

Bridges to Stem Cell Research and Therapy Awards Program

Guide for Program Directors

Resources

- The RFA “Funding Opportunity For Bridges To Stem Cell Research and Therapy Awards:
https://www.cirm.ca.gov/sites/default/files/files/about_cirm/EDUC2_Bridges_030221.pdf
- CIRM Grants Administration Policy for Discovery, Translation, and Education Projects:
https://www.cirm.ca.gov/sites/default/files/files/funding_page/Grants_Administration_Policy_for_Discovery_Translation_and_Education_Projects.pdf

Award Administration

Funding

Each award supports up to 10 trainees per year and the program is funded for up to five years. To reiterate from the program announcement, programs must follow these limitations on each budget category:

- **Stipends**

The award provides up to \$3,000/month stipend for trainees. Foreign trainees can be paid an equivalent salary rather than a stipend if that payment mechanism is required due to their status. Nevertheless, all trainees are to be 100% devoted to their internship activities and are not required to provide any other service as a condition of this payment. Also, CIRM will only support the intern health insurance that is provided to those in a similar capacity and up to the amounts provided by the award. All other fringe benefits expenses must be supported by other, non-CIRM funding sources.

- **Tuition and Fees**

Bridges Awards provide up to \$8,000 per year to the home institution for actual educational expenses for each trainee during the internship period. NOTE: The tuition calculation specified in the CIRM Grants Administration Policy for Discovery, Translation, and Education Projects (100% of 1st \$3,000 and 60% of everything over \$3,000 up to \$16,000) does not apply to this funding.

- **Research-related funds**

Research-related funds up to \$3,300/trainee/year for costs to the internship-host laboratory. It is expected that the host institution will recover overhead on these costs at a rate of 10%. Textbooks required for coursework, specialty volumes that will enhance training, laboratory and technical manuals are appropriate for purchase. Professional journal subscriptions are not allowable costs.

- **Techniques Course Fees**

Technique course fees up to \$3,000/trainee/year for fees and expenses (including travel) for a training course in advanced cell culture techniques.

- **Travel Funds**

Travel funds up to \$1,000/trainee/year is provided to cover travel costs for trainees to attend the CIRM Annual Meeting. Excess funds may be used to cover other program-related travel for the trainee. Travel funds may not be expended to cover the costs of travel between the trainee's place of residence and the training institution or to the training institution for the purpose of recruitment.

- **Program Administration**

Up to \$150,000 per year. Within this allocation, up to \$25,000 per year may be used for Program Director salary and up to \$7,000 per year may be used for a faculty advisor or internship coordinator at a host institution.

Other allowable costs in the category include but are not limited to reasonable administrative support, planning and implementing activities focused on patient and healthcare engagement including a required training course in regulatory pathway and therapeutic development, community outreach, seminar speakers, outside speakers for courses, or other activities that enhance the educational value of the program. Other program administration costs should benefit all trainees in the cohort and not be used for individual trainee experiences. The cost of food and meals served at a seminar or meeting is not an allowable cost.

- **Overhead**

CIRM will fund 10% Indirect Costs on eligible costs (excludes tuition and fees) and will not fund any Facilities Costs.

Program Director

Must be full-time faculty member at the awardee institution and commit a minimum of 5% effort to the Program throughout the project period.

Internship Slots

For programs offering two tracks of internship (e.g. Masters and undergraduate): CIRM will allow programs to make adjustments to the numbers and types of trainees within each track to match the strengths, needs and demands of the program. Any change to an individual trainee's appointment duration that differs from that specified in the grant, such as leave of absence, requires prior approval and should be adequately justified. A change of sponsor, mentor, or host institution requires a Prior Approval Request.

Carryforward

CIRM allows carry-forward of any obligated trainee funds from one grant year to the next. All unobligated trainee funds at the end of each trainee internship must be returned to CIRM and cannot be used to fund additional internships, additional program administration funding or for any other purpose unless specifically approved in advance by CIRM for exceptional circumstances. CIRM will allow carry-forward of unobligated program administration funds from one grant year to the next without prior approval to use those funds in a way that best serves the trainees.

No-cost extensions (NCEs) are only permitted under exceptional circumstances, where an extension would facilitate the completion of a trainee's normal internship term; such an extension would require specific approval by CIRM.

Rebudgeting

Prior Approval may be needed to rebudget funds from one budget category to another. Please see page 43-44 of the [CIRM Grants Administration Policy for Discovery, Translation, and Education Projects](#) for more information. Generally speaking, rebudgeting into or within Trainee-related funds is allowable, while rebudgeting from Trainee-related funds to Program administration is unallowable. Rebudgeting cannot be used to exceed the per-trainee budget category maximums.

Internships and Host Laboratories

Internship Projects must comprise hands-on, regenerative medicine-related research involving stem cells, gene therapy and/or other critical research relevant to understanding or treating a human condition or disease.

Host Laboratories must be within California non-profit doctorate granting research universities or research institutes or at California laboratories of for-profit biotech or pharmaceutical companies, including CROs or CDMOs. Internships cannot occur at the applicant institution. Before adding new internship host sites or laboratories to a program, the Program Director must verify that the research, mentorship and financial resources are adequate to support interns for the duration of their training.

Reporting Requirements

Grantees are required to submit Annual Progress and Financial Reports. Progress Reports will be due on the anniversary of each budget period and include sections on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion as well as alumni tracking. Financial Reports will be due 60 days after each budget period.

In addition, Intern Appointment forms will be required at the beginning of each appointment period which will describe the planned laboratory placement, mentor and research activities/project for each trainee prior to start of the internship. Appointment forms should be submitted to CIRM within 30 days of the appointment start date. In addition, Completion forms

will be required and due within 60 days of the end of each appointment period which will describe progress made during the internship period. CIRM will withhold subsequent payments until Appointment and Completion forms are submitted.

Assurances

CIRM will require self-certification that applicable protocol approvals (SCRO, IRB, IACUC) were in place when reporting on individual intern progress.

Reporting Requirements

All reporting is done through our online Grants Management System (GMS). To access the reporting requirements, the PD or their delegate first logs into GMS at <https://grants.cirm.ca.gov/>. In the “Action Items Needing Your Attention” section (found on both the home screen and the “Your Awards” screen), current or overdue reporting requirements are shown. The requirement can be accessed with the “edit” action to the right of the report listing.

To view more information about the award, including upcoming reporting requirements, Trainee Appointment forms, a link to the executed Notice of Award and contact information for the CIRM Science Officer and Grants Manager, use the “Your Awards” link near the top of the webpage and scroll down to the current award.

Submission of the Annual Progress Reports and Prior Approval Requests require a secondary submission by the Authorized Organizational Official (AOO) assigned to the award. An email is automatically generated to the AOO after submission by the PD. Financial reports are submitted solely by the Financial Authorized Organizational Official (FAOO) assigned to the award. More information on the AOO and FAOO roles can be found at <https://www.cirm.ca.gov/researchers/managing-your-grant#Guides>. Appointment forms are completed solely by the Program Director. Once a full cohort is appointed, the submitted appointment forms are locked. Please contact CIRM if any corrections or additions need to be made.

Prior Approval Requests

The following post-award changes require the Awardee to submit a Prior Approval Request to CIRM for review and approval before any changes or actions are taken by the Awardee:

- Training Period for Individual Trainee (special circumstances)
- Project Period Extensions
- Change in Program Director, sponsor, mentor, or host institution
- Award Relinquishment
- Addition/carry forward of unused internship slots
- Major change to program scope (e.g. converting in person to online class)
- Rebudgeting between training-related categories and program administration

Policy for Intern Mentorship under the Bridges Program

Trainees appointed under a CIRM Training Program must be supervised by a faculty mentor or faculty level scientist who is accountable for the conduct of the research and operations of the laboratory or facility where the trainee research is performed. To ensure appropriate supervision and commitment to each trainee, a mentor may not be appointed to supervise more than two concurrent trainees from any CIRM training program at any one time. Prior to making a trainee appointment, Program Directors should consider the availability of the mentor to supervise a new trainee, including any possible overlaps with existing trainees that might result in exceeding this mentorship limit. The goal is to have greater engagement by mentors with each intern and encourage a broader participation of mentors in the Bridges program.