

Smith Family Foundation: Odyssey Award

A Program of the Richard and Susan Smith Family Foundation

Pre- Application Informational Session

Applications Due:

Tuesday, December 17th at 12 PM ET

SmithOdyssey@hria.org

www.hria.org/tmf/smithodyssey



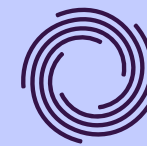
**HEALTH
RESOURCES
IN ACTION**

HRiA partners with individuals, organizations, and communities to transform the practices, policies, and systems that improve health and advance equity.



Agenda

- Program Goals
- Eligibility
- Program Overview
- Review Criteria
- Proposal Writing Tips
- Example of Reviewer Feedback
- Q & A



Smith Odyssey was created to support:

“the pursuit of high impact ideas to generate breakthroughs and drive new directions in biomedical research.”



Program Goals



Short Term

Fuel creativity and innovation

Drive new research directions



Long Term

Achieve biomedical breakthroughs

Eligibility

Applicant

- Applicant has less than \$750K per year in external funding
- Received first independent faculty (tenure-track assistant professor) appointment on or between November 1, 2016 and November 1, 2021
- Based at a nonprofit academic, medical, or research institution in MA or at Brown or Yale University

Research

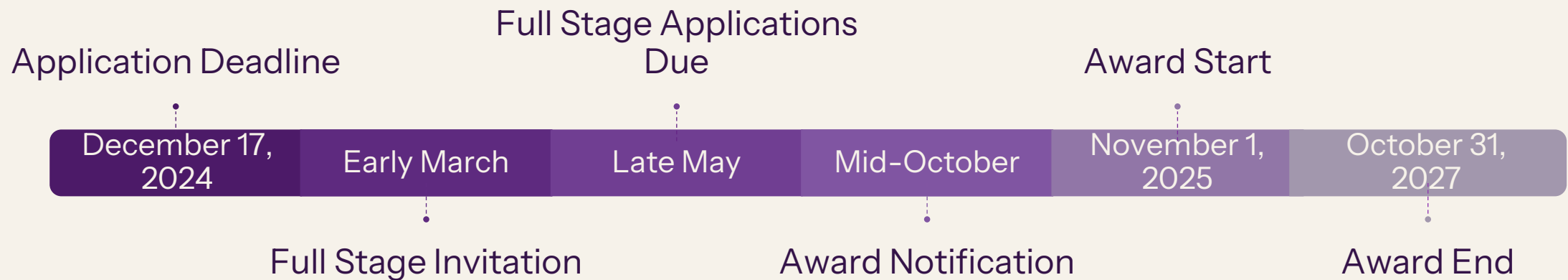
- Basic or translational biomedical research
- Clinical trials are beyond the scope of this program

Note: Researchers may only apply to the Odyssey Award no more than 2 times

Program Overview

Award Duration: 2 years

Award Amount: \$400,000
(including 5% indirect costs)



Review Criteria



APPLICANT

Fully capable of carrying out the proposed research
Institutional commitment



IMPACT

Important problem
Will advance biology
Potential for medical breakthrough



PROJECT

Clear question and rationale
Appropriate and feasible design
Makes sense in context of the field



INNOVATION

Novel research line
Distinct off-shoot of current research

Proposal Writing Tips



Clear, concise,
logical



Understandabl
e language



Novelty



Distinct from
ongoing work



Goals and
metrics of
success



Long-term
goals

Example Reviewer Feedback – Critiques

- “There is **no explanation of how the proposed work is fundamentally different from the current focus**. It is asserted that the work is different, but there is no real explanation, and it seems reasonably in line with the current focus of the lab.”
- “The proposal is not that innovative in that it basically proposes to simply to do this on a **larger scale** and with more automation.”
- “This is potentially **not as large of a departure** from current research as some other proposals.”
- “The PI has had **similar funding** to study this question.”
- “The research is **already a major component** of the PI's research program and the proposed studies do not seem to define a new area of research.”
- “The objectives of this proposal are also very **similar to those of many other research programs** in this field.”

Example Reviewer Feedback - Critiques

- “The **methods** that will be used to study xxxxx are not clearly described.”
- “Proposal includes a **large quantity of unexplained acronyms and hyper-technical jargon** making it difficult to understand what exactly is being proposed in some areas.”
- “The core finding is so cool that the **vagueness of the Aims** are disappointing.”
- “**Relationship of the proposed work to the applicant’s current research** is not described clearly.”
- “The proposed studies are not clear enough to fully assess. Project is too vague and it is difficult to evaluate the **experiments** proposed.”
- “Even with limited space, the description is too vague to understand many of the **approaches** to be taken. As such, it is hard to know how impactful the work might be.”

Example Reviewer Feedback - Critiques

- “Although the format used fits in the space guidelines provided, I think it is a stretch in the sense that the 'simple timeline' was used as a specific aims page.”
- “The description of the Aims relies too heavily on a reference list containing 22 citations. This format dampens enthusiasm because a framework for what will be done is not provided.”
- “Please make sure that any figures incorporated into a proposal are very clear for a reader, including a generalist. A well-crafted figure can convey 1000 words, but one that isn't well crafted can be confusing or just take up precious space.”

Example Reviewer Feedback - Critiques

- **Research Focus:** “A weakness is proposing **two different screens in one proposal**. It would be stronger to propose one screen and demonstrate more ability to be able to characterize targets.”
- **Power:** “The investigator should, I think, be **more ambitious to obtain useful data**. At the **scale** proposed here, it is not clear that much of value will be achieved.”
- **Impact:** “While admittedly there is much still to learn in this area, it is not clear what **new insights** will be gained from these studies.”
- **Overstatement:** “I find the proposal OK, but not great, and in many cases a bit **overhyped**: “*My research will bring ----- to the forefront of the ----- field*” - The ----- field has already been focused on ----- for years.”

Example of Reviewer Feedback - Strengths

- The **depth of the analysis and creativity is clear**, this one really stands out in regards to it **helping build the PI's career**.
- The **approach is unique**, the proposal is strong and multifaceted.
- The research proposal is clearly defined and comprises a straightforward plan. **The PI has assembled a team which is well qualified to help with the effort.**

Questions?

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