

San Antonio Partnership for Precision Therapeutics (SA PPT) Request for Proposals

Award Information:

- Estimated number of awards to be made: 1-3
- Maximum funding available per award: \$200,000 total (\$100,000/year)
- Period of funding/performance: 1 or 2 years

Background:

The recently created San Antonio Partnership for Precision Therapeutics (**SA PPT**) is a ‘one voice’ platform for an innovative research program in precision therapeutics that builds on current collaborations and unique strengths across four leading San Antonio-based research institutions: UT Health San Antonio (**UT Health SA**), The University of Texas at San Antonio (**UTSA**), Texas Biomedical Research Institute (**Texas Biomed**), and Southwest Research Institute (**SwRI**), in conjunction with military/Veteran’s Affairs engagement through UT Health SA’s Military Health Institute (**MHI**). SA PPT provides a platform to integrate the drug discovery pipeline for new therapeutics with “multi-omic” individualized approaches in precision medicine to address the specific and diverse medical needs of our city’s population, many of which mirror those of populations across the nation.

Research Objectives and Scope:

The objective of this pilot grant program is to foster the development of cohesive, ongoing multi-institution research initiatives organized around precision therapy. The program provides seed funding for collaborative teams to grow a more robust external public and private grant and contract portfolio. SA PPT partners have launched this program as a “venture capital initiative,” for the purposes of growth and return on investment. Therefore, all applicants should provide sufficient rationale and evidence (1) for the strong probability of success of near future funding applications and (2) that such funding will benefit the efforts of the SA PPT mission. Award selections will be based on scientific merit, trajectory for success, and the collaborative and innovative nature of projects.

Additional review criteria:

- Level of involvement by researchers across SA PPT organizations – projects with greater collaboration will receive prioritized consideration if otherwise meritorious and appropriate
- Project alignment with the direction of the SA PPT
- Level of innovation and creativity

The pilot grant program will **NOT** consider proposals that:

- Are continuations of previously funded projects and show no new direction or new collaboration
- Are from investigators seeking support for projects in areas that do not directly align with precision therapy

- Do not provide strong evidence of near future funding opportunities (return on investment)

Full Proposal Application Instructions:

Deadline: April 13th 2020, 5PM Central Time

Submission: All application materials must be submitted as a single PDF email attachment to ltullis@sappt.org

Formatting:

- All pages must be formatted for 8.5 by 11-inch paper
- Margins must be at least 0.5" on all sides
- Text must be single spaced in 11 pt Arial font
- All pages must be numbered

Page Limitations: See Proposal Outline below

Proposals that do not comply with the guidance above will be returned without review.

NOTE: It is important that you consult with your institutional Office of Commercialization and Innovation (if applicable) before disclosing details of any research that may be patentable. Any confidential information in this proposal must be clearly identified by marking "Confidential" at the top and bottom of each page where the confidential information appears.

If a Nondisclosure Agreement is required due to the sharing of proprietary or confidential information, one should be drafted (by the relevant organization's contract office) and approved by both parties prior to funding distribution.

Questions regarding submission requirements can be addressed to Liz Tullis, Interim Program Director, at ltullis@txbiomed.org

Award Timeline: SA PPT anticipates releasing award notices in June 2020.

Proposal Outline:

Please number all pages and apply these letter headings, in the order shown below:

- A. Cover Page
- B. Specific Aims
- C. Research Strategy
- D. Joint Execution Plan
- E. Literature Cited

F. Biosketch for Each Investigator (NIH format)

G. Budget

A. Cover Page

- Name and Institution of the Principal Investigator
- Name and Institution of all Co-Principal Investigators
- Title of proposal
- Abstract (maximum 250 words). Brief description of the project, including: Problem to be solved. What is the current gap and proposed solution?
- Anticipated start date
- Duration of project and total funds requested

B. Specific Aims (maximum 1 page)

- A clear statement of the project objectives, including: rationale, hypotheses tested, research questions addressed, and predicted outcomes, including any products to be developed.

C. Research Strategy (maximum 6 pages)

- C.1. Rationale and Significance.** Concisely present the rationale behind the proposed research. Describe the probable end products of the study and associated significance to the field. Summarize the current status of research and significant published work. Explain the relationship to precision therapeutics, and how it differs from current projects.
- C.2. Innovation.** Describe how the proposed research features new methods, advanced and original new ideas, and creative thinking.
- C.3. Research Approach.** Include information on preliminary studies and/or experience pertinent to this application. This should be followed by a description of the research design, methods, data analysis, application of results, limitations of the procedures, and a schedule of activities. Proposals should provide clearly labeled “Milestones” within the Research Approach section, for assessing progress and success of experiments, and a discussion of the implications of successful completion of these milestones. Milestones should be specific, quantifiable and scientifically justified, and lead to “go/no go” decisions; they should not be simply a restatement of the specific aims.
- C.4. Future Funding and/or Commercialization.** Fully address plans for future applications for external funding. Fully address commercialization opportunities (e.g. invention disclosure, provisional patent, patents, licensing, creation of startups, etc.) including anticipated time frame for each.

D. Joint Execution Plan (maximum 1 page)

- To aid in the reviewers’ assessment of the proposed scope, roles, and responsibilities within the team as well as the collaborative environment, summarize activities to be performed by each key investigator as they relate to

the overall project's objectives. Include information about percent effort of each investigator. Describe areas of interdependence.

E. Literature Cited (NIH format)

F. Biosketch (NIH format)

- Required for PI, Co-PI(s), and any other Key Personnel
- [NIH format](#) (non-fellowship) must be used

G. Budget

- Use Budget Template
- Maximum request is \$100,000/year for up to 2 years
- Direct costs only (program will not fund indirect, overhead, or F&A costs)
- Allowable costs include: PI/faculty, other personnel, materials/reagents/supplies and non-capital equipment purchases to support the goals of the program.
- Unallowable costs include: Capital equipment, student tuition/fees/scholarships, travel, and program management costs.
- Funding allocation across the SA PPT institutions is flexible and will be based on the specific needs of each project.
- Each investigator is responsible for the allocation of funds in accordance with their institutional funding restrictions and cost allocation principles.

Additional Guidance and Awardee Responsibilities:

- SA PPT will provide an email confirmation for receipt of proposal application materials. **Please inquire if you do not receive this email within 24 hours at ltullis@sappt.org**
- **If a project is awarded, all required regulatory documents (e.g., IACUC/IRB approval letters) must be provided to SA PPT prior to the release of funds.** These must be received by the SA PPT program within 60 days of the award start date.
- A progress report at the end of Year 1 is required and continuation of funding is dependent on a review of outcomes.
- Pilot awardees are required to participate in SA PPT Technical Steering Committee Reviews to discuss milestones and “go/no go” decisions based on these milestones.
- Project teams will be asked to provide information for and participate in SA PPT communication activities (note: a presentation may be required).
- A final report describing project accomplishments must be submitted within 30 days of the project end date (note: a presentation may be required).
- Following the final performance period end date, the SA PPT administration will request periodic updates of progress related to project (e.g. publications, external funding, intellectual property, patents, meeting presentations, media coverage, etc.)
- Award terms and conditions will be outlined in award notices.

Budget Justification (maximum one page per institution):

- A budget justification must be included for each institution that is part of a project team.
- Budget justifications must convey an integrated understanding of the types of resources (personnel, materials, other) necessary to complete the proposed effort.
- The proposed budget for each institution must conform to that institution’s funding restrictions and cost allocation principles.

Application Review:

SA PPT is applying the NIH Grant Application Peer Review Scoring System. The NIH grant application scoring system uses a 9-point scale for both overall impact scores and scores for individual review criteria:

	Score	Description	Additional Guidance on Strengths/Weaknesses
High	1	Exceptional	Exceptionally strong with essentially no weaknesses
	2	Excellent	Extremely strong with negligible weaknesses
	3	Very Good	Very strong with only some minor weaknesses
Medium	4	Good	Strong but with numerous minor weaknesses
	5	Poor	Strong but with at least one moderate weakness
	6	Satisfactory	Some strengths but also some moderate weaknesses
Low	7	Fair	Some strengths but with at least one major weakness
	8	Marginal	A few strengths and a few major weaknesses
	9	Poor	Very few strengths and numerous major weaknesses

Definitions

Minor: easily addressable weakness that does not substantially lessen the impact of the project.

Moderate: weakness that lessens the impact of the project.

Major: weakness that severely limits the impact of the project.

Overall Impact

Reviewers will provide an overall impact score to reflect their assessment of the likelihood for the project to exert a sustained, powerful influence on the field of precision medicine, in consideration of the following review criteria.

Scored Review Criteria

Reviewers will consider each of the review criteria below in the determination of scientific merit, and give a separate score for each. An application does not need to be strong in all categories to be judged likely to have major scientific impact.

1. Significance: Research strategy significantly advances the mission of SA PPT

A project scored high is considered significantly important and is aligned with several mission elements of SA PPT

2. Approach: Innovative, feasible, leverages strengths of investigators

A project scored high is considered exemplarily innovative, feasible in the time period, and utilizes complementary strengths of the investigators

3. Partnership/Collaboration: Project capitalizes on collaborations across the SA PPT Organizations

A project scored high involves investigators from all four (4) core organizations in a unique and significant manner

4. Stage of Research: Proposal at an advanced stage of research development

A project scored high will have evidence of an established team, pilot data or other preliminary evidence to support the research hypothesis

5. Development and/or Commercialization: Project outcome has potential for further funding or commercial interest

A project scored high would provide innovative concepts, demonstrated evidence, and detailed funding or commercialization ideas with an extremely high likelihood of success

6. PIs' credentials align with and advance the mission of SA PPT (Includes track record of notable past accomplishments, funding, honors, awards and publications)

A project scored high shows evidence that each investigator demonstrates outstanding credentials within several elements relevant to precision therapeutics