



**Request for Applications: 2020 COVID-19 PIVOT (3rd round)
AND COVID-19 RESEARCH GRANTS (1st round)**

**RFA Released: September 8, 2020
Applications Due: October 30, 2020 5:00 PM EST**

Introduction

The Autism Science Foundation invites applications for a third round of the 2020 Pivot Grants, and also announces a new mechanism meant to allow researchers to take advantage of the pandemic to better understand the effects of social distancing on families with ASD.

Pivot funding is not intended to support costs relating to an ongoing project, but should be used to help support new costs encountered due to adaptations or modifications to an original research plan as a result of social distancing measures and/or the current shutdown across research institutions. The goals of the original project should be the same, the funding would allow adaptation to current protocols to gather data. It can also be used on projects which will inform future research about the validity of new methods being employed during the pandemic.

COVID-19 Research funding is available to support some or all of the costs of enhancing or expanding a current line of research to answer a question relating to the effects of the pandemic on families with ASD. These can include, but are not limited to studying the effectiveness of telehealth approaches, understanding short or long-term outcomes as a result of social distancing, new scientific approaches to understanding the effects of COVID-19 in animal or cellular models of ASD, as well as specific interventions meant to deal with pandemic-related mental health issues in siblings or other family members. We realize that the funding cannot support the development of a project from scratch, therefore, the funding should be considered as supplementation of an existing project.

Both mechanisms are limited to scientists early in their career with an established university or research institution affiliation. Early career investigators are defined by ASF as those from pre-doctoral training to up to 7 years after completion of a postdoctoral fellowship or following medical training including the internship and fellowship. Pre and post-doctoral fellows are required to ensure that a letter of support is sent to ASF from their mentor or PI on the existing grant.

Awards

The Autism Science Foundation will make a number of Awards determined by its available financial resources. The term of the award cannot exceed the IRB approval period or the changes approved by the IRB for the alterations to the research plan.

Grants of up to \$3000 are available for a 6-month term. **Because this is a fast turnaround mechanism, the initial project must have prior IRB approval, if**

applicable. An IRB letter should be included in the application. Changes to animal care protocols must be approved by the appropriate review boards at your research institution. If you have applied for IRB approval but have not received it yet, you are not eligible at this time. No portion of these funds shall be used to cover indirect university costs.

Be creative in your use of these funds!

Some examples of how funds *can* be used are:

1. Honorariums associated with additional visits to retain participants in research;
2. Costs of new biological agents, assays, instruments or preparations proposed to either pivot or modify the research plan;
3. Direct storage costs of biological agents to preserve previously acquired samples or model systems;
4. Costs of technological platforms or technological tools to collect data from families remotely;
5. Modification of procedures to accommodate telehealth;
6. Costs associated with making various materials or technology available to families or to other researchers which were not intended in the original proposal. These can include infrastructure to support sharing or dissemination expenses;
7. Funding for temporary child care expenses (up to \$500) to enable parents to focus on research;
8. Support for research staff time in order to conduct the research and the analysis;
9. Supplies to support social distancing measures such as PPE supplies or COVID-testing.

Proposal Preparation

- **Cover Page**
 - The cover page should include the following information:
 - Full name and contact information of the applicant
 - University where research will occur
 - Current grant name, scope and number
 - Current funding source
 - Whether this is a Pivot or a COVID Research Grant
 - Amount of funding requested
- **Application**
 - A maximum of 3 pages written in 12-point Arial font with margins of 0.5 inch or greater.
 - **In bold, describe in 3-4 sentences how this award (either Pivot or COVID-19 Research) can be used to either 1) help complete the current application or 2) modify an existing line of research to capture effects of the pandemic.** Your application should start with this brief, succinct rationale of why you need the funds. The rest of the application space should be used to expand upon this summary.
 - For Pivot Grants: The application should include a brief background of the research project, expected aims, challenges posed by the current emergency, and a strong rationale of the change in research plan. In addition, provide information around any outside expertise obtained to make decisions on how the plan was changed. In other words: what were you going to do, why, what are you doing differently, how, and who helped you decide what to do? Indicate the exact dollar amount you are applying for and specify exactly how the funds will be spent.
 - For COVID-19 Research Grants: The application should include a brief

background of the parent grant and the strong rationale of how this project could be supplemented or enriched to collect information about pandemic-related issues in ASD families.

- **References**
 - A maximum of 1 page written in 12-point Arial font with margins of 0.5 inch or greater.
- **Biosketch of Applicant**
- **Original research plan and budget (both Pivot and COVID-19 Research Grants)**

Applications should be submitted as one PDF bundle. Applicant's last name and page number should appear on the bottom right of each page.

*****Additional requirement for pre- and post-doctoral fellows:***

Pre- and post-doctoral fellows applying for this mechanism should include a letter from their mentor ensuring that they will receive the proper support for the project and that they agree with plans that have been proposed.

Letters of support/recommendation should NOT be included in the application bundle and must come directly from the email of the mentor.

Submission of Proposals

Applications should be submitted as one PDF and be ordered as follows:

1. Cover page – 1 page
2. Proposal – up to 3 pages
3. Scientific references - 1 page
4. Biosketch of applicant
5. Original grant proposal and budget
6. IRB modification letter

Proposals should be submitted to grants@autismsciencefoundation.org with the subject line: (Last Name of Applicant/Institution/Pivot Grant Application).

Example: Martin/Tulane/Pivot Grant Application

Letters of support (when applicable) go to grants@autismsciencefoundation.org with the subject line: (Last Name of Applicant/Institution/LOS/Pivot).

Example: Martin/Tulane/LOS/Pivot

Reminder, letters of support must come directly from mentors/recommenders

Successful electronic submission will be confirmed by email notification to the sender.

- **Applications are due October 30, 2020, 5PM EST. Any applications received after this deadline will not be reviewed.**
- **We expect to notify applicants by early to mid December, 2020.**

It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that the proposal complies with the conditions prescribed in the RFA. Autism Science Foundation reserves the right to return without review any proposal found not to be in compliance with the conditions prescribed on the RFA, or any proposal that is not responsive to its research goals or exceeds its funding limits or available resources, at any time during the application and review process.

The Autism Science Foundation reserves the right to make changes to this RFA at any

time. Check <https://autismsciencefoundation.org/what-we-fund/funding-calendar/> for any updates. We advise applicants to check this website frequently.

Payment of Awards

We will issue a contract to the investigator's sponsoring institution and make a single payment of the full amount.

Because of the fast turnaround, ASF has limited time to negotiate with universities on the content and terms of the grant. A sample contract has been posted on our website and applicants should know that if a university cannot agree in spirit to the grant contract or provide adequate turnaround, the funds will not be released.

Awardees must submit a brief written report to the Autism Science Foundation at the conclusion of the award, documenting the status of the research funded and detailing the use of funds. A form will be provided by ASF for this purpose. Past forms can be found on <http://autismsciencefoundation.org/what-we-fund/resources-for-grantees/>

Questions about proposal submission, proposal content and review, or applicant eligibility should be addressed to Casey Gold-Casey, Director of Operations, Autism Science Foundation. (cgold@autismsciencefoundation.org)