

The Klarman Family Foundation Eating Disorders Research Grants Program

Selection Criteria & Frequently Asked Questions

Grant Selection Criteria

What are the grant selection criteria?

Relevance

- Potential of the research project to identify the underlying biological causes of anorexia nervosa

Applicant

- Qualifications of the applicant and prior experience in conducting innovative research

Excellence of research project

- Clear hypothesis based on sound precedents and supported by relevant literature
- Research methodology, data collection, and data analyses that are feasible and appropriate to the proposal's aims
- Objectives that are well thought out and technically feasible
- Appropriateness of grant duration, budget, and Dissemination Plan

To provide insight on how these criteria are applied and guidance on drafting successful proposals, we have summarized the most common reasons for low scores in our two previous grant cycles below:

Animal model proposals

- **Relevance**
 - Model does not replicate the human condition of AN (related to feeding, activity, taste, or neuronal function, but not AN-like behavior)
 - Will address a behavioral component of ABA model, but may not be translatable to AN in humans
 - No control group to distinguish between AN behaviors and effect of energy deficit/weight loss
 - The proposal is interesting in principle, but not directly related to the etiology of AN.
 - Proposed novel model of disease does not have sufficiently strong rationale
- **Weak preliminary data**, speculative rationale
- **Modest continuation of past work** (repetitive of preliminary study, unclear overlap with currently funded work)
- **Experimental design**
 - doesn't address challenging aspects of study and feasibility
 - provides limited mechanistic insight (may reflect consequences of disease rather than cause)
 - methodology not adequate to study complex brain area/ set of neurons or

- distinguish between different mechanisms
- lacks critical detail
- lacks predictive outcomes and alternative approaches, possible interpretation of mixed results
- animal model/intervention/experimental condition (e.g. anesthesia) will confound interpretation of results
- **Power** (e.g. no indication of number of animals being studied)

Human study proposals

- **Power and small sample size**
 - No estimation of predictive power or plan of how to assess
 - Underpowered study, without pilot data
 - Inadequate plans for validation of results
 - Unclear power to make predictions from complex, noisy, brain variables
 - Broad age range in small sample (major source of variation will be age)
 - Literature does not support the existence of large effect sizes for the variable
- **Unconvincing preliminary data**
 - Series of interesting observations, but no coherent model
 - Over-interpretation of pilot data
 - Weak link between brain network of interest and AN
 - Lack of experimental support for a primary assumption
- **Relevance to the clinical condition anorexia nervosa**
- **Experimental design**
 - Design will not elucidate mechanistic basis of AN (e.g. correlative study)
 - Confounding will make it difficult to establish causality of observed changes
 - Inadequate characterization of individuals included in pilot data or proposed study inclusion/exclusion criteria
 - For certain 3 year applications, scope is too broad– re-focusing and applying in pilot category would be better fit
 - Feasibility concerns due to unrealistic recruitment plan, etc.
 - Weak control group (confounding will limit comparison)
 - No evidence serum/salivary levels of x will reflect what is happening in the brain
 - Flawed behavioral paradigm/ neuroimaging task (e.g. passive viewing of food with no link to behavior); fMRI task not well linked to pathology of AN; non-specific task
 - Vague analytic plan
 - Hypothesis and/or specific predictions are not clearly articulated
 - Study design is too broad and vague to compellingly address the hypothesis
 - Cannot tell how this differs from existing funding

Eligibility of the research project

How strict are the guidelines with respect to a specific focus on anorexia nervosa?

Very strict. Research must directly address the underlying biology of the human

psychiatric disease anorexia nervosa, and the questions of how and why it develops and persists. Research projects that do not address this topic will not be considered.

Are imaging studies eligible?

While in the past we have considered human brain imaging research outside the scope of our program, we are now inviting both human and animal imaging studies that are directly relevant to the biology of anorexia nervosa.

Eligibility of the investigator

How many applications may be submitted from one institution?

There are no institutional limitations on the number of applications.

Must the applicant be nominated by his/her institution?

No.

Is a full faculty appointment necessary or is a visiting professorship or adjunct faculty position sufficient?

The faculty appointment must be at an academic or medical institution in the United States, Canada or Israel at the time of application. A visiting or adjunct faculty position is acceptable at an institution in the above countries as long as this appointment is in place at the time of application and will be retained throughout the grant period. The letter from the department or division chair must confirm the duration of the appointment.

May I hold a faculty appointment outside the United States?

An investigator must hold a faculty appointment at a nonprofit, non-governmental academic, medical or research institution in the United States, Canada or Israel in order to qualify. If your faculty appointment is not in one of these countries, you would not be eligible to apply.

Is the position of “Research Scientist” acceptable rather than an academic faculty appointment?

If the position is considered a faculty position and you are an independent investigator, you are eligible for this program.

If I am a postdoctoral fellow at the time of application but will have a faculty appointment by the grant’s start date, am I eligible to apply?

Your faculty appointment must be in place at the time of application.

I am a previous recipient of a Klarman Family Foundation grant. May I renew or reapply for another grant in the current cycle?

You may not renew your current grant, but you may submit an application which will be competitively reviewed with all other submissions. Any outstanding reporting requirements for previous grants must be complete prior to submission of a new application.

If I apply and do not receive a grant, may I apply in future years?

Yes.

May an application be submitted by two or more equal multiple-Principal Investigators?

Yes, in the case of investigators jointly leading collaborative projects where success depends on the involvement of two or more labs. **Any application involving multi-PIs must be discussed with and approved by The Klarman Family Foundation staff before submission.** Such proposals must involve meaningful collaboration between participants to perform research in a synergistic manner.

May a PI on one grant also be part of another grant submission?

Yes. A PI on one grant may be listed as personnel on someone else's grant.

May a PI submit proposals for both a multi-year grant and a one-year Pilot Study?

No. Only one application may be submitted by a PI and, therefore, s/he must decide whether to submit a pilot study or a multi-year grant.

I am considering submitting one of several possible projects. May I speak with someone for advice and guidance?

Please submit the one that you believe has the greatest likelihood of contributing to the understanding of the underlying biology of anorexia nervosa.

If I am offered the grant but cannot accept it, may it be transferred to a co-investigator or other individual significantly involved in the project?

No. The grant can only be awarded to the applicant who originally submitted the grant application.

Application instructions

What are the different roles for project personnel?

Please use the terms PI/multi-PI, Co-Investigator, Consultant, Postdoctoral Scholar, or Other Significant Contributor (OSC), as defined by the NIH at <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/glossary.htm>. Please note that proposals with multi-PIs must be pre-approved by KFF staff.

Should I include a biosketch for co-Investigators?

A biosketch for co-Investigators with significant roles on the project must be included (5-page maximum for each using the current NIH format).

Who is considered the "Authorized Institutional Representative" when signing that portion of the Application Face Sheet?

This is someone from the office of sponsored programs (or similar entity) or other officer responsible for research oversight within the institution. The department chair or other administrator within the applicant's department may NOT sign the face sheet.

Should the budget forms reflect the actual cost of the project or only what is requested from The Klarman Family Foundation?

Please indicate only what is being requested from The Klarman Family Foundation Eating Disorders Grants Program. If the project uses additional support, the amounts and sources should be listed where requested in the “Additional Information” section of the application.

In preparing the proposal section, may I use the NIH continuation pages?

Yes.

My Department Chair will not be able to submit his/her letter to me by the deadline. Can this letter be sent later on?

No. This letter as well as any letter(s) of collaboration must be included in the one PDF upload and submitted by the online application deadline.

Are the section headings mentioned in the Research Proposal portion required or may other headings be included?

Please prepare your proposal using these headings.

May I include appendices? I am utilizing subjects from another grant and it would be relevant to include information on that study as well.

No. Additional materials will not be accepted. You may certainly report on the data from your other studies, but all materials must be contained within the 9-page research proposal section.

Grant statistics

What are my chances of receiving a grant?

This is difficult to predict, given that the scope of the program changed significantly in 2017. In 2013, the Program funded 16.7% of the submissions, in 2014 we funded 12.7%, in 2017 we funded 19% and in 2019, we funded 21.4%.

Who were the successful applicants from the previous grant cycle?

Please see the listing of past recipients at <http://klarmanfoundation.org/eating-disorders-research/>. Note that the scientific focus of the program has tightened, and that many funded applications from years prior to 2017 would not currently be eligible for consideration.

Additional questions

For answers to any issues not covered in the application instructions, grant policies, or the FAQs, please contact KFF at EDresearch@klarmanfoundation.org.

(Revised September 2019)