designed to yield meaningful insights.
- Assess the validity of the potential pitfalls identified and alternative approaches presented.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of the budget and timeline for the research proposed.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of leadership, interdisciplinary integration, resources, and staffing for the research proposed.
- Assess the effectiveness of the plan for team communications and management of the collaborative effort.

5. Population Impact: Evaluate the extent to which the project considers the potential impact of successful outcomes across affected populations

- Assess how effectively the experimental design accounts for genetic, environmental and other external factors that may influence research findings.
- Assess the extent to which the project may extend or validate the potential applicability of discoveries across affected populations or communities.
- Assess how effectively the applicant team's prior or proposed outreach, partnership, or educational efforts, inform study design and enhance the population relevance of potential discoveries.

Award Administration

Issuance of Award

CIRM issues awards through a Notice of Award (NOA), which serves as the official contract defining terms, conditions, and funding commitments. Before finalizing the NOA, CIRM reserves the right to modify project activities and budgets, including improving data sharing plans submitted during pre-funding administrative review. After consulting with project teams, CIRM establishes milestones, success criteria, and timelines based on application information and data sharing plans and may consult external advisors when developing milestones for research and data sharing activities. CIRM will also review key agreements critical to project success to ensure compliance with applicable policies and regulations.

Milestones and Payment

Upon execution of the NOA, CIRM will issue an initial payment; subsequent disbursements will be made as outlined in the NOA. Continued CIRM funding is contingent upon timely scientific progress against specific aims or milestones, DSMP milestones, and timelines established under the NOA. Where project and/or DSMP milestones are not timely met, CIRM reserves the right to either redirect resources to maximize the project outcome or, at its sole discretion, to suspend payment and/or terminate the project. Five percent (5%) of the award budget will be withheld pending completion of all remaining milestones and reporting requirements.

Reporting

The awardee will be required to provide periodic written progress and financial reports to CIRM. CIRM will partner with the awardee to foster the success of the project. Awardees will have ongoing communication with the CIRM Science Officer throughout the duration of the award, typically meeting by teleconference and periodically in person.

Data Sharing and Management

The sharing of data and knowledge produced from CIRM-funded projects is key to advancing the field of regenerative medicine and accelerating the discovery, validation and development of treatments for patients. CIRM requires awardees to manage and preserve raw data, processed data, and metadata, and make applicable data and metadata available to the broader scientific community. CIRM also requires applicants to allocate funds in their proposed budget for personnel and/or activities related to managing and sharing data produced from the funded project. Refer to CIRM Data Sharing and Management for additional information on how data sharing requirements, including the submission and execution of a Data Sharing and Management Plan (DSMP) and data sharing and management budget justification guidelines. The requirements described in CIRM Data Sharing and Management are incorporated here by reference.

No-Cost Extensions

Timely progress on funded projects is of critical importance to CIRM. Therefore, CIRM will consider a one-time, No-Cost Extension (NCE) request of no more than 6 months, submitted at least 30 days before the project end date. Such requests should properly justify how such an extension will advance the project towards its expected outcome, but awardees should not assume CIRM will approve a NCE request.

Discovery Program Meetings and Conferences

To facilitate knowledge sharing and the formation of collaborative networks, CIRM will fund and co-lead the organization of Discovery program meetings or other CIRM-funded conferences. Awardees and trainees funded through this program may be invited, at CIRM's discretion, to attend such meetings and conferences. Dates and frequency of CIRM organized meetings or conferences will be determined by CIRM staff and communicated to investigators in advance of the conference start date. Applicants are required to budget for costs associated with supporting at least one project team member to attend at least one CIRM-organized meeting or conference per year.

CIRM Regulations and Policies

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

Resources

For more information about this and CIRM's other Discovery stage programs, please visit our Current Funding Opportunities page to access program announcements, webinar materials and FAQs. For

programmatic questions that are not addressed in the above resources, send email correspondence to discovery@cirm.ca.gov.

For questions related to application review, send email correspondence to review@cirm.ca.gov.

For questions related to budgets or allowable project costs, please consult the Grants Management FAQ on CIRM's website under "For Researchers > Grants > Managing your Grant." For more information on budgets or allowable costs that are not addressed in the above resources, send email correspondence to grantsmanagement@cirm.ca.gov.

Terms used here are defined in CIRM Funding Opportunities: Common Requirements and Definitions.

Information about CIRM's data sharing requirements, data sharing and management guidelines, and applicant resources are found in CIRM Data Sharing and Management.

CIRM Shared Resources Labs for Stem Cell-Based Modeling

CIRM is supporting a network of Shared Resources Laboratories (SRLs) for Stem Cell-Based Modeling across California. These are core laboratories that provide access to expertise and infrastructure for conducting and analyzing stem cell-based modeling experiments. Applicants are encouraged to engage with SRLs as potential partners in their DISC5 applications. Synergies may arise for stem cell-based modeling-experienced labs in need of expertise with additional models or analyses, and for labs that do not have expertise in stem cell-based modeling but wish to test hypotheses using this technology. Please go to CIRM Collaboration Hub to browse SRL Research Offerings and Courses.

Standards in Stem Cell Research

CIRM has a strong interest in promoting the highest quality standards in human stem cell research. In 2023, the International Society for Stem Cell Research (ISSCR) published Standards for Human Stem Cell Use in Research, a document that identifies quality standards and outlines basic principles for the laboratory use of human stem cells and the in vitro models derived from them. CIRM strongly encourages all awardees to adhere to the recommended characterization and reporting practices outlined in this document to ensure rigor and reproducibility of human stem cell research. CIRM science officers will work with all awardees to ensure quality standards are taken into consideration.

For a list of scientific and infrastructure resources that may be integrated into the proposed project, visit our Researcher Resources page.