

Epstein Breakthrough Alzheimer's Research Fund Request for Proposals

The Keck School of Medicine of USC is seeking proposals for innovative and interdisciplinary research in Alzheimer's disease (AD) under a new research program supported by a generous gift from USC Trustee, Daniel J. Epstein. Funds will be awarded to promote and support research to advance the development of new therapies and/or preventive measures for AD across the spectrum from pre-symptomatic to symptomatic disease. Funding preference will be given to those projects that have the strongest potential to advance therapeutics in the next five years.

Mr. Epstein has committed funds to support this collaborative effort for five years. This Request for Proposals is for year two of the five-year effort.

Eligibility

- This interdisciplinary award requires multiple principal investigators (MPIs) at least one of whom is a full-time faculty member in one of the following USC health science schools at the time of the award: Keck School of Medicine, Alfred E. Mann School of Pharmacy, Ostrow School of Dentistry, Dworak-Peck School of Social Work, or Davis School of Gerontology.
- The contact MPI must be from one of these health science schools and must attest to devoting at least 20% of her/his effort to research overall, including this project, throughout the award period.
- One or two other MPI(s) are required. They must have faculty appointments in any USC School(s) other than the primary school of the contact MPI. If two MPIs are proposed, they must be from different schools as well. The MPIs should bring research expertise that complements expertise of the PI for the proposed research and offers a clear advantage in conducting innovative research project related to AD.
- Prior Epstein Breakthrough Awardees are eligible to apply for one year of additional funding. Their application must include a report on progress to date and unexpended funds from the original award period (see "How to Apply" for details).

Terms of Award

- We anticipate making 4–8 awards per year in the range of \$125–\$250K each, subject to receipt of a sufficient number of high-quality proposals and ongoing availability of funds.
- Funds will be awarded for one year. No-cost extensions are discouraged but will be considered based on specific circumstances that delay progress during the award year.
- Awardees will have the opportunity to apply for one additional year of funding under this program. Applications for such additional funding will be considered on a competing basis with all other proposals in the respective funding cycle. Progress during the initial award will be considered during the peer review process.
- Salary support for the MPIs and Co-Is may be requested but combined support for faculty salaries should not exceed 20% of the total project budget.
- Indirect costs may not be charged on the awarded funds.

How to Apply

Intent to Submit

Please upload the following information in the “Intent to Submit” section of the application portal (<https://keck.infoready4.com>) by Tuesday August 15

- participating investigators and Schools; and
- 2-3 sentences describing the research area and project.

Full Proposal

- **Full proposal must be submitted by 5 p.m. (PDT) on Tuesday, Sept 5, 2023**
- **The submission portal will open August 7, 2023**, at the link below and will contain a structured electronic application and additional submission instructions
 - Submission Portal Link: <https://keck.infoready4.com/>
- Submission will require uploading of a single PDF containing the following information in the order and within the page limits stated (**minimum margins 0.8 in, font: arial 11-pt**).
 - **Biosketch** in NIH format for the MPIs and each Co-I (limit five pages each, per NIH format). Biosketch template can be found at <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/forms/biosketch.htm>.
 - **Abstract** (limit ½ page)
 - **Research Plan** (limit five pages) including specific aims, significance, innovation, approach, and data analysis and interpretation.
 - **Future Directions** (limit one page) addressing how the results of the proposed studies will advance the development of novel therapeutics or preventive measures for AD and the anticipated next steps toward those goals including future funding
 - **Progress Report** (ONLY for applicants who have already received an initial award from the Epstein Breakthrough program): Limit 2 pages for methods, results and significance; also include up to one page statement of projected unexpended balance from year 1 and intended use)
 - **References Cited** (limit 1 page)
 - **Regulatory Approvals**: Indicate all regulatory approvals (e.g., IRB, IACUC) that will be required to conduct the proposed research.
 - **Chair or Dean’s Letter** (limit two pages): for MPIs, documenting faculty status, research commitment, and supporting participation in the proposed research.
 - For PIs with rank of Assistant Professor or below, chair letter should also describe a mentoring plan in support for the applicant and project.
 - **Budget**: presented on NIH 398 Detailed Budget for Initial Budget Period Form (form can be obtained at <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/phs398/fp4.PDF>).
 - Support for faculty effort is allowable. It should be commensurate with proposed effort and not exceed 20% of the total budget.
 - **Budget Justification** (limit three pages): Explain and justify all budgetary requests.
 - **MPI plan** (up to one page): Explain how the proposed research and activities relate to the expertise of the MPIs and indicate any potential overlap with existing funded grants.

Applications will be considered incomplete and will not be reviewed unless all materials are submitted by the application due date. Questions about the submission process should be directed to Cort Brinkerhoff (cort.brinkerhoff@med.usc.edu).

Review and Award

Applications will be peer-reviewed and recommendations for funding will be made by a committee appointed by the Dean of the Keck School of Medicine.

Reporting

- A final progress report will be due 60 days after the end date of the award for projects that do not receive a no-cost extension, or within one month after such extension ends if one is granted.
- By accepting an award, awardees will agree to
 - acknowledge funding from the Daniel J. Epstein Breakthrough Alzheimer's Research Fund in all publications and presentations related to the funded project. And
 - provide information on publications and follow-on funding at least annually for five years after completion of the award.

FY24 Review and Award Timeline

- Submission Portal opens Monday **August 7, 2023**
- Application Deadline: 5:00 p.m. Pacific Time on Tuesday **September 5, 2023**
- Funding Decision: on or before Wednesday, **November 1, 2023**
- Funding Initiation on or before Friday, **December 1, 2023**
 - All research compliance submissions (IRB, IACUC, etc.) must be made before initiation of funding