

# Frequently Asked Questions

The following questions and answers are meant to provide a convenient summary of the issues of most frequent interest to potential applicants for Life Sciences Discovery Fund grants. This FAQ may be amended from time-to-time in response to questions received from the community.

## A. What is the Life Sciences Discovery Fund?

### A.1 What is LSDF and what are its goals?

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 life sciences competitiveness, to improve health and health care for the state's citizens, and to foster economic growth.

### A.2 What is the source of LSDF funds?

Generous private donors contributed an initial \$3 million to launch LSDF's grant-making in 2007. However, the bulk of LSDF's resources come from the tobacco settlement bonus payments being received by the State of Washington in annual increments of \$35 million from 2008 to 2017.

Funds for LSDF 07-02 grants will come from the first tobacco settlement bonus payment, scheduled to be received in April, 2008.

### A.3 What does "life sciences research" mean?

As defined within the Fund's enabling legislation, life sciences research is "advanced and applied research and development intended to improve human health."

### A.4 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.5 What types of returns on investment is LSDF seeking?

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.

A more extended discussion of anticipated returns on the state's investment in life sciences research is included in the [2006 LSDF Report to the Washington State Legislature](#) found on the LSDF website.

#### **A.6 Where can I read the legislation that created the Life Sciences Discovery Fund?**

LSDF's enabling legislation, passed on April 23, 2005—[Engrossed Second Substitute Senate Bill 5581](#)—can be read on the LSDF website.

### **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 e-mail —[programs@lsdfa.org](mailto:programs@lsdfa.org).

#### **B.2 What are the size and duration of LSDF grants?**

LSDF grants vary in size and duration depending on the competition focus, the needs of the proposals being offered, and the availability of funds. In LSDF 07-02, there are no restrictions on grant size or duration, but a typical award is expected to be between \$2 million and \$4 million and to range over three years.

#### **B.3 LSDF 07-02 invites proposals for innovative "programs." What are "programs," and how do they differ from "projects"?**

"Projects" are individual scientific studies, relatively limited in scope, with a sharply defined research focus. "Programs" are strategic research initiatives, broader in scope, designed to address problems within a field of study and to position an organization or organizations for future competitiveness and leadership.

LSDF 07-02 invites proposals for programs. Proposals for "projects" will not be eligible for this competition.

#### **B.4 My organization needs infrastructure expansion for programs that are already underway. Is this need eligible for LSDF 07-02 support?**

No. LSDF 07-02 is designed to support new programs, not to provide additional infrastructure for existing programs.

#### **B.5 Does the LSDF make equity investments in companies?**

No. The LSDF makes grants to nonprofit entities for the purposes of research.

## **C. Who may apply for an LSDF grant?**

### **C.1 Who may apply for LSDF funding under LSDF-07-02?**

Applicants must be nonprofit Washington State institutions or organizations, including public and private universities, nonprofit research institutions, public health departments, and nonprofit 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 a request for proposals (RFP) announced by LSDF. Notices of RFPs are published on the LSDF website ([www.lsdfa.org](http://www.lsdfa.org)).

### **C.3 Can for-profit or out-of-state entities apply?**

No, but they may join Washington nonprofit 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?**

To be a principal investigator on an LSDF grant, individuals must meet the requirements of their employer regarding such status. Though prepared and submitted by the principal investigator, proposals officially come from the applicant organization, not the principal investigator. Both the letter of intent and the proposal must be signed by an individual with the authority to commit applicant organization resources to support the proposed program.

### **C.6 Can a principal investigator submit more than one proposal in a single grant competition?**

No, but he or she may serve as a co-investigator on other proposals.

### **C.8 Will the LSDF cap the number of proposals it is willing to review from a single organization?**

No.

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

### **D.1 How are application materials submitted?**

Application materials are submitted electronically via an on-line application system accessed through the LSDF website, [www.lsdfa.org](http://www.lsdfa.org).

### **D.2 Do applicants need a special code to access the electronic application system?**

No. Applicants can access the system directly via the LSDF website. Instructions for submitting letters of intent (LOIs) and proposals are provided in the system.

### **D.3 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 applications.

### **D.4 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.5 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.6 Does the letter of intent require institutional approval or signature?**

Yes. The letter of intent must be signed by the person with institutional authority to commit the applicant organization's resources to supporting the proposed program.

### **D.7 Can I go beyond the 500 word limit for the LOI abstract in order to include a list of references?**

No. Limit the abstract to 500 words and save the references for the proposal.

### **D.8 Can I submit a proposal if I do not submit an LOI?**

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

**D.9 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 07-02, the deadline for the LOI is Wednesday, August 8, 2007, 5:00PM PDT.

**D.10 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. Up to five additional pages of references may be appended to the narrative.

**D.11 What is the deadline for submitting an LSDF 07-02 proposal?**

The proposal deadline for LSDF 07-02 is Wednesday, October 24, 2007, 5:00PM PDT.

**D.12 How may I obtain more information if I have questions?**

General information about LSDF funding programs can be sought at

[programs@lsdfa.org](mailto:programs@lsdfa.org)  
206-732-6770.

**E. Important Questions about LSDF Grant Policy**

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

All costs reasonably associated with the development and operation of the proposed program are eligible to be included in the proposal budget. Such costs include salaries, equipment and facilities, administrative costs, supplies, services, and grant-related travel.

Costs associated with patient care beyond what is required for program research are not allowed by LSDF.

**E.2 Is there a cap on allowable salaries in an LSDF proposal budget?**

No, but salaries must be consistent with applicant organization policies.

**E.3 Is cost-sharing required?**

No specific formula for cost-sharing is required. However, it is expected that applicant organizations will make tangible resource commitments to support programs proposed for LSDF 07-02 funding.

In proposals including for-profit collaborating companies, the companies will be expected to pay for their own internal costs associated with program development and for exploratory research and development activities performed on a best-effort basis. Monies may be subcontracted from the applicant organization to a company for products and services provided as deliverables to the program.

**E.4 Are the LSDF granting programs carried out in a confidential manner?**

Yes. LSDF holds all applications confidential, subject to the public disclosure laws of the State of Washington. For more information, see RCW 42.56 and the amendments to the exemption provisions in RCW 42.56.270(14). LSDF will require grant reviewers to sign confidentiality agreements.

LSDF reserves the right to publicly disseminate information about its granting activities through a variety of means. Such communications may include lists of LOIs and proposals received, the names of PIs and applicant organizations, the field(s) in which the research will be conducted, descriptions of proposals funded, and reports about program progress and outcomes.

**E.5 Who owns the intellectual property developed under the research of an LSDF-funded program?**

Normally, the intellectual property (IP) resulting from research in a funded program 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 program how rights to the IP will be shared by collaborators.

**E.6 Will LSDF fund programs involving human subjects research?**

Yes. If a proposed program will involve human subjects research, the applicant organization is responsible for ensuring that program research sites and projects 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.7 Will LSDF fund programs involving animal subjects research?**

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

**E.8 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 RFP for each funding competition. The general criteria for LSDF awards, however, are consistent with the Fund's goals: to promote scientific competitiveness, improve health and health care, and foster economic growth.

### **F.2 How are proposals selected for awards?**

Expert reviewers recommend proposals to the LSDF Board of Trustees for funding. The board's selections are based on these recommendations, the availability of funds, and the goals of the LSDF program. Consistent with these and with its enabling legislation, the board also considers factors such as the following in making awards:

- diversity of research,
- variety of health benefits,
- breadth of economic opportunity, and
- geographic impact.

Based on its consideration of all these factors, the board selects proposals which in its judgment are the most meritorious.

### **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. 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 grant period. 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 LSDF is able to track program 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 LSDF as tools to track the progress of funded programs.