

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)
STUDENT RESEARCH INTERNSHIP

ISSUED BY THE SPINAL CORD INJURY RESEARCH FUND
ADMINISTERED BY THE MEDICAL UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA (MUSC)

RFP 2020 - S

Date of Release: July 22, 2020
Deadline for Submission: Open

Background: Amendment (Bill S54 44-38-510) to Section 2, Chapter 38, Title 44 of the 1976 SC Code was ratified on July 20, 2000 and authorized the new South Carolina Spinal Cord Injury Research Fund (SCIRF) provided from a \$100 surcharge on each Driving Under the Influence (DUI) conviction. The SCIRF is administered by the SCIRF Board appointed by the Governor and is attached to MUSC for staff and administrative purposes. The law authorizes the SCIRF to utilize monies to cover basic operating and administrative costs but directed that the balance be provided for spinal cord injury (SCI) research projects.

SCI is a serious cause of disability, results in an increased lifelong risk of secondary health conditions and is typically associated with elevated risk of mortality. Often traumatic in origin, it may also result from inflammatory, neoplastic, developmental, or rarely infectious causes. The consequences of SCI are legion, including paralysis of legs and arms, even muscles of respiration; loss of sensation and autonomic control; chronic pain; impairment of bowel, bladder, and sexual function; metabolic disorders, such as hypercalcemia; muscle spasticity with contractures of joints, fractures, and heterotopic ossification; complications such as decubitus ulcers, uncontrolled blood pressure, and frequent infections. People with SCI may face extraordinary demands due to the costs of medical care, limitations in rehabilitation resources after profound loss of mobility, and the absence of environmental supports. The families of people with SCI also face additional demands, and the costs of care to families and the residents of South Carolina are extraordinary and ongoing. The long-term goal of this research initiative is to minimize the risk and incidence of SCI, interrupt or reverse the process of SCI, and improve the health and quality of life for residents of South Carolina with SCI.

Areas of potential research interest include: basic neurobiology, including regeneration of cells and axons, modulation of inflammatory and destructive processes, prevention of injury-induced neurotoxicity or secondary injury; pre-clinical studies, including refinement of animal models of SCI; translation of pre-clinical findings into treatment, including pharmacological trials, surgical approaches, and previously unexplored treatments; clinical issues, including diagnostic assessment and monitoring, relationship to other spinal cord disorders and psychological disorders; outcomes of rehabilitation, including therapies (prosthetic, physical, occupational, speech/language, recreational), secondary health conditions, quality of life (technological solutions, functional improvement), and attendant care; epidemiology, including factors affecting incidence, availability, and quality of SCI care in South Carolina; education and prevention, including education curriculum for people and families in appropriate and adequate SCI care (classroom, career), community (prevention of alcohol-related injury, opportunities for therapy and rehabilitation), and health care providers (curriculum at South Carolina colleges and universities, professional education).

Request for Proposals: The SCIRF invites applications from established investigators for *Student Research Internship* grants for students in medicine, nursing, health professions, epidemiology, neuroscience or other related fields that apply to basic, clinical, or translational research with SCI and spinal cord injury/disease.

Funding Mechanism: Student Research Internship Grants

Student Research Internship grants will not exceed \$10,000 over a 12-month period or \$5,000 over a 3-month summer period. The primary goal of this grant will be to provide established investigators in basic or applied sciences, with the opportunity to provide mentorship to students interested in SCI research, with the goal of enhancing the number of students who develop skills in research with SCI.

Eligibility and Terms of Support: *Student Research Internship* grant applications will be accepted from investigators in South Carolina who have a terminal professional degree in their field and, in the case of research involving human subjects, have access to an Institutional Review Board. Investigators must be located at a non-profit facility that is currently supported by state or federal funding in South Carolina. This includes, but is not limited to, faculty members of research and educational institutions throughout the state.

The PI must have the time to provide the mentorship and the resources for the student candidate to complete their research training. All research activities must be approved by the appropriate institutional review board, where required. By accepting the award, the PI ensures that the student candidate spends 100% effort committed to SCI research and related SCI training activities.

Reporting/Presentations: A Final Report is due within 60 days after termination of the grant. All reports should be submitted to the Executive Director. In addition, all applicants may be required to present their research/findings at a SCIRF meeting and/or Scientific Conference.

Funding: *Student Research Internship* grants will provide stipends and associated expenses for 3-month summer research internships or 12-month research internships.

For 3-month summer internships, the maximum request is \$5,000 with no more than \$1,000 of the total to go for research/laboratory supplies or to support the mentor's time/effort.

For 12-month internships, the maximum request is \$10,000 with no more than \$2,000 of the total to go for research/laboratory supplies or to support the mentor's time/effort.

We encourage applicants to allocate the majority of the funds for student stipends. The SCIRF does not provide support for indirect costs, and any such related costs essential to the proposed research should be included in the direct cost budget request. No tuition, travel or student fees allowed.

Timeframes: This mechanism is open, so there is no specific deadline; however, investigators applying for summer funding should submit their proposals by March 1st to allow time for a full review prior to June. The review of all *Student Research Internship* proposals will be completed within 60 days following the application submission. The SCIRF will make money available within 30 days following approval from the Board of Directors and receipt of signed acceptance forms from successful applicants.

Review Process: *Student Research Internship* grant proposals will be reviewed by the SCIRF Scientific Directors. The SCIRF Board of Directors will consider these reviews in making all final award decisions.

Submission Address: Grant applications should be submitted in PDF form by e-mail to the SCIRF Executive Director.

Application Format: The proposal must not exceed 5 pages, not including the Face Page, Abstract or the vita/biosketch of the mentor. The suggested application format follows:

- I. Face page
- II. Abstract
- III. Background and approach of the project:
 - A. Background and qualifications of the mentor
 - B. Overview of the research program
 - C. Types of student sought
 - D. Detailed description of the plan for mentorship/oversight
 - E. Description of the resources/environment at the applicant institution
- III. Value to the State of South Carolina
- IV. Detailed Budget (NIH form PHS 398 preferred) with narrative justification
- V. Biosketch of mentor– abridged NIH format

Review Criteria: *Student Research Internship* applications will be reviewed according to the following criteria:

1. Background and qualifications of the mentor

The primary mentor must have the proper training to mentor the student in the SCI field as well as the time/effort available.

2. Overview of the research program

Description of the mentor's current SCI research program that the student in which the student will be involved. The current research must have funding through the time period concurrent with the student request.

3. Types of student sought

The mentor must either identify the types of student sought or indicate whether a specific student has already been identified. If one has been identified, the PI should provide a description about their background studies and/or the desire for SCI study.

4. Detailed description of the plan for mentorship/oversight

Mentor must provide a detailed description of oversight including specific meetings/training/etc.

5. Description of the resources/environment at the applicant institution

Mentor should describe the resources (SCI research laboratory, etc.) available for the student.

6. Value to South Carolina (considered by the Board of Directors independent of scientific merit)

The Board of Directors will consider the value of the student training above and beyond the quality of the science. The PI must make the case as to how this work will benefit people with SCI in South Carolina via sustaining SCI research and/or the SCI research laboratory as well as the relevance directly to South Carolina.

Number of Awards: The SCIRF anticipates making up to 4 *Student Research Internship* awards per year. Up to 2 *Student Research Internship awards* per institution is permitted at any one time.

Awarding of Funds: Projects will be awarded by grant or contract based upon applicable South Carolina policies, procedures, and laws concerning the expenditure of State funds. Grants or contracts are made to the mentor's institution, not to any individual or principal investigator.

The SCIRF will make money available within 30 days following approval from the Board of Directors and receipt of signed acceptance forms from successful applicants.

For Questions or Additional Information: Potential applicants should contact Ms. Catherine Leigh Graham, Executive Director, South Carolina Spinal Cord Injury Research Fund. Questions regarding applied or clinical research should be addressed to Dr. James Krause, Scientific Director, South Carolina Spinal Cord Injury Research Fund. Basic science questions should be addressed to Dr. Naren L. Banik, Associate Scientific Director, South Carolina Spinal Cord Injury Research Fund.

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FACE PAGE
SOUTH CAROLINA SPINAL CORD INJURY RESEARCH FUND
STUDENT RESEARCH INTERNSHIP
RESPONSE TO: RFP 2020 – S

Title of Project:

Name of Principal Investigator:

Institution:

Address:

Phone:

Fax:

Email:

Is this a resubmission:

Yes
 No

Total Amount Requested:

Name of Contact Person:

Phone of Contact Person:

Signatures

Principal Investigator: _____

Authorized Institutional Official: _____