2024 BrainStorm Neuroscience Pitch Competition
Proposal Requirements
View on website

Project Title for the Lay Public, Investigators, Institution and Credentials (1 page)

A project title for the lay public should effectively convey your research goals to a non-scientist audience. First and last names of the Principal Investigator(s) and Co-investigator(s) should be listed with institutional affiliation and contact information.

If your proposal is chosen as a finalist, we will request a one-paragraph summary of your credentials including links to biographical websites, social media profiles, awards, and previous talks for use in Mind Science communications.

Investigator CVs

A curriculum vitae (no page limit) should be provided for each investigator. CVs should be included at the end of your submission, in the order that the investigators are listed on the cover page.

Project Summary for the Lay Public (1/2 page)

Mind Science has a philanthropic goal to increase the scientific literacy of the lay public and therefore requests a description of the proposed research in lay terms. This section should succinctly state any critical background information and outline the major goals of the proposed project in a way that is understandable by a wide variety of audiences. A Project Summary for the Lay Public should be written at a level understandable by an 8th grader. We request that you avoid jargon and consider using appropriate analogies to help convey your message. It is critical that the description should directly answer the "So What" question: why is your research important? In explaining your idea, and the problem you are trying to solve, how does it relate to consciousness and/or how will your unique approach lead to improvements to the health and well-being of humankind? It should not exceed 2-3 concise paragraphs.

If your proposal makes it to the final round, this summary will be used in Mind Science communications.

Research Strategy (6-9 pages)

Six-to-nine-page description of the proposed research, in accordance with the NIH formatting guidelines. If your project includes human subjects, please include a contingency plan in case of delays due to Covid-19 or other restrictions. This section should include Specific Aims (1 page), Significance/Background (1 to 2 pages), Innovation (1/2 to 1 page), Approach (3 to 4 pages), Risks and Limitations (1/2 page), and Timeline (1/4 page).

References (No limit)

References should be listed in order of appearance. (No page limit)

Budget and Justification (1 page limit)

This section should present and justify expenses required to achieve the project aims and objectives and indicate any other significant sources of funding. The budget is $30,000, scalable to $40,000. Include what you will add to your project to make it more robust if you win the Audience Choice award of $10,000.

Deliverable Product (1/2 page limit)

Statement of deliverable product (i.e., publishable article, data as the basis for a publishable book, pilot data for subsequent funding by NIH, NIMH, or similar funding entities, etc.).

Pitch Video

If your submission proceeds to the semi-finalist round of review, the research team will be asked to submit a short video presentation (5-7 minutes) by the early-career member of your team. The Mind Science Scientific Advisory and Education Committees will evaluate this presentation to assess the presenter's skills in verbally translating their work for a layperson. This video does not need to be highly produced, as the Committee will grade it on content and the ability to communicate your work to a lay audience – not the production value. If your video proceeds to the finalist (Audience Choice Award) round, Mind Science will provide coaching from a science communications expert, should you wish to revise your original video submission before it is posted on the Mind Science website for online voting by the public.

Presenters can include slides to supplement, but no more than seven (7), containing primarily pictures, easily understood graphics or video and judicious use of text.

Semi-finalist and finalist presentations will be posted on Mind Science social media and YouTube channel. Please take care when deciding what pieces of your story you want to share if you have proprietary information.

Speakers may not have a commercial agenda. Your project could result in a product to be developed but product pitches are not allowed. No political or religious agenda.

Focus time and energy on delivery, telling your story, and engaging the audience. Avoid jargon and data-heavy slides. Use emotion to drive your story. A little humor goes a long way. If applicable, tell a story (surprising, funny, or a unique anecdote) personalizing your journey.

Evaluation Criteria

Finalists will be determined following initial review by the Mind Science Scientific Advisory Committee, subsequent rigorous peer review, with a final decision by the Mind Science Scientific Advisory and Program Committees, based equally on the scientific merit of your research proposal **and** the overall effectiveness of your video submission. Final determination of the $10,000 Audience Choice award (for a total of $40,000 in funding) will be determined following voting by the public for the pitches posted on our website. You will be evaluated on how clearly you communicate your work to a lay audience, as BrainStorm is focused on excellence in scientific communication. Quality, originality, and relevance to the advancement of the science of consciousness and/or improvement of the health and well-being of humankind will be key factors in the evaluation process. It is important to note that proposals will be

reviewed by both scientific and non-scientific professionals. Each section of the proposal will be scored based on the NIH scoring system. All proposals and results of peer and science committee review will be kept confidential. The content of your final pre-recorded pitch video presentation, however, will be presented online.

IRB Protocol

In the event your proposal is chosen as a finalist, an IRB or equivalent institutional approval protocol for experiments involving human or animal subjects will be required. **Please note: Funds will not be disbursed without an IRB or equivalent institutional approval protocol for experiments involving human or animal subjects. If not uploaded at the time of project submission, IRBs must be submitted within 60 days of being notified of finalist status.**

Use of Funds and Restrictions

Research funds are restricted to actual costs, with no more than 5% indirect costs. Actual costs may include lab supplies/reagents, services provided by core facilities, salaries for staff/assistants and salary supplements for Co-Investigators. Under special circumstances related to the goals of the research, salary supplement for Principal Investigators may also be appropriate.

Period of Performance

The period of performance (term of the award) is 24 months, beginning with the first of the month following the date of the award. We realize that circumstances may arise which delay previously anticipated progress. In this case, awardees are encouraged to communicate with Mind Science as soon as possible to make alternate arrangements satisfactory to the researcher and Mind Science.

Participation in Additional Media

To provide additional opportunities for public communication, we ask each finalist to participate as a guest in our Mind Matters webcast toward the end of the project period. This is an opportunity to give an update on your Mind Science-funded research, and to share more broadly about yourself and your overall research goals.

Submission

Completed proposals should be submitted electronically through the Good Grants portal: https://brainstormnpc.grantplatform.com by 11:59 pm (CDT/GMT -5) on THURSDAY, May 9, 2024. Please direct any questions to Meriam Good, at mgood@mindscience.org. No email submissions will be accepted. **Submission deadlines are firm.**

Limitations on Submissions

1. Eligibility for Early-Career Researchers (ECRs)
   a. ECRs are defined as individuals who are within six (6) years of completing their terminal degree (e.g., Ph.D.), or who hold the position of post-doctoral fellow or research scientist.
   b. All applicants must be affiliated with an accredited higher-education institution; all BrainStorm-funded research projects must be conducted at the affiliate college or university and must receive approval from all applicable institutional review boards.

c. Submissions are welcome from any accredited higher education institution globally. Applications are *not* restricted to the United States.
   d. Each ECR is limited to one submission per grant cycle.
   e. ECRs who have previously received a BrainStorm award are not eligible to apply.
2. BrainStorm awards are intended to support research projects that advance our understanding of consciousness, but we also welcome submissions focused on improving the health and well-being of humankind.
3. Lab or PI Limit
   a. No more than one BrainStorm grant will be awarded to any laboratory or PI during each funding cycle.
   b. If multiple applications are submitted from one laboratory or PI, the scope of the projects must be distinct and independent. Mind Science reserves the right to reject applications based on overlapping study focus if they are from the same lab.
4. Compliance and Enforcement
   a. Grant applicants must confirm their eligibility and adherence to this policy during the application process.

Checklist of proposal requirements, in order

Project Title for the Lay Public, Investigators, Institution, and Credentials (No page limit)
- Project Title for the Lay Public
- Names of the Principal Investigator(s) and Co-investigator(s)
- Institutional Affiliation
- Contact Information
- CV for each investigator

Project Summary for the Lay Public (1/2 page)
Research Strategy (not to exceed 9 pages total)
- Specific Aims (1 page)
- Significance/Background (1 to 2 pages)
- Innovation (1/2 to 1 page)
- Approach (3 to 4 pages)
- Risk and Limitations (1/2 page)
- Timeline (1/4 page)

References (No page Limit)
Budget and Justification (One page limit)
Deliverable Product (1/2-page limit)

Questions about eligibility, submission limit, or any other requirement should be directed to Meriam Good (mgood@mindscience.org) before the submission deadline.