



CLIN2 Awards: Funding Opportunity for Clinical Trials

Summary

OVERVIEW				
Objective		To accelerate clinical development of stem cell-based and genetic therapies to late-stage trials by encouraging innovative clinical trial designs, and incentivizing stage-appropriate market access strategies and pre-commercialization activities		
Scope		All activities necessary for completion of a Phase 1, 2, or 3 trial, plus studies to understand mechanism of action and potency assay development, patient support activities, and data sharing activities. May support manufacturing for the next phase trial.		
Program Recurrence		Four times per year		
AWARD DETAILS				
Funds	Stage	First in Human*	Phase 2 or Subsequent**	Phase 3 or Pivotal
	Maximum Award Amount	\$8,000,000 (for-profit) \$12,000,000 (non-profit)	\$15,000,000	\$15,000,000
Maximum Duration		Up to 4 years		
ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS				
Applicant Organization		California or non-California-based for-profit or non-profit organizations may apply		
Applicant PI		Must commit at least 15% effort		
Project Manager		Must commit at least 50% effort		
Co-funding		First in Human*	Phase 2 or Subsequent**	Phase 3 or Pivotal
		30% (for-profit***) None (non-profit)	50% (for-profit***) None (non-profit)	50%
SCHEDULES AND DEADLINES				
Application Due Dates		Four times per year		
GWG Selection		Approximately 60 days after application deadline		
GWG Review		Approximately 30 days after GWG Selection		
Award Approval		Next available ARS meeting		
Start Date		Must be prepared to commence award activities within 45 days of award approval; upon the effective date of the Award Management Policy, this timeframe will be extended to 60 days from award approval.		



CONTACT AND ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

<https://www.cirm.ca.gov/researchers/funding-opportunities-clinical-trial-stage-research/>

For additional information on the program or applications, contact clinical@cirm.ca.gov. For questions related to the review and approval of applications, contact review@cirm.ca.gov.

Additional requirements and definitions may be found in CIRM Funding Opportunities: Common Requirements and Definitions, and are incorporated herein by reference.

*For this program announcement, a trial is considered First-in-Human if it is the first clinical trial using this therapeutic candidate in the proposed disease indication and using a given route of administration.

**For this program announcement, "Subsequent" trials are any Phase 1 trials following a First-In-Human trial in the proposed disease indication and using a given route of administration. This definition excludes Phase 3 or pivotal Phase 2 trials.

***Co-funding requirement also applies to for-profit partners of non-profit applicants.

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.

This opportunity is in support of CIRM's Strategic Allocation Framework (SAF) goals as approved by the Independent Citizens' Oversight Committee (ICOC) in September 2024, including the goal to propel 15-20 therapies targeting diseases affecting Californians to late-stage trials and the goal to advance 4-7 rare disease programs to the stage of filing a Biologics License Application (BLA) with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

Through the CLIN2 program, CIRM continues to create funding opportunities for the types and stages of clinical research that otherwise do not exist or are of limited scope and focus to advance the field of regenerative medicine. Existing federal funding opportunities for clinical trial stage activities are primarily driven by the internal priorities and interests of the administering body and, therefore, are unpredictable and limited in both scope and focus. The CLIN2 program is a part of CIRM's core product development programs that unlike other funding sources, provide reliable and predictable funding throughout the award period.

Objective

The objective of this funding opportunity is to support completion of a Phase 1, 2, or 3 trial, (including registrational trials) for an innovative regenerative medicine-based therapy addressing a serious unmet need and with the potential for transformative benefits to patients, families and the health care system. The trial should be part of a clinical development program aiming for marketing approval, and which proposes stage-appropriate pre-commercialization activities, including development of an access strategy. The clinical development program for the supported trial should demonstrate a commitment to enrolling a patient population reflective of the demographics of the disease population. Further, the clinical development program should leverage CIRM-funded and externally funded infrastructure for data, resource or knowledge sharing to drive rigor, efficiency, and transparency of clinical trial results.

Under this program, CIRM will act not only as a funding agency, but will also devote significant internal resources and leverage its external team of world-class subject matter experts to actively advance the project. The result of a successful application will be the formation of a true partnership that both accelerates the program and gives it the greatest opportunity for success.



Program Guiding Principles

Guiding Principles are how CIRM translates the SAF recommendations into portfolio outcomes. Guiding Principles shape program objectives, inform the criteria by which projects are selected for merit review and scientifically evaluated, and inform the recommendations that CIRM teams bring to the Application Review Subcommittee (ARS) to support funding decisions.

The CLIN2 Program is designed to advance clinical-stage candidates with the potential to deliver transformative therapies for Californians while addressing barriers to access. To achieve these objectives, the CLIN2 portfolio will prioritize projects that:

- Offer transformative impact for patients, meaning therapies that provide significant benefits over existing therapies and therapies in clinical trials;
- Address known barriers to access of stem cell-based and genetic therapies, and;
- Broadly address both prevalent and rare diseases affecting Californians.

CLIN2 Guiding Principles are applied throughout the application lifecycle to ensure the development of a scientifically meritorious portfolio aligned with the SAF Impact Goals.

Scope and Structure

The CLIN2 award supports completion of an interventional Phase 1, 2 or 3 clinical trial for a stem-cell based or genetic therapeutic candidate and may also fund an associated natural-history comparator or lead-in normal healthy volunteer study. Applicants are encouraged to use accelerating trial designs where appropriate, such as basket trials or adaptive design dose-escalation protocols.

Program activities

Applicants may request funds to cover costs for research activities conducted wholly in California and may also request costs for research activities conducted outside of California, provided that the Awardee is a California Organization and exercises direction and control over the activities.

CIRM will **fund** the following activities under this opportunity:

REQUIRED ACTIVITIES	
✓	All clinical operations activities needed to complete the trial according to the proposed timeline
✓	Outreach and inclusion activities to achieve trial enrollment demographics reflecting the patient population
✓	Treatment of patients with the therapeutic candidate (or control) and follow-up visits per the clinical protocol
✓	Sharing of any non-clinical as well as clinical data per the CIRM data sharing requirements
✓	Establishment and regular convening of a Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) with clinical development expertise to provide forward-looking strategic advice
✓	Activities associated with managing, preserving, and sharing data and knowledge from the study
ALLOWABLE ACTIVITIES	
✓	Natural history studies needed for baseline or control data for the interventional trial
✓	Lead-in studies in normal healthy volunteers for the interventional trial
✓	Studies to develop biomarkers, understand mechanisms of action and develop a potency assay



✓	Regulatory activities including FDA interactions and requests for designations
✓	Non-clinical studies required by the FDA (FDA documentation required)
✓	Strategic planning activities
✓	Manufacturing activities to supply the current clinical trial, including technology transfer and FDA-approved comparability studies, if needed
CONDITIONALLY ALLOWABLE ACTIVITY	
✓	Manufacturing for the next phase trial. Funding of that activity will be conditioned on 1) an interim evaluation by CIRM and a panel of independent experts of the clinical trial data to date, and 2) provision of 50% co-funding for this activity, if co-funding is required as specified in “Award Amount and Duration” below

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

UNALLOWABLE ACTIVITIES	
✗	Project costs incurred before the date the ICOC approves the application for funding
✗	Discovery or translational research
✗	Activities already budgeted or paid for under a prior, existing or future CIRM award
✗	The 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

Award amount and duration

CLIN2 award amounts vary by trial phase and organization type as described below. The proposed project period must not exceed 48 months from the award start date, expected to be within 60 days of the ICOC approval. During the Project Period, CIRM funds shall only be used for allowable costs and activities.

	FIRST IN HUMAN	PHASE 2 OR SUBSEQUENT	PHASE 3 OR PIVOTAL
Co-funding	30% (for-profit) None (non-profit)	50% (for-profit) None (non-profit)	50%
Max Award (total cost)	\$8,000,000 (for-profit) \$12,000,000 (non-profit)	\$15,000,000	\$15,000,000

The amount of total project costs requested must be adequately justified. The requested amount is subject to adjustments prior to issuance of an award based on assessments of the Grants Working Group (GWG), the CIRM team, or by the Application Review Subcommittee (ARS) of the ICOC.



Provisional timetable

CLIN2 funding opportunities will recur four times per year. The anticipated timeline of each funding cycle is as follows:

PROVISIONAL TIMETABLE	
Applications Open	Four times per year
Applications Due	Please visit Funding Opportunities on the CIRM website for current application deadlines.
GWG Selection	Approximately 60 days after application deadline
GWG Merit Review	Approximately 30 days after GWG Selection
ARS Award Approval	Next available ARS meeting
Award Start	Must be prepared to commence award activities within 45 days of award approval; upon the effective date of the Award Management Policy, this timeframe will be extended to 60 days from award approval.

Application Selection for Merit Review

If the number of applications submitted exceeds the volume that can reasonably be reviewed by the GWG panel, the GWG will conduct an initial screening to identify those applications that best align with the CLIN2 program objectives. The basis for selection will be defined in the CLIN2 Program Announcement.

Applications receiving the highest overall reviewer assessments, consistent with the target number established for GWG Merit Review, will advance to full panel discussion.

The CIRM President and CEO, upon recommendation from CIRM scientific staff, may advance a limited number of additional applications not selected by the GWG if there is a compelling programmatic justification.

Reviewers may provide brief comments or categorical assessments at this stage; however, detailed feedback to applicants is not guaranteed.

Eligibility

All the following requirements must be fully satisfied for an application to be accepted and considered for funding by CIRM. Requirements marked with a * incorporate by reference the requirements and definitions described in [CIRM Funding Opportunities: Common Requirements and Definitions](#).

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS	
1	The applicant must propose an interventional clinical trial for a regenerative medicine-based therapeutic (stem cell-based or genetic therapy*)
2	For projects not progressing from a CIRM preclinical stage award, the IND application and clinical protocol must be cleared by FDA at the time the CIRM application is submitted. For projects progressing from a CIRM preclinical stage or earlier phase clinical trial award, the IND application must have been submitted to FDA by the time of the CLIN2 application and must be cleared to proceed within 30 days of the CLIN2 application submission
3	The PI must commit a minimum of 15% effort and adhere to CIRM's requirements*
4	The project team must include an experienced project manager at 50% effort
5	The project team must include a key person with data management experience



6	The CIRM applicant must be the IND sponsor
7	The applicant must have at least one trial site located in California. California applicants must justify any trial sites outside of California
8	The applicant must be ready to initiate work on the funded project within 60 days of award approval
9	The application must be accurate and complete
10	The applicant must demonstrate the required level of co-funding*
11	For-profit organizations must demonstrate solvency*
12	The applicant must meet CIRM's requirements for "good standing"*