



Request for Proposals: *Bipolar Disorder*

The Baszucki Brain Research Fund is launching a new program focused on funding bipolar disorder research in collaboration with the Milken Institute Center for Strategic Philanthropy. The Milken Institute is now accepting applications for one-year research projects that seek to advance therapeutic discovery for bipolar disorder to improve treatment options for individuals living with bipolar disorder.

Description

The Baszucki Brain Research Fund intends to award 8-10 research grants. Each grant will provide up to \$200,000 (USD) in funding to support one-year research projects led by PhD and/or MD level investigators at qualifying research-based institutions.

Projects investigating bipolar disorder that may be selected for funding should display novelty, creativity, and promise in seeking innovative approaches to treat bipolar disorder.

Scientific Focus

The scientific focus of bipolar disorder proposals shall address one or more of the following broad focus areas in humans or relevant research models:

- Proof of concept studies for novel treatment approaches
- Comparative assessment of novel or underutilized approaches to standard clinical practice
- The novel application of therapies not currently used to treat bipolar disorder
- Advancement of the application of neural devices to bipolar disorder
- Application of new tools or technologies to identify subpopulations of patients that may differentially respond to a treatment approach
- Research that deepens our understanding of how existing or novel therapies affect bipolar disorder

Eligibility Criteria

1. Each applicant organization must be a nonprofit academic or research institution, including domestic and non-US nonprofit organizations and domestic and non-US public/private academic universities or institutions of higher learning (including colleges, universities, medical schools, and other related academic research institutions); certain qualified governmental agencies with active biomedical research programs may also apply.
2. All proposed research projects must be led by a principal investigator (PI) who holds a doctorate (e.g., PhD, MD) or related research doctorate degree. PIs must be an independent investigator.
3. Institutions may submit more than one proposal, but each proposal must be led by a unique PI.

Letter of Intent (LOI) and Application Requirements

All completed LOIs and applications shall be submitted through the Milken Institute's online grant portal. It is recommended that each applicant keep in mind the portal's requirements when preparing his/her application. **Applications shall be single spaced and formatted in Calibri 11 pt font with 1-inch margins, except where provided templates apply.**

All applicants first shall submit an LOI, which shall be reviewed by Milken Institute's review team. Selected applicants who propose relevant projects will be invited to submit a full application, as outlined below.

1. **Letter of intent.** The LOI is a one-page letter briefly stating intent to apply for a grant, project title, and project aims. The LOI also requires the applicant organization's legal name; PI name, degree, position, and contact information; and the organization's tax ID (for US), registered charity number, or international country's equivalent.
 - a. LOIs are due Friday, May 14, 2021, at 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time.
 - b. LOIs should be submitted via the online submission portal, which may be accessed here: <https://milken.smapply.io/prog/bipolargrant/>.
 - c. Should the Milken Institute, in its sole discretion, deem a project described in an LOI appropriate for further consideration, the eligible applicant will be notified by email within approximately three (3) weeks of LOI submission deadline as to whether or not they will be invited to submit a formal proposal.
2. **Proposal.** A formal proposal outlining the intended project shall be no more than twelve (12) pages in length, outlining the intended project, and will be organized as follows:
 - a. Cover page. One (1) page, including the following:
 - i. Project title (a short title identifying the project and its intended area of focus).
 - ii. Technical abstract.
 - iii. Name of applicant institution and principal investigator.
 - b. Project summary page. One (1) page, including the following:
 - i. Lay summary (succinct summary describing the project's aims, goals, any previous accomplishments, and how it will benefit the field).
 - ii. Aims and milestones (summary of what the project aims to accomplish and the major milestones the PI anticipates the project will complete in the process of meeting said project aims). Major milestones should include estimated timeframe of completion.
 - iii. Full roster of project team members.
 - c. Scientific approach (outline of which research methodology the PI intends to use in pursuit of the project, in addition to defining and justifying key project outcome measures). Inclusive of references. Four (4) pages maximum.
 - i. Any clinical study of an interventional strategy should include a discussion of how participants will be selected, how efficacy will be assessed, participant diversity, necessary sample size, and control populations.
 - d. Team capabilities (statement outlining the research group's ability to address the research question, support the research, and manage patients, if applicable, and identification of any key personnel in addition to the PI). Three (3) pages maximum. In addition to the information outlined above, consider the following:
 - i. How is the research group structured?
 - ii. Why is the research group uniquely positioned to be successful?
 - iii. Describe the relevant expertise that each team member brings to this research.

- e. Budget (a detailed budget in USD with a narrative summary and justification for each item, including how the PI intends to spend his/her time on the project). Acceptable expenditures will include: salary, equipment, software, patient recruitment, fringe benefits, salary for hired personnel, project-related travel, publication costs, and up to 15 percent indirect expenses to support institutional infrastructure. If more than one institution will be involved in the project, one shall be proposed as the applicant organization and the other included as a sub-grantee. Two (2) pages in length using the provided template and one (1) page in length providing narrative justification of budget items.
 - i. For international applicants: **Please note grants will be made in USD, and Baszucki Brain Research Fund is not responsible for changes in conversion rates. Grants selected for funding will be made payable to the applicant's institution. Under no circumstances will funding be paid to an individual.**
3. Additional documentation within the online form may include:
- a. Completed electronic signature confirming that the grant proposal contains information that is true, complete, and accurate and that false or fraudulent statements may subject the institution to criminal, civil, or administrative penalties.
 - b. Institutional letter of commitment stating that applicant institution will be able to support the research led by the PI.
 - c. Upon request, an applicant institution may be required to submit organizational assurances (additional information to document its nonprofit status).
 - d. For international organizations, please identify whether a US-based nonprofit partner exists to support international granting to the specific research institution. Note that this field is not required.

Formatting and length shall be strictly enforced by the review team. Any submissions that exceed the page limit or do not follow the aforementioned requirements shall not be considered for review.

Review

The Milken Institute will seek independent expert review for each application. All applications will be reviewed based on their scientific and technical merit, team capabilities and competencies, the potential impact of the project, and the realism of the cost. The Milken Institute does not offer feedback on proposals for projects that are not selected for funding.

A key component of review for this funding program is the research team behind the proposed project. Baszucki Brain Research Fund is interested in funding innovative, creative, and motivated teams seeking to radically shift the landscape of bipolar disorder research. As such, the Fund will be reaching out to principal investigators during the grant review period for brief video conference interviews.

Key Dates and Timeline

1. **Friday, May 14, 2021:** Letters of intent due via <https://milken.smapply.io/prog/bipolargrant/> by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time.
2. **Friday, May 28, 2021:** Applicant organizations whose LOIs are selected to move to the next stage will be invited to submit full proposals.
3. **Friday, July 9, 2021:** Invited applicants shall submit their full proposals via <https://milken.smapply.io/prog/bipolargrant/> by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time.
4. **September 2021:** Awardees who are selected for funding are notified.
5. **October 2021:** Projects begin.

Grant Terms

Each funded research institution and the lead investigator will be required to co-sign and agree in writing to Baszucki Brain Research Fund's grant terms within thirty (30) days from receipt of notice of the award and prior to funds being released. Baszucki Brain Research Fund's grant terms include the following:

1. Any substantial changes to the project including activities, budget, or grant period require written approval from the Fund before proceeding with such activities, spending, or committing any remaining funds from the grant.
 - a. Any funds not expended or committed for the purposes of the grant must be returned to the Fund unless otherwise agreed by the Fund in writing.
 - b. If an applicant organization proposes to supplement any funds provided by Baszucki Brain Research Fund with funds provided by a third party, the organization must first provide notice to Baszucki Brain Research Fund and must ensure that the funding terms that attach to any such third-party funds do not preclude sharing of data or publication of project results as contemplated in this RFP.
2. The applicant organization must be able to receive awarded funds and allocate them toward the funded bipolar disorder research project.
3. Funded organizations must agree to the following reporting requirements:
 - a. Submission of full written narrative and financial reports at the conclusion of the granting period following the award payment.
 - b. On a monthly basis, funded investigators shall share brief written reports, no longer than one page in length, describing major project highlights and/or progress after the initial award payment.
 - c. On a quarterly basis, funded investigators shall participate in a brief, virtual meeting with other grant recipients to discuss plans, progress, and findings.
4. IRB (for human studies) or IACUC (for animal studies) approval will be required before initial payments are made.
5. It is a condition of any funding provided by Baszucki Brain Research Fund that the investigator seek to have the results of the funded project published in a peer-reviewed journal within eighteen (18) months after the completion of the project. Each publication would acknowledge Baszucki Brain Research Fund's role in supporting the project, in a form approved by Baszucki Brain Research Fund. If the investigator does not publish the results within such timeframe, Baszucki Brain Research Fund would have the right to make such results public.

Intellectual Property

Each funded organization would own the rights in all intellectual property developed by or on behalf of that organization under Baszucki Brain Research Fund funding, in accordance with such organization's applicable intellectual property policies. Baszucki Brain Research Fund would have the right to use and to practice all such intellectual property for internal, non-commercial research purposes, and would also have the right to publicly disclose research results in press releases, announcements, and otherwise (subject to the funded organization's advance approval if any such public disclosure will occur prior to publication of the applicable results).

Each funded organization must agree to share projects results, data (de-identified, where applicable), reagents, and other research tools developed under Baszucki Brain Research Fund funding with other researchers for non-commercial use to advance the understanding of bipolar disorder and to maximize scientific and patient impact.

Funding Awarded in Baszucki Brain Research Fund's Discretion

Responding to this RFP, submitting an LOI, and/or submitting a full proposal does not entitle any individual or institution to receive funding from Baszucki Brain Research Fund. Funding, if any, would be provided in Baszucki Brain Research Fund's sole discretion pursuant to the terms of a written grant agreement executed by Baszucki Brain Research Fund and the selected awardee institution and acknowledged by the PI.

Contact Information

For all inquiries about the online process, necessary documentation, research priorities, or scientific requirements, please contact bipolargrant@milkeninstitute.org.

An automated email confirmation is generated upon submission of the application. If you do not receive a confirmation within 24 hours of submitting your application, please check spam filters and then contact: bipolargrant@milkeninstitute.org.