



Award for Innovative Mindset (AIM)

May is Friedreich Ataxia awareness month and while many of you are away from the lab and your daily routine, we want to inspire creativity, thoughtful reflection, innovation and advance FA research, so FARA is pleased to announce a request for proposals for a one-year Award for Innovative Mindset (AIM).

AIM supports innovative, high-impact research that will foster new directions, bring new perspectives to the field, and address neglected issues in FA research.

This RFP promotes the initial exploration of innovative, high-risk, high-gain, and potentially groundbreaking concepts in FA research. Studies supported by this award mechanism are expected to **lay the groundwork for future avenues of scientific investigation**. The proposed research project should include a well-formulated, **testable** hypothesis based on strong scientific rationale and study design. The presentation of preliminary and/or published data is encouraged, but not required.

The proposed research project should be innovative - introduce a novel paradigm, challenge existing paradigms, examine existing problems from novel perspectives, or exhibit other highly creative qualities. Research that is an incremental advance upon published data is not considered innovative and is not consistent with the intent of this award mechanism. It is the responsibility of the Principal Investigator (PI) to clearly and explicitly articulate how the proposed research project is innovative in the field of FA.

Research applications that specifically address the critical needs of the FA community, are timely and innovative, and consistent with the mission of FARA will be considered for review and funding. For example:

- Characterizing the neurodevelopmental and neurodegenerative changes
- Predictors, risk-factors or modifiers of cardiomyopathy in FA
- Biomarker discovery – identifying ways to measure frataxin in affected tissues and/or novel pharmacodynamics markers for early stage clinical trials

Application Submission Deadline: July 1, 2020

Application Submission:

Please submit your proposal here (https://webportalapp.com/sp/login/fara_grants) by creating a new letter of intent (LOI) and uploading all required information into the LOI form. This grant should be categorized as “RFPs & Ad-hoc requests” and the grant duration indicated should be a maximum of 12 months. The proposal has a **four-page limit** that applies to text and non-text elements (e.g., figures, tables, graphs, photographs, diagrams, chemical structures, drawings) used to describe the project. References are not included in the page limit. Describe the proposed project in detail using the outline below.

- **Rationale:** Clearly articulate the rationale for the proposed research project. The presentation of preliminary and/or published data is encouraged, but not required.
- **Hypothesis:** State concisely the specific hypothesis that will be tested as it relates to a new concept, theory, paradigm, and/or method that addresses an important problem in FA research.
- **Innovation:** Briefly state the potential impact of this line of investigation and the innovation it brings to the field of FA.
- **Specific Aims:** Concisely explain the proposed research project's specific aims to be funded by this application.
- **Research Strategy and Feasibility:** Describe the experimental design, methods, and analyses, including appropriate controls, in sufficient detail for scientific peer review. Address potential problem areas and present alternative methods and approaches. State clearly how you are qualified to test the specific hypothesis you are putting forward.

The proposal should also include an estimate of the budget with justification (not included in the four-page limit) and the Principal Investigator's CV/biosketch. The anticipated direct costs budgeted must not exceed \$100,000. FARA does not fund indirect costs.

Those eligible to submit proposals include investigators from public and private nonprofit universities, colleges, hospitals, laboratories, government agencies, biotechnology/pharmaceutical companies, other for-profit entities; irrespective of the country of origin. Investigators at all academic levels (or equivalent) may be named as the PI on the application. We particularly encourage junior investigators to apply.

All submitted proposals will be considered and peer-reviewed, and the award recipients announced by September 1, 2020. The grant start date will be between October 1, 2020 and January 1, 2021.

Please contact grants@curefa.org or liz.soragni@curefa.org for questions or assistance with the application.