

FELLOWSHIP TRAINING GRANT PROPOSAL

PROGRAM SUMMARY

The mission of Morris Animal Foundation is to bridge science and resources to advance the health of animals. To achieve this aim, we fund hypothesis-driven, humane animal health research projects with high scientific merit and the potential for significant impact on animal health.

Fellowship Training grants are designed to assist new investigators in launching a successful research career by providing salary support in a quality mentoring environment.

Proposals should be designed to convince the reviewers that the proposed project will advance the science of animal health; the investigator clearly understands the health problem and has the expertise to conduct the study; and the approach is scientifically sound.

Given the events related to the COVID-19 pandemic at the time of release of this RFP including the likelihood of ongoing economic uncertainties, we wish to support early career researchers. We are therefore allowing up to \$25,000 for consumables funding in applications for this year's Fellowship Training grant. Please see the instructions below.

QUALIFICATIONS OF APPLICANT

- To apply, if not a DVM, must have completed or about to obtain a PhD.
- Must be a full-time graduate student or have a postdoctoral research appointment.
- Must not have completed more than two years of full-time postdoctoral research training on the proposed project.
- Clinical residents and other applicants with clinical service requirements are not eligible.
- Must devote at least 75% of their time to the funded research.
- If the Fellow is not based in a country where a component of the research is to be conducted, then the proposal must have the support of a mentor who is based in-country.

FELLOWSHIP TRAINING CRITERIA

- **Mission Adherence:** Projects must advance the science of canine, feline, equine, llama, alpaca, or wildlife health. Projects oriented toward human health and agricultural animal health do not fall within Morris Animal Foundation's mission and will not be accepted.
- **Health Study Policy:** Projects must adhere to Morris Animal Foundation's [Health Study Policy for Animals Involved in Research](#).
- **Application Limits:** A maximum of one application as Principal Investigator per species call, per year, is permitted.
- **Resubmissions:** A proposal that is not approved for funding, but eligible to resubmit, can be re-submitted a maximum of two times (three total submissions).
- **Budget:** The budget for salary cannot exceed \$50,000 per year, inclusive of benefits and indirect costs (if charged by your institution). The budget for consumables cannot exceed \$25,000, inclusive of indirect costs (if charged by your institution).
- **Duration:** Maximum study duration is two years.
- **Mentor:** Must have the support of an appropriately experienced mentor in the applicant's field.

APPLICATION PROCESS

As of November 2019, Morris Animal Foundation has begun using a new grant application and management software called Fluxx. All past, current and new grant applicants will need to create a new account to access past grant information and submit new applications. Visit maf.fluxx.io to create your account and submit an application.

Both the Principal Investigator and the individual submitting the application (if different from the Principal Investigator) must create an account before applying for funding. Your account must be reviewed and validated by Morris Animal Foundation, which may take up to two business days, so please plan to create an account several days prior to the proposal deadline. For details on how to create an account and submit an application, view our [Fluxx Applicant User Guide](#).

Morris Animal Foundation grant applications have two components: an online application and a full proposal attachment. Applications **must be received by 4:59 PM ET** on the designated due date. To submit an application, please complete the following:

1. **Online Application** with contact information for the investigator(s), institution, and key project information.
2. **Full Proposal** document, using the [proposal template](#), uploaded to the online application (see proposal guidelines below).

REVIEW PROCESS

1. All proposals submitted to Morris Animal Foundation go through the following review process. For more details about our review process, please watch [our video](#).
2. Each abstract is reviewed on scientific merit and potential impact by five Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) members.
 - a. Only the highest scoring abstracts will advance to full proposal review. Proposals not chosen for full review will not receive written reviewer feedback.
3. Proposals are reviewed internally for adherence to guidelines.
4. Full proposals that pass abstract and internal review are assigned to two SAB member reviewers. Proposals are reviewed and scored based on [this rubric](#).
5. Reviewers present evaluations to the full SAB at an annual review meeting. Based on scores, the SAB recommends projects for funding.
6. All projects recommended for funding are reviewed by Morris Animal Foundation's Animal Welfare Advisory Board (AWAB) for adherence to our [Health Study Policy for Animals Involved in Research](#).

PROPOSAL GUIDELINES

Failure to adhere to these guidelines will result in disqualification.

1. Proposal Format:

- A. Proposals must be completed using this [template](#). **Please do not remove any headlines or sections from this template. If there is information that does not apply to your proposal, leave those sections in your proposal and enter "Not Applicable"**. The order of the written proposal must follow the outline described below, including the use of outline number and headings provided in the template.
- B. Single-spaced or greater, using no smaller than Times New Roman 11-point font with a minimum of ¼ inch margins.
- C. The full proposal must be converted to a single PDF document that includes all letters and attachments.
- D. Technical terminology should be defined on first usage; acronyms and abbreviations may be used

subsequently.

2. Proposal Outline:

- A. **Abstract** (one-page limit): Abstracts should not contain information that identifies the investigators or any charts or graphics.
 - i. **Title:** limit 150 characters, including spaces.
 - ii. **Rationale**
 - iii. **Hypothesis/Objectives**
 - iv. **Experimental Design and Methods**
 - v. **Preliminary Data**
 - vi. **Expected Results**
 - vii. **Budget and Timeline:** Include each year's total budget and project grand total including indirect costs.
 - viii. **Potential Impact for Animal Health**
- B. **Title Page** (one-page limit): Name, institution, and email address of fellow, mentor(s) and all co-investigators.
- C. **Resubmission Summary** (three-page limit — excluding copy of the original review): If this proposal is a resubmission of a previously-reviewed full proposal, include a copy of the review and your responses to the reviewer's comments. Please answer questions thoroughly and be aware that your resubmission might be reviewed by different SAB members than previous submissions.
- D. **Letters**
 - i. **Candidate Letter of Intent** (two-page limit): This letter should:
 1. Address your previous educational background, training and research experiences.
 2. Provide insight into your suitability, motivation and commitment to a career in animal health research.
 3. Describe your career vision and how this training award and the proposed research will assist in your progress toward becoming an independent established investigator.
 - ii. **Mentor Letter** (two-page limit per mentor): A letter is required from each mentor and should:
 1. Address the candidate's accomplishments, perceived strengths, motivation, academic abilities and potential as an independent research scientist.
 2. Demonstrate that there will be a strong mentoring relationship that includes formal and informal opportunities to discuss research. If the mentor is not in close proximity to the fellow, the mentor must demonstrate that his or her availability will be consistent.
 3. Include the mentor's history of mentoring, including list of mentees and their current positions.
 4. Describe the role of the mentor and the candidate in the preparation and writing of this fellowship application and the status of research project funding. Project funding must be in place prior to awarding the fellowship.
 - iii. **Department Head Letter** (one-page limit): This letter should confirm that:
 1. The applicant is a full-time graduate student or has postdoctoral research appointment.
 2. The applicant will be allowed adequate time to conduct the proposed research.
- E. **Training Plan** (one-page limit): Provide a detailed plan for mentoring with career development and training objectives. Describe the institutional environment and how this training environment will enable the fellow to achieve success.
- F. **Salary Verification** (one-page limit): Formal documentation from your institution's administration office must show approval of the requested annual salary and benefits based on the institution's salary scales and

your experience. The salary request should be broken out into annual salary, fringe benefits and indirect costs.

- G. **Unofficial Educational Transcripts** (no page limit): Submit all transcripts beginning with year one of graduate and/or veterinary training.
- H. **Study Proposal** (five-page limit including figures, tables and graphics).
- i. **Hypothesis and Objectives:** Be precise and enumerate specific, testable hypotheses with realistic objectives to be met within the timeline and budget of the proposal.
 - ii. **Justification, Significance and Literature Review:** Clearly describe the background of the problem, justify the need for the study, and state the importance of expected findings. The literature review should indicate the current status of research in the area, including the investigator's contributions.
 - iii. **Preliminary Data:** Succinctly describe any previous results by the investigator which support the proposed research. If this project is a continuation of a previous or current Morris Animal Foundation study, include grant ID number, title and a brief summary of the progress and/or final results. Preliminary data will substantially strengthen your proposal.
 - iv. **Experimental Methods and Design:** Describe the experimental approach, including the design, experimental methods, number of animals, treatments, sampling schedules, potential pitfalls, and alternative approaches for each objective. A thorough description of proposed data analysis methods must be included.
 - v. **Timeline:** Indicate the sequence and schedule of experiments as well as the duration of the project. Justify that the objectives can be completed in the given timeline. A maximum of two years is permitted. Include sufficient time to complete data analysis.
 - vi. **Expected Results:** Indicate expected results, your proposed plan for disseminating information generated by your work to the scientific and lay audience, and potential means of translating the results into practice.
- I. **Sample Size Calculation** (no page limit): Describe the method of power analysis using the Sample Size form provided in the [proposal template](#).
- J. **Animal Involvement Justification Form** (no page limit): Include the required Animal Involvement Justification form provided in the [proposal template](#) in ALL proposals, regardless of live animal involvement.
- K. **Recombinant DNA/Biohazards** (no page limit): Applicants using recombinant DNA techniques must confirm that they have complied with National Institutes of Health guidelines for this technology and that they have approval from their institution's Biological Safety Committee to conduct the proposed research if it is funded. Also indicate any other potential biosafety concerns, including the use of radiation.
- L. **Facilities and Equipment** (one-page limit): Availability of necessary facilities and equipment to complete the proposed study should be documented. If more than one institution is involved, a letter of collaboration from the outside institution(s) must be included at the end of the proposal.
- M. **Cited References** (three-page limit): Include complete citations referenced numerically in the body of the proposal.
- N. **Budget** (one-page limit): Use the required budget form provided in the [proposal template](#). Include annual subtotals, calculated indirect costs and grand totals in all applicable fields. All funds must be U.S. dollars.
- i. **Amount:** The budget is limited to two years of salary at \$50,000 maximum, per year, inclusive of a maximum of 8% indirect costs (if charged by your institution). Consumables costs are limited

- to \$25,000 maximum, inclusive of indirect costs (if charged by your institution). The total maximum available award is \$125,000.
- ii. **Duration:** Maximum study duration is two years.
 - iii. **Budget Limitations:** Tuition is not supported by this award.
 - iv. **Indirect Costs:** Up to 8% of the budget can be applied to indirect costs, if your institution charges for these costs. Where a subaward to another institution is proposed, the total indirect costs may not exceed 8% of the total direct costs.
- O. **Itemized Budget Justification** (one-page limit): Specifically justify the cost of each item in the budget. Costs not justified will not be approved. The role and percent effort of each individual for whom MAF salary funds are requested should be clearly defined.
- P. **Current and Pending Support** (no page limit): Include all financial support (e.g., federal, nonfederal, commercial, institutional) currently available in support of the fellow, mentor and co-investigators' research programs. Overlap, whether scientific, budgetary or commitment of an individual's effort greater than 100%, is not permitted. Provide the following information for all current and pending support:
- i. **Project ID**
 - ii. **Funding Source**
 - iii. **Project Title**
 - iv. **Summary:** Brief summary of the objectives and results to date.
 - v. **Budget:** In the case of an active project, provide the budget. For a pending project, provide the proposed budget.
 - vi. **Timeline:** In the case of an active project, provide start date and projected end date. For a pending project, provide the anticipated start and end dates.
 - vii. **Overlap:** Summarize any potential overlap with the proposed project regarding the science, budget or committed effort.
- Q. **Prior Morris Animal Foundation Support:** (no page limit): If the fellow, mentor(s), and/or co-investigator(s) have received MAF support in the past three years, provide the following information for each MAF award received:
- i. **Morris Animal Foundation Grant ID**
 - ii. **Project Title**
 - iii. **Summary:** Provide a brief summary of the objectives and results to date.
 - iv. **Budget**
 - v. **Timeline:** Provide start and end dates.
 - vi. **Presentations:** List of the presentations resulting from the award.
 - vii. **Publications:** List of the publications resulting from the award. If none have yet resulted, please provide a detailed description of current progress including the intended journal.
 - viii. **Patents:** List of patents resulting from the award.
- R. **Biographical Data** (two-page limit per individual): For each fellow, mentor(s) and co-investigator(s), provide the following information:
- i. **Name**
 - ii. **Position/Role** on this project.
 - iii. **Current Position** (title, name, and address of institution)
 - iv. **Education/Training** (degrees, institution, year of graduation, field of study)
 - v. **Previous Positions and Honors** (include membership on any advisory committees)
 - vi. **Relevant Peer-Reviewed Publications** (include titles, all authors, and complete reference)
- S. **Letters of Support:** Include support letters from all collaborators.