BIBS Innovation Awards

DEADLINE: JUNE 15, 2018

The Brown Institute for Brain Science (BIBS) announces a call for proposals for BIBS Innovation Awards. The purpose of these awards is to help brain scientists launch new, innovative research projects with great potential that are too risky and early stage for NIH or other external funding sources. BIBS will make significant investments of up to $100K for one year, renewable for a second year on a competitive basis, to support projects with potential for high scientific impact and potential to attract future external funding.

Eligibility – BIBS Innovation Awards are open to all Brown faculty members conducting brain science research at Brown or its affiliated hospitals. Any basic or translational research that is within the BIBS mission is eligible for support. However, strictly clinical research is not eligible. Collaborative interdisciplinary projects with more than one Principal Investigator (PI) are encouraged but not required. Individuals may not participate on more than one application responding to this call for BIBS Innovation Awards.

Award terms – The maximum allocation for each award will be $100K. Awards are for one year but may be renewable for a second year on a competitive basis. In exceptional circumstances, a project may only be feasible with a larger budget. In such a case, the project leader must contact BIBS at least 4 weeks in advance of the submission deadline to request approval to submit a larger budget. The rationale for a larger budget must be strongly justified.

Budget – Use of funds is restricted to expenditures required to complete the proposed project. Equipment purchases will be allowed, if well-justified and essential for the project to succeed. Typical allowable expenses include:

- Salaries for students, postdocs and/or research support personnel
- Supplies
- Core facility user fees
- Equipment

Funds cannot be used for:

- Faculty salaries
- Travel to scientific meetings
- Publication costs
- Invited speakers
- Entertainment
- Indirect costs

Junior investigator supplement – Projects involving one or more junior investigator (holding a faculty appointment at the assistant professor level at the time of submission) as PI/co-PI may request a $32,000 supplement. Only a single $32,000 supplement may be requested per proposal, regardless of the number of junior investigator co-PIs involved. The supplement is intended to provide the junior investigator with additional personnel effort on the project, however other uses may be requested.

Application process – Applications must include the following:

- Cover letter – Include a letter signed by the PI, or co-PIs, containing the title of the proposed project and a brief explanation of how it meets the goals of the BIBS Innovation Fund. Cover letter must include name, academic title, institutional affiliation, and address for each PI/co-PI.
• Biographical sketches - NIH or NSF style biosketches are required for the PI/co-PIs and any key personnel named in the proposal. Biosketches must include current and pending support.
• Research Plan: Limited to four single-spaced pages, excluding references, but including the Specific Aims. Follow NIH PHS Form 398 outline and guidelines. Include the following sections:
  o Specific Aims: Describe the project goals for the 12-month project period. No more than one-half page recommended.
  o Significance
    ▪ Explain the importance of the problem or critical barrier to progress that the proposed project addresses.
    ▪ Describe the scientific premise for the proposed project.
    ▪ Explain how the proposed project will improve scientific knowledge, technical capability, and/or clinical practice in one or more broad fields.
    ▪ Describe plans for use of data from this project to pursue external funding (including anticipated application dates and specific funding programs).
  o Innovation: Describe any novel theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation or intervention(s) to be developed or used.
  o Approach
    ▪ Describe the overall strategy, methodology, and analyses to be used to accomplish the specific aims of the project.
    ▪ Describe the experimental design and methods proposed, and how they will achieve robust and unbiased results.
    ▪ Describe any strategy to establish feasibility, and address the management of any high risk aspects of the proposed work.
    ▪ Describe potential outcomes and alternative approaches.
  o Preliminary data may be included in Significance, Innovation, or Approach sections of the research plan to establish likelihood of success of the proposed project.
• Literature Cited: Not included in the four-page research plan limit. No page limit; restrict references to essential publications specifically related to the proposal.
• Protection of Human Subjects/Vertebrate Animals. Indicate IRB and IACUC approvals. IRB and IACUC approvals are not required at time of proposal submission but funding for approved projects will not be released until IRB or IACUC approvals are in place.
• Biosafety/Select Agents. Indicate Institutional Safety Committee approvals, if applicable.
• Milestones. Outline specific goals (as a bullet list or narrative) that you expect to reach at 6 months and at the conclusion of the grant period. Milestones/goals will be used as a basis for measuring progress for continuing funding at 6 months and in considering requests for a second year of support. Milestones are not intended to impede creativity, but to provide a means for monitoring progress. Milestones may be modified as needed during the course of the project. Limited to 1 page.
• Budget. Itemize and include brief budget justifications. Justifications should clearly indicate how budget items are essential for meeting the project goals.
• Resources. Describe the facilities or other resources available to the PI/co-PIs to carry out the project.

Application deadline – JUNE 15, 2018 (anticipated start by October 1, 2018). Applications should be submitted as a single document in .pdf format using the Online Application Form. Please use the PI’s last name at the beginning of the file name.

Evaluation Criteria – Responsive applications will be evaluated for overall scientific merit based on the following general review criteria:
  ▪ Significance
Applications will also be evaluated on:

- the chances that the stated milestone/goals for the project can be accomplished in 12 months;
- the likelihood that the project will become competitive for extramural funding within 2 years.

**Review Process** – BIBS will appoint a qualified review committee to review the applications. This committee will rate the proposals based on the evaluation criteria and make funding recommendations to BIBS. BIBS Director will solicit input from the BIBS Executive Committee as necessary and approve final funding decisions.

**6-month Review** – PIs of funded projects must submit a short report after 6 months that describes progress to date, milestones reached, alterations of milestones required, and adjustments to the research plan necessary. BIBS reserves the right to terminate the grant at that time if evidence of scientific progress is not demonstrated.

Questions about the BIBS Innovation Award program should be directed to John Davenport (John_Davenport@brown.edu), Managing Director of BIBS.