

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

The following questions and answers are meant to provide a convenient summary of the issues of most frequent interest to potential LSDF applicants. This FAQ may be amended from time-to-time in response to questions received from the community. The most current version of the FAQ is available on the LSDF website at www.lsdfa.org.

A. What is the Life Sciences Discovery Fund?

A.1 What is LSDF?

The Life Sciences Discovery Fund (LSDF) Authority is a Washington State agency, established in 2005 and authorized to distribute up to \$350M over 10 years to life sciences research--to promote the health of the state's citizens, to advance its life sciences sector, and to strengthen the economy.

A.2 Where does LSDF's money come from?

Generous private donors contributed an initial \$3 million to launch the LSDF's grant-making. However, the bulk of LSDF's resources comes from the tobacco settlement bonus payments being received by the State of Washington in annual increments of \$35 million from 2008 to 2017.

A.3 What does it mean when I hear that LSDF awards are considered to be "investments"?

The Governor and Legislature created the LSDF expressly to leverage its tobacco settlement bonus payments for the benefit of the citizens of Washington State. The LSDF is expected to use these public dollars in its grant programs to catalyze tangible public gains. Proposals for funding therefore are expected to demonstrate the potential to earn returns on the state's investment.

A.4 What types of returns on investment is the LSDF seeking?

The goal of LSDF is to promote economic vitality in the State of Washington by fostering innovative scientific research designed to improve the health of the state's citizens. Knowledge gains will enhance the reputation of Washington as a global center of life sciences research and provide a source of leverage for follow-on research and investment funding. Scientific discovery will contribute to robust industry development and economic growth. Research will lead to innovations that will improve health-care outcomes, efficiencies in delivery, and cost effectiveness.

B. What kinds of grants does LSDF make?

B.1 Where can I find information about grant programs or proposal guidelines?

General inquiries about grant programs and questions about proposal guidelines may be addressed to LSDF by email -- info@lsdfa.org.

B.2 What size grants does LSDF make?

LSDF grants vary in size depending on the range of programs being offered and the availability of funds. In the first grant competition of 2007, the LSDF is distributing \$3-\$6 million. Grant sizes for this competition are expected to be in the range of \$250 thousand to \$1 million.

B.3 Are LSDF awards made for one year or can they be multi-year?

Both one-year and multi-year proposals are expected to be funded.

B.4 The inaugural LSDF RFP (07-01) invites proposals related to applications of technology in health care; what is meant by “technology”?

Viewed broadly for the purposes of LSDF 07-01, the term “technology” refers to tools to accomplish a task, including, but not limited to, devices, instruments, tests, computerized systems, software, and drugs and other chemical and biological substances.

B.5 I am in the early stages of developing a new technology with health-care applications; can I use LSDF 07-01 funding for my development project?

No. Projects that focus on technology development in the absence of application or on modes of practice independent of an innovative application of technology will not be competitive.

B.6 Does the LSDF make equity investments in companies?

No. The LSDF makes grants to non-profit entities for the purposes of research.

C. Who may apply for an LSDF grant?

C.1 Who may apply for LSDF funding under LSDF-07-01?

Applicants must be non-profit Washington State institutions or organizations, including public and private universities, nonprofit research institutions, public health departments, and non-profit hospitals and clinics.

C.2 How can I receive grant funding from LSDF?

You can receive funding by submitting an application—on behalf of an eligible organization--in response to an RFP announced by LSDF. Notices of RFPs are

published on the LSDF website (www.lsdfa.org). There is at least one funding program announced each year. In 2007, there are two grant competitions, LSDF 07-01 and LSDF 07-02.

C.3 Can for-profit or out-of-State entities apply?

No, but they may join Washington non-profit applicants in collaborative proposals.

C.4 Is collaboration required for LSDF proposals?

No, but it is encouraged, to foster an even more vibrant and competitive life sciences sector for Washington State.

C.5 Who within eligible organizations may apply?

Though prepared and submitted by the principal investigator, proposals officially come from the applicant organization, not the principal investigator. To be a principal investigator on an LSDF grant, individuals must meet the requirements of their employer regarding such status.

C.6 Is there a preference for senior level researchers?

There is no preference in the evaluation of proposals for senior level researchers.

C.7 Can a principal investigator submit more than one proposal in a single grant competition?

No.

C.8 Will the LSDF cap the number of proposals it is willing to review from a single organization in LSDF-07-01?

No.

D. What are the requirements for submitting an LSDF application?

D.1 How are application materials submitted?

Proposals are submitted electronically via an on-line application system accessed through the LSDF website, www.lsdfa.org.

D.2 Is there a pre-proposal process for applying for LSDF grants?

No. A letter of intent is required to be able to submit a proposal. The letter of intent is not a pre-proposal and is not used as a screening mechanism for invitation of full proposals.

D.3 What information is required in an LSDF application?

Specific requirements for LSDF grants are included in the RFP, but applications generally consist of two elements: (1) a letter of intent and (2) a proposal, which includes a face page, project narrative, budget, and supplementary materials.

D.4 What is a letter of intent?

The letter of intent (LOI) is the first part of the application process. It is an electronically submitted notification to LSDF of an applicant's intention to submit a proposal. The LOI does not bind the prospective applicant to submit a proposal. It is not a pre-proposal. Its purpose is to assist LSDF in planning the review process.

D.5 Can I submit a proposal if I do not submit an LOI?

No. The LOI is an essential requirement of an LSDF application.

D.6 When is the LOI due?

Key dates for all parts of the application process are included in the RFP for each LSDF funding program. For LSDF 07-01, the deadline for the LOI is 5:00PM PDT March 28, 2007.

D.7 What is the page limit on the narrative portion of the proposal?

The proposal narrative should be no longer than 20 pages, though shorter narratives are strongly encouraged.

D.8 What is the deadline for submitting an LSDF proposal?

The proposal deadline for LSDF 07-01 is 5:00PM PDT May 23, 2007.

D.9 How may I obtain more information if I have questions?

General information about LSDF funding programs can be sought at

info@lsdfa.org
206-732-6770.

E. Important questions about LSDF grant policy

E.1 Which costs are allowable for funding by LSDF?

Direct costs allowable for grant support include salaries, equipment, supplies, services, and travel. Costs that are not allowable include facilities construction or remodeling, patient care, and computers not essential for performance of the research.

E.2 Will LSDF grants support facilities and administration (F&A or “indirect”) costs related to funded research?

Yes. An F&A allowance of 15% of selected items of a proposal’s direct costs will be available for grants under LSDF-07-01. The F&A allowance is fixed, regardless of the established F&A rate of the applicant organization.

E.3 Which direct costs are allowable for use in determining the F&A allowance under LSDF- 07-01?

Direct costs allowable for F&A support include salaries, supplies, services, and grant-related travel, as well as equipment at unit prices at or below \$5000.

E.4 Is cost-sharing required?

No.

E.5 Are the LSDF granting programs carried out in a confidential manner?

Yes. LSDF will hold all proposal documents confidential, subject to the public disclosure laws of the State of Washington. For more information, see RCW 42.17.350 and the amendments to the exemption provisions in RCW 42.56.270. LSDF will require grant reviewers to sign nondisclosure agreements. The LSDF reserves the right to publicly disseminate the subject matter of the proposals it receives.

E.6 Who owns the intellectual property developed during an LSDF-funded project?

Normally it is expected that intellectual property (IP) resulting from a funded project will be owned by the applicant organization, not by the LSDF. However, proposals are expected to make clear specifically who will own the IP, who will be responsible for managing it, and in the case of a collaborative project how rights to the IP will be shared by collaborators.

E.7 Will LSDF fund projects involving human subjects?

Yes. If a proposed project involves human subjects, the applicant organization is responsible for ensuring that the research site and project operate under an appropriate Office of Human Research Protections (OHRP)-approved assurance for the protection of human subjects and comply with all NIH human-subjects-related policies.

E.8 Will LSDF fund projects involving animal subjects?

Yes. For research involving vertebrate animals, the applicant organization must ensure that all performance sites and projects hold Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare (OLAW)-approved assurances and approvals.

E.9 Must I already have human subjects approval or animal use approval at the time I submit my application?

No, but the necessary approvals for human subjects or vertebrate animal research will need to have been received prior to execution of the grant agreement.

F. How are LSDF proposals evaluated and selected for funding?

F.1 What evaluation criteria are used to evaluate LSDF proposals for funding?

Specific evaluation criteria are described in the RFPs for each funding competition. The general criteria for LSDF awards, however, are scientific and technological merit and strong potential for economic and health benefits for the State of Washington.

F.2 How are proposals selected for awards?

Independent peer reviewers provide evaluations to the LSDF Board of Trustees regarding the strengths, weaknesses and overall merit of submitted proposals. The Board makes the final selections based on peer evaluations, availability of funds, and the goals of the LSDF program.

F.3 Can LSDF funding decisions be appealed?

No. All funding decisions are final and cannot be appealed.

F.4 What are some ways LSDF grants differ from federal grants in their expectations and requirements?

LSDF grants are investments with expected returns. They require the establishment of specific milestones and timelines. Their fund-disbursement

schedule is phased and contingent upon milestone achievement. Also, they require frequent reporting.

F.5 Do LSDF grants have standard terms and conditions?

Yes. These are the guiding principles which establish the legal procedures and responsibilities for LSDF and its grantees in all funding competitions of the program. Specific terms and conditions are established in the grant agreement for individual grant awards.

F.6 When will a recipient organization receive funds once a proposal is selected for funding?

The disbursement schedule will be established as part of the grant agreement. Funding will be distributed to recipient organizations in increments, based upon timely reporting and the achievement of milestones during the project. Disbursements will be authorized by LSDF when recipient organizations have achieved the specific milestones delineated in the grant agreement.

F.7 If I receive an LSDF award, will I have to submit progress reports? If so, how often?

Yes. Reporting by principal investigators is the primary way that the LSDF is able to track project progress and return on investment. Reporting requirements, specific for each funded proposal, will be finalized in the grant contract. But LSDF requires, at minimum, semi-annual financial and technical progress reports and post-award annual reports for a period of five years. Site visits and in-person briefings by principal investigators may be used by the LSDF as tools to track the progress of funded projects.