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UNIVERSITY

CENTER FOR
BRIDGING INFECTIOUS DISEASE, GENOMICS, AND SOCIETY
(BRIDGES)

The JHU BRIDGES Anticipatory Ethics of Genomics and Infectious Disease Request for Seed Grant Proposals

Issued: September 11, 2017

I. Overview

The JHU BRIDGES Anticipatory Ethics Seed Grant Request for Proposals (RFP) invites JHU faculty and postdoctoral fellows to develop pilot projects exploring the ethical, legal, and social implications (ELSI) of past, present, and future human genetic discoveries related to infectious disease management, using an anticipatory ethics lens. **Anticipatory ethics** refers to ethical engagement with the future, while research findings or technologies are in early stages.

Housed within the Berman Institute of Bioethics, BRIDGES is an NIH Center of Excellence in ELSI Research (CEER) funded by the National Human Genome Research Institute. BRIDGES is dedicated to anticipating and examining the ethical, legal, social, historical, and policy issues confronting the incorporation of genomics in the prevention, outbreak control, and treatment of a range of infectious diseases, and planning for the responsible translation of genomic advances into practice.

We welcome proposals from investigators of all disciplinary backgrounds, and from investigators new to ELSI research. Proposals must address an ELSI issue raised by an emerging or future genomic discovery related to infectious disease.

- **Examples of topics at the intersection of genomics and infectious disease:** host genetic factors that contribute to genetic susceptibility or resistance to infectious disease, transmissibility to others, or response to treatment; gene editing applications in infectious disease treatment and prevention; microbiome-based approaches to treating and preventing infectious diseases or promoting human health; epigenetic change and contributions to or as a result of infectious diseases; genotyping in a variety of contexts: clinical diagnostics, population-based screening or surveillance, employment; and treatments for host immune response to infection.
- **Project period and budget:** The project period is a maximum of 1 year. The total requested amount may not exceed \$25,000. We also invite smaller requests and encourage matching funds, other in-kind contributions, or co-funding.
- **Funding availability and priority:** A total of \$50,000 is available to fund project proposals submitted in response to this RFP. Investigators from under-represented minority groups are strongly encouraged to apply. At least one

award will be designated as a career development grant for a junior faculty member who shows promise as an ELSI investigator.

- **Proposal submission deadlines:** Full proposals are due **November 13, 2017**, before 11:59pm EST.
Prior to the deadline, investigators may, if desired, contact the Program Officer (Dr. Angie Boyce) for advice on developing an ELSI project and suggestions on potential ELSI collaborators at the Berman Institute.
- **Earliest anticipated start date for awards:** January 1, 2018.

II. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Program Goals

1. Advance anticipatory ethics approaches and identify new and important ELSI topics at the intersection of genomics and infectious disease
2. Grow the BRIDGES community and foster new relationships and collaborations
3. Identify and foster promising pilot research projects that could launch new ELSI research agendas and attract external funding

B. Solicited Proposal Topics

Proposals responsive to this RFP will explore ELSI issue(s) raised by any past, emerging or future genomic discovery related to infectious disease through an anticipatory ethics lens. Priority will be given to projects that focus on host genetics or host-pathogen interaction. Projects on pathogen or vector genomics will only be considered if human health outcomes are proximate or if findings have relevance to host genomics. To be competitive for funding, proposed projects should be distinct from currently funded BRIDGES pilot projects (see <http://www.bioethicsinstitute.org/bridges> for descriptions).

The following are examples of ELSI issues that might arise at the intersection of genomics and infectious disease. Applicants are welcome to propose projects on topics not listed here.

- Clarifying and reconciling ethical conflicts between precision and population health
- Gaps or frictions between science and policy; R&D, clinical management and public health
- Identifying ways to maximize benefit and minimize harm to individuals and populations
- Identifying new or changing moral responsibilities of providers, patients, research subjects, academic institutions, government, industry
- Implications of research or technologies for identity, personhood, vulnerability, stigma, disability, or discrimination
- Ethical resource allocation or priority-setting
- Incorporating public values; public trust in biomedical and public health institutions

C. Eligibility and Priority

Proposals may be initiated by JHU faculty or postdoctoral fellows in any division of the university. Individuals or teams may submit proposals. Seed funds can be

used to support student research team members at the doctoral, master, and undergraduate levels. Investigators from under-represented minority groups are strongly encouraged to apply. At least one award will be designated as a career development grant for a junior faculty member who shows promise as a future ELSI investigator.

D. RFP Timeline

September 11, 2017	RFP released to JHU community
November 13, 2017	Proposals due
December 8, 2017	Funding decisions announced
January 1, 2018	Earliest start date for funded projects

III. Application and Submission Information

A. Content and form of application

Proposals should be prepared single-spaced with 1-inch margins (minimum font size 11 point) and should conform to the following format:

1. PI or Co-PI Name(s) and Institutional Affiliation(s)
2. Co-investigator and Research Team Member name(s) and Institutional Affiliation(s)
3. Project Title
4. Abstract (limit ½ page)
5. Description of ELSI issue(s) and Infectious Disease Genomics Topic Explored in Project (limit 50 words)
6. Project Description (limit 4 pages): statement of the question or problem; specific aims or goals of the project; significance and potential impact; how an anticipatory ethics lens will be employed; summary of previous or current research relevant to proposed project; plan for implementation; anticipated outcomes; and plan or vision for next phase of work beyond timeframe of project, including possible funding sources
7. Project Management Plan and Timeline (limit 1 page)
8. References Cited
9. Budget (limit 1 page)
10. Budget justification narrative (itemized; limit 1 page)
11. Short biosketches of key personnel, emphasizing relevant expertise (limit ½ page per person)

B. Proposal submission procedure

Proposals should be submitted via email as PDF attachments to aboyce@jhu.edu, with subject line “BRIDGES seed grant application.”

Submission deadline: 11:59 p.m., Monday November 13, 2017

IV. Application Review Information

The review process will be administered by the BRIDGES leadership team, with the participation of selected BRIDGES co-investigators and external advisors as needed for subject matter expertise.

Review criteria include:

- Strategic positioning of proposed project in compelling longer-term agenda for further work in the anticipatory ethics of infectious disease genomics
- Likelihood that pilot project would result in preliminary work for a larger investigator-initiated grant
- Quality of proposed project
- Feasibility with resources requested and in project timeframe
- Appropriateness of scope and fit of budget to scope

V. Funding Restrictions

Funding may be requested to support all activities justified in the budget. This may include, but is not limited to, salary support, purchase of materials and supplies, and transportation expenses where applicable. No indirect costs may be charged to these grants. No funds may be budgeted for personnel or collaborating entities outside JHU.

VI. Award Administration

Award notices will be issued on or shortly after December 8, 2017. The earliest start date for funded awards is January 1, 2018.

A. Obligations of Award Recipients

Award recipients will be expected to participate in and present at quarterly BRIDGES research-in-progress meetings and research retreats and complete proposed research within one year. Within 60 days of the completion of the award period, recipients will be expected to submit final narrative reports detailing outcomes, successes, and reflections on anything that did not go as planned. The final narrative report should include a discussion of future plans for building on the pilot work and seeking external funding. Projects will be publicized on the Berman Institute website.

VII. How to Obtain More Information

Potential applicants may contact the Program Officer, Dr. Angie Boyce, at aboyce@jhu.edu, with questions about the RFP, to seek advice on developing an ELSI project, or for suggestions on potential ELSI collaborators.