

Subject: Call for Letters of Intent to Target ALS Foundation for Young Investigator-led Collaborative Projects (YICPs)

Dear Investigator,

Target ALS Foundation is an independent non-profit 501(c)(3) foundation working to accelerate ALS drug development and break down barriers to ALS research. Another major focus has been to identify and support the next generation of ALS research leaders, in part through our ALS Springboard Fellowship program for newly independent investigators. We now wish to provide further leadership opportunities to this group – in both academic and pharma/biotech settings - by funding a new series of grants called Young Investigator-Led Collaborative Projects (YICPs), led by them and involving scientists from across the field. We are therefore inviting letters of intent for YICP collaborative projects by August 31, 2016.

This call is being sent widely to the ALS community and beyond. As with all Target ALS Foundation calls, only collaborative projects will be funded. Collaborative projects for this call comprise groups of 2-4 laboratories working around a common research theme or target. Each project must have a project leader (or a co-project leader) who has less than three years' experience running an independent laboratory in an academic or pharma/biotech setting. We recognize that the definition of independence may vary with the context and so will need to be determined on a case-by-case basis. However, no applications from young investigators working closely with the lab in which they did their thesis or postdoc will be considered for this call.

The maximum budget for a lab per project cannot exceed a maximum of \$130,000 per lab/year (details in attached administrative document). The total budget for a YICP cannot exceed a maximum of \$400,000 per year. PHARMA/BIOTECH PARTNERS: Target ALS Foundation will allow direct funding to a pharma/biotech investigator's lab. Confidentiality of each collaborator's data, research and intellectual property will be strictly honored. Target ALS Foundation does not seek ownership of any intellectual property or financial gains that results on basis of its funding.

Next Steps and Deadlines:

1) TOPICS OF INTEREST: Target ALS is particularly interested in receiving projects that focus on identification, validation and development of new targets for ALS therapeutics, or for novel biomarkers and other tools to facilitate human proof-of-biology studies.

2) LETTER OF INTENT: To be considered for an YICP award the proposed Project Leader or Co-leaders must first submit a letter of intent (1-2 pages). The deadline for submission is **August 31, 2016**. The letter of intent should clearly identify the scientists involved (with a short paragraph about the expected contribution of each), a defined set of scientific objectives with explicit milestones and, even for basic science or genetics projects, a short paragraph describing the present or future relevance of the project for ALS therapeutic strategies. The letter of intent should be submitted to President of the Target ALS Foundation (Dr. Manish Raisinghani, manish.raisinghani@targetals.org).

A given laboratory can be a member of more than one YICP, provided that a distinct identified member of the group will be devoting >75% of their time to each project and will participate in all related project meetings.

A lab participating in more than one YICP or a lab that is currently receiving Target ALS funding as part of an ongoing project, or as a result of no-cost extension, has to make clear how the proposed project is distinct.

3) The chief advisor of Target ALS Foundation (Dr. Chris Henderson) will undertake an administrative review of the letters of intent and **by September 16, 2016** provide feedback to project leaders concerning potential overlap with other proposals, or modifications needed to align with Target ALS objectives.

4) FULL PROPOSALS: Invitations for full project proposals will be sent out on **September 16, 2016** and the deadline for full project proposal submission will be **October 31, 2016**. Full proposals should be as concise as possible consistent with clear exposition of the goals and main steps of the project; the total length should not exceed 2 pages per participating group (i.e. up to 10 pages in Arial 11 pt for a project involving 4 partners). The project leader can choose to use the allowable space as they deem fit to best present the project plan. The total length includes the following sections: Specific Aims; Background and Rationale; Research Plan; Statement of relevance to ALS therapeutic strategies; A bullet list indicating the specific involvement of each partner; A table indicating milestones for the first 2 years of the project; Literature cited. Preliminary data will be helpful but are not required.

5) The Independent Review Committee will complete project proposal review by **December 31, 2016**. Projects will be ranked on the basis of the following criteria: Biological rationale, Novelty, Synergistic potential, Feasibility of proposed experiments and Relevance to ALS therapeutic strategies.

Because of the restricted length of the proposals, projects will not be marked down for lack of detailed information or absence of preliminary data. High-risk proposals are encouraged, meaning that lack of guaranteed success will not be a negative providing that the approach is seen to be exciting. However, projects that do not appear feasible on the basis of the information provided will not be highly ranked.

6) PROJECT FUNDING: Project funding will commence on **January 1, 2016**, or as soon as possible after this date depending on the time needed to subcontract with individual institutions. Details of financial and scientific reporting will be provided at this stage.

Funding for a consortium will be renewed for the second year based on submission of a satisfactory progress report to Target ALS in the 11th month of first year. A consortium will be eligible to compete for a third year of funding based on a competitive review of updated consortium goals as well as satisfactory progress at the end of second year of funding.

Please send any questions or comments to Manish Raisinghani (manish.raisinghani@targetals.org). We look forward to hearing from you.

Regards,

Manish Raisinghani, President

Chris Henderson, Chief Advisor

Target ALS Foundation; www.targetals.org