Participating Organization: The Saban Research Institute (TSRI) of Children’s Hospital Los Angeles (CHLA)

Funding Opportunity Title: The Saban Research Institute 2020 Research Career Development Award (RCDA)

Funding Opportunity Purpose: The goal of The Saban Research Institute RCDA is to support the research of junior faculty members at CHLA. The RCDA is considered as seed funding to help investigators generate preliminary data that can be used to support extramural research grant applications. This award is aimed at supporting a junior faculty member (MD, PhD, MD/PhD) for a research project that has a primary focus on laboratory research (dry or wet laboratory) or clinical (patient related) research.

Number of Applications: Applicants can receive this award only once. A principal investigator (Mentor) can sponsor only one application per year. TSRI will fund applications based on budget availability and quality of applications.

Eligibility:
- USC junior faculty (Assistant Professor, any track) with a primary appointment at CHLA, within 4-years of their initial faculty appointment, who are establishing their research careers, are encouraged to apply. A change in faculty status may result in a termination of funding.
- Clinical instructors are eligible to apply for up to one year of funding. Clinical Instructors who are establishing their research careers, within 4-years of completion of all their training, and who hold CHLA positions that are eligible to apply for NIH grants, are encouraged to apply. Funded clinical instructors may apply for a second year of funding through the competitive application process (not a progress report renewal).
- Newly recruited junior researchers in one of the categories above will be eligible, as long as they will have a CHLA/USC faculty appointment by the date that funding begins (July 1, 2020).
- The applicant must submit a letter from their Division Chief or Clinical Director to validate that they have adequate (50% minimum) protected research time.
- Applicants may NOT have served as a PI on a NIH R21- or R01.
- The applicant must identify a member of the senior faculty who serve as the primary mentor for his/her research and career.

Award Description:
- The award is made for a two-year period, with funding for the second year contingent on the progress made.
- Each year, the highest scoring RCDA application will be awarded as either The Ellison Research Career Development Fellowship Award, funded by the Leon and Carol Ellison family, or The Otis Booth Foundation Research Career Development Award (alternating from year to year). For the 2020 funding cycle, the top scorer will be awarded the Ellison Research Career Development Fellowship Award.
- Awards will be for a maximum of $60,000 per year. Applications must include a budget for Year 1 and should include requests for research funds only (personnel, supplies, and appropriate misc. expenses).
- Awards will support direct costs only; overhead charges (indirect costs) and tuition reimbursement costs are not allowed. Funding for research equipment costing more than $1,000, or administrative support will not be provided.
• Competitive requests for a second year of support are accepted and will be judged on the basis of progress (i.e. abstracts, papers and progress report) as well as the investigator’s effort to seek extramural funds.
• Funded applications must be written by the applicant and reviewed by the primary mentor.
• Applicants may submit only one application per funding cycle, and may receive only one intramural award at a time.
• Receipt of an extramural grant will not result in termination of the RCDA.
• Awards are contingent upon the approval or conditional approval of research protocols by the Institutional Review Board (IRB), and Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC), if applicable. It is the applicant’s responsibility to have relevant approvals at the time the project will start, if approved.

Responsibilities of Award Recipients and Mentors:
• Award recipients must provide up to a 400-word lay abstract at the time of funding. Recipients will be expected to prepare a progress report at the end of the first year, including up to a 400-word lay abstract of results and findings.
• Funding for the second year will be contingent upon satisfactory progress made during the first year, as reported in the year one progress report. (Scientific Merit Review).
• Recipients will be expected to prepare a progress report 45 days after completion of funding, including up to a 400-word lay abstract of results and findings.
• The awardee must maintain a current certificate of completion of Requirement for Instruction in the Responsible Conduct of Research, per the National Institutes of Health (NIH), see NOT-OD-10-019 (https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-10-019.html).
• The awardee is required to participate in TSRI academic activities, including research seminars, Annual Poster Session and Annual Symposium. The awardee may be invited to present at the TSRI Research Seminar Series.
• The awardee must acknowledge RCDA support in all manuscripts resulting from the award and notify tsrifunding@chla.usc.edu of any extramural funding.
• Funds must be spent the fiscal year in which they are awarded. Carry over is not permitted.
• At the discretion of the Chief Scientific Officer, failure to meet award requirements may prohibit the awardee’s division or research program from participating in future intramural applications.

Key Dates

Fund Announcement Date: December 2019
Letter of Intent Due Date: February 18, 2020, by 5:00 PM, PST
Mandatory Pre-Review Deadline: March 16, 2020 by 5:00 PM, PST
Application Due Date: March 20, 2020, by 5:00 PM, PST
Application Review Period: April - May, 2020
Award Announcement Date: May 31, 2020
Funding Start Date: July 1, 2020
Scientific Merit Review: May 2021. Scientific Merit Review refers to review of the year one progress report to determine year two funding.
Funding Expiration Date: Year 1 expiration date is June 30, 2021. If Year 2 funds are approved, expiration date is June 30, 2022. Carry over and no-cost extensions will not be granted under any circumstances.
Required Application Instructions

FORMATTING REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL SECTIONS

Conformance to all requirements is required and strictly enforced. Applicants and Mentors must read and follow all application instructions in the “Required Application Instructions” section. Applications that do not comply with these instructions may be delayed or not accepted for review.

Applications should be generated using word processing software and then converted to PDF using PDF generating software for submission. Avoid scanning text attachments to convert to PDF since that causes problems for the administrators handling the application.

Font
Prepare the application using Arial typeface in black font color. After text is converted to PDF, font size in each final PDF document must be at least 11 points (or larger). (A Symbol font may be used to insert Greek letters or special characters; the font size requirement still applies.)

Paper Size and Page Margins
Final PDF documents should be formatted to be no larger than standard paper size (8 1/2 x 11”). The final PDF document should have at least one-half (0.5) inch margins (top, bottom, left, and right) for all pages. Aside from page numbers, no information should appear in the margins.

Figures, Graphs, Diagrams, Charts, Tables, Figure Legends, and Footnotes
You may use a smaller type size but it must be in a black font color, readily legible, and follow the font typeface requirement. Color can be used in figures; however, all text must be in a black font color, clear and legible.

Grantsmanship
Use English and avoid jargon.

If terms are not universally known, spell out the term the first time it is used and note the appropriate abbreviation in parentheses. The abbreviation may be used thereafter.

Page Limits
Page limits referenced in these instructions must be followed. Administrative validations will include checks for page limits. Applications found not to comply with the requirements will lead to rejection of the application during administrative validation.

Unless otherwise specified, Internet Web site addresses (URLs) may not be used to provide information necessary to the review because reviewers are under no obligation to view the Internet sites. Moreover, reviewers are cautioned that they should not directly access an Internet site as it could compromise their anonymity.

Applicants are prohibited from using other application sections to circumvent page limitations in any section of the application for which a page limit applies.
Required Application Instructions

**Letter of Intent:** Applicants should submit a Letter of Intent (LOI) by February 18, 2020 to both the Research Operations Grants Team at tsripreaward@chla.usc.edu and tsrifunding@chla.usc.edu. Refer to the announcement for the LOI form with details and instructions. LOIs are used for review planning and applicant communications; LOIs are not competitive.

**TO BE COMPLETED BY THE APPLICANT AND MENTOR:**

1. Applications must include a completed Cover Sheet, grants intake form, and submission checklist. Refer to the announcement for these forms.

**TO BE COMPLETED BY THE MENTOR:**

Mentor submissions should keep their Mentor Statement, Mentoring Plan and list of previously awarded intramural funding recipients mentored to no more than 4 pages. Mentor’s NIH biographical sketch is not subject to the page limit.

1. **Mentor Statement and Mentoring Plan (4 pages)**

Mentor Statement: A statement written by the Mentor is required, describing the qualifications of the Applicant to conduct the proposed research project. Elaborate on the potential of the candidate to become an independent investigator upon completion of this project and on his/her long-term career goals. Elaborate on the commitment of the Applicant to continue his/her career in research and how this award would benefit him/her in achieving these goals. The mentor should describe his/her qualifications to supervise the training of the Applicant conducting research under his/her guidance, answering the question -- how does this research project fit in with research conducted in the mentee’s research program. If there is overlap between Applicant and Mentor’s ongoing research program, describe how the proposed project will insure the Applicant’s independence.

Mentoring Plan: The mentoring plan will require the information below:

- A plan that describes the nature of the supervision, mentoring, and professional development activities that will occur during the proposed award period.
- A plan for career progression for the candidate to move from the mentored stage of his/her career to the independent research investigator status during the project period of the award.
- A plan for monitoring the candidate’s research, publications, and progression towards independence.
- The mentor must agree to provide annual evaluations of the candidate’s progress as required in the annual progress report.

2. **A list of any previous CHLA TSRI intramural funding recipients mentored** over the previous five years. Indicate the year(s) when the Awards were granted, and a list of publications that resulted from the support. Indicate if the Awardees have obtained independent peer review funding and/or have been promoted. Include information on their current positions. (To be included in the four page limit).

3. **Mentor’s NIH Biographical Sketch** (no curriculum vitae) – use the most recent NIH Biographical Sketch Templates. Visit [https://grants.nih.gov/grants/forms/biosketch.htm](https://grants.nih.gov/grants/forms/biosketch.htm) for blank format page, instructions, and examples.

**TO BE COMPLETED BY THE DIVISION HEAD:**

1. **Letter of Support from Division Head**

The Division Head should clearly state the nature of faculty appointment and Divisional support for the Applicant, including an explicit statement that the Applicant will be assured a minimum of 50% protected time
for research. The letter should also indicate space available for the Applicant, and cost sharing for technicians, administrative support, supplies and/or equipment. The letter should also state the relationship of the proposed work to the program goals of the Division and/or The Saban Research Institute.

Additional supplementary letters of recommendation will not be accepted.

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE APPLICANT:

Should the application be a resubmission to this same program, within the last two years, you must include in your resubmission a one-page Introduction addressing previous reviewer concerns, point by point, as for an NIH resubmission. Modification of Specific Aims of a previous submission still constitute a resubmission. Completely new Specific Aims would constitute a new application. This determination is at the discretion of the TSRI CSO.

Page Limits: See below.

1. Abstract
   A summary of the proposed project. No more than 30 lines of text.

2. Specific Aims (1 page)
   State concisely the goal of the proposed research and summarize the expected outcome(s), including the impact that the results of the proposed research will exert on the research field(s) involved. List succinctly the specific objectives of the research proposed, e.g., to test a stated hypothesis, created a novel design, solve a specific problem, challenge an existing paradigm or clinical practice, address a critical barrier to progress in the field, or develop new technology.

3. Research Strategy (6 pages)
   Organize the Research Strategy in the specified order and using the instructions provided below. Start each section with the appropriate section heading – Significance, Innovation, Approach. Experimental details should be cited using the “Literature Cited section” section and need not be detailed in the Research Strategy.

Significance
   • Explain the importance of the problem or critical barrier to progress in the field that the proposed project addresses.
   • Explain how the proposed project will improve scientific knowledge, technical capability, and/or clinical practice in one or more broad fields.
   • Describe how the concepts, methods, technologies, treatments, services, or preventative interventions that drive this field will be changed if the proposed aims are achieved.
   • Describe which of CHLA’s strategic plan themes the work most closely aligns with and how the results will contribute to advancing that theme:
     o Best starts to life: Identify early risk factors and interventions, from fetal development to early childhood, to improve the lives of all children.
     o Personalized prevention and care: Develop an understanding of each patient down to the cellular level to intervene early and effectively for a lifetime.
     o From discovery to pediatric care innovation: Transform knowledge gleaned from clinical care provided today into the new and innovative approaches of tomorrow.
     o Pediatric disease models and mechanisms: Discover the underlying causes of pediatric disease to drive development of new interventions and cures.

Innovation
   • Explain how the application challenges and seeks to shift current research or clinical practice paradigms.
   • Describe any novel theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation or intervention(s) to be developed or used, and any advantage over existing methodologies, instrumentation or intervention(s).
• Explain any refinements, improvements, or new application of theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation or interventions.

**Approach**

• Describe the overall strategy, methodology, and analyses to be used to accomplish the specific aims of the project. Include how the data will be collected, analyzed, and interpreted.

• Discuss potential problems, alternative strategies, and benchmarks for success anticipated to achieve the aims.

• If the project is in the early stages of development, describe any strategy to establish feasibility, and address the management of any high risk aspects of the proposed work.

**Preliminary Data**

• Include relevant preliminary data (graphs, tables, micrographs, etc.) that support your hypothesis and are in line with your Specific Aims.

  **Note:** The proposed preliminary data is to demonstrate that the Applicant has already initiated his/her research project, but not to demonstrate full competency in the Applicant’s research approach.

**4. Personal Statement by the Applicant** (2 pages)

A personal statement by the candidate describing his/her research career goals and how this research project would help him/her to achieve these goals. **This section should elaborate on the future, not on the past.**

**5. Environment** (1 page)

Identify the facilities to be used (laboratory, clinical, animal, computer, office other). If appropriated, indicate their capacities, pertinent capabilities, relative proximity and extent of availability to the project. Describe only those resources that are directly applicable to the proposed work. Describe how the scientific environment in which the research will be done contributes to the probability of success (e.g., institutional support, physical resources, and intellectual rapport). In describing the scientific environment in which the work will be done, discuss ways in which the proposed studies will benefit from unique features of the scientific environment or subject populations or will employ useful collaborative arrangements.

**6. Literature Cited**

Authors, title, journal volume, pages, and year.

**7. Applicant's NIH Biographical Sketch**

(no curriculum vitae) – use the most recent NIH Biographical Sketch Templates. Visit [https://grants.nih.gov/grants/forms/biosketch.htm](https://grants.nih.gov/grants/forms/biosketch.htm) for blank format page, instructions, and examples.

**8. Human Subjects, Animal Safety, and Biosafety**, should be included as applicable following NIH format and instructions.

If proposal does **not** include Human Subjects, include the following statement in your proposal:

*This is to verify that the proposal entitled [INSERT TITLE OF PROPOSED RESEARCH PROJECT] does not involve the study of human subjects, human tissue, or by-products (blood, urine, etc.), nor does it include any demonstrations, interviews, or examinations of human subjects. Should this study be amended to involve human subjects, I, [INSERT APPLICANT’s NAME], the Applicant, will present the amended protocol to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) and to The Saban Research Institute for review and approval prior to commencement.*

**9. Budget**: Complete a budget form for Year 1 (use NIH detailed budget form).

Include percentage of time/effort for all persons. Do not include capital equipment. The upper limit on the total annual amount of funds to be awarded is $60,000. Include a description of justification for each budget category.

Letters of collaboration should be included as appropriate.
Submission:
Starting this year, submissions will be processed by the Research Operations Grants Team. The applicant must submit his/her application as one (1) electronic PDF to TSRIPreAward@chla.usc.edu for pre-review no later than March 16, 2020 at 5:00 PM PST. The Grants team will review and reach out to each applicant with required and/or recommended corrections per these application instructions. The final application will be submitted to the Intramural Funding team by the Grants team on or before final application due date of March 20, 2020 by 5:00 PM PST.

Applications must include a signed Grants Intake Form, Cover Sheet, and Submission Checklist.

Applications that do not fully comply with application requirements will not be accepted. Applications not submitted by the due date and time will not be accepted. Applicants are strongly encouraged to apply early to allow adequate time to make any corrections to errors found in the application during the submission process by the due date.

Application Review: This award is granted following a highly competitive review process.

- All applications are reviewed by the TSRI Intramural Funding Study Section following the NIH review criteria.
- Funding Decision: Funding recommendations are made by the TSRI Intramural Funding Study Section based on application review scores. Final decisions will be made by the Chief Scientific Officer based on reviewers’ comments and programmatic alignment.
- Written feedback: All applicants, regardless of whether they are recommended for funding, will receive written reviews after funding notifications are issued.

Incomplete applications and applications submitted after the deadline shall not be considered for review.