Ramsay Award Program
Application Instructions and Scope

WEDNESDAY, MAY 1, 2019

Application Deadline: June 30, 2019 11:59pm PST

I. BACKGROUND & SCOPE

Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (formerly known as chronic fatigue syndrome or ME/CFS) is a chronic, complex, systemic disease that can profoundly limit the health and productivity of affected patients. As many as 2.5 million Americans, and nearly 20 million people worldwide, are estimated to be living with ME/CFS. Since up to 91% of those living with the disease are undiagnosed, its true prevalence is unclear. ME/CFS is found in populations of all ages, races, genders, and income levels; however, it is much more likely to be diagnosed in individuals who have a high level of access to high quality health services. At the present time, the causes of ME/CFS are unknown, and there are no FDA-approved drugs or other treatments for the disease. In 2015, the National Academies of Medicine (formerly the Institute of Medicine) released a 300-page report sounding the alarm regarding the dearth of investment and investigations in ME/CFS, pointing to the severe gaps in knowledge when it comes to this debilitating disease. You can read the report here.

The Solve ME/CFS Initiative (Solve M.E.) is a non-profit organization whose mission is to make ME/CFS understood, diagnosable and treatable. Solve M.E. supports research and advocacy on behalf of millions of ME/CFS patients and their families. The Ramsay Award Program, an annual seed grant mechanism, funds interdisciplinary research investigations into causes of ME/CFS so that approaches to treatment and prevention can be developed for people living with the disease.

Broad scientific areas of interest include genetics, the microbiome, immunology, metabolism, neurology, autonomic dysfunction, orthostatic/vascular dysfunction, and neuroendocrine. Studies that synergize, inform or complement previous Ramsay Program studies (view them on our microsite here) or existing national efforts at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the Centers of Disease Controls and Prevention (CDC) (e.g., the intramural ME/CFS study at the National Institutes of Health, the multisite clinical assessment study at the CDC, and the Collaborative Research Centers) are encouraged. Research proposals that interrogate proposed disease models are of interest (view our Ramsay 2019 toolkit here).
Solve M.E. has set aside funding for at least one collaborative proposal in the Ramsay 2019 cycle. Applicants forming a collaboration across two or more labs based out of different institutions can request to submit their application on an extended timeline of July 15th.

II. AWARD INFORMATION

Each grant award typically ranges between $35,000 and $55,000 for a one-year period, with the possibility of renewal for projects yielding promising results. Applications will be subject to a rigorous, double-blinded peer-review process. Funding decisions will focus on applications most likely to make highly impactful contributions to ME/CFS research.

Each grant application receives two independent reviews and proposals are ranked numerically on a defined scale based on the following:

- Relevance and significance of the work
- Innovation aspect of the proposal
- Feasibility and soundness of the approach(es)

Ramsay Investigators are asked to submit brief reports at 6 and 12-months detailing scientific progress and budget expended to date. In 2018, Solve M.E. implemented enhancements to the Ramsay Program to expand the reach and impact of the program. As part of this, Investigators will complete at least one advocacy/visibility action (e.g. meeting with a legislator to advocate for more research funding or writing an article). Investigators are expected to publish or share both positive and negative findings. Investigators can opt in to Solve M.E. mechanisms to increase collaboration among the Ramsay researcher network (e.g. bi-annual teleconferences, in-person events).

IV. APPLICATION PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION DETAILS

Email the application as ONE PDF document to research@solvecfs.org. The deadline to receive applications is 11:59pm PST on June 30th, 2019.

Please use the templates provided on the Ramsay 2019 announcement webpage and include ALL of the following components with your application (use Arial or similar sans-serif font, 11 pt. or higher):

Application Components

(use “Main Application Template” provided on application webpage)

A. Cover Pages - includes signature page with assurances and certification, contact information of signing official, and general audience summary
B. Technical Abstract (1 page)
C. Research Plan (3 – 5 pages, excluding References)
   - Specific Aims
   - Background and Significance
   - Preliminary Studies (if available)
   - Research Design and Methods
• Statement of ME/CFS Relevance
• References
D. Budget and Justification (up to 2 pages. If possible, use the suggested “Budget Template” to create budget)
E. Facilities (1 page)
F. NIH-style biosketches of Applicant and Key Personnel (use the NIH-style form “Biographical Sketch Template” provided on the application page)

NOTE: To facilitate the double-blinded peer-review process, please do not include the actual names of investigators, research collaborators, institutions, or other identifiers in components B, C, and D of the application (technical abstract, research plan, budget and justification); referring to them instead as, for example, “Principal Investigator”, “Co-Investigator”, “Institution”, or “University”. In the references section, do not highlight yourself or any co-applicants as authors. Failure to follow this instruction will result in a rejection of the application and requirement that you to revise and resubmit.

Include any applicable supporting documentation, such as subcontract documentation/consortium agreement or letters of collaboration, attached as an Appendix to the Main Application.

*SMCI will allow up to 10% institutional overhead for the Ramsay ’19 application cycle*

V. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

Ramsay Award Application & Award Process Timeline

The Award notification is anticipated in October 2019. A Ramsay Award notice consists of the recommended funding level for the proposed project and the applicable award conditions, including the award policies and project reporting requirements. Applicants whose proposals are declined will be advised as promptly as possible.

Organizational Contact: Allison Ramiller, Director of Research Programs, at research@solvecfs.org