

# Request for Application (RFA)

## Mid-Career Investigator Award Program

### About FARE

FARE is the largest private funder of food allergy research, promoting the development of new therapies and offering hope for effective treatments. FARE's mission is to improve the quality of life and health of those with food allergies through transformative research, education, and advocacy.

### Background

FARE's strategic plan entails expanding the participation and involvement of the scientific and medical community in food allergy research. The Mid-Career Investigator Award program is designed to support scientific discovery by established investigators who are currently researching food allergy or seeking to transition into food allergy research. An award of \$750,000 over five years will enable scientists to substantively enhance and advance their research program and career trajectory. In all instances, emphasis will be placed on promoting equity and diversity within the food allergy research community.

### RFA Objectives

The overall goal of the Mid-Career Investigator Award program is to encourage and support physician-scientists and researchers to conduct food allergy research and to foster their career advancement toward becoming a senior investigator. The program also aims to broaden the diversity of food allergy researchers to be inclusive of underrepresented groups, including women, minorities, persons with disabilities and veterans.

In all instances, individuals applying for an award are strongly encouraged to establish collaborations across the [FARE Clinical Network](#) and utilize the consortium's resources such as the [FARE Data Coordination Center \(DCC\)](#) and [FARE Biobank & Biomarker Discovery Center \(BBDC\)](#) as appropriate.

### Eligibility & Project Requirements

- Eligible applicants must demonstrate a commitment to academic research careers in food allergy and fulfill the following requirements:
  - Be a U.S. citizen, national or permanent resident.
  - Have a MD, DO, PhD, or equivalent doctoral degree
  - Be at least five years or more from their first faculty-level appointment. This could include assistant professors or early-stage associate professors. Instructors and full professors are not eligible.
  - Demonstrate a history of scientific accomplishment and peer-reviewed research applicable to the proposed food allergy research.

- Applicants affiliated with a [FARE Clinical Network](#) site are highly encouraged to apply and will receive funding priority. A single application per [FARE Clinical Network](#) site is permitted.
- Applicants with RO1 funding or equivalent are not eligible.
- Only one Principal Investigator is allowed per application. Co-Principal Investigators are not permitted.
- The proposed research study must focus on food allergy. Proposals are welcome across the spectrum of basic, translational, and clinical research.
- The study timeline should not exceed 5 years from project initiation.

## Funding Level

- FARE intends to fund a minimum of two (2) Mid-Career Awards during the 2024 grant cycle.
- The maximum allotted budget for any given proposal is \$750,000 over five years inclusive of indirect costs. Indirect costs are capped at 10%.
- Allowable direct costs include salaries, fringe benefits, supplies, publishing, and travel. Mandatory attendance to at least one FARE Summit should be allocated in the budget.

## Key Dates

Request for Applications released	February 1, 2024
Letter of Intent (LOI) deadline	April 18, 2024
LOI review/notification to proceed with full application	May 2024
Full application deadline	July 17, 2024
Scientific review	August 2024
Earliest award announcement	September 2024
Grant initiation	October 2024

## Mandatory Letter of Intent

Prospective applicants are **REQUIRED** to submit a 1-page Letter of Intent (LOI) by **April 18, at 11:59 p.m. ET**.

The single-page document should include the following information:

- Title and brief summary of the project
- Name and affiliation of the principal investigator

The letter should be submitted per the application procedure noted in the following section.

Following review of the LOI, applicants will be notified if their proposal is selected to advance to a full proposal.

## Application Procedure

Proposals shall be submitted via FARE's online grant submission system.

- To apply visit [https://foodallergy.fluxx.io/user\\_sessions/new](https://foodallergy.fluxx.io/user_sessions/new) and click on "Create New User" (or log in if you already have an account).
- A step-by-step user's guide for applying via a web-based portal will be made available.
- For questions concerning user accounts, passwords, or system issues, please contact Satya Shanmugham at [sshanmugham@foodallergy.org](mailto:sshanmugham@foodallergy.org) or 703-563-3086.

For those advancing to full proposal submission, applicants will enter general project information via the web-based form and upload the documents listed below under '**Proposal Sections**':

- Project Title
- Amount Requested
- Investigator Information: Name, title, institution, department
- General Project Information: Applicants will be asked to answer general questions regarding the project

## Proposal Sections

Required components of the proposal include the below sections to be completed as online forms or submitted as attachments in PDF format.

### 1. Career Development Plan (1-page limit)

Detail how the award will enhance and advance the applicant's research program and career trajectory.

### 2. Scientific Abstract (500 words maximum)

The abstract, which is limited to 500 words in the respective text field, is a succinct and accurate description of the proposed project. The abstract must state the application's broad, long-term objectives and specific aims; design and methods for achieving the stated project goals; and alignment with the goals of the RFA. The abstract should be informative to other people working in the same or related fields and understandable to a scientifically or technically literate reader. Avoid using first-person language or describing past accomplishments.

### 3. Lay Abstract (200 words maximum)

The general audience summary provides an overview of the proposed research for people who are not trained in the sciences. Summaries may be shared with the public and thus should not include proprietary/confidential information. The general audience summary should not duplicate the structured technical abstract and should be written in an understandable way for a lay audience. Describe concisely the background, significance, question(s) being asked, information to be obtained, and potential impact of the proposed research.

### 4. Research Plan (5-page limit, excluding tables and figures)

The Research Plan should follow the standard [National Institutes of Health \(NIH\) format](#) with the following mandatory sections:

- a. Rationale and Specific Aims:** List the objectives and goal(s) of the research proposed and describe the Specific Aims briefly and succinctly.
- b. Background & Significance**
- c. Innovation**
- d. Approach, Methods, and Analysis:** Include [if applicable] preliminary studies/data that support the feasibility of the application, stage of the project/product, hypotheses, design, procedures,

sample recruitment, methods/measures, potential pitfalls and alternatives, and data management and analysis plan.

**5. Environment (1-page limit)**

Briefly describe the space and equipment available to carry out the proposed research (e.g., space designated specifically for your research program, shared space and/or core facilities).

**6. Project Timeline and Metrics (1-page limit)** Using a Gantt-like chart, list each project aim and related activities to benchmark progress toward stated goals and objectives.

**7. Subsequent Funding (1-page limit)**

Detail a specific plan to obtain extramural funding including a timeline of grant submission(s).

**8. Project Budget**

Using the NIH budget template ([PHS 398, Form Page 4](#)), the project budget should clearly indicate how the grant funds will be spent. Expenditures must:

- be fully justified, reasonable and clearly related to the project's goals
- reflect the activities listed in the proposal
- explain the sources and amounts of any cash match or cost-sharing funds

Requests should be made by expense type (salary and fringe benefits, services, travel, supplies, etc.) and should provide sufficient detail for individuals unfamiliar with the project. Mandatory attendance to at least one FARE Summit should be allocated in the budget.

**9. Budget Justification**

A budget justification ([using PHS 398, Form Page 5](#)) is required for purposes of describing in detail the major budget line items: salary and fringe benefits, travel, services, and supplies and other expenses. The narrative should provide specific information about why an expense is necessary to achieve the project's goals and objectives. It must also describe the roles and responsibilities of the PI and collaborators, even if uncompensated. The Budget Justification should include sufficient detail for reviewers to assess whether appropriate resources have been requested.

**10. Human Subjects (no page limit)**

If human subjects are involved, provide a description of their involvement and characteristics, study procedures, materials used in the research, potential risks to subjects, the process for recruitment and informed consent, and protection against risks. Provide assurance that the project will be reviewed and approved by an accredited institutional review board (IRB) and comply with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA).

**11. NIH Biographical Sketches**

NIH-formatted biosketches should be included for the PI and other key members of the research team. Biosketches must be submitted using the current format and are limited to five pages. The NIH biosketch form can be downloaded at <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/forms/biosketch.htm>.

**12. References**

**13. Letters of Support**

- A letter of support from department chair or institutional official indicating that the proposed study is endorsed and will not present a conflict with current responsibilities and commitments including the guarantee of appropriate protected time.
- A letter of support from proposed collaborator(s).

## Submission Style Guide

Applications must adhere to the following formatting specifications:

- 11-point Arial font
- Single-spaced
- ½" margins on all sides
- 8½" x 11" (i.e., standard size) paper
- Number all pages

## Review Process

All proposals will be triaged for feasibility and close alignment to the nature and purpose of the RFA, including completeness, feasibility, and budget compliance.

- Applications that meet all technical criteria will move forward to undergo scientific review.
- Each application will receive at least two independent reviews. Assigned reviewers will score the proposal utilizing the same criteria used in NIH peer review.
- Final funding decisions are based on reviewer scores and other RFA criteria and principles.
- Investigators will receive final notice of award or non-award.

## Evaluation Criteria

Each proposal will be evaluated using the NIH 9-point rating scale (1 = exceptional; 9 = poor) scoring system. Each application will receive a separate score for each of five core review criteria (Significance, Investigator(s), Innovation, Approach, and Environment) and Overall Impact. Scientific merit will be determined by averaging these preliminary impact scores from two independent reviewers with appropriate expertise. Applications deemed of high scientific merit will be evaluated and ranked by a review committee.

Additional review considerations will include feasibility of the proposal, and plan for (and probability that) the project will lead to additional grant funding.

Projects that entail collaborations across FARE Clinical Network sites and/or utilization of FARE Clinical Network services, such as the FARE Data Coordination Center and FARE Biobank and Biomarker Discovery Center, and FARE databases, including the FARE Patient Registry, are highly encouraged.

## Contact for Information, Questions & Consultations

Questions and requests for consultations should be directed Jennifer Bufford at [jbufford@foodallergy.org](mailto:jbufford@foodallergy.org).

## Awardee Requirements | Terms and Conditions

- It is expected that all research supported by this RFA will result in one or more publications in a peer-reviewed journal and will provide critical preliminary data to support extramural applications.
- Compliance: Recipients of an award must adhere to federal, state, and local guidelines with respect to scientific conduct of research, conflict of interest policies, and human subject participation.

- Continued funding is contingent on keeping FARE apprised of the project's status. Awardees must submit general progress reports every six months after the notice of award.
- Awardees must notify FARE during the funding period if there is a significant change in the scope of work or personnel that would affect the outcome of the project or necessitate re-budgeting.
- All presentations and publications resulting from work funded by this award must acknowledge FARE funding.