



The Neurofibromatosis Network (NF Network) is a non-profit organization committed to finding treatments and a cure for neurofibromatosis (NF) and schwannomatosis (SWN) by promoting scientific research. Toward this goal, NF Network invites researchers to submit applications for research funding on projects directly focused on neurofibromatosis and schwannomatosis disease manifestations or therapeutic discovery. This grant is a competitive research award provided to investigators at any post-graduate stage of training who demonstrate an eagerness to advance care for individuals with neurofibromatosis and schwannomatosis, and is intended to serve as early funding for novel ideas that may subsequently result in larger grants, such as from the NIH or the CDMRP NFRP.

## **PROGRAM FOCUS**

The program welcomes proposals focused on advancing the scientific knowledge or clinical care of individuals with neurofibromatosis 1 or schwannomatosis (inclusive of NF2-related schwannomatosis, which was formerly known as neurofibromatosis 2).

## **APPLICATION CRITERIA**

**The NF Network scientific grant program is open to applicants currently in a graduate (post-bachelor degree) degree program or at any post-graduate stage of training or career, and has particular interest in advancing the careers of junior investigators (within 10 years of terminal degree) or those who are newly focusing research on neurofibromatosis or schwannomatosis. Although this grant is not mentored, researchers new to the field of NF research may consider identifying an established NF researcher as a close collaborator in this application.**

1. Applicant must:
  1. Hold a doctoral level degree (MD, Ph.D., or equivalent); or hold a bachelor level degree and be currently enrolled in a doctoral degree program (MD, Ph.D., or equivalent)
  2. Be currently conducting academic research in a United States-based academic laboratory with an established track record of grant-funded research, in which the proposed research will be performed

NF Network is committed to promoting a culture of diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging. We encourage applications from all backgrounds, experiences, races, ethnicities, religions, genders, sexual orientations, national origins, ancestries, citizenship status, family or marital status, physical and mental abilities.

## **FUNDING DETAILS**

### **Direct Costs**



With adequate budget justification, applicants may receive up to \$50,000 per year of direct funding for up to 2 years of research. Funding may be used to support the cost of applicant or technician salary or laboratory supplies/reagents, but may not be used for the purchase of permanent laboratory equipment.

### **Indirect Costs**

NF Network will support indirect costs at a maximum of 10%.

### **Payment Distribution**

Payments will be disbursed throughout the award period at 6-month intervals, with 50% of Year 1 funds released at activation of award. Payments are contingent on receipt of satisfactory progress reports.

## **APPLICATION AND REVIEW PROCESS**

The application process comprises two stages:

### **Letter of Intent (LOI)**

LOIs are due by August 1, 2023, and should be emailed as a PDF to [Research@NFNetwork.org](mailto:Research@NFNetwork.org). The LOI should be no more than one page (12 point font, ½ inch margins, Times New Roman or Arial, Single Spaced) which will include the following:

- Proposed aims
- Research significance
- Impact on people with NF or SWN
- Biosketch for PI (NIH)

LOI's will be reviewed by the Scientific Advisory Committee, and those meeting the program specifications will be invited to submit a full application.

### **Full Application**

Invited full applications are due by November 1, 2023. These should also be emailed as a single, combined PDF file to [Research@NFNetwork.org](mailto:Research@NFNetwork.org). The full application should follow formatting rules of 12 point font, ½ inch margins, Times New Roman or Arial, Single Spaced, and should include:

- Specific Aims (1 page max)
- Experimental Plan (5 pages max), which must include -
  - Introduction
  - Preliminary Data
  - Rationale and Experimental Design



- Expectations and Alternatives
- Timeline
- 160 character lay explanation about the research
- Lay summary of research that you're ok with being publicized
- Innovation (1/2 page max)
- Significance (1/2 page max)
- References
- Budget justification
- NIH Biosketches for key personnel
- Other support documentation with statement of overlap
- Applicant's personal financial conflicts of interest

**NOTE:** Applicants may wish to take advantage of existing data and research resources such as those available at the [NF Data Portal](#), [Neurofibromatosis Therapeutic Acceleration Program \(NTAP\)](#), and [CDMRP Neurofibromatosis Research Program \(NFRP\)](#) when preparing their research proposal.

Full applications will be evaluated by the NF Network's Scientific Advisory Board, taking the following elements into consideration:

- Scientific merit of proposed research
- Innovation and/or impact of the idea
- Applicant's educational background and prior training
- Research environment, including strength of current sponsor and institution
- Demonstrated scientific achievement of applicant
- Relevance to neurofibromatosis or schwannomatosis
- Appropriateness of budget

Based on this review, the NF Network Scientific Advisory Committee will select and recommend applications for funding.

## **TERMS OF AWARD**

### **I. Applicant Notification**

Applicants will be notified about the decision on their application by December 1, 2023. All applicants invited to submit a full application, both funded and not funded, will also be provided with a summary of the key comments of the reviewers.

### **II. Award Activation**

For applications selected for funding, awardees will be requested to complete and return the following documentation to NF Network before the award can be activated –



- **Acceptance of Award** – An award acceptance letter will be sent requesting information on applicant, institution, and contact officials for award disbursement.
- **Data Sharing** – All awardees will be required to register their project as a new study on the [NF Data Portal](#) and provide a [Data Sharing Plan](#). NF Network believes in making data from all its funded projects freely accessible irrespective of whether the findings were positive or negative. NF Network will allow a maximum 12-month embargo on data from the end of the award, after which the data must be opened to the community.
- **Notification of IRB acceptance for proposed research**

### **III. Status of Awardee**

The awardee will be considered an employee of the awardee's institution and not of NF Network.

### **IV. Extended Leave of Absence**

Should the awardee need to take a leave of absence for more than four weeks for reasons such as parental leave or illness, NF Network must be informed of the date of departure and expected date of return.

### **V. Award Purpose Change or Transfer**

Any fundamental change in the research for which the grant was originally approved must have prior written consent of NF network. This grant may not be transferred from one institution to another without prior written authorization from NF Network.

### **VI. Award Cancellation or Early Termination**

NF Network reserves the right to cancel or prematurely terminate a research grant for cause. In such an event, the award amount will be prorated based on the number of months it was in effect. A final report of expenditures and a refund of any unspent funds must be submitted to NF Network within 60 days after cancellation or termination. Failure to provide the final expenditure report by the required date will result in suspension of the award and may impact the applicant's eligibility for future funding opportunities at NF Network until all materials are received.

### **VII. No-Cost Extension**

NF Network allows awardees to request a No-Cost Extension (NCE) of the final budget period of their award for up to 1 year beyond its original expiration date. All terms and conditions specified in the original contract will apply during the extension period. Upon notification of approval by the scientific advisory committee, NF Network will revise the project end date and provide an acknowledgment to the awardee.

### **VIII. Other Sources of Support**



NF Network is committed to funding innovative science, and recognizes that funding from multiple sources may be required for such. While overlapping support must be declared, NF Network may approve overlapping funding in cases presented with adequate rationale. Failure to inform NF Network of other sources of funding may result in loss of NF Network funding and may impact the applicant's eligibility for future funding from this organization.

### **IX. Periodic Reporting**

Awardees are required to submit two types of reports periodically -

- **Progress report**
  - A detailed update on the research progress must be provided to NF Network at 6 month increments for the duration of the granting period (inclusive of any no-cost extension).
- **Expenditure report**
  - A financial statement itemizing expenses for each year of funding must be provided to NF Network within 90 days after completion of the funded year.
  - All expenses must be reported in US dollars only.
  - Any unexpended and uncommitted funds in possession of the awardee at the end of the award period must be returned to NF Network within 90 days from the expiration of the award.

Awardees will be provided with a schedule of payments and reporting dates in the award letter.

### **X. Public Notification of Awards Funded**

NF Network reserves the right to make public notice of grant recipients and project titles, as well as the lay summary of the research project and 160 character description of the research submitted by researchers as a portion of the application.

### **XI. Acknowledgement of Funding**

For professional publications and presentations, or for presentations to lay audiences, the support of NF Network must be duly recognized as a funding source. Please also share any accepted abstracts or publications with NF Network related to a funded research project.

### **XIV. Follow-On Funding**

Awardees are required to keep NF Network informed about any follow-on funding, collaborations, and publications (posters, papers) generated from the research funded by the grant. Such continuing communications will allow NF Network to measure the impact of our research funding more easily.

### **XV. Intellectual Property**

NF Network does not claim ownership of intellectual property developed through the completion of research funded by this award.