Innate Immune System Impact (RFA) Frequently Asked Questions

The frequently asked questions (FAQs) aim to cover topics related to the Simons Foundation Autism Research Initiative (SFARI) Innate Immune System Impact RFA full proposal processes, Simons Foundation policies and online submission on proposalCENTRAL.

If you have a question regarding the RFA guidelines or policies not answered below, do not hesitate to contact the Simons Foundation at grants@simonsfoundation.org or call 646-654-0066.

How do I submit a full proposal?
New users first need to register on proposalCENTRAL. For all users, log in and select “Create New Proposal” or click on the “Grant Opportunities” tab. Filter the Grant Maker by “Simons Foundation” and click on “Apply Now” next to the “Innate Immune System Impact” program. Once all sections are complete and the attachments are uploaded, the “Submit” button will be activated.

Are references, figures and figure legends included in the narrative six (6)-page limit? How should they be included?
References, figures and figure legends are not included in the page limit for the full proposal. Please attach them at the end of the six (6)-page narrative in the same PDF file. The Simons Foundation’s preference is for figures to follow the narrative rather than be embedded in the text.

What are the font and size requirements?
11-point, legible font.

What can I include as an appendix?
‘In-press’ papers can be included as appendices, as well as any papers that you consider essential for the work of the review committee (not more than three [3]). Any other material should be included, if possible, in the narrative. If you have video attachments for your proposal, please upload as an appendix (all file types are accepted).

How can I find out more about available biospecimens and other data available from the Simons Variation in Individuals Project (Simons VIP) and Simons Simplex Collection (SSC)?
You can access and request information about Simons VIP and SSC biospecimens and data on SFARI Base. If you do not have a SFARI ID, you must create one. If you have problems with the log-in or have questions about the availability of biospecimens or data, please email grants@simonsfoundation.org.

Does the Simons Foundation require letters of support or collaboration?
We do not require letters of support or letters of collaboration for Co-investigators. If a letter is prepared, it can be uploaded as “Appendix: In-press papers on related topics.”

Is there a minimum percent effort for Principal Investigators or Co-investigators?
There is no minimum percent effort required for any personnel, but we expect personnel, in particular Principal Investigators (PIs) and Co-investigators, to have efforts that reflect their roles in the project.

Can someone else (assistant, staff, etc.) submit my application for me?
Yes, you can add users with administrator access to the proposalCENTRAL application so that someone other than the PI can edit and submit the application.
Can postdoctoral associates apply as PIs?
No, postdoctoral associates may not apply. SFARI funds may only be used for personnel considered employees of the grantee institution who are eligible for benefits. Funds may not be used for stipend supplementation unless specifically authorized under the terms of the program from which funds are derived.

Can foreign institutions apply for a grant?
Yes, foreign institutions with a 501(c)(3) equivalency may apply.

Can multiple PIs apply for a grant?
The applicant organization may designate multiple individuals as PIs who share the authority and responsibility for leading and directing the project, intellectually and logistically. For more information on the responsibilities of PIs, please refer to the personnel definitions in the SFARI glossary below.

Applications with multiple PIs from different institutions that would like to be paid separately must include a signed signature page, budget template and budget justification for each PI. The budget totals for all non-applicant PIs must be included in the "Consortium and Contractual Direct Costs" section and indirect costs for all non-applicant PIs should be included in the "Other Indirect Costs" section.

Does the PI need to sign the signature page?
No, only the signing official is required to sign the signature page.

What is required for a subcontract? Where do I add the subcontract budget and upload subcontract budget details?*
Applications with subcontracts must submit a Subcontract Budget and Budget Justification for each subcontract awardee and grant year. The applicant PI must include the direct cost budget totals for all subcontracts in the "Consortium & Contractual Direct" section and indirect costs for all subcontracts in the "Other Indirect Cost" section. Please upload the subcontract budget details/budget justification (available for download in the “Proposal Attachments” section) in the “Proposal Attachments” section of the full application on proposalCENTRAL.

Can I make changes to the application once it has been submitted?
You must contact the Simons Foundation to unsubmit your full application before you can edit attachments or HTML sections. Please email grants@simonsfoundation.org or call 646-654-0066 if you would like to unsubmit your application prior to the 3 March 2014 deadline.

Is validating my proposal the same as submitting it?
No. “Validating” the proposal checks for errors and omissions and will alert you to missing requirements of your application. If the application is complete, you must then click on "Submit." You will receive an email within ten minutes, and should contact pcsupport@altum.com if you do not receive confirmation and do not see your application in the “Submitted” tab or with the status changed to “Submitted.”

The deadline for notification has passed. What is the status of my proposal?
You should receive notification within 24 hours of the deadline. Please check your spam filter settings if you have not received it by then.

Can PIs or Co-investigators submit multiple applications to the same award type (e.g. Pilot, Research, Explorer etc.)?
You must request approval from the Science Team at scienferfa@simonsfoundation.org.

Can PIs or Co-investigators apply to different award types (e.g. Pilot, Research, Explorer etc.)?
You must request approval from the Science Team at scienferfa@simonsfoundation.org.
SFARI Glossary

Personnel definitions

Principal Investigator
The individual(s) judged by the applicant organization to have the appropriate level of authority and responsibility to direct the project or program supported by the grant. He or she is responsible and accountable to the applicant organization and SFARI for the proper conduct of the project or activity, including the submission of all required reports. He or she will act as the main point of contact for the foundation. There is no minimum percent effort required for a Principal Investigator (PI), but it is expected that the PI will join the collaborative community of SFARI Investigators, and he or she will partake in some conferences, workshops and symposia that the foundation organizes.

In very rare circumstances, the applicant organization may designate multiple individuals as PIs who share the authority and responsibility for leading and directing the project, intellectually and logistically. Each PI is responsible and accountable to the applicant organization, or, as appropriate, to a collaborating organization, for the proper conduct of the project or program, including the submission of all required reports. The presence of more than one identified PI on an application or award diminishes neither the responsibility nor the accountability of any individual PI.

The first PI listed, under whose name the application is submitted, will serve as the contact PI for administrative purposes. The contact PI must be affiliated with the institution submitting the application. The contact PI will be responsible for communication between SFARI and the rest of the leadership team.

The role type 'Co-PI' will not be used by SFARI.

Co-investigator
An individual involved with the PI in the scientific development or execution of a project. The Co-investigator may be employed by, or be affiliated with, the applicant/grantee organization or another organization participating in the project under a consortium agreement. A Co-investigator is considered Key Personnel, but the Simons Foundation does not require a minimum effort from the Co-investigator. The designation of a Co-investigator, if applicable, does not affect the PI's roles and responsibilities, nor is it a role implying multiple PIs.

Consultant
An individual providing professional advice or services on the basis of a written agreement. These individuals are not normally employees of the organization receiving the services. Consultants also include firms providing professional advice or services.

Postdoctoral Research Associate
An individual who has received a doctoral degree (or the equivalent) and is engaged in a temporary and defined period of mentored advanced training to enhance the professional skills and research independence needed to pursue his or her chosen career path. The Postdoctoral Research Associate performs specific services in exchange for compensation, and he or she is treated as an employee of the grantee institution, with benefits.

SFARI funds may only be used for personnel considered employees of the grantee institution who are eligible for benefits. Funds may not be used for stipend supplementation unless specifically authorized under the terms of the program from which funds are derived.