



JDRF REQUESTS LETTERS OF INTENT FOR: NOVEL THERAPEUTIC STRATEGIES TO PREVENT OR DELAY PROGRESSION OF EARLY STAGE DIABETIC RETINOPATHY

PURPOSE

JDRF is the world's leading non-profit organization with the mission to accelerate life-changing breakthroughs to cure, prevent and treat type 1 diabetes (T1D) and its complications. To this end, JDRF is soliciting letters of intent for innovative therapeutic strategies to prevent or delay progression of diabetic retinopathy (DR) at the earliest possible stages.

BACKGROUND

Diabetic retinopathy is a sight-threatening complication of diabetes and the largest cause of blindness in the US. Almost all individuals with T1D experience progressive vision loss over a 15- to 20-year period, and approximately 20–30% advance to the blinding stage of the disease. Tight glycemic control reduces the risk of complications, but only about one-fifth with T1D are achieving recommended targets. Furthermore, some may develop DR despite having good glycemic control.

The past decade has seen significant progress in therapeutic options for DR with the advent of drugs that block the actions of vascular endothelial growth factor (VEGF). However, frequent intravitreal injections are required and up to 50% of individuals do not achieve a satisfactory response. Although additional molecular targets have been identified, including the plasma kallikrein pathway, lipoprotein-associated phospholipase A2 (Lp-PLA2) and Tie-2, with some are under clinical evaluation, there remains a critical gap in effective treatments.

Recent data from Joslin T1D Medalists, individuals who have lived with T1D for over 50 years without major complications, suggests the presence of endogenous mechanisms that can protect against DR. Therapeutic strategies to enhance these protective effects may lead to novel treatments that prevent onset and progression of DR.

As such, there remains an urgent need for alternative therapeutic options. Ideally, these would be administered orally or topically to reduce the burden of invasive treatment, frequent clinical visits and improve patient adherence – especially when targeting the earliest stages of disease before permanent damage has been realized, such as mild to moderate NPDR.

OBJECTIVES

JDRF is soliciting letters of intent (LOIs) for proof-of-concept or Investigational New Drug (IND)-enabling clinical studies that address a key research/knowledge gap for translation of novel therapies focused on preventing or treating DR pathology at the earliest possible stages in people with T1D.

Examples of therapeutic strategies include but are not limited to:

- Novel therapies that prevent or reverse the underlying mechanisms leading to vascular leakage, retinal neuronal dysfunction, ischemia and/or pathologic angiogenesis
- Strategies to enhance the action of endogenous protective pathways and/or suppress the deleterious pathways
- Topical, systemic or sustained delivery methods that increase feasibility of prevention and treatment at the earliest stages and over prolonged durations

Please note: Proposals focusing on preclinical studies and approaches targeting VEGF are out-of-scope, and will not be considered.

Academic or industry applicants, preferably multidisciplinary teams, with innovative disease-modifying approaches are encouraged to apply. Applicants are strongly encouraged to consult with JDRF Scientific Staff to discuss the alignment of their proposal to this RFA as they develop the projected study concept.

CLINICAL STUDIES

- JDRF follows the U.S. National Institutes of Health (NIH) guidelines for studies including human subjects, including the common rule changes: <https://nexus.od.nih.gov/all/2019/01/07/nih-implementation-of-the-final-rule-on-the-federal-policy-for-the-protection-of-human-subjects-common-rule/>
- JDRF endorses the use of outcomes beyond A1c. Please review Section 6.3 of JDRF's Award Terms & Conditions: <http://grantcenter.jdrf.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/JDRF-Terms-and-Conditions-7.2.2019.pdf>

MECHANISM

In response to this announcement, LOI's can be submitted to JDRF's **Strategic Research Agreement (SRA)** or **Industry Discovery and Development Program (IDDP)** grant mechanisms. For more information on these mechanisms, please refer to our website:

- Strategic Research Agreements: <http://grantcenter.jdrf.org/information-for-applicants/grant-mechanism-descriptions/strategic-research-agreements/>
- Industry Development and Discovery Program: <http://grantcenter.jdrf.org/industry-discovery-development-partnerships/>

Each application may request up to \$400,000 (including up to 10% indirect costs) for a project lasting up to 2 years. Substantially shorter projects are welcome. Applicants should discuss with JDRF Staff (see below) when proposing projects with increased scope (time, budget).

For-profit entities interested in submitting an IDDP LOI are requested to contact JDRF prior to submitting an LOI. The IDDP application entails additional requirements including matching funds from the company and administration of the award by contract agreements. Projected timelines for IDDP submissions will be determined ad hoc by JDRF and communicated to the Principal Investigator at the time of invitation to submit a full IDDP proposal.

For-profit entities whose business models do not lend themselves to JDRF's standard IDDP terms (e.g. fee-for-service models) are encouraged to submit LOI's in conversation with JDRF staff.

Applications that are not funded through this RFA may be resubmitted to other JDRF grant mechanisms according to the deadlines and guidelines described on the JDRF website: <http://grantcenter.jdrf.org/rfa/>

ELIGIBILITY

Applications may be submitted by domestic and foreign non-profit organizations, public and private, such as universities, colleges, hospitals, laboratories, units of state and local governments, and eligible agencies of the federal government. Applicants must hold a faculty position or equivalent at a college, university, medical school, industry setting or other research facility. Please note that applications from for-profit entities or industry collaborations with academia may be submitted to this RFA; however, additional information will be requested from for-profit entities if a full application is invited. Submissions from for-profit entities or collaborations involving for-profit entities will be reviewed by the JDRF T1D Fund (t1dfund.org) in addition to JDRF Research.

There are no citizenship requirements for this program. To assure continued excellence and diversity among applicants and awardees, JDRF welcomes applications from all qualified individuals and encourages applications from persons with disabilities, women, and members of minority groups underrepresented in the sciences.

LETTER OF INTENT

Prospective applicants should submit a LOI online via RMS360 (<http://jdrf.smartsimple.us>) to be considered for a full proposal request. The LOI template provided on the RMS360 website must be used to complete the application. Applicants will be notified approximately eight weeks after the LOI deadline date if they have been approved to submit a full application.

Please see below for complete instructions. Letters of intent should use the template provided and include the following information:

- Background/rationale, scientific approach, published or preliminary data, hypotheses, specific aims, deliverables of project, collaborative framework if applicable
- Description of potential for translating project deliverables into therapies, including short and long-term development goals
- Plan for acquiring drugs used in the study, if applicable
- Indication of whether research will include human subjects
- Intellectual property or commercial efforts associated with the current application
- Estimated budget (total and yearly)

PROPOSAL

An approved LOI (2 page maximum) is required prior to submission of a full proposal. Upon notification of a request for a full proposal, the application must be completed using the templates provided on the RMS360 (<http://jdrf.smartsimple.us>). Proposal section templates in MS Word (**10 page maximum**) should be type-written, single-spaced and in typeface no smaller than 10-point font and have no more than six vertical lines per vertical inch. Margins, in all directions, must be at least ½ inch. Complete information should be included to permit review of each application without reference to previous applications.

Note that all applications involving human subject research must include supplemental information to address subject safety, study design and investigational product information. More details can be found in the Human Subject Research Guidelines:

http://grantcenter.jdrf.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/JDRF_Scientific_Guidelines_final-Aug20151.pdf

ANNOUNCEMENT INTRODUCTION AND PUBLIC Q&A

JDRF will hold an announcement introduction meeting via web and teleconference on **Wednesday, October 30, 2019 at 12:30pm** US Eastern Standard Time, to which all interested prospective applicants are invited. JDRF scientists will give an overview of the goals of this initiative, explain the application process and answer initial questions on applications.

Click here to [Join WebEx meeting](#)

Meeting number: 738 312 505

Meeting password: jdrf2019

Join by phone

Dial in (US): 1-650-429-3300

Dial in (International): [Global Call in Numbers](#)

Conference Code: 738 312 505

DEADLINES

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| • RFA release date | October 23, 2019 |
| • LOI deadline | November 26, 2019 |
| • Notification of full application request | December 10, 2019 |

- **Application deadline** January 14, 2020
- **Response to applicants** May 2020
- **Earliest anticipated start date** July 2020

SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

Applicants should register and submit their completed LOI in RMS360 (<http://jdrf.smartsimple.us>).

REVIEW CRITERIA

Applications will be evaluated based on JDRF's standard confidential award policy and according to the following criteria:

- Significance
- Relevance to T1D
- Approach
- Innovation
- Investigator experience
- Environment

CONTACTS

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If you have any grant-specific questions as you work within RMS360, please contact the administrative contact listed above.

For any **non-grant-specific** inquiries or issues, please contact SmartSimple Support Services via email support@smartsimple.com or phone (866) 239-0991. Support hours are Monday through Friday between 5:00am and 9:00pm US Eastern Standard Time.