

Dr. Ralph and Marian Falk Medical Research Trust

Catalyst and Transformational Awards Programs

Office Hours

April 9, 2024



MEET OUR TEAM



Who We Are



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HRiA partners with individuals, organizations, and communities to transform the practices, policies, and systems that improve health and advance equity.



Program Goals



New in 2024

Only minor program changes:

- Commercialization potential: Applicant's should address current or future plans for licensing of technology if applicable.
- Investigator - initiated trials: Applicants should explicitly state the status of, or plan for obtaining FDA and/or IRB approvals
- Clarification on the eligibility window for Transformational applicants.

Program Overview

Catalyst Award

Transformational Award

Award Duration:

12– 24 months

24 – 36 months

Maximum Award Amount:
(including 10% indirect costs)

Up to \$350,000

Up to \$1,000,000

Application Deadline

Award Start



Award Notifications

Award End



Review Criteria

Translational Potential

- Can be transferred to clinical practice in the near term

Impact

- Addresses a critical scientific roadblock and will have high impact on patient lives if successful

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Common Features of Successful Projects

- **High impact:** high potential to improve the lives of those suffering from a disease
- Translational in the **near term** (typically within 3 - 5 years)
- **Fill an unmet need** or improve upon existing products
- **Clear strategic path** to a \$1M Transformational award or the next step of commercial development.
- Combination of **expertise and infrastructure** in relevant areas (i.e. pharmacology, drug delivery, clinical trials, scaling & manufacturing, commercialization, specific techniques, etc.)
- **Solid project** : Sound precedents, preliminary data, and clear rationale; feasible and sufficiently powered; alternative approaches; appropriate and realistic budget and timeline.
- **Grantsmanship** : clear language and hypothesis understandable to a general audience and appropriate use of jargon and abbreviations.

Common Pitfalls

- Impact/critical need are lacking
- Project is heavily mechanistic and far from clinical practice
- Unclear path forward (to Transformational Award and beyond to clinical practice)
- Idea lacks innovation (e.g. therapeutic in a competitive commercial space without a plan for differentiation)
- Lacking the correct expertise
- Lacking in preliminary data or alternative approaches
- Poor grantsmanship, proposals include much jargon and are not understandable to a general audience.

Application Tips

- Recruit the right team: Include appropriate collaborations and/or shared leadership if it benefits the project
- Be realistic (in timeline, budgets, etc.)
- Avoid jargon and abbreviations; should be understandable to scientific generalists such as venture capital investors
- Be concise and clear (make it easy to read!)
- Include contingencies
- Know the competitive landscape
- Seek feedback (internally, externally, and across disciplines)

Example Reviewer Feedback

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Example Reviewer Feedback

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Example Reviewer Feedback

Investigative Team

- “This grant utilizes numerous novel techniques. While innovative, it is not clear that the PI has the resources, experience or collaborators for all of the novel techniques described.”
- “lack of understanding of what is needed to move to clinical development”
- “I am concerned that the team might not have the expertise to make the project work within the timeline suggested.”

Project and Grantsmanship

- “...focusing on a single therapeutic may not be the right approach.”
- “Densely written proposal with many crowded, small figures. It is not easy to read!”
- “the grant is not hypothesis - driven and there are concerns about feasibility that limit the transformational potential.”
- “contingencies and alternative plans should be addressed”
- “lack of experimental details and methods for validation/assessment of results”
- “Much of the proposal is early stage and unlikely to be ready for a Transformational award in 2 years.”
- “It is hard to determine the precedent and rationale from the description.”

