



**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Members, Governing Board CIRM

**FROM:** Rahul G. Thakar, CIRM Senior Science Officer for Portfolio Development and Review

**DATE:** Friday, March 4, 2016

**SUBJECT:** Amendment of the Concept Plan for the CIRM Conference Grant Program.

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**Accelerating the Development of Stem Cell Treatments: Conference Grant Program**

The mission of CIRM is to accelerate the development of stem cell therapies to patients with unmet medical needs. CIRM has applied this basic approach to its support of high quality and compelling mission-relevant scientific conferences. Thus, with the approval of the Board, CIRM restructured the existing program to create a mechanism to accept open-call applications on a quarterly basis and create a complementary award mechanism that allows CIRM to effectively create RFAs for specific meetings/conferences that pertain to specific CIRM programs or interests.

The updated Conference Grant Program maintains two categories of funding. The first category, or Mechanism 1, is an applicant-initiated mechanism whereby an applicant proposes to hold a conference regarding a particular scientific concept. Mechanism 1 conferences have a maximum funding level that is the lesser of \$50,000 or 50% of the total budget. The second category, or Mechanism 2, is a CIRM-initiated opportunity whereby CIRM determines the need for a conference and designs an RFA to create a competitive application process to determine the conference organizer/coordinating entity. CIRM maintains an oversight role in Mechanism 2 awards to ensure that its mission-centric goals are met.

CIRM proposes further refinements in the Conference Grant Concept Plan to ensure that the program achieves its goals.

**REQUESTED MODIFICATIONS TO APPLICANT-INITIATED CONFERENCES (MECHANISM 1)**

CIRM proposes to amend the concept plan to require Mechanism 1 Conference Grant awardees to provide a 30-minute speaking slot (inclusive of question-and-answer time) for a CIRM team member. This speaking slot is intended to be an opportunity for CIRM to inform attendees about its mission, current funding opportunities, and recruit potential projects. To be eligible for funding, applicants for a Mechanism 1 Conference Grant must commit to include this slot in the program agenda.



## **REQUESTED MODIFICATIONS TO CIRM-INITIATED CONFERENCES (MECHANISM 2)**

CIRM proposes to modify the parameters that govern CIRM-initiated conferences (Mechanism 2 Conference Grants). Currently, Mechanism 2 Conference Grants do not allow funding for honoraria for invited speakers, salary support for the Program Director (PD), or salary support for an administrative person. Given the necessity and reasonableness of these costs to ensure a well coordinated, engaging CIRM-initiated conference, CIRM proposes to include funding in Mechanism 2 CIRM Conference Grants for honoraria for invited speakers, up to 10% salary support for the PD's time spent conducting conference-specific activities, and reasonable salary support for administrative staff time conducting conference-specific activities. Mechanism 1 Conference Grants (applicant-initiated conferences) will remain unchanged in these areas.



## **CIRM Conference Grant Concept Plan**

### **Objective**

The mission of the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine (CIRM) is to accelerate efficiently stem cell therapies to patients with unmet medical needs.

The objective of this Conference Grant program is to create a highly competitive opportunity for CIRM to support valuable mission-specific scientific conferences. A scientific conference is defined as an organized event where persons physically assemble to exchange scientific information and explore a defined scientific subject relevant to CIRM's mission. Support of such conferences is contingent on the fiscal and programmatic priorities of CIRM at time of submission.

Under this program, CIRM will only accept applications for review of conferences aligned with CIRM's short and long-term goals. In addition, CIRM may issue specific requests for applications to develop a conference in collaboration with CIRM to fulfill a specifically defined need.

### **Award Information**

What conferences will CIRM support?

CIRM will support following types of conferences under this opportunity:

Conferences addressing critical issues and bottlenecks related to stem cell-based therapy and discovery/stem cell biology.

CIRM resources cannot be used for the following types of conferences:

- Conferences outside of California
- Academic departmental retreats
- Conferences not directly relevant to CIRM's mission

This PA will support the development and conduct of scientific conferences relevant to regenerative medicine via two funding mechanisms. CIRM plans to allocate up to \$2,000,000 biennially to this program via the following mechanisms:

#### **A. Mechanism 1**

Under the first category, the grantee will be solely responsible for planning, directing, and executing the proposed conference.

It is anticipated that the size and duration of each award will vary. The total amount awarded and the number of awards will depend upon the number, quality, and timing of applications,



the costs of the proposals received, and on CIRM programmatic priorities. The maximum award amount for this category is the lesser of \$50,000 or 50% of the conference budget.

## **B. Mechanism 2**

Under the second category, the grantee retains the primary responsibility for planning, directing, and executing the proposed event; however, CIRM staff will work closely with the grantee to design and implement an event that is responsive to a specific CIRM need.

CIRM will use this mechanism to request specific conferences to address an area or need important to the Institute or to seek advice on an emerging scientific issue(s) in regenerative medicine. For this type of conference, CIRM will solicit proposals from prospective applicants through a specific announcement. The maximum award amount for this category will be stated in the announcement. Under Mechanism 2, an applicant may request funding for honoraria for invited speakers, up to 10% salary support for the PD's time spent conducting conference-specific activities, and reasonable salary support for administrative staff time conducting conference-specific activities.

For all conference grants awarded, CIRM requires a final report on the conference including outputs (e.g., DVD, abstract book or webcast) and an assessment by attendees of the presentations and overall quality of the conference. Please note that CIRM expects appropriate acknowledgement on marketing and conference materials.

### How will funds be awarded?

Awards to applicants will be in the form of a grant. Initial payment will be dispersed ~~no earlier than 60 days before the conference start date~~ upon issuance of a Notice of Award and final payment issued upon submission for final conference reports. Successful applicants will have thoughtfully accounted for foreseeable risks and developed contingency plans that do not involve additional funding from CIRM. Information regarding an applicant's contingency plan should be included in the application.

## **Eligibility**

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

- (1) Must establish relevance to CIRM's Mission

For Mechanism 1, applicants must provide justification as to how will the proposed conference help accelerate stem cell therapies to patients with unmet medical needs. In addition, applicants must commit to make a 30-minute speaking slot (inclusive of question-and-answer time) available for a CIRM team member. This speaking slot is intended to be an opportunity for CIRM to inform attendees about its mission, current funding opportunities, and recruit potential projects.



For Mechanism 2, CIRM will call for specific meetings to be organized that are aligned with its mission. The applicant will be asked to justify how the meeting has been organized efficiently.

(2) Must be held in California by an eligible institution and have a qualified Program Director (PD)

#### California Based Organizations

California organizations (for-profit and non-profit) may use CIRM funds for eligible conference costs incurred in California. To qualify as a California organization, the organization must have >50% of its employees located in, and paid in, the state of California, and manage the award activities from the California location.

#### Non-California Based Organizations

Non-California organizations may also apply; however, CIRM funding can be used only for allowable expenditures incurred within California. Foreign institutions are not eligible to apply for conference grant support.

An international conference can be supported through a California non-profit organization of an established international scientific or professional society. Non-profit organization means either:

- (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) and California Revenue and Taxation Code section 23701d.

#### Program Director Qualifications

A Program Director (PD) is any individual with the skills necessary to direct the planning and execution of the proposed conference. The PD may be an employee or partnered with the applicant institution. The applicant must provide the PD's qualification at time of application submission.

(3) Must show or have applied for other funding sources (Mechanism 1 applications only)

For Mechanism 1 applications, CIRM requires the applicant to have applied for or have obtained other sources of funding. The maximum funding CIRM will allow is the lesser of 50% of a conference budget or \$50,000 for any Mechanism 1 application. The co-funding may come from any funding source arranged by the applicant. Documentation demonstrating the commitment and/or application for funds to cover the co-funding amount must be provided upon application submission. Only funds that will be spent concurrently with CIRM funds will qualify towards the co-funding requirement. CIRM will not release funds until the applicant has demonstrated to CIRM's satisfaction that it has access to the required co-funding.

For Mechanism 2 application, CIRM does not require co-funding. CIRM will specify an award amount in the announcement that will serve as the maximum budget for the conference.



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(4) Must be submitted on or before the closest submission date that is 90 days before the conference begins.

**Schedule and Deadlines**

Mechanism 1 Applications

Applications Due	2:00 pm (PDT/PST) on the last business day of February, May, August, November
Presidential Review and Approval	Within 45 days post submission
Award Start	<del>Earliest is 60 days before conference start date</del> <u>TBD depending on the conference start date and CIRM approval</u>

Mechanism 2 Applications

Application submission deadlines for Mechanism 2 will be identified in the announcement for the desired conference.