American Heart Association Cardiovascular Genome-Phenome Study (CVGPS)

HDL Discovery Grant
Supported by AstraZeneca

This is an award for innovative projects that can address questions of high impact as outlined herein. These questions, when answered, could make an extraordinary impact, leading to changes in our understanding, diagnosis and/or treatments of a specific area of cardiovascular disease or stroke.

Introduction

The American Heart Association (AHA) is proud to announce the new Cardiovascular Genome-Phenome Study (CVGPS) Discovery Grants, supported by AstraZeneca, a grant program designed to answer questions that are of strategic importance for scientific progress. This grant mechanism is part of the AHA’s CVGPS Program that aims to combine the power of long-term population studies with the precision of molecular analyses in order to unravel key distinctions between and within subgroups of cardiovascular disease or stroke patients. The discoveries it generates will point the way toward better-targeted, safer and more effective treatments, based on a deeper understanding of patients’ characteristics.

For more information about the AHA’s Cardiovascular Genome-Phenome Study, please visit the dedicated CVGPS webpage.

Award Objectives and Characteristics

AstraZeneca (AZ) has provided support to AHA to fund multiple researchers over 12 months to answer questions that are of strategic importance for scientific progress in three broad areas: heart failure, HDL and predictors of CVD. Broad areas for questions were discussed at a high level by the AHA and AZ; the actual questions for the RFA were defined by AHA volunteers via RFA writing groups with final approval from the CVGPS Science Oversight Committee. Projects will most likely be secondary data analyses, as the goal is to provide outcomes to address specific questions. Applicants must succinctly describe their approach to addressing the question within the one-year grant period.

Duration: One-year research awards using phenomic and genomic data from any dataset as part of the AHA’s Cardiovascular Genome-Phenome Study (CVGPS). Work must be completed in one year; there is no opportunity for a typical one-year, no-cost extension.

Award Amount: Amount of each award will be approximately $160,000; the selection committee reserves the right to determine the final award amount for competitive projects based on need and potential impact. The maximum budget amount an applicant may request in the application is $160,000.

Number of Awards: One or two HDL Discovery Grants will be awarded. The Selection Committee will determine the final number of awardees.

Appropriate Budget Items: Salary and fringe benefits of the principal investigator, collaborating investigator(s) and other participants with faculty appointments; project-related expenses, such as salaries of technical personnel essential to the conduct of the project, supplies, equipment, travel, volunteer subject costs and publication costs; 10% institutional indirect costs.
Data Source: Applications can include data from any of the following sources

a) The Framingham Heart Study (FHS) and/or the Jackson Heart Study (JHS)
b) Other established cohorts (ARIC, MESA, SOL, etc.)
c) New clinical/population samples

The use of FHS or JHS data is not a requirement of the grant and will not affect the strength of the application.

Interim Assessment: Awardees must report progress on a quarterly basis. Progress reporting may take the form of written reports, phone calls and/or face to face visits. Reporting is not intended to be onerous and will be focused on achievement of stated milestones as indicated in the project timeline.

Final Assessment: Upon completion of the one-year period, awardees will be evaluated on the extent to which their project has addressed the selected question.

Specific Questions to be Answered by this Grant Opportunity

The questions are meant to be of high impact, which means that when answered, they could have an extraordinary impact on CVD and/or stroke. It might be possible to consider these measures in light of repeatability, trends over time, and/or inheritability. (CHOOSE ONE question for each application.)

1. Are there biomarkers of HDL functionality that can identify persons at high risk of developing cardiovascular disease?

2. What are the biochemical features associated with measures of HDL functionality?

3. Are there genomic, metabolomic, proteomic or epigenetic markers associated with HDL function, particle size, or particle composition?

4. Are any of the genomic, metabolomic, proteomic or epigenetic markers associated with HDL function, particle size, or particle composition causally related to cardiovascular disease risk?

Eligibility

This RFA seeks to encourage investigators at all levels and across all disciplines provide proposals that adhere to the above broad objectives while specifically addressing the questions outlined.

All applicants should hold a Ph.D., M.D., D.O., or equivalent doctoral degree and must meet institutional requirements for grant submission.

Other than the requirement that the Principal Investigator be independent, eligibility for the CVGPS Discovery Grant is in no way restricted based upon experience level or seniority. While no minimum percent effort is specified, the PI must demonstrate that adequate time will be devoted to ensure successful completion of the proposed project.

For more information on other eligibility requirements, such as citizenship and institution profile, please refer to the CVGPS Discovery Grant Additional Information Page.

Peer Review Criteria

Impact on AHA Mission: How does the project relate to and support the mission of the American Heart Association: building healthier lives, free of cardiovascular diseases and stroke?

Approach: Are the conceptual framework, design, methods and analyses adequately developed, well integrated, well-reasoned and feasible and appropriate to address the defined question? Does the applicant acknowledge potential problem areas and consider alternative tactics? Is it reasonable to expect meaningful results to address the question in a one-year time frame?
Innovation: Does the project develop or employ novel concepts, approaches, methodologies, tools or technologies to address the question?

Application Format and Submissions

The research project description should be no more than 5 pages in length, including figures, but excluding references. The application must also include a timeline and list of milestones. Applications must be submitted using the AHA’s online grant submission portal available at Grants@Heart. For more information regarding supporting documents that will be used to complete your application, visit the CVGPS Discovery Grant Application Supporting Documents page.

If your study proposes to use data from the Framingham or Jackson cohorts, the potential sources for the data are:

- **BioLINCC** (the NHLBI data biorepository) for non-genetic data;
- **dbGaP** for genetic/genomic/other OMICs data and for phenotypic data to be used for genome-phenome associations/analyses;
- Data may also be requested from the parent cohorts (e.g., FHS and JHS) if they are not available in either of the two sources noted above.

Access to data from BioLINCC and dbGaP will follow the established protocols established by the NHLBI and NCBI, respectively, with appropriate data request applications made to these two repository systems. Approvals for such applications will follow the existing review process at these data repositories. Applications that require only data from dbGaP or BioLINCC do not need an application to the parent study itself.

Applicants who plan to request data directly from FHS or JHS will have to submit a data request form as part of the application. View the Data Cohort Identification Form. Other specific protocols for working with FHS and JHS are outlined on the CVGPS Discovery Grant Additional Information Page.

Key Dates

- RFA Posted and Application Opened in Grants@Heart: June 16, 2015
- Application Deadline: July 22, 2015
- AHA Peer Review: August 2015
- Partner Study Feasibility Review: August-October 2015
- Notification of Awards: November 1, 2015
- Award Start Date: December 1, 2015

Award Selection and Other Policies

AstraZeneca can designate staff who have signed a non-disclosure agreement to observe, but not participate, in peer review.

Final funding recommendations will be approved by the AHA CVGPS Science Oversight Committee.

For all other relevant policies and Frequently Asked Questions, please see the CVGPS webpage.