

2012 REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Introduction

The Society of Family Planning (SFP) was founded in 2004 to bring together professionals committed to the scientific study of family planning, focusing in the areas of contraception and abortion. The SFP Research Fund, an associated corporation launched by SFP in 2011, supports interdisciplinary research in the biological, medical, epidemiological, behavioral, and social sciences related to family planning. We focus on a wide range of research areas—from improvements in basic conceptual or biomedical knowledge; to design of programs or policies that will provide family planning

more safely, efficiently and extensively; to studies of the social and psychological dimensions of family planning services and programs.

Go to grants.societyfp.org to apply. Application submission opens February 1, 2012 and closes at 11:59 pm EST, Thursday, April 12, 2012. No late materials or changes to your application will be allowed after the cut-off date.

Grant program

The SFP Research Fund is pleased to announce its sixth competitive grant funding cycle. The SFP Research Fund's grant program is intended to generate knowledge in the field of family planning through scientific research and strengthen family planning policies, services and programs.

Proposals are requested that cover a wide range of research areas—from improvements in underlying conceptual or biomedical knowledge that advance fundamental understanding in the field of family planning, to knowledge of improved programs or policies that will provide family planning more safely,

effectively, efficiently, and to wider groups of people in need. The research program will also provide support for research that focuses on social and psychological dimensions of family planning services and programs.

The SFP Research Fund's primary goal is to support the best scientific research that contributes to the greater understanding and advancement of family planning; therefore, we will fund the top merit-based proposals that fall within the SFP Research Fund's mission. Priority will be given to high-quality research that is unlikely to be funded elsewhere.

Small research grants

The purpose of the small research grants is to provide start-up or supplemental funds to support the initial phase of a project, including solidifying collaborations, identifying research questions, negotiating roles and responsibilities, detailing the research plan and methods, and collecting pilot data. Such a study may be designed to determine the feasibility of conducting a larger and more expensive research project, test a new method or approach, or to collect data on a sample of subjects to document the practicality of a project.

Funds can be used for a variety of purposes: to hire a research assistant or statistical consultant; to acquire special data sets; meet unusual computer

processing or programming needs; or cover costs associated with the collection or processing of primary or secondary data; or for other similar purposes.

The SFP Research Fund prefers not to pay institutional indirect costs for this very modest award; if the institution is unwilling to waive such costs, they are limited to no more than 10% of the total direct costs. The total costs (direct and indirect) may not exceed \$15,000. These awards are designated for Society of Family Planning Junior Fellows.

- **Maximum duration: 12 months**
- **Budget cap: \$15,000 per grant** (including direct and indirect costs)

Large research grants

These awards provide support for projects representing the investigator's specific interest and competencies. The project must be original research relevant to the field of family planning and abortion. Indirect costs up to 20% of total direct costs are allowed. The total costs

(direct and indirect) may not exceed \$120,000.

- **Duration: 12 or 24 months**
- **Budget cap: \$120,000 per grant** (including direct and indirect costs)

Social science and program evaluation/education assessment grants

We also have funds set aside for each of two other types of projects: social science oriented grants and program evaluation/education assessment.

Program evaluation refers to the use of research to measure the effects of a program in terms of its goals,

outcomes, or criteria. Education assessment refers to the qualitative and quantitative study of hypothesis-driven observations or interventions on the acquisition of knowledge or training.

Review criteria

The SFP Research Fund's goals are to support research that advances the understanding of biological, medical, social and psychological factors influencing the safe and effective practice of family planning; and that helps establish and expand family planning policies and services to additional groups in need. Expert reviewers evaluate the applications based on the following criteria:

- **Significance and potential for advancing science/knowledge in family planning:** Project's potential contribution to the body of knowledge in family planning and likelihood that research results will inform scientific concepts, methods.
- **Research approach/design:** The extent to which the research problem is well-specified and described. The strength and feasibility of the conceptual framework, research methods, and plan for analysis. Acknowledgment of potential problem areas. Sufficient detail to assess feasibility.
- **Innovativeness:** The extent to which the project employs novel concepts, approaches or methods, challenges existing paradigms or develops new paradigms, or

considers an existing problem from a new perspective.

- **Qualifications of investigator(s):** The demonstrated experience and training of the investigative team, as led by the Principal Investigator. If the Principal Investigator is a new investigator, the potential to conduct the proposed research, based on past training, will be evaluated.
- **Environment:** The extent to which the scientific environment contributes to the project's success. Organizational support for research and use of unique collaborative arrangements will be assessed.
- **Absence of other funders:** The likelihood that the proposal would not be funded by any other agency/organization.
- **Budget and timeline:** Reasonable and cost-effective budget with clear justifications and realistic timeline for completion. The SFP Research Fund will look more favorably on applications that use more of the budget on direct expenditures and less on indirect costs.
- **Responsiveness to the SFP Research Fund mission and public health impact.**

Review procedure

Proposals will be assigned to a review committee of experts in the field for evaluation of scientific and technical merit using the criteria named above. Each proposal is assigned a score based on a scale similar to that used by the National Institutes of Health. A review committee may also decide that an application is not sufficiently competitive and choose not to assign a score.

Such an application will not be eligible for funding.

The assigned scores for applications are one factor in the decision-making process. Together with responsiveness and relevance to the program's mission, the score is used by the SFP Research Fund Board of Directors to recommend funding for specific applications. Funding decisions will be announced in mid-June, 2012.

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Terms of awards

Funds may be used for expenses related to the conduct of the approved research project, including salaries and wages, equipment, consultants, publications, supplies, project-related travel, fees related to participation of

research subjects, and other necessary expenses.

An allowance for indirect costs, not to exceed 10% of direct costs for small grants and 20% of direct costs for large grants, may be requested.

Ethical considerations

For studies in humans, human biological materials, or animals, evidence must be provided that the proposed research has been approved by the local Institutional Review Board (IRB) or equivalent ethics committee. SFP

will not transmit any funds until such approval has been given. The first three months of the project timeline must be allocated for IRB approval.

Eligibility

The principal investigator of any proposed large research project must be an SFP Fellow or Junior Fellow and a faculty or staff member of the applicant institution. Small grants are reserved for SFP Junior Fellows.

Applicants may submit more than one large research grant application, however, only one can be funded at a time. If both proposals are scored within funding range, the SFP Research Fund will make the final decision as to which study will be eligible for funding.

Applicants who are PIs on current SFP large research

grants are ineligible to apply for new grants until those grants are completed.

Grants will be made to institutions on behalf of a named principal investigator, not to individuals. Eligible organizations employing SFP fellows include but are not limited to universities, independent non-profit agencies, community-based organizations, and hospitals. Investigator(s) must have principal investigator status at a non-profit institution with at least 10% of effort contributed to the proposed study.

Application procedures

Applications must be submitted online. (See next page for instructions.)

Application cover page will be available on February 1, 2012—the date that application submission opens—at grants.societyfp.org. Online submission closes on April 12, 2012 at 11:59 PM (EST).

To be considered for support, an applicant must be eligible and submit a complete application in accordance with established guidelines. Failure to comply with instructions may result in the return of the application without review. No late materials or changes to your application will be allowed after online submission ends.

Grant program schedule

- Online application submission will open on February 1, 2012. Go to grants.societyfp.org.
- Application deadline: April 12, 2012 at 11:59 PM (EST). No changes allowed after this time.
- Award decisions: Mid-June, 2012.
- Earliest grant start-up: July 1, 2012.
- IRB approval no later than October, 1, 2012.

For questions regarding grant requirements, please contact: mpolonsky@societyfp.org. Instructions for proposal submission are provided on page 4.

PROPOSAL INSTRUCTIONS. Grant proposals should include the following components:

- **Project abstract** (300 word limit). Provide a summary description of the proposed research. If the research is funded, the abstract may be used by SFP for informational purposes to describe its program activities. Therefore, do not include proprietary information.
- **Signature page.** [Download a copy of the signature page](#) and use the links provided to digitally sign the form. Upload it as part of your online application.
- **Proposal narrative** (7 pages). The research proposal narrative should not exceed a total of seven pages. Provide information for each category listed below. Amount of space allocated to each category may vary as needed.
 1. **Specific aims:** Hypothesis to be tested; long-term objectives of proposed study.
 2. **Previous research:** Review the previous significant and relevant research by the applicant as well as other investigators.
 3. **Rationale:** Justification or rationale for the proposed research within the context of present knowledge presented above. If applicable, justify the proposed study in terms of its demographic, social, or reproductive health impacts, and/or its policy, service or program relevance.
 4. **Relevance to SFP Research Fund:** State the significance of the proposed research in relation to the SFP Research Fund mission and public health impact.
 5. **Research design and methods:** Describe the research design, control groups, sample size, procedures to be used, methods of data collection and analysis, and potential difficulties that may be encountered.
 6. **Links with other projects:** Indicate if the proposed project is linked in any way to other projects in progress.
 7. **Expected outcomes:** Indicate how the study results will be utilized, and by what means they will be disseminated. Describe how the results are expected to affect health care policies and practices in areas such as reproductive health, family planning, abortion, or population.
- **Budget with justifications** (1 page + separate form). Use the [SFP Research Fund budget form](#) to provide information on personnel salary and benefits (benefit rate must conform to constraints detailed in the budget form); consulting; supplies and equipment; clinical costs; travel related to completing the project; and other specified expenditures. In addition, include with your proposal a detailed budget narrative that specifically relates each item in the project budget to project activities. If are you seeking or have received other sources of funding for this project, please specify those sources by name, the amount being requested, and the status of the requests.
- **Timeline** (1 page). Proposed sequence or timetable for major project components. Indicate the start/ completion dates.
- **References with complete citations** (2 pages).
- **Biosketch for all key personnel** (4-page NIH style).
- **Appendices** that include description of methodology, survey instruments and tools will be accepted. However, please keep attachments to a minimum. Reviewers will be advised that reading this additional material is optional.
- **Nonprofit research organizations:** Attach a copy of the agency's federal 501(c)(3) status determination letter or proof of tax-exempt status.
- **Type requirements:** Font must be at least 11 points, all margins at least 1 inch, and 1.5 spacing. Applications that do not adhere to these requirements will be disqualified.