

MIND PRIZE

“Maximizing Innovation in Neuroscience Discovery”

An initiative from The Pershing Square Foundation

Frequently Asked Questions

ELIGIBILITY

1.) Q: How many PIs from an institution can apply?

A: This is an open call for proposals, so multiple PIs from an institution in the USA may apply as long as they meet the eligibility requirements. We have no limit and applicants do not need to be nominated.

2.) Q: Can postdoctoral fellows apply?

A: Unfortunately, no. Assistant Professors, Associate Professors, or Full Professors (or equivalent) with independent experience running their own labs from a minimum of one to a maximum of 10 years by the start date of the MIND Prize (May 2025) may apply. Salaries for postdocs in these labs may be on the submitted budgets.

3.) Q: What does “independent research experience” mean?

A: Independent research experience means the start of a tenure-track (or equivalent) faculty appointment or independent lab space, with a maximum of 10 years of experience by May 2025.

4.) Q: Can scientists from biotech startups apply?

A: No, MIND Prize applicants must be full-time, tenure-track (or equivalent) faculty members at 501(c)3 research institutions in the USA.

5.) Q: Can scientists who are in independent research roles at non-faculty research institutions (e.g., Janelia, NIH and other national labs, etc.) apply?

A: Yes, scientists who are in independent research roles at non-faculty research institutions are indeed eligible to apply, should they run their own research program and meet all the other eligibility requirements.

6.) Q: Is a PI allowed to submit two LOIs for two very distinct projects?

A: No, only one LOI is allowed per PI. PIs should choose their most innovative, high-risk, high-reward project to submit! However, a PI can be listed as a collaborator on another lead PIs application.

7.) Q: Do you make eligibility exceptions for parental leave and other extenuating circumstances?

A: We do on a case-by-case basis. Please contact info@mindprize.org with additional information on the applicant’s exact situation.

THE APPLICATION

8.) Q: How should I format my LOI?

A: The LOI is a one-page document in Georgia, 11-point font and single-spaced with 0.5-inch (NIH standard) margins.

9.) Q: Do figures need to be included in the one-page limit? What about references?

A: While neither are required, figures need to be confined to the one-page limit, while references can be appended to an additional page(s)—you’ll have an opportunity to include these in your biosketch, as well. We ask that any figures included remain legible for our reviewers.

10.) Q: Are there naming requirements for the application files?

A: No, there aren’t any file naming requirements for the application files. As long as they are submitted as PDFs, applicants can name them whatever they’d like (reviewers don’t see the file name).

11.) Q: Where can I find the biosketch and budget templates?

A: Once an applicant registers and begins to create an application on our application submission portal (<https://prizeapplication.smapply.io>), they will have access to the biosketch and budget templates.

12.) Q: How much is the award total and how much can I budget for direct and indirect costs per year?

A: The award total is \$750,000 over three years, so \$250,000/year. This includes the indirect costs (not to exceed 10%), so annually it would be \$225,000 in direct costs and \$25,000 in indirect costs.

Therefore, the budget should be constructed as follows:

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total
Total Direct Costs	\$225,000	\$225,000	\$225,000	\$675,000
Indirect Costs (10%)	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$75,000
TOTAL (Direct + Indirect)	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$750,000

13.) Q: Should the budget take into account the full \$750,000 award, or can I apply for a smaller amount of funding, such as \$400,000?

A: The award is \$750,000 over three years, so the proposed project should be large enough in scope to have a budget that requires the full award amount. We do not accept budgets for amounts smaller than \$750,000.

14.) Q: Is there a salary cap?

A: No, we do not have a salary cap, but expect applicants to budget reasonably and responsibly.

15.) Q: Is there a minimum effort requirement for the PI?

A: We don't have a formal policy on this, but budgets are viewed favorably if there is at least a 5% minimum effort.

16.) Q: Do you allow carryover from year to year, and no-cost extensions?

A: Budgets should not be designed to have carryover each year, but we do approve carryover as needed and requested in annual grant reporting, with adequate explanation. We also approve no-cost extensions at the end of an award term on a case-by-case basis. More details on this are included in our award terms and conditions, should an applicant be selected for funding.

17.) Q: In the biosketch publication list, can applicants include pre-prints?

A: Yes, you absolutely can, but we'd recommend also including some fully published papers so that the reviewers can see the types of journals published in thus far, as that is also helpful. We recommend applicants have at least one last-author publication (in press or in revision is ok) before applying to ensure their application is competitive.

18.) Q: I plan on having collaborator(s). Is this OK? Do I need to submit their biosketch and/or letters of support?

A: While there may only be one lead PI who is the primary applicant for administrative purposes, we absolutely encourage collaboration, and there is no limit to the number of collaborators that can be included within a proposal. The lead PI can work with as many collaborators as the needs of their project dictates. Applicants are not required to include the biosketches of collaborators or letters of support. Reviewers will focus first and foremost on the lead PI's accomplishments, background, and work. If these wish to be included, they can be uploaded as additional files. The lead PI is the only one who must meet the eligibility criteria, as well.

19.) Q: Will I need to submit a full proposal if my LOI is reviewed favorably?

A: No, as of now the MIND Prize does not have a full proposal stage in the reviewing process. After the LOI, invited finalists will be asked to submit a PowerPoint presentation of no more than three slides. However, we recommend that applicants be ready to answer any detailed questions about their proposed project and provide additional information as needed, as there will be time for Q&A from the MIND Prize Scientific Advisory Board.

20.) Q: Who should submit the online application? Can this be the PI applicant? Or should this be someone from the academic institution?

A: Ideally, it should be the PI applicant, and the email address associated with the application should be that of the PI applicant.

21.) Q: I submitted my application. I realized I forgot to include a publication, and/or I have a new one that just came out. Can I edit it?

A: Applicants are unable to edit their applications once submitted. However, if it is before the deadline, please email info@mindprize.org and we can update it for you. If it is after the deadline, per internal policies, we will not allow any further edits or updates.