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ABOUT THE PVA RESEARCH FOUNDATION

Since its founding more than 60 years ago, the primary goal of the Paralyzed Veterans of America ("Paralyzed Veterans") has been to assist its members in reentering mainstream society. This goal has been addressed through a variety of activities, including the support of research projects designed to alleviate and eventually end the serious medical, rehabilitative, and psychosocial consequences of spinal cord injury and/or disease (SCI/D).

In 1975, the Paralyzed Veterans' Board of Directors approved a formal organization of its research activities by creating a nonprofit foundation, the Technology and Research Foundation. The following year, the Foundation was legally incorporated as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation. In the early 1980's, the corporation was renamed the PVA Spinal Cord Research Foundation to reflect its interest and activities more accurately. Its current working title is the PVA Research Foundation.

MISSION

The mission of the PVA Research Foundation is:

- To promote innovative research to find better treatments and cures for paralysis.
- To support efforts to improve the quality of life of individuals with spinal cord dysfunction until treatments are found.
- To train post-doctoral fellow investigators and encourage them to specialize in the area of spinal cord research.
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FUNDING CATEGORIES
The Foundation supports one or two-year grants for five types of projects at varying funding levels.

- **Basic Science**
  Laboratory research in the basic sciences related to spinal cord injury or disease (up to $75,000 for 1 year or up to $150,000 for 2 years).

- **Clinical Applications**
  Clinical and functional studies of the medical, psychosocial, and economic effects of spinal cord dysfunction, as well as interventions proposed to alleviate these effects (up to $75,000 for 1 year or up to $150,000 for 2 years).

- **Design and Development**
  Design and development of new or improved rehabilitative and assistive devices for individuals with spinal cord dysfunction (up to $75,000 for one year or up to $150,000 for 2 years).

- **Post-doctoral Fellowships**
  Fellowships for postdoctoral students in basic science, clinical applications, or design and development intended to encourage training and specialization in the field of spinal cord research (up to $50,000 for 1 year or up to $100,000 for 2 years).

Two-year awards are made as a single grant. The work plan must cover the entire 24 months of activity. Staff monitoring throughout the project period helps determine continued funding. Compliance with reporting requirements is a significant criterion for continued funding.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS
All applications must be submitted by fiscally responsible organizational entities in the name of the Principal Investigator. Entities should be nonprofit academic institutions, health-care providers, associations, and/or organizations. Each application must include appropriate endorsement of an official who is responsible for the administration of awarded funds (hereafter called the “Grant Administrator”).

Revision Date: March 2016
Grantee institutions must be located in the U.S. or Canada. However, investigators and fellows are not required to be U.S. or Canadian citizens. The Foundation does not fund undergraduate or pre-doctoral students. Post-doctoral students who received their PhD or MD within four years or less should apply for a fellowship grant, and may not be proposed as a Principal Investigator if they have not held such a position under previous funding (from any source). However, if a post-doctoral student has completed a post-doctoral fellowship under any source (please document), they may apply as a Principal Investigator. The Foundation is concerned about any Principal Investigator committing 5% effort or less in a project, with project activities falling primarily on less experienced investigators.

Foreign nationals who will serve as a grant’s Project Director (PD), Principal Investigator (PI), Research Fellow (RF), or a Significant Project Staff member(s) (20% of time) must provide verification that their United States or Canadian Visa is current and that the Visa will allow sufficient in-country (United States or Canada) time to complete the approved and funded grant project or fellowship award.

Visa verification can be accomplished by submitting a letter from the PD’s, PI’s, RF’s, or significant staff on the sponsoring institution’s letterhead that identifies the individuals Visa expiration date. The letter must bear the individual’s signature and the signature of the institution’s grant administrator. The PD, PI, RF, or significant staff person may also submit a copy of (his or her) current Visa that identifies the Visa’s expiration date.

- **Special Requirements for Design and Development Projects**

Grant money for design and development projects may be used to develop drawings, schematics, or prototypes, and for the testing necessary to further the design of such devices. The Foundation prohibits the use of grant money for the expenses of bringing a product to market (e.g., patent attorney costs, mass production, promotion and marketing, etc.).

- **Special Requirements for Fellowship Applicants**

Fellowships may be granted in basic science, clinical applications, or design and development. These grants are awarded to the fellow, not to the mentor or sponsor, and not to the host institution. The proposal must be written by the fellow, although the mentor/sponsor may serve as an advisor.
Fellowship applicants must apply within 4 years of receiving a PhD, or within 4 years of completing a formal MD residency program. Fellowship applicants with more than 4 years of training should apply as principal investigators.

Fellowship applicants must have a designated and identified mentor/sponsor who is a senior-level investigator of the laboratory in which the research is to be conducted. In addition to the standard proposal contents, fellowship proposals must include:

- One letter of support written by the mentor/sponsor. The letter should identify the mentor as and be submitted as an attachment in the “Supporting Documents” section of the online application. This letter should include:
  - A statement about the applicant.
  - A brief overview of the sponsor’s training and number of fellows and students previously trained.
  - A description of the training environment provided by the laboratory and department, such as seminar programs, and availability of other investigators for discussion and consultation.

- Two additional letters of support from individuals familiar with the qualifications of the fellow (also submitted as an attachment in the “Supporting Documents” section of the online application).

- A biosketch of the mentor/sponsor (submitted as part of the “Biosketch” section of the online application).

In 2003, Paralyzed Veterans established the Fritz Krauth Memorial Fellowship, named after a life-time PVA member who established a trust fund in the 1990’s to benefit PVA research upon his death. The Fritz Krauth Memorial Fellowship is bestowed annually on the highest scoring fellowship grant. The Foundation presents a recognition plaque to the Fritz Krauth Memorial Fellow each year.

PVA Research Foundation no longer supports funding for conferences or symposiums. Please visit the PVA Education Foundation for information regarding funding for these proposals.
TIMELINE FOR PROPOSALS

The PVA Research Foundation has one grant cycle per fiscal year. All grant applications must be received via the proposalCENTRAL online system. Please check www.pva.org/research routinely for program updates and announcements to be sure you have the most recent information concerning the Foundation.

- **Date to Submit Proposals**

Proposal applications for the PVA Research Foundation are accepted early as **May 1**. Applications are submitted online only via proposalCENTRAL.com.

- **Deadline for Submission**

The deadline for submitting applications is **September 1**, no later than 11:59 p.m. (Eastern Standard Time [EST]), without exception. If September 1, falls on a weekend or holiday, the deadline will be 11:59 p.m. (EST) of the next regular business day.

- **Notification of Grants**

Notification of grant decisions will be made to the applicants no later than December 31. You will be notified via email or first class mail. Please do not contact our staff to ascertain status of your proposal. It is our policy not to convey grant award decisions by telephone or email.

- **Grant Start Date**

If you are awarded a grant, you will be sent a Grant Acknowledgment Form to complete and return to the Foundation office. No funds will be disbursed until we receive an original Grant Acknowledgment Form, signed by both the Principal Investigator and the Grant Administrator, together with appropriate supporting items as outlined in the grant award letter. In general, grants awarded by December 31, 2015 will be funded for a one- or two-year grant period beginning January 1, 2016 of the following year. If you need a grant start date more than 60 days beyond January 1, you may so state in your application or on the Grant Acknowledgement Form with written justification.
FOUNDATION STAFF CONTACTS

Grant administration questions should be directed to:

- Frank Davis
  Manager, Grants Portfolio
  Phone: (202) 416-7651
  Fax: (202) 416-7641
  Email: frankd@pva.org

Policy or program questions should be directed to:

- Kera Lawson, Ph.D.
  Director, Research & Education
  Phone: (202) 416-7668
  Fax: (202) 416-7641
  Email: Foundations@pva.org

Mailing address:

- PVA Research Foundation
  Attn: Manager, Grants Portfolio
  Paralyzed Veterans of America
  801 – 18th Street, NW
  Washington, DC 20006

ONLINE APPLICATION PROCESS

All application submissions MUST be made online through the proposalCENTRAL/Altum website (https://proposalcentral.altum.com), which can be accessed directly or from the link on the Paralyzed Veterans’ web site (www.pva.org, click on “Research and Education”). Paper copy applications will be returned without review and will not satisfy the submission deadline. You may use either PC or Mac platforms and all standard operating systems. The “proposalCENTRAL” web site is maintained by Altum, Inc., of Bethesda, Maryland.
SUBMISSION CONTENT

The online application includes the following eight components:

- Title Page (title may not exceed 75 characters)
- Applicant/Principal Investigator (PI)
- Institution and Contacts
- Letters of Reference (required for fellowships; optional for others)
- Abstract
- Organization Assurances
- Proposal Narrative (20 page maximum, including references) & Supporting Documents (including biosketches and budget)
- Signature Page(s)

All components of the application must be completed and submitted electronically. All submissions are considered confidential. Specific instructions for completing each component are included with the templates for each component. All applicants must use templates as appropriate for their application to ensure uniformity of presentation for reviewers. Some of the components have fixed-size templates you complete online. Others are Microsoft Word templates that you may download to your computer. You may complete these templates with any standard word processing software (e.g., MS Word or other), but you must convert completed documents to Adobe.pdf format to be uploaded to the website.

As the final step in submission, print, secure necessary signature(s), and send the original Signature Page(s) to the Foundation office. The signed Signature Page must be submitted by the deadline for submission of grant applications to make your application complete. In order to meet the deadline, a fully signed copy of the form may be faxed to (202) 416-7641, but the original signed form must immediately be mailed to the Foundation for inclusion in our files.
Please note that at different stages of initiating and completing a submission, a notification email will be generated by the system to your institution’s Grant Administrator (the official signing for the applicant institution whom you identified in the online applicant registration process).

**ORGANIZATION ASSURANCES**

The Foundation supports research in a wide variety of areas that may use animal models, human tissue, and human subjects. All applicants must comply with rules and regulations published by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) on certifications and assurances regarding use of animals in research, human tissue, and human subjects. In each case, approval documents from the appropriate Institutional Review Board (IRB) or committee must be specific to the proposed investigation, including the time period for which the grant is requested. If the applications for such approvals have been made but have not been acted upon at the time of submission, a letter from the IRB chair or safeguard committee acknowledging the pending status, with a date for board or committee action, must accompany the application. **Official approval by the relevant board or committee must be received in the Foundation office before awarded funds will be disbursed.**

- **Animal Research**

The Foundation requires that all individuals and institutions that conduct research using animals with Foundation funds adhere to all federal, state, and local laws pertaining to the humane care and use of animals for research purposes, including IRB procedures and approvals. At a minimum, the Foundation requires investigators to adhere to the following laws that provide guidelines for such research:


- The Animal Welfare Act (Public Law 89-544, August 24, 1966). and any subsequent amendments to this act.


- The *Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals* (Institute of Laboratory Animal Resources, National Academy of Sciences, updated 1996).
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- **Human Tissue**

The Foundation requires that all individuals and institutions that conduct research using human tissue -- including stem cells -- with Foundation funds adhere to all federal, state, and local laws pertaining to the use of this tissue, including IRB procedures and approvals.

- **Human Subjects**

Studies that involve human subjects must ensure that informed consent is obtained from the participants. A copy of the final consent form that subjects will be required to sign must accompany the proposal. A statement that adequate protection of human subjects' rights will be provided must be obtained from the applicant’s Institutional Review Board and submitted with the proposal as well.

**AGREEMENTS WITH COOPERATING INSTITUTIONS OR AGENCIES**

Proposals for projects involving institutions or agencies in addition to the grantee (e.g., affiliated clinical facilities, laboratories to conduct work under a contract, etc.) must include a letter signed by a responsible official of the cooperating facility acknowledging its role in the project and supplying such assurances as may cover any aspect of the research to be conducted in the facility. Such letters must be submitted online under the “Supporting Documents” section of the application. If necessary, an additional 4 pages may be used for such letters in excess of the 20-page limit for this section.

**REVIEW PROCESS**

Grant applications are reviewed first by the PVA Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) for scientific merit and relevance to spinal cord dysfunction. The SAB is composed of scientists, clinicians, and technology experts.

After being scored by the SAB, proposals are reviewed by the PVA Research Foundation Board of Directors, composed entirely of Paralyzed Veterans’ members. Final funding decisions rest solely with the Directors.

At the close of the grant cycle, following the announcement of grant decisions, applicants will be allowed to view the reviews of their applications online.
ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF AWARD

When a project is approved for funding, the applicant will be notified in writing. This written notification will include a Grant Acknowledgment Form, an Approved Grant Budget Form, and a copy of the PVA Research Foundation Policies and Procedures. Signatures of both the Principal Investigator and the Grant Administrator are required on the Grant Acknowledgment Form. Signing this form acknowledges your acceptance of and agreement to comply with the PVA Research Foundation Policies and Procedures. The Grant Acknowledgment Form must be accompanied by a photo of the Principal Investigator and any other supporting documents requested in the grant award letter.

PAYMENT AND REPORTING SCHEDULE

Payments are made to the grantee institution in three installments according to the following stipulations, whether for 1 or 2 year projects:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Payment Schedule</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Retainer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st Payment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Payment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Payment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Reporting Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reporting Schedule</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grant Acknowledgment</td>
<td>The grantee must return the original signed Grant Acknowledgment Form before any funds can be disbursed to the project. Upon the Foundation’s receipt of the signed Grant Acknowledgment Form, the 1st payment on the grant will be made, as outlined above.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interim Expenditure and Progress Reports</td>
<td>The Interim Expenditure and Progress Reports are due from the grantee within 30 days of completion of the first 6 months for a one-year project or first 12 months for a two-year project. Upon the Foundation’s receipt and approval of these reports, the 2nd payment on the grant will be made, as outlined above. The Principal Investigator and Grant Administrator must sign the reports.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Expenditure and Progress Reports</td>
<td>The Final Expenditure and Progress Reports are due within 60 days of the completion of the project. The Principal Investigator and Grant Administrator must sign all grant reports. <em>The Final Expenditure Report should show a zero balance, or, if any funds remain unexpended, they should be returned at this time in a check payable to “PVA Research Foundation.”</em> Upon the Foundation’s receipt and approval of the Final Reports, the 10% Retainer initially withheld from the grant award will be sent to the grantee.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

EXTENSIONS AND AMENDMENTS

Any proposed changes to the agreed-upon terms of the grant, as laid out in the Grant Acknowledgment Form -- including grant period, personnel, budget, and location -- must be made in writing, at least one month in advance of the proposed change.

Such written requests must be signed by both the Principal Investigator and the Grant Administrator, and should detail the reason(s) for and other relevant information about the change. Agreement to any extension or amendment request must be acknowledged in writing by the Foundation to be considered binding.

➢ **“No-cost” Time Extensions**

The Foundation will consider “no-cost” time extensions from grantees who determine that they will have difficulty completing the work in the time allotted. Requests for
additional time must detail the progress of the grant to date as well as the particular circumstances requiring additional time. Extensions beyond 6 months of the original grant period will not be approved except in extraordinary circumstances.

- **Personnel Changes**

Requests for replacement of the Principal Investigator, Grant Administrator, or any other personnel must detail why the change is being made and who the replacement person will be, including a biosketch and contact information for that person. **Funded fellows cannot be replaced. However, unusual requests may be made to the Foundation staff.**

- **Budget Changes**

Please construct your project budget carefully, as you will be expected to adhere to the approved budget in making expenditures from grant funds. The total amount of the grant cannot be increased; however, you may make minor changes within categories of your approved budget.

- **Location Changes**

The Foundation must be notified if the Principal Investigator or fellow intends to move from the grantee institution at any time during a funded project period. Please state why, when, and where you are moving. **Your request letter must be accompanied by a letter from your current host institution acknowledging the move, “closing out” any fiscal responsibilities, and transferring any unexpended funds to the new institution. Your request letter also must be accompanied by a letter from the new host institution agreeing to accept the grant and fiscal responsibility for it, and providing the name and contact information of the new Grant Administrator.**

**COMPLETION OF GRANT**

Upon completion of the grant, the grantee will have 60 days to liquidate all commitments against the grant account and to submit written Final Expenditure and Progress Reports.

Unexpended funds must be returned to the Foundation at that time. It is our policy not to approve requests for alternate uses of leftover funds not related to the original grant objectives or the field of SCI/D.
Final reports must include a sample copy of any project end product(s), such as books, journal articles, training guides, pamphlets, charts, videos, CD’s, brochures, press releases, and/or press clippings. We also request photos taken in the course of your project, particularly photos that illustrate the nature of your work (for example, you working in your laboratory, demonstrating your equipment, talking with a patient or teaching a class, or a photo of materials you are developing under the grant). You may submit more than one photo if you like. Photos may be used in our Annual Report, as part of an article in PN (our monthly magazine), or other publication. They must be high resolution, 300 d.p.i. or better, and in color.

Lastly, upon completion of the grant, the grantee is required to prepare and submit a brief article for lay readers describing the results or outcomes of the project, together with an accompanying photo. This article will be considered for publication in PN and for other publicity purposes to promote the PVA Research Foundation.

COPYRIGHTS, DISCOVERIES, AND PATENTS ON GRANT-SUPPORTED PRODUCTS

The Foundation does not accept applications for funds to be used exclusively for the publication, market testing, or marketing of books, manuals, or audiovisual materials to be sold either at cost or for profit.

Unless otherwise specified in the terms of an individual grant award, the grantee is free to retain copyright of such materials, which for this purpose are defined as writings, sound recordings, pictorial reproductions, drawings, graphic representations, procedural manuals, forms, diagrams, and data processing or computer programs. However, the grantee must notify the Foundation in writing regarding who holds the copyright, and provide the materials to the Foundation in reproducible form, and the Foundation reserves the right to reproduce, publish, or otherwise use such materials, royalty-free, for distribution to individuals, groups, or institutions that would benefit from their use. Furthermore, the packaging of the product should clearly indicate that it was supported, in whole or in part, by funding from the PVA Research Foundation.

The Foundation reserves the right to participate in the patenting of the materials, devices or any products resulting from the research funded (or partially funded) by this Agreement. Any party intending to seek such a patent shall notify the Foundation at least 90 days prior to filing for patent protection so as to permit the Foundation to evaluate the research and determine if the Foundation wishes to participate in the patenting of the materials, devices, or products resulting from the research. Such notice
shall contain a description of the patent sought and shall identify the Foundation grant-sponsored research which forms the basis for the patent protection sought. The Foundation agrees to respond to such notice, in writing, within sixty (60) days of receipt of the notice. The decision to participate or not to participate in the filing for patent protection of the research shall be at the sole discretion of the Foundation. In the event that the Foundation declines to participate in the filing for patent protection, that decision shall be final and binding on the Foundation unless, pursuant to a subsequent agreement, the parties mutually agree otherwise.

The Foundation shall have the first option to participate in the filing for patent protection of the research in the event such protection is considered to be necessary by the Foundation and upon the Foundation agreeing to pay for the cost of filing for such protection. Upon the Foundation agreeing to file for such protection, the Foundation shall have the first option to negotiate an exclusive license as to the research, subject to the license rights of other sponsors of the research, including the United States Government, and negotiated diligence terms related to licensing and development.

All parties originating the research who agree to such exclusive license also thereby agree to cooperate in the obtaining of the patent protection of the research and further agree to sign all documents necessary to obtain such protection as may reasonably be deemed necessary for such protection.

OWNERSHIP OF EQUIPMENT

All allowable purchases of apparatus and materials with PVA Research Foundation grant funds will be the property of the grantee institution and are expected to be retained for use in further activities focusing on SCI/D.

PUBLICITY

Following award of a grant, grantees are required to submit a photograph of themselves (and other relevant photos) to the Foundation together with their Grant Acknowledgment Form. Other photos may be submitted during the course of or at completion of the project. These photos may be used for publicity in Paralyzed Veterans’ monthly magazine, PN, in our Annual Report, or in other publications as deemed necessary to let our readers and donors know how grant funds are being used.
The grantee institutions will cooperate with the Foundation in making announcements through the news media of the grant award. We will provide you with a sample press release about your grant which you may use to seek publicity within your host institution and peer community. Principal Investigators are encouraged to publicize the results of their projects using the usual avenues for dissemination (e.g., press releases, journals, etc.).

All awarded projects are required to prominently acknowledge Foundation support in every appropriate way (e.g., on the packaging of a product, in news articles, or in brochures and signage). In crediting the PVA Research Foundation as a funding source, the following acknowledgment language must be used with all publicity concerning the grant: “Supported [in part or in full, whichever is appropriate] by Grant #_____ from the PVA Research Foundation.” In addition, any cofunding sources must be given credit in a similar statement.

AMENDMENT OF POLICIES

The PVA Research Foundation reserves the right to amend these policies. By returning to the Foundation a signed Grant Acknowledgment Form, the grantee agrees to either abide by any changes or to terminate the grant at such time that new policies become effective.

TIPS FOR GOOD GRANTSMANSHIP

There are many sources of information about how to write successful grant proposals. If this is your first experience in applying for a grant, it would be worth your time to consult some of these sources. Check your local bookstore or do an online search under “grantsmanship” or “grant-writing” to find more information.

Below is a simple list of tips that PVA Research Foundation staff have compiled based on the strengths and weaknesses we have observed in previous grant applications.

1. Make sure you are using up-to-date instructions and forms. Application materials may be revised between grant cycles; be sure you are using the materials for the current grant cycle.

2. Follow directions. Begin by reading the “Policies and Procedures” document carefully. When completing the application, respond specifically, thoroughly, and
succinctly to the questions asked in each section. Adhere to page limits. Do not submit hard copy supporting documents, since they cannot be distributed to reviewers.

3. **Spell out the “match” between your project and the stated mission of the PVA Research Foundation.** Demonstrate how your proposal will involve or benefit Paralyzed Veterans’ members and/or facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

4. **Be sure that your project is new and innovative.** The PVA Research Foundation will not provide operational funding for ongoing projects.

5. Set specific, realistic, accomplishable goals, within a reasonable time frame and budget, using appropriate levels of staff time. Do not overreach.

6. **Write clearly. Edit and proofread your work.** Polish it; make it succinct, well-focused, well-organized, and accurate. Avoid acronyms and jargon. Format and present it attractively.

7. **Avoid the appearance of proposals “written by committee.”** When different parts of an application are written by different people and then assembled, the resulting package can be fragmented, disjointed, and/or repetitive. Have one person, preferably someone outside your immediate team, review your final product for consistency in writing style and to eliminate redundancies.

8. **Choose a concise, clear project title -- one that is descriptive, specific, and appropriate.**

9. **Make sure your abstract/project summary is succinct and well-written, in language understandable by a lay audience.** Keep in mind that if your proposal is granted, the project summary will be used in subsequent publicity. It must be able to stand alone.

10. **Prepare the proposal budget carefully -- requests should be specific, realistic, and justified.** Observe limits on equipment purchases, travel, fringe benefits, and indirect costs when creating your budget. If you include a travel request give detailed information: how many people, how many days, cost of airfare, daily hotel and meal expenses, etc. Double-check the math.

11. **Let us know if you are also requesting funds from other sources.** Is the amount you are seeking from the Foundation your whole budget, or are you hoping to secure
other funding as well? If you are seeking other sources of funding, what percentage of the total budget is the amount you are seeking from the PVA Research Foundation?

12. Be specific about your plans for dissemination of any products from your grant and how you will acknowledge the Foundation’s support if you receive it.