

PROPOSAL GUIDELINES

FOR ESTABLISHED INVESTIGATOR, FIRST, AND PILOT STUDY AWARDS

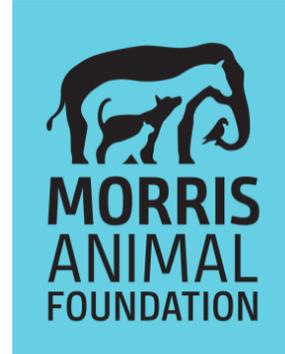
PROGRAM SUMMARY

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 research projects with high scientific merit and the potential for significant impact. We are a nonprofit organization funded by public support from individuals, corporations, clubs and foundations, and by earnings from our endowed funds. Our donors are interested in funding research that results in impactful animal health achievements and benefits both scientific and non-scientific stakeholders including veterinarians, horse owners, communities and the environment.

We are accepting proposals on all topics that aim to improve domestic equid health. This year, we are specifically interested in funding one or more proposals that answers one of the following research questions on the topic of pituitary pars intermedia dysfunction (PPID), that were identified during a [priority setting partnership workshop](#):

1. In animals with PPID, what is the expected disease progression over their lifetime both with and without treatment?
2. In animals with PPID, are there any effective treatments other than pergolide? These may include non-prescription treatments e.g. Agnus Castus, homeopathy or other herbal products.
3. In animals with PPID receiving treatment with pergolide, is the risk of laminitis reduced?
4. What are the short- and/or long-term side effects of pergolide treatment in animals with PPID?
5. In animals with PPID, does the dose of pergolide need to vary with the season?
6. In animals with suspected PPID, what is the best way to deal with inconclusive or conflicting test results and/or clinical signs?
7. What is the best way of dealing with animals with PPID who do not respond to pergolide treatment even when the maximum dose has been reached?

Proposals should advance the science of the health and overall welfare of domestic horses, ponies, donkeys, and mules. Please note that for racehorses and other professional athletes, we fund research focused on health and quality of life only where outcomes are likely to be of universal equine/equid benefit. Use of other species as models (including laboratory rodents) is not appropriate for this topic.



MORRIS ANIMAL FOUNDATION POLICIES

Health Study Policy: Projects must adhere to the Foundation's [Health Study Policy for Animals Involved in Research](#). Our preference is not to fund projects that include euthanasia of animals for research purposes, or that derive data and/or samples from such projects. Note that proposals recommended for funding by scientific reviewers are reviewed separately by animal welfare and ethics experts prior to funding.

Parachute Science: Projects that include international collaborations should address international scientific engagement and benefits and include a named Principal Investigator (PI) or Co-Investigator in the country where the research will occur. The Foundation endeavors to achieve impact through ethical pathways and with the clear intention of inclusivity, diversity, and the elimination of the practice of parachute/colonial science.

COVID-19 Considerations: Research plans must include mitigation strategies for operational risks posed by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Alternative strategies for travel restrictions, pandemic-related mandates, supply shortages, etc., should be included in the proposal.

Environmental Policy: Consideration should be given to reducing the detrimental effects of research projects on the environment. Travel requests should be limited and well justified with respect to the project objectives. We encourage means of transportation with the lowest possible carbon emissions.

Grant Resubmission Policy: Proposal resubmissions are not permitted without explicit written permission from the Foundation. An investigator who resubmits a proposal without permission may be barred from applying to future RFPs.

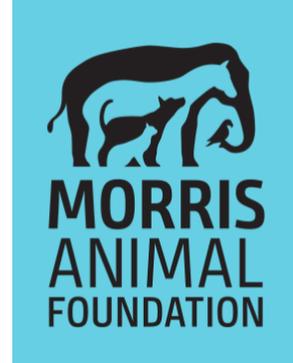
For questions about Morris Animal Foundation Policies, contact grantapplications@morrisanimalfoundation.org

****Note that many of the following guidelines apply to all three categories of award. However, some instructions are award-type specific, and these instructions are in bold italic type.**

Please read all instructions carefully so that you can complete your application with reference to the correct eligibility and award criteria, budget maximum, project duration and page limit for your award.**

APPLICANT QUALIFICATIONS

All applicants for all categories of award must convince the scientific and animal welfare reviewers that they clearly understand the health problem, have sufficient expertise to conduct the study, are using a scientifically sound approach, and have given appropriate consideration to the overall environmental impact of their research. A maximum of one application as PI/Co-Investigator in response to this RFP is permitted.



SPECIFIC AWARD CRITERIA

ESTABLISHED INVESTIGATOR: *Competitive applicants for this award will have a record of expertise demonstrated through peer-reviewed publication. Researchers with active grants (either Established Investigator or First Award) as the RFP opens are not eligible. Prior Morris Animal Foundation grants must be complete with final report approval before the RFP opening date.*

FIRST AWARD: *First Award grants are designed to assist early career researchers in establishing a successful research program. The applicant must have completed a PhD and have a permanent position in a university, accredited zoo or conservation organization, or non-academic equivalent. Individuals currently in a residency program are not eligible. Postdoctoral researchers should be completing their program and proposing research intended to be conducted in a permanent position. Applicants must not have received previous funding of more than \$25,000 for any single extramural award as a Principal Investigator. Please state this in your candidate letter of intent. Previous funding as a Co-Investigator is acceptable. This application requires supporting statements from one or more appropriately experienced mentors.*

PILOT STUDY: *Pilot Study Awards provide funding for proof-of-concept studies in animal health research.*

AWARD DURATION AND BUDGET LIMITS

The maximum duration of an Established Investigator Award is 36 months, and the total budget cannot exceed \$100,000 USD.

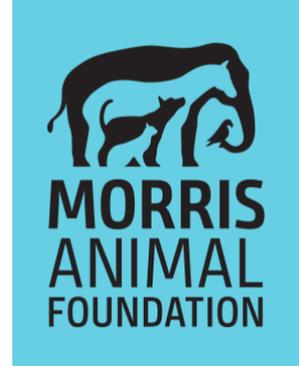
The maximum duration of a First Award is 24 months, and the total budget cannot exceed \$125,000 USD.

The maximum duration of a Pilot Award is 12 months, and the total budget cannot exceed \$15,000 USD.

For awards that allow projects of more than one year, the applicant can allocate costs as appropriate. Costs do not have to be evenly spread across the lifetime of the project. Nor do applicants have to use the maximum award duration.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Your application must be received by **5:00 PM Eastern Time on the designated due date**. Submit applications at maf.fluxx.io. The application process includes completion of the online form and proposal attachment. 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.

PROPOSAL CRITERIA

Resubmissions of prior proposals to the Foundation are not permitted without explicit permission. If an investigator submits an uninvited resubmission, they may be penalized from re-applying for up to two years. Contact grantapplications@morrisanimalfoundation.org with any questions.

REVIEW PROCESS

All proposals submitted to Morris Animal Foundation in response to this RFP will undergo administrative and scientific review. Administrative review includes ensuring the proposal follows guidelines and instructions. Scientific review is conducted by two Scientific Advisers and will then be scored by the entire Scientific Advisory Board according to [this rubric](#). Projects recommended for funding are reviewed by Morris Animal Foundation's [Animal Welfare Advisory Board](#) for adherence to our [Health Study Policy for Animals Involved in Research](#).

PROPOSAL GUIDELINES

Carefully review and adhere to these proposal guidelines. Guideline deviations may result in disqualification of your proposal.

Proposal Format:

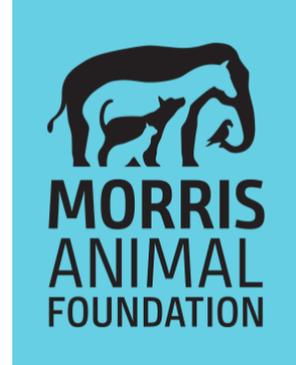
Use this [proposal template](#) to complete your proposal. Do not remove any headers or sections. Indicate “not applicable” if a section or question does not apply. The order of the research proposal must follow the order in the template.

Use 11-point font (Times New Roman or Arial preferred), single-spaced lines and ¾-inch margins. Define technical terms and acronyms on the first use. The complete proposal, including attachments, must be converted to a single PDF prior to submission.

[The template](#) is sub-divided into 14 parts (sections A-N) and must be converted to a PDF for submission. In part L, indicate the letters of support that you will be adding (i.e., one letter from my head of department, two from collaborators, etc.), convert these to PDF format and combine with the template PDF for upload as a single file.

Proposal Outline:

- A. **Lay Summary** (2,000-character limit): This information may be used in communications with the public to showcase your project or shared with potential funders. Lay language should be used, and we require a Flesch Reading Ease Score of 50-70 (determine your score [here](#)). This should not be a duplicate of the technical summary (below).



- B. **Technical Summary** (2,000-character limit): For review by Foundation staff and the Scientific Advisory Board.
- C. **Title Page** (one page): Include the proposal title and name, and institution and email address of the PI and all Co-Investigators.
- D. **Study Proposal:** Note that “not applicable” is not a sufficient response.

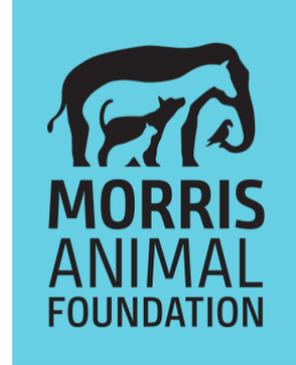
For Established Investigator and First Awards - the Research Proposal has a five-page limit, including figures and tables and the one-page animal health impact section.

The Pilot Award proposal has a three-page limit inclusive of figures and tables and a half-page animal health impact section.

- i. **Hypothesis and Objectives:** Be precise and enumerate specific, testable hypotheses with realistic objectives to be achieved within the timeline and budget of the proposal.
- ii. **Problem Description and Significance:** Include a brief literature summary and preliminary data (if applicable) that describes the current state of the problem and justifies the need for the proposed study/proof-of-concept study. If the PI is conducting research outside of their country of institutional affiliation, they must clearly stipulate how the information gained from their study will be used by stakeholder groups locally.

Preliminary Data: Established Investigator and First Award applicants should succinctly describe any previous results by the investigator which support the proposed research. If this project is a continuation of a previous Morris Animal Foundation study, include grant ID number, title, and a brief summary of the final results. Preliminary data is not required for Pilot Studies but should be included if available and relevant.

- iii. **Study Design and Methods:** Include the experimental design and methods for each objective. Data analysis methods must also be described.
- iv. **Possible Risks and Mitigations:** Identify and address any potential shortcomings of the design and methods, or possible operational challenges for the project.
- v. **Animal Health Impact** (See page minimums guidelines above):
[Animal Health Impact Example](#)
Impact is vitally important to our donor-supported organization. We may decline proposals where impact is incompletely addressed, particularly those lacking in



impact beyond the scientific community. Scientifically robust studies in which non-academic and broader impact are integral to the study design will have the highest chance of success. Remember that the [scoring rubric](#) allocates a third of the points available to impact and engagement. **Please note your proposal may be declined if all questions are not addressed.**

Scientific impact, including impact beyond this research field. Key questions include:

- Why is this work integral to the welfare or longevity of equids?
- Is this project likely to make a rapid contribution to solving a problem or addressing a key knowledge deficit that is obstructing progress?
- How likely is it that the findings will have an impact beyond the period of this award?
- Is there potential for wider impact e.g., for other scientific fields, animal populations, species, or geographic regions?

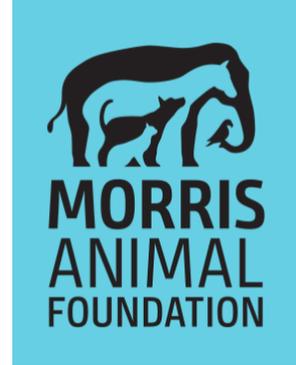
Non-academic impact, including stakeholders and beneficiaries. Key questions include:

- Who might be interested and who might benefit from this project?
- What are the needs of these stakeholders and how were these identified?
- Will stakeholders be involved in project design, execution, preparation of training and/or dissemination of results? Have any been included as applicants?
- If applicable, describe the extended impact this work (or subsequent work) may have on the environment, policy, human behavior, industry, economics or public awareness.

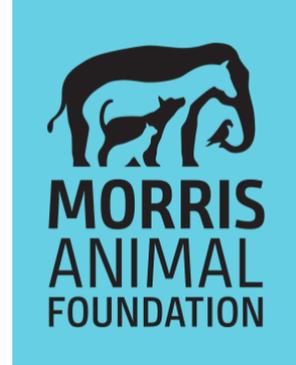
If applicable, have connections with policymakers been established? Outline your engagement activities and outputs plan (i.e., knowledge exchange activities). Engagement beyond academic/scientific communities will substantially strengthen your proposal. Key questions include:

- What time and effort will be committed to these activities? Please include in the budget and timeline below if appropriate (section K).
- Who do you propose to engage with and how? Include letters of support if applicable.
- How will the success of engagement activities be evaluated?
- What experience do the applicants have with non-academic engagement, and/or what training or other resources are available?

E. Sample Size Calculation (no page limit): Use the Sample Size Form in the [proposal template](#) as applicable.



- F. Animal Involvement Justification (A.I.J.) Form** (no page limit): Use the A.I.J. form in the [proposal template](#), regardless of live animal involvement. This form is required.
- G. Recombinant DNA/Biohazards/Biosecurity Measures** (no page limit): Applicants using recombinant DNA techniques must confirm that they have complied with National Institutes of Health guidelines and have approval from their institution's Biological Safety Committee to conduct the proposed research. Indicate any other potential biosafety concerns, including the use of radiation. Describe biosecurity measures that will be put in place to protect humans and animals from transmissible disease and biological agents.
- H. Facilities and Equipment** (one-page limit): Describe facilities and equipment available to conduct the proposed research. Include resources available at the PI's institution and sub-contracted or fee-for-service resources needed to complete the research.
- I. Cited References** (*two-page limit for Established Investigator and First Award proposals. One-page limit for Pilot Awards*): Include complete citations referenced numerically in the body of the proposal.
- J. Budget Spreadsheet** (one-page limit): This is uploaded separately from the main proposal. Use the provided [budget template](#). Do not exceed the budget limits and timescales described for each grant type on page 3 of these guidelines, under "Award Duration and Budget Limits." Applicants may include up to 8% indirect costs in their budget (if charged by your institution).
- K. Budget Limitations:**
- i. **Equipment:** Requests for equipment purchase may not exceed \$5,000 for the entire project.
 - ii. **Tuition:** Morris Animal Foundation does not pay for tuition.
 - iii. **Salary:** Include salary for each person's time spent on the project as "% project appointment". Identify each person's project role. Also include the fringe benefit rate for each person, to calculate total personnel costs. If salary for time spent on the project will not be charged to the project (in-kind contribution), list the % project appointment as "0%" on the budget form. If a contributor's salary is covered 100% by their employer, do not request salary support. Please keep in mind the international nature of our Scientific Advisory Boards in terms of providing justification that can be clearly understood.
- **Key Personnel:** Salary requests for time spent on the project must be clearly defined and include % appointment and other current salary support. As we



are an international funder, we expect the nature of these positions to be clearly described to aid review.

- **Technicians, Residents, Fellows and Students:** Salary requests are permitted but must be clearly defined and include % time commitment.

**Please note: No more than 10% of a postdoctoral salary should be included and should be clearly justified, e.g., for training of students, or the performance of highly technical components of the study.*

**Postdoctoral fellows applying to our Fellowship Program later this year are required to have an independent project and may not apply using the same proposal submitted to this Established Investigator, First Award and Pilot Study RFP.*

- iv. **Travel:** Requests for travel to scientific meetings must be well justified in terms of environmental and scientific impact and should not exceed \$2,000. Travel needed to complete research objectives should be budgeted separately. Travel must be essential; resources or activities that provide alternatives are preferred. Possible ongoing disruptions to travel due to COVID-19 should also be considered. For international project teams, activities should be conducted wherever possible by teams and/or collaborators already in-country.
- v. **Indirect Costs:** Up to 8% of the budget can be applied to indirect costs if your institution charges for these costs. The addition of indirect costs should not result in the total exceeding the maximum allowable budget. If a subaward to another organization is proposed, the total indirect costs may not exceed 8% for the subaward. We encourage provision of indirect costs as in-kind from your institution whenever possible.
- vi. **Other Project Expenses:** Briefly categorize other project expenses. Examples include laboratory or clinical consumables, reagents, non-equipment study supplies and service fees for specimen analysis.

Once completed, upload [Excel budget spreadsheet](#) into the Fluxx portal. This will be a separate upload from the rest of the proposal template.

K. Budget Justification and Timeline Summary (2-page limit):

[Budget Justification Example](#)

Use the budget justification and timeline summary form in the proposal template to demonstrate how the research objectives will be completed in the timeframe requested. Include data analysis time and manuscript preparation time.



L. Current and Pending Support (No page limit): The Foundation wishes to support discrete research proposals that have not already received funding from elsewhere. This avoids duplicating lengthy review processes and widens our net to support other deserving, but as yet unfunded proposals. Please identify all active or pending support for the PI and all Co-Investigators. Where overlap, whether scientific or budgetary, may be perceived, please explain. The Foundation is also anxious to ensure that researchers have enough time to complete their projects. Therefore, we request information regarding time commitment to this project. Researchers who are overcommitted and already have 100% of their time allocated to other work, are not permitted to apply. Submissions to other funding sources should not duplicate this project unless we have already officially declined to fund it. Provide the following information for all current and pending support.

- Project ID
- Funding Source
- Funding Start and End Dates
- Project Title
- Summary: Summarize the project objectives and results to date.
- Overlap: Summarize any potential overlap with the proposed project regarding the science, budget or committed effort.

M. Biographical Data (two-page limit per person): Include a biosketch for the PI and each Co-Investigator with the following information:

- i. Name, Role on this Project
- ii. Current Position (title, institutional affiliation, institutional address)
- iii. Education and Training (degrees, institution, year completed, areas of emphasis)
- iv. Previous Positions, Honors, Awards, Committee Assignments
- v. Selected Peer-reviewed Publications

N. Letters of Support: Include a letter of support from any collaborator, funding agency, policymaker or commercial partner whose contributions are required to achieve the research objectives described in the proposal. ***For those applying for a First Award, include a candidate letter of intent, mentor(s) letter(s) and a letter of support from your department head or equivalent.***

Indicate the letters of support that you will be adding (i.e., one letter from my head of department, two from collaborators etc.), convert these to PDF format and combine with the template PDF for upload as a single file.

Once completed, convert Word files to a PDF, and combine all documents into a single PDF for upload.

QUESTIONS REGARDING THE SUBMISSION PROCESS

Contact grantapplications@morrisanimalfoundation.org for technical assistance