

Missouri Life Sciences Research Board: Scientific Peer Review Services

Request for Proposals

LSRB 2009-003

Full Proposal Deadline (due by 5 p.m. CST):

June 17, 2009

Summary of Program Requirements

Program Title:

Scientific Peer Review Services

Statutory Purpose:

Moneys in the life sciences research trust fund shall be used strategically, in cooperation with other governmental and not-for-profit private entities, to enhance the capacity of the state of Missouri's ability to perform research to better serve the health and welfare of the residents of the state of Missouri as a center of life sciences research and development by building on the success of research institutions located in Missouri, creating in and attracting to Missouri new research and development institutions, commercializing the life sciences technologies developed by such institutions, and enhancing their capacity to carry out their respective missions.

State statute provides that proposals shall be subject to a process of peer review conducted under the auspices of the Missouri Life Sciences Research Board (MLSRB), which is the subject of this request for proposals.

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Contents

Introduction	3
Request for Scientific Peer Review Services	3
Section 1: Grant Categories	4
1.1 Life Sciences Research Trust Fund Research Grants (with the categories from below)	4
1.1.1 <i>Project Proposals</i>	5
1.1.2 <i>Equipment</i>	5
1.1.3 <i>Eminent Scholars</i>	5
1.1.4 <i>Research Centers or Institutes of Excellence</i>	5
1.2 Life Sciences Research Trust Fund Commercialization Grants (with the categories from below)	7
1.2.1 <i>Project Proposals</i>	7
1.2.2 <i>Equipment</i>	7
1.2.3 <i>Centers or Institutes of Excellence</i>	7
1.3 Funds Available In Each Grant Category	9
1.4 Proposed Schedule	9
Section 2: Work Scope, Qualifications and Eligibility Requirements, Submission Details, etc.	10
2.1 WORK SCOPE	10
2.2 QUALIFICATION AND ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS.....	10
2.3 SUMMARY OF REQUIRED CONTRACT PROVISIONS	11
2.4 ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES FOR THE LSRB	11
Section 3: Responding to the RFP: Materials to be included, Deadlines..	11
3.1 RESPONDING TO THE RFP: MATERIALS TO BE INCLUDED IN RESPONSES	11
3.2 SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS ELECTRONICALLY & DEADLINES	13
Section 4: Questions and Answers, Miscellaneous, Schedule of Events ..	13
4.1 QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS	13
4.2 SCHEDULE OF EVENTS	13

Introduction

In 2003, the Missouri General Assembly passed and the Governor signed into law H.B. 688, creating the Missouri Life Sciences Research Board.

According to the statute, "moneys in the life sciences research trust fund shall be used strategically, in cooperation with other governmental and not-for-profit private entities, to enhance the capacity of the state of Missouri's ability to perform research to better serve the health and welfare of the residents of the state of Missouri as a center of life sciences research and development by building on the success of research institutions located in Missouri, creating in and attracting to Missouri new research and development institutions, commercializing the life sciences technologies developed by such institutions, and enhancing their capacity to carry out their respective missions."

Limitation on Funding for Fiscal Year 2010 Awards

Pursuant to language passed by the General Assembly in HB 7 and that provided funds to the Missouri Department of Economic Development for the Missouri Life Sciences Research Trust Fund in fiscal year 2010, the scope of research will focus on *agriculture research, animal science, plant science, medical devices, biomaterials and composite research, nanotechnology related to drug development and delivery, diagnostics, clinical imaging, and information technology related to human health.*

Request for Scientific Peer Review Services

The intent of this RFP is to identify and select an experienced contractor that will provide services and assistance to the MLSRB in connection with research and commercialization grants available from the Life Sciences Research Trust Fund.

By means of this request for proposals, the Life Science Research Board is continuing its progress in implementing the Life Sciences Research Trust Fund. The first stage will be a letter of intent process that will assist in narrowing down proposals and that will be conducted by the Research Board. The second stage is the designation of four Centers for Excellence in accordance with Section 196.1106 RsMo. The second stage of that process involves issuing the statewide request for a letter of intent for research and commercialization proposals which is occurring simultaneously with this request for proposals.

The Centers for Excellence, located in Kansas City, St. Louis, Springfield and Out-State Missouri, are comprised of a consortium of public and private not-for-profit academic, research, or health care institutions or organizations that have collectively at least

fifteen million dollars in annual research expenditures in the life sciences, including a collective minimum of two million dollars in basic research in life sciences.

The Centers for Excellence have a chairman and functional advisory board that are representative of the consortium of public and private not-for-profit academic, research, or health care institutions or organizations associated with their center for excellence.

Each Center for Excellence will also be appointing a screening committee. The centers, through their screening committees, shall solicit, collect, prioritize, and forward to the Life Sciences Research Board proposed research initiatives for consideration for funding by the board. According to 196.1106 (10), members of each screening committee shall generally be familiar with the life sciences and current trends and developments with either technical or scientific expertise in the life sciences with an understanding of life sciences and with an understanding of the application of the results of life sciences research. No member of a screening committee shall be employed by any public or private entity eligible to receive financial support from the Life Sciences Research Trust Fund.

Once recommendations are received by the MLSRB, then they will be subjected to a contracted scientific peer review process in accordance with Section 196.1112 RSMo provided for in this document.

The third stage will be an invitation offered by the Research Board to invite an applicant to submit a full proposal or decline the letter of intent. **The full proposal will be due approximately September 14, 2009.** The Research Board will distribute the full guidelines and instructions with the invitation to apply.

Research and Commercialization Missions

Funds from the Life Sciences Research Trust Fund are to be used to explore creative ideas that increase the scope and capacity of life sciences research at public and private not-for-profit institutions in the state of Missouri as well as maximizing opportunities for developing companies and attracting commercial opportunities that build upon our research base.

Section 1: Grant Categories

1.1 Life Sciences Research Trust Fund Research Grants (with the categories from below)

The research grant program is meant to improve the quantity and quality of life sciences research at public and private not-for-profit institutions, including but not limited to basic research (including the discovery of new knowledge), translational research (including

translating knowledge into a usable form), and clinical research (including the literal application of a therapy or intervention to determine its efficacy).

1.1.1 *Project Proposals*

To support a discrete, specified, circumscribed project to be performed by the named investigator(s) in an area representing the investigator's specific interest and competencies based on the mission of the Missouri Life Sciences Research Trust Fund.

1.1.2 *Equipment*

To improve the capabilities of institutions of higher education to conduct research and to educate scientists and engineers in areas important to agriculture research, animal science, plant science, medical devices, biomaterials and composite research, nanotechnology related to drug development and delivery, diagnostics, clinical imaging, and information technology related to human health. Proposals for purely instructional equipment are not eligible. This program assists in the acquisition, development, maintenance, and/or technical support of major research instrumentation that is, in general, too costly for support through other programs. Proposals may be for a single instrument, a large system of instruments, or multiple instruments that share a common research focus.

1.1.3 *Eminent Scholars*

To provide the opportunity to authorized public universities to receive grants from the trust fund in order to create endowments for selected eminent scholars to occupy chairs within the university. Additionally, this includes recruitment packages (graduate assistants, start-up packages, equipment).

1.1.4 *Research Centers or Institutes of Excellence*

All Research Centers or Institutes of Excellence are expected to clearly demonstrate the occurrence of innovative, rigorous, thematically focused, and productive research that emerges from interdependent components of the research program and that would not emerge from the mere collection of those individual components. Further, it is expected to be demonstrated that the use of the research center mechanism is essential to accomplishing the scientific aims required by the MLSRB. In addition to narrative, evidence of components' interdependency should be summarized in a table and organizational structure should be summarized in a diagram. While Centers or Institutes of Excellence should discuss how proposed activities will be

completed within 3 years of receiving MLSRB funds, sustainability beyond MLSRB should be discussed.

Two characteristics are necessary for meeting this set of requirements:

1) Innovation -- There must be evidence of scientific innovation. Centers/Institutes must be at the cutting edge of the science. Centers/Institutes are expected to provide the next generation of ideas and novel approaches. Incremental work, though valuable, should not be the focus of Center activities. Rather, it is expected that a Center/Institute will transform knowledge in the sciences it is studying.

2) Thematic integration and multidisciplinary involvement -- There must be an overarching theme that integrates and focuses the Center/Institute. Further, there must be an essential relationship of each component part to the overall theme of the center and to the other components. Interdependency and integration of the projects should be clearly evident, so that the center does not appear to be a collection of independent research projects. The degree of coordination, interaction, and collaboration should foster original and creative contributions to scientific understanding over and above that which would be obtained if each component existed independently.

The type of integration proposed may be different for different genres of science. Some types may emphasize conceptual integration and focus, while others may emphasize sharing of data, instruments, and other resources. Linkages should encourage an exchange of ideas and interactions among investigators that are relevant to the theme. There must be multidisciplinary involvement. That is, there must be research activity across a variety of disciplines or sub-disciplines such that multiple scientific perspectives and approaches are brought to bear on an area or question. There must be evidence that significant multidisciplinary collaborations will occur and contribute to thematic integration.

1.2 Life Sciences Research Trust Fund Commercialization Grants (with the categories from below)

The commercialization grant program is meant to enhance technology transfer and technology commercialization derived from research at public and private not-for-profit institutions within the Centers for Excellence. In this sense, "technology transfer and technology commercialization" includes stages of the regular business cycle occurring after research and development of a life science technology, including but not limited to reduction to practice, proof of concept, and achieving federal Food and Drug Administration, United States Department of Agriculture, or other regulatory requirements in addition to the definition in section 348.251, RSMo. Applicants are encouraged to discuss the timeline, scale and scope of future commercialization opportunities, as well as demonstrate a need for MLSRB funds.

1.2.1 *Project Proposals*

To support a discrete, specified, circumscribed project to be performed by the named investigator(s) in an area representing the investigator's specific interest and competencies based on the mission of the Missouri Life Sciences Research Trust Fund.

1.2.2 *Equipment*

To improve the capabilities of institutions of higher education and not-for profit organizations to commercialize or facilitate the commercialization of discoveries, innovations and technologies derived from research activities in the areas of agriculture research, animal science, plant science, medical devices, biomaterials and composite research, nanotechnology related to drug development and delivery, diagnostics, clinical imaging, and information technology related to human health. This program assists in the acquisition, development, maintenance, and/or technical support of major research instrumentation by institutions that is, in general, too costly for support through other programs. Proposals may be for a single instrument, a large system of instruments, or multiple instruments that share a common research focus

1.2.3 *Centers or Institutes of Excellence*

All Centers or Institutes of Excellence are expected to clearly demonstrate or facilitate the occurrence of innovative, rigorous, thematically focused, and productive activities that will result in commercial products or services in the areas of agriculture research, animal science, plant science, medical devices, biomaterials and composite

research, nanotechnology related to drug development and delivery, diagnostics, clinical imaging, and information technology related to human health. Centers or Institutes of Excellence should contain interdependent components that will result in outcomes that would not emerge from the mere collection of those individual components. Further, it is expected to be demonstrated that the use of the Center or Institutes of Excellence mechanism is essential to accomplishing the scientific aims required by the MLSRB. In addition to narrative, evidence of components' interdependency should be summarized in a table and organizational structure should be summarized in a diagram. While Centers or Institutes of Excellence should discuss how proposed activities will be completed within 3 years of receiving MLSRB funds, sustainability beyond MLSRB should be discussed.

Two characteristics are necessary for meeting this set of requirements:

1.2.3 (a) Innovation -- There must be evidence of scientific innovation. Centers/Institutes must be at the cutting edge of the science. Centers/Institutes are expected to provide a pathway to market for the next generation of ideas and approaches. It is expected that a Center/Institute will transform knowledge in the sciences it is studying into promising commercial and economic development opportunities for the state.

1.2.3 (b) Thematic integration and multidisciplinary involvement -- There must be an overarching theme that integrates and focuses the Center/Institute. Further, there must be an essential relationship of each component part to the overall theme of the center and to the other components. Interdependency and integration of the projects should be clearly evident, so that the center does not appear to be a collection of independent commercialization research projects.

The type of integration proposed may be different for different genres of science. Some types may emphasize conceptual integration and focus, while others may emphasize sharing of data, instruments, and other resources. Linkages should encourage an exchange of ideas and interactions among investigators that are relevant to the theme. There must be multidisciplinary involvement. That is, there must be research commercialization activity across a variety of disciplines or

sub-disciplines such that multiple scientific perspectives and approaches are brought to bear on an area or question. There must be evidence that significant multidisciplinary collaborations will occur and contribute to thematic integration.

The degree of coordination, interaction, and collaboration should foster original and creative contributions to scientific understanding over and above that which would be obtained if each component existed independently

1.3 Funds Available In Each Grant Category

Eighty percent, or **\$10.4 million**, is available for Life Sciences Research Trust Fund research grants.

Twenty percent, or **\$ 2.6 million**, is available for Life Sciences Research Trust Fund commercialization grants.

It should be noted that no more than 10%, or **\$ 1.3 million**, shall be used for the construction of physical facilities or “bricks and mortar.”

Furthermore, a single Center for Excellence shall not receive more than 50% or **\$6.5 million**. It should also be noted that no single institution or organization shall receive in any consecutive three fiscal year period more than 40% of the moneys appropriated to the Life Sciences Research Trust Fund.

1.4 Proposed Schedule

A proposed schedule for the second grant round of the Life Sciences Research Trust Fund is as follows:

RFP Release	Estimated August 2009
Grant Application Process	4 weeks
Peer Review Process	6 weeks Sept. – October.
LSRB Approval	Early December
Awards Announced	Early December

It is estimated that this will involve an average of 50 research and commercialization proposals received in late September. The average proposal will consist of approximately 15 pages.

The above is a good faith estimate only, and not a definitive indication of required hours for this project. Respondents to this RFP are required to make their own determinations as to how to best staff this project and comply with the Work Scope requirements.

Section 2: Work Scope, Qualifications and Eligibility Requirements, Submission Details, etc.

2.1 WORK SCOPE

The services required under this contract involve coordinating and providing the overall process for the scientific merit review of research and commercialization proposals submitted by grant applicants to the MLSRB.

These processes include, but are not limited to:

1. Assist in the Development of the RFP for the Research and Commercialization Grants for FY2010
2. Identify and recruit qualified subject matter experts to serve as reviewers
3. Prepare and deliver reviewer orientation materials
4. Manage the completion of independent reviews
5. Compile and edit an evaluation report for each proposal
6. Prepare summary level evaluation reports for funding decision-making by the Life Sciences Research Board
7. Conduct a post award briefing meeting for the MLSRB and staff

The Contractor shall provide all necessary personnel, management, supervision, and space to carry out the required activities to support the scientific peer review process.

2.2 QUALIFICATION AND ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Appropriate respondents to this RFP are organizations or individuals routinely providing scientific peer review and related consulting services for high technology sponsored research programs, provided neither the organization nor its employees and, where applicable, nor its parent organization nor employees thereof, have any financial interest in any current grant, nor will they have any financial interest in any new grant awarded through the Life Sciences Research Trust Fund Program during the term of the proposed contract.

Ideally, respondents will have the following qualifications:

1. Experience in advising technical grant programs sponsoring projects within the life sciences.
2. Intimate knowledge of best practices in scientific peer review.
3. Significant experience and knowledge of issues pertaining to competitive grant programs funded by state government, including conflict of interest avoidance and public rights and access to information.
4. Experience working with independent Web-based peer review systems.

2.3 SUMMARY OF REQUIRED CONTRACT PROVISIONS

The selected contractor must comply with the following requirements:

1. Any work undertaken by contractor on behalf of the Life Sciences Research Board shall be non-defamatory and shall not violate or infringe upon the privacy rights, copyrights, or other proprietary rights of any third party.
2. Evidence of adequate insurance maintained by the contractor must be provided at time of contract award.
3. Contractor must comply with equal employment opportunity and nondiscrimination laws and policies.
4. The term of the agreement shall be twelve months, subject to earlier termination at the Life Sciences Research Board's option and sole discretion.

2.4 ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES FOR THE LSRB

It should be noted by applicants that administrative expenses for the Life Sciences are limited to 2% of appropriated funds per year. This amounts to approximately \$266,000 in fiscal year 2010. While peer review expenses are expected to be a significant portion of the administrative expenses, they are not the sole administrative expenses that the Board encounters while administering the Trust Fund.

Section 3: Responding to the RFP: Materials to be included, Deadlines

3.1 RESPONDING TO THE RFP: MATERIALS TO BE INCLUDED IN RESPONSES

Each response to this RFP must include the following information

- 1) Work Scope Capabilities. The proposal must address the consultant's experience and proposed approach to complete each of the tasks enumerated above under Work Scope.
- 2) Consultant Qualifications. Respondents must detail qualifications of the contractor in each of the areas defined above under Qualification and Eligibility Requirements. Respondents must list the key personnel who will be assigned to conducting the tasks outlined in the Work Scope, and include resumes (including education, experience, license, and/or certifications of each individual).
- 3) References. Respondents must include a list of at least three (3) references from clients that worked with the respondent in the last four (4) years. The list should include contact names, phone numbers, address and email address. Indicate how long the respondent has worked with each reference and in what capacity.
- 4) Pricing Module. Respondents must include all costs associated with providing the scope of services as described. Costs may be fixed annual costs, one-time costs for one-time activities, or unit costs where appropriate. For unit costs, indicate the proposed price for each unit of service delivered and the anticipated number of units. The proposal must specify the level of service in sufficient detail to allow for a meaningful evaluation of the value of the service. Also indicate in-kind contributions, if any. This section of the proposal must provide sufficient detail to demonstrate how the cost was calculated and identify any assumptions used in calculating the cost. Use the following information when preparing the proposed price. This is not an exhaustive list of items to consider. Each prospective vendor is responsible for assessing the cost to provide the scope of services requested by this RFP.
 - i) The Life Sciences Research Board allows an honorarium per application for peer reviewers. The cost proposal should include the amount of recommended honorarium using the following criteria: each application will be assigned to three peer reviewers and no peer reviewer will be assigned more than three applications to review.
 - ii) Assume the grant application and review process is completely web-based and does not require reviewers to meet in person.
 - iii) Respondent will provide the web-based infrastructure for conducting the scientific peer reviews.

3.2 SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS ELECTRONICALLY & DEADLINES

Proposals may be submitted by mail and/or email.

Proposals should be emailed to Bill Anderson (william.anderson@ded.mo.gov) **no later than 5 p.m. Wednesday, June 17, 2009.**

Hardcopies of proposals should be **overnight mailed and postmarked for Tuesday, June 16, 2009** to the following address:

Missouri Life Sciences Research Board
Attention: Bill Anderson
Truman State Office Building, Suite 680
Jefferson City, Missouri 65102

Section 4: Questions and Answers, Miscellaneous, Schedule of Events

4.1 QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

The MLSRB welcomes your questions or requests for clarification. Please submit any questions in writing by **5 pm CST on June 10, 2009 to william.anderson@ded.mo.gov.** A copy of submitted questions and associated answers will be provided via email to all prospective vendors indicating intent to provide a proposal.

4.2 SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

The MLSRB anticipates the following schedule of events for this RFP. The board reserves the right to amend this schedule at any time:

Letter of Intent RFP Issue: May 26, 2009 (Peer Review Services N/A)

Letter of Intent RFP Due to Research Board: July 1, 2009 (Peer Review Services N/A)

Peer Review Services Awarded: No later than July 1, 2009

Draft RFP Due: No later than August 3, 2009

Invitation for Full Grant: No later than August 30, 2009

Full Grant Application Due: Approximately September 14, 2009

Grant Awards: No later than December 10, 2009

Evaluation Period: 6 Weeks