INVESTMENT GRANTS

Frequently Asked Questions

How often will this page be updated?

The page will be updated when new questions are posed by applicants. Applicants are encouraged to check this page on a regular basis and always before sending a question to amfAR.

The FAQ are categorized in this order:

1. APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY
2. PROPOSED RESEARCH, MILESTONES, AND PHASES
3. SPECIFIC AREAS OF INTEREST
4. APPLICATION, SUBMISSION, AND REVIEW
5. USE OF FUNDS
6. USING THE PORTAL

APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

How is applicant eligibility determined?

HIV Cure Researcher (PI)

- The PI must have spent the majority of his/her recent research efforts within the field of HIV cure research (see below) as evidenced by their publication history or other indicators of their contribution to science
- Must hold a doctoral-level degree
- Must collaborate with a bioengineer proposing a technology, idea or approach that has not been used in HIV cure research
- Must be affiliated with a nonprofit research institution (applications are welcome from nonprofit research institutions worldwide)

Collaborating Bioengineer

- Has a track record, as evidenced through publications, patents or other indicators, of developing technologies or platforms that use engineering principals to solve biological or medical problems
- Must hold a doctoral-level degree
- Must collaborate with HIV cure researcher
- Need not be at the applicant’s institution
What is amfAR’s definition of HIV cure research?

“Cure” is defined as a situation in which a person with HIV infection can (1) live a normal, healthy lifespan; (2) in the absence of any medications or therapies; (3) without the risk of transmitting the virus to others; (4) for at least five years.

Specifically, “cure research” will provide the information necessary to:
- Chart: pinpoint the precise anatomical and/or cellular locations of reservoirs of persistent HIV;
- Understand: determine how reservoirs are formed and persist;
- Record: develop improved methods to quantify the amount of virus in the reservoirs;
- Eradicate the (replication-competent viral) reservoirs from the body

How is an “HIV cure researcher” defined?

An eligible HIV cure investigator must have a track record of HIV cure research, including experience in animal or clinical studies. A track record could be established by, for example, three first-author publications in HIV cure research, or one last-author publication AND presentations at HIV-related conferences.

I am an adjunct professor, am I eligible to apply?

Yes. There is no faculty level appointment required to be a PI or the collaborating bioengineer.

Do PIs or other personnel supported with grant funds have to be U.S. citizens?

No. amfAR sets no citizenship or residency requirements for PIs or other individuals working on a grant. Because grants are awarded to institutions, the institution is responsible to ensure compliance with regulations that apply to salary or other payments to personnel and consultants.

Can this submission be the first collaboration between the PI and the HIV cure research scientist?

Yes, this can be the first collaboration.

PROPOSED RESEARCH, MILESTONES AND PHASES

How should the milestones section be formatted?

When writing milestones for each phase, ask yourself:
- What is my goal for this phase (milestone)? What do I need to do to complete it (task)? Each task should also be followed by success criteria (go, no go criteria) which should describe quantifiable measures of success. Please see the Death Star example as a suggestion.

How much time should I allot to each phase?

There is no specific requirement indicating how long each phase must be. We expect that each technology or approach proposed will be at different stages of development. Some may spend more time developing the technology than others. We do expect that reasonable time allotments will be proposed which allow for all three phases to be completed with 4 years.
SPECIFIC AREAS OF INTEREST

Can I propose something outside of the areas of interest?
No, only proposals directly addressing the areas of interest will be reviewed.

APPLICATION, SUBMISSION, AND REVIEW

May a PI submit more than one LOI?
Yes. If it were to happen that more than one of the LOIs you submit results in an invitation to submit an application, only one of those applications would be funded.

Is an institution signature or approval required on an LOI?
No, amfAR does not require institution signature on an LOI. However, if an application is invited, institution signature will be required. Applicant PIs are also advised that they are responsible for ensuring compliance with their institution’s guidelines for the submission of funding proposals.

Is the collaborating bioengineer’s signature required at the LOI stage?
The collaborating engineer does not sign the LOI Signature Page, but a Letter of Support is required from the collaborating bioengineer at the LOI stage.

Do I have to submit biographical sketches for all of the key personnel identified in the LOI?
Submit biographical sketches only for the PI, the bioengineer and others who will make similarly substantive contributions to the proposed research, whether salary support is requested or not. Please keep in mind, however, that the project personnel list should include all personnel and consultants.

Is there a list of the possible reviewers for my application?
amfAR does not publish reviewers for any of our grants. Members of our Scientific Advisory Committee are scientists who have repeatedly contributed their time to review applications during the in-person sessions, but may or may not be reviewing these Investment grants. Each LOI or application will be reviewed by two HIV researchers and one bioengineer familiar with the technology proposed.

Can I request certain reviewers NOT read my application?
You may specify the names of reviewers whom you do not wish to review your application at any time in writing to grants@amfar.org.

USE OF FUNDS

Are subcontracts to for-profit organizations allowed?
Yes, subcontracts to for-profit organizations are allowed with the understanding that such subcontracts will be limited to the actual costs of the scope of work supported.

What personnel costs are allowed?
Grant funds may be used to support personnel costs (e.g., salary, wages, stipends, fringe benefits) relative to the percent effort dedicated to the proposed research. Grant-funded compensation must
be consistent with compensation paid to other institution staff in similar positions regardless of the source of support.

What is amfAR’s policy on indirect costs for this RFP?
The $1.5M maximum grant amount includes indirect costs at a maximum rate of 20% of direct costs excluding the full amount of subawards. Amounts paid to subawards may include indirect costs at maximum 20% rate.

Should I submit a budget with my LOI?
No, budgets are not required at the LOI stage.

USING THE PORTAL

Do I need separate log-in to submit more than one LOI?
No, you should use the same log-in for all submissions from the same PI. Start each submission using the “start LOI” link which was provided with your credentials.

How do I give portal access to someone else who is working with me on my LOI?
You will have to share your log-in with colleagues who are collaborating with you. You can change your password after they have provided assistance by clicking on “my profile” and selecting the change password tab. **DO NOT ASSIGN PORTAL PERMISSIONS TO CONTACTS OTHER THAN THE PI.**

(Do not change your organization information in the portal. If you need to change your organization, please e-mail grants@amfar.org with an explanation of the requested change and we will be glad to assist.)

Can another PI use my log-in credentials to submit an LOI?
No, each PI should request their own log-in credentials.