

Guidelines for Submission of Research Grant Proposals

Introduction

Midwest Eye-Banks (MWEB) is a charitable, not-for-profit organization whose mission is the restoration of sight. This is accomplished via the recovery, evaluation and distribution of human eye tissue for transplantation. MWEB has established a Vision Research Program to enhance its mission by providing financial support for meritorious start up projects, especially those focused on corneal transplantation, corneal disease and eye banking.

Each year, the MWEB is pleased to invite proposals from academic, clinical and health services investigators seeking funding for promising research projects concerned with vision problems with special emphasis on corneal transplantation, corneal disease and eye banking practices. Funding is provided mostly as seed money to develop promising ideas for research, collect initial data and/or carry out preliminary laboratory work that could facilitate the submission of full-fledged applications for more extensive support from private or governmental agencies.

To further its own mission and objectives, the MWEB Vision Research Program aims to support research related to corneal surgery, corneal disease, and eye banking (including the organization and delivery of eye banking services, corneal procurement and distribution, and business practices) as its highest priority. However, this would not rule out funding for other highly meritorious scientific research related to eye disease and blindness. Research topics may include basic or applied science including theoretical, experimental and clinical techniques, and innovative practices in eye banking. Available funds would be allocated to proposals showing the greatest potential to advance scientific understanding of corneal surgery, corneal disease, eye banking, and the causes and treatment of visual disorders and blindness.

Approved applicants are required to submit a final report to summarize the basic findings from the study as well as reports of any publications or presentations at professional meetings that are related to the topic of the funded research. All publications resulting from this research must acknowledge the MWEB for its financial support with the proper disclaimer.

Finally, it is hoped that the principal investigators of funded projects that result in a successful commercial enterprise would consider making a contribution to MWEB equal to or greater than the amount awarded to them through this Research Program.

Submission Process

For each research grant proposal, the following must be completed and submitted:

Scientific Research Application, submitted electronically via E-mail to Midwest Eye-Banks' Grants mailbox, grants@midwesteyebanks.org.

Biographical Sketch for the Principal Investigator and Co-Principal Investigator(s), submitted electronically via E-mail together with the Scientific Research Application.

Research Grant Application Acknowledgement Form, signed by the Principal Investigator and Department Chair and mailed via regular mail to:

Midwest Eye-Banks, ATTN: Eye and Vision Research Program, 4889 Venture Drive, Ann Arbor, MI 48108.

Alternatively, this signed form may be faxed to **(734) 780-2143, ATTN: Eye and Vision Research Program.**

Consult the **Research Grant Awards Calendar** for submission deadlines.

Images and scanned documents should be included as E-mail attachments, and all file names should carry sufficient information to link the files to the appropriate proposal or request.

Research Grant Proposal Parameters

1. Typical budgets should not exceed \$15,000.00, except for highly meritorious projects that are given exceptionally high scores by the Research Review Committee and who offer special justification for exceeding this limit. No budget will be approved beyond \$25,000.
2. These research grants are intended to support the work of young investigators or new research directions for more established researchers, but are not meant to augment support for research that is already funded.
3. Funding will be for a period of one (1) year but, in certain exceptional cases, grants may be renewed for a second year. This requires submission of a competitive renewal proposal. A summary of project progress and initial findings must be included in such a proposal, together with an explicit justification for additional funding.
4. Approved budgets for individual projects will not include indirect or overhead charges, training costs and travel expenses. However, investigators can request approval for funding travel to professional meetings to present findings from the funded project.
5. Applicants will be required to submit a detailed total budget for the proposed project, specifying amounts requested from the MWEB and amounts available from all other sources.
6. No more than 10% of the total grant may be allocated to fund salary costs for principal investigators.
7. If funding for acquisition of equipment is requested, its application to the research objective must be clearly explained.
8. Acknowledgment of Midwest Eye-Banks support must be included in all publications and presentations of research results together with the appropriate disclaimer.
9. Applicants will be required to provide a brief description of long term plans for further research on the proposed topic or area of investigation, explain how this will be pursued; and pledge to submit to the MWEB timely reports on publications, presentations, and any further funding from other sources. Failure to meet these promises could jeopardize future funding in the academic departments or units associated with the investigators.
10. Researchers must agree to provide Midwest Eye-Banks with a publishable summary report of the main findings of the project, presented in layman's terms, at the conclusion of the 12-month grant cycle. This may be used by the MWEB to stimulate public interest in and support for its Vision Research Program.

Review Process

All research proposals that meet the eligibility requirements for the Vision Research Program will be reviewed and evaluated by the MWEB's Research Review Committee. The Committee is an independent, volunteer panel of distinguished scientists, ophthalmologists and health services researchers. They will assess the scientific merit and the extent to which each proposal meets with the explicit objectives of the MWEB Vision Research Program.

Specific merit criteria include:

- The scientific and/or clinical merit of the proposed project, and its potential for attracting support from other sources.
- The extent to which the proposed research meets the explicit purposes of this research program.
- The appropriateness and feasibility of the proposed methodology, including the choice of research design, subject selection, data collection methods, and analytic design.
- The qualifications of the investigator(s) and relevant experience.
- The adequacy of the available facilities to carry out the proposed research.
- The justification(s) for the proposed budget.
- Appropriate approvals from Institutional Review Boards (IRB) for human or animal use. Application for IRB approval is accepted at the time of submission. However, funds will not be disbursed until documentation of IRB approval is obtained.

After all proposal submissions have been reviewed, the Research Review Committee presents its recommendations in the form of a ranking of meritorious projects to the MWEB Board of Directors. The Board serves the final authority for approving the funding for approved proposals.

Announcements of Receipt, Funding Awards and Denials

Midwest Eye-Banks will send an E-mail acknowledging receipt of each proposal received. If an E-mail acknowledgement is not received within seven (7) business days of submission, applicants are urged to contact Midwest Eye-Banks at (800) 247-7250 or grants@midwesteyebanks.org.

Letters announcing research grant awards and denials are mailed out in accordance with the annual [Research Grant Awards Calendar](#). Please consult the Calendar for this year's announcement date. If an announcement letter related to a confirmed research proposal submission is not received within seven (7) days of the listed mailing date, applicants are asked to contact Midwest Eye-Banks at (800) 247-7250 or grants@midwesteyebanks.org.

Support Questions

Researchers needing additional information regarding the process of submitting research grant proposals, including technical questions about the application form and related attachments, should contact Darlene Wade, at (800) 247-7250, ext. 2607. Questions may also be submitted in writing to grants@midwesteyebanks.org.