



The Marilyn Hilton Award for Innovation in MS Research

PILOT INNOVATOR GRANTS

Request for Proposals

Conrad N. Hilton Foundation

Established in 1944 by the founder of Hilton Hotels, the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation works to improve the lives of disadvantaged and vulnerable people throughout the world. The Foundation funds Multiple Sclerosis (MS) research and patient services through its Overcoming Multiple Sclerosis Major Program area. Since the Foundation's inception, it has awarded almost \$40 million in grants in the hopes of finding a cure for those with MS and improving the lives of people living with the disease. Continuing with its long-term commitment to supporting MS research, the Foundation is launching a new cycle of its peer-reviewed award program, the Marilyn Hilton Award for Innovation in MS Research.

More information about the Foundation and its programs can be found on our [website](#).

Multiple Sclerosis Program Goal

The goal of the Marilyn Hilton Award for Innovation in MS Research is to stimulate innovation and advance knowledge that will aid in developing treatments and cures for progressive forms of MS.

The Foundation envisions the Marilyn Hilton Award for Innovation in MS Research as the centerpiece of its MS research funding. The goal of the award is to stimulate innovation and potentially paradigm-shifting research in progressive MS, which may otherwise go unfunded in times of declining funding for research.

In this 2016-17 cycle of funding, the Foundation wishes to encourage the work of investigators who are at early stages in their careers, recognizing that young investigators are a wellspring of new ideas and innovation and that funding at an early stage can make a critical difference to a young investigator's career trajectory. The Foundation has released two Requests for Proposals, both aimed at advancing the work of investigators at early stages of their career.

PILOT INNOVATOR GRANTS

Recognizing that the funding environment for investigators at the beginning of their careers continues to present challenges, the Foundation is launching a competition that will provide young investigators pilot grants to explore new lines of research. Goals of this program are:

- To facilitate young investigators to explore innovative new research directions in MS with the potential of high impact;
- To encourage young investigators from other disciplines to apply their expertise to MS;
- To foster new collaborations amongst young investigators aimed at addressing critical problems relating to MS; and
- To provide young investigators with the support needed to collect the preliminary data required to obtain additional multi-year research funding for their projects.

The Foundation has a particular interest in progressive MS, both Primary Progressive MS and Secondary Progressive MS. The Foundation is interested in exploring mechanisms behind disease progression, finding biomarkers for progression, and potential new therapeutic targets. While the Foundation is not strictly limiting the scope of these awards to research into progressive MS, proposals chosen to advance will likely reflect this interest.

Award Description: Dependent on the availability of funds and quality of pre-proposals received, the Foundation expects to make up to 10 pilot innovator grants. Each grant will range from \$60,000 - \$120,000 over a one or two-year term (dependent on the number of collaborators and proposal). The funding level will depend on the scope of the proposed project and budget justification. However, projects involving two co-PIs are more likely to be funded at the maximum level than projects involving one principal investigator. Funds to purchase major items of equipment are discouraged for this program, as are requests for travel funds. All animal and human subject protocols must receive the required institutional approvals prior to the release of grant funds.

Competition Deadlines

- August 29, 2016: Request for Applications posted
- November 14, 2016: Applications Due
- January 13 2016: Finalists Selected
- January 20, 2017: - Finalists Invited to Submit Full Applications
- February 20, 2017: Full Applications Due
- April 7, 2017: Final Review Completed
- Anticipated Award Announcement: June 1, 2017
- Anticipated Grant Start Date: July 1, 2017

Eligibility Requirements: All applicants must: (a) hold a Ph.D., MD. or equivalent degree; (b) be within 15 years of receiving their most recent doctoral level graduate degree; and (c) have a full-time research position at a non-profit U.S. research institution.

Because innovation often happens at the intersections of disciplines or when investigators from different fields enter a new field of endeavor, pairs of researchers from different disciplines are strongly encouraged to apply with one or both members of the pair new to the field of MS. If an application is submitted by two co-investigators, at least one of the investigators must be within five years of their first faculty appointment as described above and that person will be considered the principal investigator with primary responsibility for the conduct of the pilot project. Applicants need not be U.S. citizens, but the institutions at which they work must have a non-profit US tax-id number.

Selection Process: The Foundation will consult a small scientific advisory panel in a two-stage selection process.

STAGE 1: Pre-proposals submitted and reviewed by the expert panel. Pre-proposals should contain the following:

- Cover page - the name, title, and complete contact information of the principal investigator (and co-investigator, if there is one), project title, and proposed budget. The pre-proposal application cover page must be signed by an official responsible for sponsored programs at the principle investigator's institution. (Cover page is on page 5.)
- Project Description – a two page (12-point font) description of proposed research including, (a) the problem/question being addressed, (b) background information on current state of knowledge, relevance to MS, and level of innovation, (c) proposed methods and approach; (d) specific aims to be achieved in the proposed 12 - 24 month grant period, and (e) if needed, important references.
- NIH style biographical sketch of the investigator(s) limited to 2 pages.
- Letter of Support - Pre-proposals will require a letter of support (one page) from the Department Chair, Dean of Research, or person in a comparable leadership position at the applicant's institution. If there are two co-investigators from different institutions, a letter of support from each institution should be submitted. In addition to confirming institutional support for the proposed research plan, the institutional letter(s) should confirm that the principal investigator meets the eligibility requirements of the program.
- Please Note - No appendixes containing additional information will be accepted, and all page limits with text in 12-point font should be followed.

Pre-proposals will be reviewed and ranked based on the following criteria:

- Level of Innovation and Potential for Impact – Is the proposed research likely to add significantly to the knowledge base and be paradigm shifting and/or catalytic? Does the project address an important problem or a barrier to progress in the field?
- Feasibility of Approach—Are the overall strategy and methodology well-reasoned and appropriate? Is it likely that the specific aims of the project will be accomplished and will help establish feasibility of the approach?
- Experience of Investigator—Do the PIs have the appropriate experience and training to accomplish the proposed work?
- Research Environment—Will the scientific environment in which the work will be done contribute to the probability of success: Are the Institutional support, equipment and other physical resources available to the investigators adequate for the project proposed?
- Appropriateness of Budget and Project Timeline – Is it likely that the project will be completed in the time proposed for the amount requested?

STAGE 2: The Foundation will invite applicants with top ranked pre-proposals to submit full proposals containing an expanded research plan, a detailed budget, and two letters of recommendation. At this time, the Foundation will also provide detailed instructions and forms to the applicant.

The Foundation does not provide critiques or written comments on the submitted applications.

Terms of the Award: Awards are made to non-profit academic or research institutions in the U.S. on behalf of the awardees. The institution is responsible for disbursing the funds, for maintaining adequate supporting records and receipts of expenditure, and ensuring that the investigator (s) meet all required regulatory compliance.

Reporting: Awardees must provide the Foundation with an interim scientific progress report 12 months after the start date of the award, detailing scientific progress. The final scientific report along with the institutional financial report must be submitted within 6 weeks of the end date of the award. The Foundation will provide additional reporting details and forms at the time the grants are awarded and will remind grantees before reports are due.

No Cost Extension: During the award period, unused research funds may be carried over to the succeeding year, if the grant is for more than one year. Requests for a no-cost extension must be submitted in writing before the end of the grant period and must explain why an extension is needed.

Scientific publications or presentations that result from these awards must acknowledge the awardee's receipt of the Foundation's Marilyn Hilton Award for Innovation in MS Research. Copies of journal articles and other publications should be sent to the Foundation along with the interim and final progress reports.

Scientific Conduct and IRB: Awardees must adhere to the federal, state and local regulations regarding the participation of human subjects, and the use of animals, radioactive or hazardous materials, and recombinant DNA in their research projects. The Foundation expects the appropriate federal, state, and local guidelines with regard to scientific misconduct are in place and enforced at all institutions where the Foundation awardees are appointed.

Communications: The Foundation is committed to ensuring that the outputs of the research grants it funds are managed and used in ways to maximize public benefit. Making research data widely available to the research community in a timely and responsible manner ensures that these data can be verified, built upon and used to advance knowledge and its application to generate improvements in health. At a minimum, the Foundation requires submission of full text of published articles to PubMed Central and adherence to NIH data sharing requirements. We strongly encourage the researcher to place data, including unpublished data, resulting from any research funded wholly or in part by this grant, in public repositories in an easily accessible form no later than 12 months after completion of the award.

Scientific publications or presentations that result from these awards must acknowledge the awardee's receipt of the Foundation's *Marilyn Hilton Bridging Award for Physician Scientists Working on MS*. Copies of journal articles and other publications should be sent to THE FOUNDATION along with the annual progress report.

Intellectual Property: Awardees should follow their institution's patent, copyright, and intellectual property policies regarding discoveries that result from research conducted under these awards.

Questions may be addressed to: ms_program@hiltonfoundation.org

CONRAD N. HILTON FOUNDATION

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PRE-PROPOSAL APPLICATION

Please electronically send your proposal, including cover page, NIH biography, scientific narrative, and letter of support from institution to the Foundation’s MS program (MS_Program@hiltonfoundation.org) Please title your submission as: Investigator Name.Institution Name.ProjectName.Date. If you have questions or require assistance, contact Elizabeth Cheung at Elizabeth@hiltonfoundation.org.

Proposal Title:

Proposal description (1-2 sentences):

	Enter response in each cell below.
Applicant Legal Name	Name of institution
Also Known As	
Tax ID Number (EIN)	Institution’s tax-id number
Complete Address	
Main Phone	
Main Fax	
Website	
Name – Organization Contact	
Title	
Email	
Name – Principal Investigator	
Title	
Direct Phone	
Direct Fax	

Email	
Authorized Signer	Enter Yes or No:
Requested amount (USD)	
Term of request (years)	
If multiple years, requested amounts per year	

Signature of Authorized Signer

Date

Print Name

Title