REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS 2021

INTRODUCTION

The Lipedema Foundation Award Program was established in 2015 to support research that will improve the lives of people with Lipedema. LF is the world's largest sponsor of Lipedema research, having awarded over $7 million across 33 research awards covering a broad array of topics relevant to patient needs, including diagnostics.

These investigator-initiated awards are intended to solicit proposals that, if successful, will lead to significant advances in the diagnosis or treatment of Lipedema.

The Lipedema Foundation is focused on expanding the workforce of committed scientists and clinicians interested in bringing their skills to solve issues related to this condition. This call for proposals is soliciting high-impact exploratory research from teams of scientists, clinicians, and surgeons around the world, regardless of background or prior work in Lipedema.

BACKGROUND

Lipedema is a chronic condition that occurs almost exclusively in women and manifests as symmetrical buildup of painful fat and swelling in the limbs, sparing the hands and feet. Different from obesity, Lipedema may be associated with reduced risk of metabolic syndrome and is often resistant to dietary or exercise-based interventions. A critical issue is the poorly understood disease biology, which for diagnosed patients results in limited treatment options that, at best, ameliorate the symptoms of lipedema. Individuals who suffer from the disease are further impacted by the absence of diagnostic tools, as well as conflicting diagnostic criteria across practitioners. A lack of public and medical awareness of Lipedema, and the stigma associated with weight, contribute to its underdiagnosis. Thus, though a common condition, its prevalence remains uncertain.
PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR
Principal Investigators must be associated with a research institution and in good standing with that institution. The Investigators must be permitted by their employers to apply for this funding and manage any subsequent awards, including management of key personnel.

Principal Investigators must hold an independent position by the time of the anticipated project start date.

Postdoctoral students, including clinical fellows, may submit applications for research support through the Mentored Award program. Candidates should have received their doctoral degree or completed their residency within 5 years of application submission.

Other trainees including undergraduate, graduate, or postdoctoral students who do not meet the above criteria may be supported as key personnel but cannot be designated Principal Investigator.

INSTITUTION
Public, private, and government-held research laboratories, medical centers, and universities are eligible to apply.

The Lipedema Foundation will not accept applications from any Institution that is delinquent in reporting on any prior award.

CITIZENSHIP AND HOST COUNTRY
This request has a global scope. There are no citizenship requirements.

ADMINISTRATIVE
Proposals must not duplicate or overlap existing funding of the Lipedema Foundation or other funding sources.

CYCLE
LF 2021 Open Call for Lipedema Research Proposals

AWARD TYPES
Collaborative Research Award - Designed for team research that requires involvement of multiple institutions or multi-disciplinary researchers. Applications that involve current LF grantees receive priority review.

Proof of Concept Award - Designed to support development of preliminary data for highly innovative hypotheses. Open to investigators of any career stage or background. Successful awards are eligible for streamlined award renewal.

Mentored Award - Designed to support postdoctoral research experiences for candidates in non-independent mentored research training. Intended to support PhD (or equivalent research degrees) and clinicians engaged in mentored medical research.
DEADLINES

Application Portal Opens: January 19, 2021
LOI Submission: March 15, 2021; 11:59 PM EST

Video Presentation with Lipedema Foundation staff and Full Application Invitations: April 2021

Full Application Submission: June 26, 2021
Award Status Update: August 31, 2021
Earliest Project Start Date: October 1, 2021

Dates are subject to change at discretion of Lipedema Foundation. Registered applicants will be notified by email should these dates change.

SPECIFIC AREAS OF INTEREST

While the Foundation will consider all proposals, those that are oriented towards improving diagnosis of patients will be prioritized in the current cycle.

Applicants should consider the development of local surgeon-researcher teams that will facilitate access to fresh, well-characterized patient biological samples and appropriate controls.

Investigators requiring assistance with recruitment of patients or acquisition of biological samples should contact the Foundation at least 3 weeks prior to LOI submission to review feasibility of the request.

Proposals to create clinically relevant animal models should clearly justify the relationship of the proposed model to a genetic or biomechanical feature of Lipedema.

MAXIMUM AWARD VALUES AND DURATION

Collaborative Research Award - Up to $250,000 over two years.

Proof of Concept Award - Up to $125,000 for one year.

Mentored Award - Up to $70,000 for two years. During the second year, applicants may apply for a third year of funding as a renewal.

Funding is competitive. Applicants are advised to submit budget proposals only for funds needed. All requested budgets will be reviewed for appropriateness relative to project aims and will require justification.

All values are stated here in USD. Applicants may justify their budget in their local currency, but any resultant award will be distributed in USD respecting the limits stated above.

INDIRECT COSTS

The Lipedema Foundation policy is to allow indirect costs up to 10% of direct costs. The maximum award values are inclusive of both direct and indirect costs.
REVIEW PROCESS

Initial review of Letters of Intent will be performed by Lipedema Foundation staff and volunteers in order to assure alignment with Lipedema Foundation priorities.

Letter of Intent authors considered for Full Application submission will be scheduled for a 90-minute video call. Foundation staff and advisors will use this time to discuss the Letter of Intent and provide feedback to guide development of the Full Application.

Full Applications will be reviewed by subject matter experts on the basis of the experience and training of the Principal Investigator, relevance to Lipedema, scientific merit, and rigor of the proposed work.

Final funding decisions are at the discretion of the Lipedema Foundation.

CONTACT

For questions regarding this RFP, please contact the Lipedema Foundation staff by email at awards@lipedema.org.

HOW TO APPLY

All applications must be submitted through the Lipedema Foundation research submission portal.

Please visit our website to find the link to the submission portal.

Applicants who wish to submit multiple Letters of Intent in the same cycle must get prior approval from the Lipedema Foundation.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Applicants new to the Lipedema field may wish to review the Lipedema Foundation website for archives of publications and other resources.

More established researchers are encouraged to consider submitting manuscripts of their of their current work to the planned Lipedema Special Issue of International Journal of Molecular Sciences, "Current Mechanistic Understandings of Lymphedema and Lipedema" (eds: Crescenzi, Rutkowski).

Submission Deadline: February 15, 2021