



Request for Applications: 2021 COVID-19 RESEARCH GRANTS (2nd round)

RFA Released: June 2, 2021

Applications Due: Friday, July 16, 2021 5:00 PM EST

Introduction

The Autism Science Foundation recognizes the continuing need to better understand the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the autism community, including biological, educational, psychological and psychiatric effects that may impact the immediate and longer-term functioning of people on the autism spectrum. For this reason, we are continuing and expanding the **COVID-19 Research Grant program** in 2021.

Multiple approaches may be used to investigate these impacts, including but not limited to: clinical assessments, new virtual interventions, animal models, use of new or existing samples or data, and basic animal or cellular research.

All research ideas are welcome, however, ASF is particularly interested in understanding gaps in utilization and delivery of telehealth assessments or interventions in the autism community. This may include ways to improve telehealth. This funding opportunity is limited to early career investigators. ASF defines early career investigators as those from post-doctoral training to up to 7 years after completion of a postdoctoral fellowship or following medical training including the internship and fellowship. 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. Priority will also be given to scientists from traditionally underrepresented groups and to projects that commit to recruiting participants from traditionally underrepresented groups.

Since this is a fast turnaround mechanism, the funding should be used to expand or enhance a currently funded, IRB approved, ongoing research project (i.e. anchor funding) supported by another funding agency or through an ASF mechanism. We hope to make decisions within 2 months of receiving the applications and begin funding soon thereafter, so there is no time to set up a new program with your institution. You can read about previous COVID-19 research grant awardees here:

<https://autismsciencefoundation.org/what-we-fund/asf-funded-research/current-grantees/>

Awards

Grants of up to \$5000 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 tuition or indirect university costs.

Be creative in your use of these funds!

Some examples of how funds can be used are:

1. Honoraria associated with additional visits to retain or include participants in research;
2. Costs of new biological agents, assays 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. 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;
6. Funding for temporary child care expenses (up to \$500) to enable parents to focus on research;
7. Support for research staff time in order to conduct the research and the analysis;
8. Supplies to support social distancing measures such as PPE 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
 - 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 the COVID-19 Research Grant award can be used to either 1) create a new opportunity or 2) modify or adjust existing funded research to understand the effects of COVID-19 on ASD.** 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.
 - The application should include a brief background of the parent grant and the strong rationale of how the parent project could be supplemented or enriched to collect information about pandemic-related issues in ASD families.
 - Budget for the \$5,000 COVID-19 Research Grant Funding
- **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 (specific aims pages area fine) and budget of anchor grant**
-

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 post-doctoral fellows:**

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 of COVID-19 Research Grant Funding**
6. IRB modification letter

Proposals should be submitted to grants@autismsciencefoundation.org with the subject line: (Last Name of Applicant/Institution/COVID-19 Grant Application).

Example: Martin/Tulane/COVID-19 Research Grant Application

Letters of support (when applicable) go to grants@autismsciencefoundation.org with the subject line: (Last Name of Applicant/Institution/LOS/COVID-19 Research Grant).

Example: Martin/Tulane/LOS/COVID-19 Research Grant

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 Friday, July 16th 5:00 pm EST. Any applications received after this deadline will not be reviewed.**
- **We expect to notify applicants by the end of August 2021 and the grant can start no later than November 1, 2021.**

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 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)

There are certain universities who have not been able to comply with the standard clauses in the ASF grant. Unfortunately we will not be able to award any grants to those universities. If you have concerns about whether or not this affects you, please email cgold@autismsciencefoundation.org