CIRM
CALIFORNIA INSTITUTE FOR REGENERATIVE MEDICINE

Funding Opportunity to Manage the 2025 SPARK Annual Meeting

EDUC 1.5

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

10.18.24 (updated 12.02.24)

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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.

The objective of this request for applications (RFA) is to solicit a highly qualified applicant to develop and manage the 2025 annual meeting in support of the CIRM SPARK program.

Award Information

What is the SPARK Program?

The SPARK program provides hands-on summer training opportunities in stem cell and gene therapy related research at leading stem cell institutes to California high school students who represent the diversity of the state's population. The SPARK meeting is a one to one-and-a-half-day program that features the scientific accomplishments of these students in the form of posters and presentations.

What activities will CIRM support?

This RFA will support the development and conduct of the 2025 CIRM SPARK meeting through CIRM's Conference Grant Program. Under this mechanism, the Awardee will retain the primary responsibility for planning, directing, and executing the proposed event; however, the CIRM team will work with the Awardee to review and approve design and implementation of the event during the planning phase to make sure it is responsive to specific CIRM needs. The meeting conducted under this RFA will showcase the scientific accomplishments of the student participants, create networking opportunities, and feature presentations from scientists, program alumni or other relevant participants.

More information about this CIRM Program can be found on the CIRM website at
https://www.cirm.ca.gov/our-impact/training-tomorrows-scientists.

CIRM resources <u>will</u> support the following required core activities under this opportunity:

Direct meeting logistics:

- Overall management of the conference including, but not limited to, site selection, food and beverage planning, meeting agenda, speaker and conference attendees, conference materials, and other conference related tasks
- Onsite conference registration and services
- Complimentary registration (if applicable) and lodging for up to 10 CIRM team members

Pre-conference logistics:

- Website management including website design, online conference registration, capture poster abstracts from attendees during online registration
- Preparation of program book with speaker bios and poster titles, electronic and/or printed
- Develop contracts/service agreements with vendors and service providers as needed
- Participate in regular conference calls with CIRM team
- Floor plan and site map preparation including diagrams for break out rooms, food and beverage spaces, event spaces, poster room, and luggage storage
- Coordination of food and beverage services and staying within the CIRM per diem requirements
- Travel and housing coordination as needed
- Discussing and arranging appropriate signage/map for posters and other conference related events
- Printing of Certificates of Completion for trainees from CIRM Template

Meeting day requirements:

- Venue set up
- Conference registration
- Work with hotel contact onsite to coordinate food and beverage and meeting logistics
- Manage all AV requirements as needed during the conferences
- Conference breakdown
- Security management

Post Meeting requirements:

- Timely reporting to CIRM on meeting results

Meeting Information

(1) <u>SPARK Meeting</u>

For purposes of this RFA, CIRM anticipates the SPARK meeting will be a one to one- and-a-half-day event that includes a networking reception and possible short activity the preceding evening, held at a suitable venue in California during August 2025 on date(s) approved by CIRM. The Conference must be planned to accommodate the following:

- Up to 275 attendees.

- 130 room nights (15 of which are for speakers and 10 of which are for CIRM staff and paid for by this grant).

- Budget sufficient for 1 breakfast, 2 lunches, 3 refreshment breaks; and 1 dinner/reception of 130 people (all paid by this grant at CIRM per diem rates[1]) If the event plan ends up calling for fewer meals, the budget should reflect appropriate reductions.

- The SPARK meeting award provides up to $114,000 for all eligible costs and may not exceed this amount.

Eligibility

What types of applicants are eligible to apply?

(1)   To be eligible, the applicant team and/ or applicant organization must satisfy the following requirements:

- Applicant organization has at least five years of experience in hosting scientific/educational events
- Program Director and one additional staff each have at least five years of experience organizing scientific/educational events
- A track record including events that have required working with individuals and institutions not connected to the applicant organization
- Demonstrated ability to understand and exploit the role of scientific conferences in learning the scientific progress for young scientists

(2)   Meeting must be held in California by an eligible applicant and have a qualified Program Director (PD)

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

Non-profit organization means either:

(1)   a governmental entity of the State of California; or

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[1] The maximum per-person expenditures for meals and light refreshments may not exceed the amounts defined in CIRM's Business Meeting Expenditure policy, which are currently: Breakfast $28.00; Lunch $49.00; Dinner $85.00; Light refreshments $20.00. **Please Review CIRM's policy prior to submitting an application for updates**, to ensure that the most current allowances can be considered.
The maximum per-person expenditures listed above include the cost of the food and beverages, labor, sales tax, delivery charges, and other service fees. Download CIRM's Business Meeting Expenditure Policy document (p.14) for full details.

(2)   a legal entity that is tax exempt under Internal Revenue Code section 501(c) and California Revenue and Taxation Code section 23701d.

(3) The application must be accurate and complete.

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

Schedule and Deadlines

Applications Due	2:00 pm (PDT/PST) on December 18, 2024
Presidential Review and Approval	Approximately 60 days post submission
SPARK Meeting Award	Up to $114,000 for all eligible costs
SPARK Meeting Scheduling Window	August 2025
Meeting Length	Up to one-and-a-half-day including a networking event/reception on first evening

Application Review Information

What is the process for evaluating an application?

Pre-submission Consultation

In accordance with CIRM's mission through this funding mechanism, the Institute is committed to funding scientific conferences that focus on regenerative medicine research and educational programs to train future scientists. Prospective applicants are encouraged, but not required, to contact CIRM with questions to discuss their proposal, including its eligibility, before applying for a Conference Grant.

Eligibility Review

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

Application Review

CIRM's governing board, the Independent Citizens Oversight Committee (ICOC), has delegated to the President of CIRM authority to review and make funding decisions for CIRM-initiated conferences.

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

1.   Experience and Track Record
Do the applicant organization and Program Director have the appropriate experience to manage and perform the proposed activities? Does the applicant organization have a proven commitment to educational conferences in science, medicine, biotechnology, and/or science education fields?

2.   Resources
Does the applicant organization have the necessary resources to adequately manage the meeting and carry out all the required core activities in a timely fashion? Has the applicant organization appointed an appropriate team that will collaborate effectively with CIRM to understand needs, implement tasks, and manage the process?

3.   Overall Value
Does the proposal offer a good value to CIRM by providing quality event management services for a reasonable price that is commensurate with use of California public funds? Are proposed costs appropriately justified?

4.   Alignment with CIRM's Mission
Are the proposed activities and budget designed to specifically promote and support the CIRM SPARK program and CIRM's mission throughout the conference?

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

Confidentiality

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

Application Components And Submission

How does one apply?

Applications must be completed and submitted online using the CIRM Grants Management Portal at https://grants.cirm.ca.gov. Any prospective 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 December 18, 2024.

What components does an application include?

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

The application for CIRM Conference Grants consists of an Application Information and Proposal Form (Web-based document) and can be found at https://www.cirm.ca.gov/researchers/funding-opportunities

The application for CIRM Conference Grant includes the following sections:

1. **Key Personnel**

"Key Personnel" means (i) the principal investigator or program director; or (ii) any other person, including an independent consultant or an employee of a Subcontractor or Partner, who is expected to contribute to the 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 through the proposed project or (b) contribute one percent (1%) or more of their 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 paragraphs (i) or (ii).

2. **Budget**

Provide all budget information requested in the budget section of the Application Information Form. All allowable costs for research grants are detailed in the CIRM Grants Administration Policy.

   Allowable Costs for CIRM-Initiated Conference Grants

   - Conference facility and equipment rental (including easels, poster display boards, tables/chairs and associated taxes and service fees)

- Transportation, parking, lodging and per diem or subsistence allowances for the organizers and speakers and other costs
- Hotel room charges and fees (overnight accommodations for CIRM staff and speakers)
- Honoraria for invited speakers
- AV equipment rental and planning costs (e.g., audio/visual and internet connectivity) (and associated taxes and service fees)
- Meeting planning and management costs that include up to 10% justified salary support for the Program Director for time spent conducting conference-specific activities; reasonable salary support for administrative staff time conducting conference-specific activities; and meeting planner costs
- Production, publicity and supply costs (website development, program printing or electronic media, name tags, etc.) needed for conduct of the conference (only if received for use during the budget period)
- Meals (food and non-alcoholic beverages) not related to travel
- Awards for students in the form of tangible gifts (no cash-based gifts including gift cards are allowed)
- Other items as described in the [CIRM Grants Administration Policy for](#) [Discovery, Translation, and Education Projects](#).

These costs are allowable whether incurred by the applicant or by contracted vendors providing the above services needed to conduct the conference.

Non-allowable Costs for CIRM-Initiated Conference Grants

Non-allowable costs include purchase of equipment; visas; passports; entertainment; alcoholic beverages; personal telephone calls; laundry charges; dues; cash awards; alterations or renovations. The [CIRM Grants Administration](#) [Policy](#) also indicates unallowable costs.

Indirect Costs are not allowable on this award.

3. **Conference Coordination and Logistics Plan**

Describe your proposed plan: how you would coordinate with CIRM and describe a proposed agenda for the conference to showcase the SPARK program, including the night-before networking reception, likely sessions highlighting the interns' research, SPARK alumni, career development, patient advocacy, general scientific research, and social media/video efforts or other segments you envision at this time. Please include a proposed agenda in the uploads section.

4. **Experience and Track Record**

Describe the experience of the Program Director in managing and performing the proposed activities. Describe his or her track record of managing conferences in science, medicine, biotechnology, and/or science education fields.

5. Available Resources

Describe the resources your program has to ensure that the meeting is adequately managed and that all required core activities are carried out in a timely fashion.
Address your ability to appoint an appropriate team that will collaborate effectively with CIRM to understand needs, implement tasks, and manage the process.

6. Overall Value

Explain how your proposal offers good value to CIRM by providing quality events management services for a reasonable price that is commensurate with use of California public funds. Explain how your proposed costs are appropriately justified.

7. Alignment with CIRM's Mission

Describe how the proposed activities and budget support the CIRM SPARK program and CIRM's mission. Explain how the proposed events, talks, and other activities are focused on the CIRM SPARK program.

8. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Plan

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

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

Award Administration

Issuance of Award

A CIRM Conference Award is issued via a Notice of Award, which is the formal contract that defines the terms and conditions of an award and documents the commitment of funds from CIRM. The Awardee will be subject to CIRM's Grants Administration Policy for Discovery, Translation, and Education Projects, including the insurance requirements specified therein.

Pandemic or other contingency: If CIRM determines that any of the parameters outlined in the Notice of Award must be changed to accommodate unexpected circumstances, CIRM will work with grantee to determine what re-budgeting is necessary and allowable to enable the meeting to

go forward.

Reporting

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

Contacts

For information about this RFA or the review process:

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Definitions

A "California Organization" is a for-profit or non-profit organization or is a California-domiciled wholly owned subsidiary of a non-California organization (any entity that does not qualify as a California Organization) that meets all of the following criteria: a) Employment and Payroll: Employs at least one W-2 employee; and (ii) More than 50% of its W-2 employees, whether part-time or full-time, who are paid in any manner (e.g., wage, salary, commission, equity), must be domiciled full-time in California and be required to file California state income taxes due to their employment with the organization.

"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.

"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 $25,000 or more through the proposed project. "Subcontractor" does not include suppliers of widely available goods.

Appendix

CIRM Regulations

Grant or Loan awards made through this RFA 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.