

THE ADDRESS FOR OUR ON LINE SYSTEM IS [HTTP://RESEARCHGRANTS.MARCHOFDIMES.ORG](http://RESEARCHGRANTS.MARCHOFDIMES.ORG).  
PLEASE E-MAIL ANY INQUIRES TO [ResearchGrantsSupport@marchofdimes.org](mailto:ResearchGrantsSupport@marchofdimes.org).

March of Dimes Foundation

National Office  
1275 Mamaroneck Avenue  
White Plains, NY 10605

[marchofdimes.org](http://marchofdimes.org)

Joe Leigh Simpson, MD, FACOG,  
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Research & Global Programs

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS  
BASIL O'CONNOR STARTER SCHOLAR RESEARCH AWARD  
2017 PROGRAM**

- A. This award is designed to support young scientists just embarking on their independent research careers. The applicants' research interests should be consonant with those of the March of Dimes' mission: *The Mission of the March of Dimes is to improve the health of babies by preventing birth defects, premature birth and infant mortality. The March of Dimes defines a birth defect as any abnormality of structure or function, whether inherited, or acquired in utero and presenting in infancy or early childhood. Deviations from reproductive health of women and men as an underlying basis of birth defects, i.e. preconceptional events, perinatal course, and premature births, are appropriate subjects for research support.* Relevance is interpreted broadly to include fundamental cell biology (embryogenesis, cell lineage, differentiation), genetics and genomics, fundamental cellular and clinical pathogenesis of disorders of importance to mothers and infants, biomedical engineering and imaging, and social and behavioral aspects. Each application should be accompanied by a Letter of Support from a Nominator (see below). The award is \$150,000 for two years, including 10 percent indirect costs to sponsoring institutions.

To view a list of currently funded grants under this program, please go to the [Basil O'Connor Starter Scholar Research Award Grant List](#).

**B. ELIGIBILITY**

The Basil O'Connor Starter Scholar Research Award is intended to be an initial independent grant to young investigators. Eligibility is thus restricted. PhD applicants should be no more than eight years past their degree. Successful applicants have traditionally completed four to six years of postdoctoral training or other faculty-mentored work, but not more than eight years, and have been hired as a faculty member at their current institution. For MD or MD/PhD applicants, the same 4-8 year timeline applies, but begins upon completion of the last year of clinical training required for medical specialty board certification. Requests for exceptions (e.g., pregnancy and maternity leave) should be directed to the Senior Vice President for Research & Global Programs.

Basil O'Connor applicants may not be recipients of a major grant (e.g. an R01, or other grant exceeding \$200,000 a year) at the time of the application. Applicants who have transition faculty-mentored awards are welcome, if they have completed the mentored portion. If not, application should be deferred. Candidates may not simultaneously submit an application for any other March of Dimes research program. Those who have previously submitted an application to the Basil O'Connor program are ordinarily not eligible for resubmission unless permission has been explicitly given; however, exceptions will be considered and application for a regular research grant is welcomed.

C. DEADLINE FOR NOMINATIONS IS MARCH 16, 2016.

D. NOMINATION PROCESS

The entire process must be completed online at [HTTP://RESEARCHGRANTS.MARCHOFDIMES.ORG](http://RESEARCHGRANTS.MARCHOFDIMES.ORG).

THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION IS REQUIRED FROM THE CANDIDATE:

- Title of the proposed research project.
- Candidate's name, academic appointment, mailing address, telephone and FAX numbers and e-mail address.
- Candidate's *Biosketch*.
- Letter of Intent (template provided) for the proposed research, which includes the following information in this order:
  1. Title of proposal.
  2. Hypothesis.
  3. Preliminary data.
  4. Précis of specific aims and methods of procedure.
  5. Current financial support: list all current financial support. If there is no current support, state "NONE."

Items 1-5 should not exceed 3 pages.

INFORMATION REQUIRED FROM THE NOMINATOR:

- Deans, Chairs of Departments, or Directors of Institutes/Centers may submit nominations for this award, addressed to the Senior Vice President for Research and Global Programs. Included should be the Nominator's name, academic appointment, mailing address, telephone and FAX number and e-mail address.
- Letter of Nomination (due by March 16, 2016) should be submitted via the online system. The nomination letter should vouch for a candidate's having an unrestricted faculty position and dedicated lab/clinical research space. Information provided should explicitly include details concerning the candidate's faculty appointment, independence, laboratory space, startup package, and core facilities available. This information will be scrutinized closely.

**E. BUDGET**

These grants do not ordinarily cover a portion of the recipient's salary, but may provide salary support for technical help. The award may not exceed \$150,000 for two years.

**F. REVIEW PROCESS**

- 1) Letters of Intent will be reviewed initially by the Senior Vice President for Research & Global Programs for adherence to eligibility. 2) Those eligible will then be subjected to a preliminary selection process to identify a pool suitable for a committee to analyze critically. 3) Those invited to submit a full application must do so by July 15, 2016. 4) The scientific advisory committee will conduct its review in November 2016. 5) The funding begins on February 1, 2017.

**G. ASSESSMENT**

- 1) The most important component of the proposal is the academic background and potential of the candidate himself/herself. 2) Resources available as judged by the nominator's letter is equally important. 3) The proposal, once completed, should place the candidate in position to be competitive for a R21 or R01.

1/2016