

FIRST AWARD 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.

First Award grants are designed to assist new faculty in establishing a successful research program.

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, please note that the Foundation is limiting the total budget to not exceed \$100,000, inclusive of indirect costs. We ask for your consideration in assisting us to continue to fund a diverse range of Principal Investigators and projects in the next financial year.

QUALIFICATIONS OF APPLICANT

- To apply, if not a DVM, must have completed or about to obtain a PhD. To receive funding, must have a DVM and/or PhD.
- Must have a full-time, permanent position in a university, accredited zoo or conservation organization or other non-academic equivalent.
- Individuals currently in a residency program are not eligible for this award.
- Postdoctoral researchers should be completing their program and proposing research intended to be conducted in a permanent full-time position.
- Must not have received previous funding as a principal investigator or co-principal investigator for more than \$20,000 for any single extramural award.
 - Previous funding as a co-investigator is acceptable.
- If the Principal Investigator is not based in the country where the research is to be conducted, then the proposal must have the support of at least one co-applicant based in-country. That situation must be thoroughly justified in terms of value to the investigator in establishing their research program.

FIRST AWARD 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 cannot exceed \$50,000 per year, inclusive of indirect costs (if charged by your institution).
- **Duration:** The 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) and institution, as well as key project information.
2. **Full Proposal** document, using the [proposal template](#), uploaded to the online application (see proposal guidelines below).

REVIEW PROCESS

All proposals submitted to Morris Animal Foundation go through the following review process. For more details about our review process, please watch [our video](#).

1. Researchers submit grant proposals.
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 headers or sections from this template. If any of the sections are not applicable, leave the header in your proposal and indicate this with "N/A"**. 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 ¾ 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 Principal Investigator, 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. Describe how this award will further your career goals and assist in your progress toward becoming an established investigator.
 2. Confirm, in bold text, within this letter that you have not received previous funding as a principal investigator or co-principal investigator for more than \$20,000 for any single extramural award.
 - ii. **Mentor Letter** (two-page limit per mentor): A letter is required from each mentor and should:
 1. Describe the mentoring environment, including laboratory space and facilities for the first award applicant.
 2. Detail a mentoring plan.
 3. Assure a strong relationship with the first award applicant, providing consistent availability and diverse opportunities to discuss research.
 4. Include the mentor's history of mentoring new researchers.
 - iii. **Letter of Support from Department Head** (or equivalent) (one-page limit): This letter should:
 1. Demonstrate the department's approval of the research plan.
 2. Confirm that the applicant is a full-time permanent employee.
 3. Confirm that the applicant will be allowed adequate time to conduct the proposed research.
- E. **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.
- F. **Sample Size Calculation** (no page limit): Describe the method of power analysis using the "Sample Size" form provided in the [proposal template](#).
- G. **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.
- H. **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.
- I. **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.
- J. **Cited References** (three-page limit): Include complete citations referenced numerically in the body of the proposal.
- K. **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:** Is limited to two years at \$50,000 maximum, per year (personnel and supplies), inclusive of a maximum of 8% indirect costs (if charged by your institution). The total maximum available award is \$100,000.
 - ii. **Duration:** Maximum study duration is two years.
 - iii. **Budget Limitations:**
 - 1. **Equipment:** Requests for equipment purchases may not exceed \$5,000.
 - 2. **Tuition:** Morris Animal Foundation does not pay for tuition.
 - 3. **Salary:**
 - a. **Full-Time Positions:** Salary requests for applicants in full-time employment in academic or non-academic settings will not be approved.
 - b. **Less than Full-Time Positions:** Salary requests for time spent on the project are permitted but must be clearly defined and include the percent appointment and

- other current salary support.
- c. **Technicians, Residents, Fellows and Students:** Salary requests are permitted and must be clearly defined but must include percent time commitment.
Please note: Postdoctoral fellows should apply to our Fellowship program, which this year includes consumables funding. No more than 10% of a postdoctoral salary should be included as an absolute maximum, and this should be clearly justified e.g. for training of students, or performance of highly technical components of the study.
 4. **Travel:** Travel expenses required to complete the project should be clearly justified and cognizant of environmental concerns and possible ongoing disruptions to travel, particularly internationally. Work should be conducted wherever possible by teams already in-country. Requests for travel to scientific meetings may not exceed \$3,000.
 5. **Indirect Costs:** Up to 8% of the budget can be applied to indirect costs, if your institution charges for these costs. Please note that addition of indirect costs should not result in the total exceeding the maximum of \$100,000. Where a subaward to another institution is proposed, the total indirect costs may not exceed 8% of the total direct costs.
- L. **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 salary funds are requested should be clearly defined.
- M. **Current and Pending support** (no page limit): Include all financial support (e.g., federal, nonfederal, commercial, institutional) currently available in support of the Principal Investigator, 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.
- N. **Prior Morris Animal Foundation Support** (no page limit): If the Principal Investigator, mentor(s) and/or co- investigator(s) have received prior support in the past three years, provide the following information for each award received:
- i. **Morris Animal Foundation Grant ID**
 - ii. **Project Title**
 - iii. **Summary:** 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.
- O. **Biographical Data** (two-page limit per individual): For each principal investigator, 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)
- P. **Letters of Support:** Include support letters from all collaborators.