



HSSA Open Grant Competition #6 Request for Proposals

- **OVERVIEW**

- Title: RFP #6 – 2011-2014 Fund Innovative Research to Expedite Commercialization and Spur Job Growth
- Funding Agency: Health Sciences & Services Authority (HSSA) of Spokane County
- Contact information: Health Sciences & Services Authority
The University District
665 N. Riverpoint Boulevard, Suite 124
Spokane, WA 99202
- Direct questions to: HSSA Executive Director at (509) 358-2113 or grantadmin@hssa.org
- Key dates:
- | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| RFP posted: | Nov. 5, 2011 and May 5, 2012 |
| Proposal due: | Feb. 5, 2012, and Aug. 5, 2012 |
| Proposal review dates: | As needed |
| HSSA board review dates: | As needed |
| Award announcement date: | 90 days from application receipt |
| Earliest funding start date: | Upon completion of Grant Agreement |
- Funds available and project duration: This is an open grant award that will be available twice annually. Initial proposals are due by Feb. 5, 2012, and second round proposals are due by Aug. 5, 2012, and each year thereafter on those two dates. The HSSA will award up to \$4.5 million during the period from 2012 to 2022 in response to these RFPs. Individual project budgets may total up to \$500,000 over the course of the grant period.

- **HSSA BACKGROUND**

The Health Sciences & Services Authority (HSSA) of Spokane County was created by the

Washington State Legislature in 2007 (RCW 35.104) to promote bioscience-based economic development and to advance new therapies and procedures to combat disease and promote public health. The HSSA was authorized by resolution of the Board of Spokane County Commissioners in 2008. The Authority has the same boundaries as Spokane County.

- **HSSA/EHF HEALTH SCIENCES RESEARCH STRATEGIC INVESTMENT PLAN**

HSSA and the Empire Health Foundation (EHF) have developed a Strategic Investment Plan (SIP) (2011) in order to increase the amount of health sciences research activity and funding in the Spokane area. Sustainable, ongoing health sciences research will contribute to economic development and job growth in the region, and has the potential to improve health outcomes among residents. Together, HSSA and EHF plan to invest up to \$12.5 million over the next ten years, and will seek to attract an additional \$5 million in health sciences research investments from collaborating public or private funders.

The combination of the HSSA, EHF, and partner investments is expected to increase the level of health science research funding in Spokane County from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and other federal and private funders from current levels (\$12 million in 2011) to \$70 million by 2030. The SIP identified several guiding principles:

- **Target Resources for Maximum Impact.** HSSA and EHF will focus on three strategic goals to ensure that available funds will have an appreciative impact and will “move the needle” to make a difference in a highly competitive research funding environment.
- **Build on Region’s Research Strengths.** Make investments that support, grow, and shape existing research capacities in basic science and translational research to maximize the likelihood of obtaining a significant increase in research funding over the next ten years.
- **Leverage Community Expertise and Support.** Make strategic research investments that complement the investments and priorities of other organizations working in the region.
- **Adopt a Flexible Investing Approach.** Be flexible and responsive to gain benefits from a broad range of proposals that align with the plan’s strategic priorities.

- **SIP GOAL #2: FUND INNOVATIVE RESEARCH TO EXPEDITE COMMERCIALIZATION AND SPUR JOB GROWTH**

Financial support for innovative research, development and commercialization is critical to grow, attract, and retain companies to Spokane County. Grant awards that stimulate innovation with a high probability of leading to commercialization are the focus of this RFP. Awards will be preferentially made to organizations performing research that validates the commercial potential of new health technologies or biomedical devices,

including research on prototype development, proof of concept, and other translational efforts. Additionally, by providing matching funds to companies already receiving Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) grants, Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) grants, or other comparable awards from other recognized funding sources or Cooperative Agreements (e.g., Congressionally Directed Medical Research), the HSSA will ensure that its grant-making process benefits from the rigorous federal peer review associated with those programs. Funding for this strategic goal is intended to:

- Facilitate the commercialization of research and technology;
- Create jobs; and
- Attract and retain companies.

A. Eligibility Requirements: This RFP is open to any for profit or not-for-profit organization that meets the definition of a “Small Business” by federal standards and that is domiciled in Spokane County or willing to relocate to Spokane County.

B. Funding Guidelines: All funded proposals will be expected to have the potential to contribute to HSSA’s mission of promoting bioscience-based economic development in Spokane County that advances new therapies, technologies, diagnostics or procedures. The HSSA will consider matching grant requests for up to the full amounts of Phase I and up to 50% of Phase II awards or \$500,000, whichever is greater, from established “proof of concept” funders, such as the SBIR, STTR, National Institutes of Health, Innovate Washington, Life Sciences Discovery Fund, Gates Foundation, U.S. Department of Defense, etc.

C. Application Process: Applicants must submit by e-mail (grantadmin@hssaspokane.org) a formal request letter to the HSSA Board outlining the amount being requested, the particular activities and functions to be funded, complete budget information, anticipated grant project outcomes, and any other information the applicant believes will justify HSSA support. Applicants must also submit evidence which documents receipt of the matching funds that are a critical feature of eligibility for an award under this RFP.

The budget information submitted must be appropriate for the scope and goals of the proposed project. Costs must be reasonably associated with the conduct and completion of the proposed project. The following budget categories are provided for use in the application process:

- Salaries - to include wages, benefits and stipends.
- Equipment - not to include equipment with a unit cost greater than \$5,000. Equipment in excess of \$5,000 will require justification.
- Administrative costs - to include clerical and fiscal.
- Facilities costs.
- Supplies - to include consumable materials and supplies required for the project. Computers are not allowable unless primarily used for the project.

- Subcontracts - to include the expenses of project research performed by co-applicants. For proposals listing for-profit collaborating companies as co-applicants, the companies will be expected to pay for their own internal costs associated with the research and development activities performed on a best-effort basis. Monies may be subcontracted from the applicant organization to a company for products and services provided as deliverables to the project.
- Travel - to include expenses required for field work, attendance at meetings and conferences, and other travel required for the proposed project; including per diem allowance, subject to the applicant's usual accounting practices.
- Other - applicant to itemize costs falling outside of the typical budget categories above, including education fees for trainees.

Compliance with this RFP and assurances that application materials are accurate, complete, and timely are the sole responsibility of the applicant. Applications that do not adhere to content requirements, are incomplete, incorrect, or late will not be reviewed. No application should include information that would compromise the applicant's subsequent ability to secure a patent or other intellectual property protection.

D. Application Evaluation Process: All applications will be screened for compliance with this RFP. Those that are judged to be compliant will proceed to review.

The Grants Committee, a subcommittee of the HSSA Board, will evaluate each application based on individual merits and adherence to HSSA goals, and make recommendations to the HSSA Board. The committee will use a 9-point scoring system. A score of 1 indicates an exceptionally strong application with essentially no weaknesses. A score of 9 indicates an application with serious and substantive weaknesses, and few strengths. A score of 5 is considered an average score. All reviewers will be subject to the HSSA Confidentiality Policy.

HSSA reserves the right to invite applicants for an interview with the HSSA Grants Committee or the Board, and to require a site visit as part of the review process. Names of reviewers will not be made available to applicants. Applicants and their representatives may not contact reviewers regarding submitted applications. Any such contact or attempt to contact may result in the disqualification of that applicant's proposal from the grant competition.

E. Grant Award Agreement: Awards are subject to grant award agreements that will be negotiated between the grant recipient organization and the HSSA. Research faculty funding will be disbursed to applicant organizations on a cost-reimbursement basis subject to the achievement of mutually agreed upon milestones and timelines. The grant award agreement will include the right of HSSA to withhold payments if progress reports have not been provided or milestones have not been met in a timely fashion.

- **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS**

A. RFP Updates: The HSSA reserves the right to amend or terminate this RFP after its release. Any clarifications or changes in the guidelines or requirements will be reduced to writing and sent to those submitting responses to the RFP. Applicants are responsible for consulting amendments to be sure they have the latest information.

B. Confidentiality and Public Disclosure: Information in grant applications is reviewed by HSSA with the understanding that it shall be used or disclosed solely for evaluation of applications or as required by law. HSSA holds all applications confidential, subject to the public disclosure laws of the State of Washington. [For more information about Washington public disclosure law, applicants are referred to RCW 42.56 and to the amendment to the exemption provisions in RCW 42.56.270(14).]

Applicants responding to this RFP are hereby put on notice that their responses are public records and may be subject to public disclosures under the state's Public Disclosure Act codified in chapter RCW 42.56; provided, however, the Public Disclosure Act contains various exemptions with regard to some information contained in the RFP. These include:

(18) Financial, commercial, operations and technical and research information and data submitted to or obtained by a health sciences and services authority in applications for, or delivery of, grants under RCW 35.104.010 through 35.104.060, to the extent that such information, if revealed, would reasonably be expected to result in private loss to providers of this information is exempt from disclosure.

Please **MARK** all information provided in your proposal which falls into the above provision or any other applicable provisions in the Public Disclosure Act which are applicable to a proposal in response to this HSSA RFP. Applicants will be notified of any public disclosure request with regard to a proposal and be afforded an opportunity to provide further information specifying why the information is exempted from disclosure under the above provision or any other application exemption from disclosure.

Typically, when it receives proposals, HSSA will release to the public the name of the sponsor, the applicant organizations, the title of the project, the dates of the proposed grant period, the funding amount requested, and miscellaneous contact and demographic data. For unfunded applications, HSSA will not release the abstract or narrative of the proposed work, the budget, or any identifiers regarding co-applicant organizations, as disclosure of these items might be reasonably expected to result in private loss to the applicant organizations. Once a proposal has been funded, HSSA will release to the public certain additional information from the application, including an abstract of the work and the names and contact information of any co-investigators or co-applicant organizations.

In response to a public disclosure request for a funded application under Washington State law, HSSA may provide further information from the application to the requestor, but only to the extent that provision of such information would reasonably not be expected to result in private loss to the providers of such information. If HSSA receives a public

records request for a funded or unfunded application, it will notify the applicant organization of such a request in a timely manner in order to allow the organization the opportunity to assert objections to disclosure in any applicable proceeding.

C. Conflict of Interest: When performing HSSA-funded research or increasing infrastructure capacity for research, it is essential that the personal interests of investigators or the proposal proponents do not impede their judgment or compromise their objectivity. Even the perception of a conflict of interest has the potential to erode the public's confidence in the research process. It is essential that applicant organizations have a financial conflict of interest policy in place and that all proposals submitted to HSSA have been vetted according to that policy. In accepting an award, the applicant organization will certify to HSSA in the grant award agreement that potential financial conflicts of research faculty hired in part with HSSA funds or other personnel participating in funded research or infrastructure projects have been disclosed and that all conflicts have been eliminated or mitigated. Applicant organizations that do not have a financial conflict of interest policy should consult with HSSA early in the application process to discuss how the financial conflict of interest review will be performed.

D. Human Subjects and Vertebrate Animal Research Requirements: If a project will include research involving human subjects, the research site must operate under an appropriate Office of Human Research Protections-approved assurance for the protection of human subjects. Its procedures must also comply with all Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) human-subjects-related policies. In accepting an award from HSSA, an organization certifies that it has a system that complies with federal, state and local government regulations to protect the rights, well-being and personal privacy of human subjects in research and that any HSSA-funded research involving human subjects has been reviewed and approved by the applicant's human subjects oversight bodies.

For research involving vertebrate animals, the applicant organization must ensure that all performance sites hold Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare-approved assurances. In accepting an award from HSSA, an organization certifies that it has a system that complies with federal, state and local government regulations to humanely, efficiently, effectively and legally use live vertebrate animals in research. Further, it certifies that and HSSA-funded research involving vertebrate animals has been reviewed and approved by the applicable animal use and care oversight bodies.

E. Intellectual Property (IP): HSSA reserves the right to require where appropriate and in the public interest either: (1) an equity position with the grantee for an IP that emanates from the HSSA grant or (2) a grant repayment for IP that emanates from the grant. All grant applicants shall confirm their concurrence with this condition in their grant application. Any IP developed through research sponsored by, through, or under an HSSA grant must be reported back to the HSSA.

Projects involving multiple collaborating organizations must be supported by an agreement that makes explicit provision for the disposition of IP rights among the organizations. Such an agreement must clearly allocate the rights that the organizations will have in any

IP developed during HSSA-funded research, and identify which of the organizations will be responsible for commercialization. The IP rights disposition agreement does not need to be submitted with the proposal, but must be in place before the grant award agreement is signed. One example of an appropriate agreement for this purpose can be found in the Federal Small Business Technology Transfer Research Program – “The Allocation of Rights in Intellectual Property and Rights in Intellectual Property and Rights to Carry out Follow-on Research, Development or Commercialization”:
www.dodbir.net/solicitation/pdf/allocationofrights.pdf.

F. Reporting Requirements: HSSA grants are an investment by Spokane County and the State of Washington in the future of its citizens. Full and timely reporting of the progress and results of the funded research by principal investigators has great importance for calculating the returns on that investment.

Reporting requirements will be finalized in the grant award agreement. These reports will document evidence that the grant recipient has achieved HSSA’s desired outcomes. HSSA requires the following reports: quarterly progress reports, final project and financial reports, and post-project annual reports for a period of five years. Site visits and in-person briefings from research faculty and principal investigators may be used by HSSA as tools to track the progress of funded projects toward agreed upon goals.

G. Publicity: HSSA reserves the right to publicly disseminate information about its granting activities. HSSA communications to the public may include lists of proposals received, the names and biographical information of research faculty, principal investigators, and applicant organizations, project titles, the field(s) in which the research will be conducted, descriptions of proposals funded, and reports about project progress and outcomes. Recipient organizations, research faculty, and principal investigators will be expected to provide the HSSA with reasonable assistance in communicating funded research and its impacts to the public.

H. Funding Start Date: Funds will not be authorized for expenditure by HSSA until the grant award agreement between HSSA and the recipient organization is completed and signed.