



## Major Grants Initiative to Advance Child Health

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### Letter of Intent Guidelines and Terms of the Award 2019 Grant Cycle

**Award Period: January 1, 2019 – December 31, 2020**

**Funding Amount: \$450,000 over two years (\$225,000 per year, inclusive of up to 10% indirect costs)**

**Letter of Intent Deadline: 12:00 Noon on Monday, May 21, 2018**

**Invited Full Proposal Deadline: 12:00 Noon on Monday, September 17, 2018**

The Charles H. Hood Foundation is pleased to announce its 2019 *Major Grants Initiative to Advance Child Health*. This Award Program supports outstanding investigators conducting innovative and transformative research in Neonatology or Brain Science and Child Development. The overall goal of the Program remains the funding of translational or clinical research that will improve child health, children's clinical outcomes or improve health care access, affordability, and quality.

The Major Grants Initiative is a component of the Hood Foundation's research funding portfolio. Since 1942, the Foundation has supported investigators at New England research institutions to improve the health and quality of life for children. The Hood Foundation Child Health Research Awards Program has launched the careers of 596 junior faculty whose discoveries have contributed to significant improvements in child health. Since 1989, the Foundation has also supported 47 Postdoctoral Fellows conducting projects spanning the continuum from basic laboratory research to clinical and health services research.

## ∞ Application Procedures

Letters of Intent are being solicited from selected research institutions in New England.

The Hood Foundation expects the invited institution to conduct an internal search for one faculty member to serve as the Principal Investigator who will submit the application. It is the responsibility of each Institution to forward this document (“Letter of Intent Guidelines and Terms of the Award”) to their designated candidate. As part of the submission, the Institution must provide a description of how this process was conducted.

Letters of Intent will be reviewed in June and up to five applicants will be invited to submit Full Proposals. The Full Proposal applications are due by 12:00 Noon, Eastern Time on Monday, September 17<sup>th</sup>, 2018. Applicants will be notified of their status in mid-December and up to two applicants will receive funding that begins on January 1, 2019.

## ∞ Research Focus

Two areas of focus will be considered for the 2019 Major Grants Program: Neonatology and Brain Science and Child Development.

### Neonatology

Although the incidence of prematurity has been declining, recent data shows that 10% of babies born in Massachusetts are premature, 7.7% weigh less than 2.5 kg, and 1.3% weigh less than 1.5 kg. These infants require complex and expensive medical care after birth and are at high risk for pulmonary disease, neurological conditions, developmental delay and other issues. Thus, improvements in neonatal care are likely to result in better health outcomes for the infants, and lower initial and lifetime health care costs.

*Please note that research projects that focus on pregnant women and their fetuses will not be considered responsive to this RFA.*

New England has long been a leader in neonatology research. Through the funding of the Major Grants Program in this area, the Hood Foundation hopes to continue this tradition of excellence.

### Brain Science and Child Development

Groundbreaking work, beginning in the late 1990s, has demonstrated that childhood experiences determine important aspects of brain growth and development. There are at least two critical periods of rapid brain growth during childhood: the first three years of life and, again, during adolescence. In parallel with the rapid advance of brain science, a new pediatric subspecialty, Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics, has begun to carve out its own research agenda.

Recent clinical and scientific advances in understanding children’s normal and abnormal development have arisen through a variety of approaches: from a basic science understanding of neural development to the epidemiology of the long-term health effects

of children's experiences. New England researchers have led many of these advances in knowledge. Therefore, this focus of the Major Grants Program will support continued innovations that will further the scientific understanding of children's brain and behavioral development that may inform improvements in the treatment of children's physical and mental health.

### **Innovations**

The Major Grants are intended to fund innovative work that may be difficult to fund with traditional grant mechanisms. For example, relatively few child health researchers make use of advanced statistical and computational techniques, ranging from computational biology to health services research to geographic information systems. In addition to traditional project-related costs, all projects funded under this Program may include the use of funds to bring new techniques or novel collaborations into child health research.

### **Collaboration**

The Charles H. Hood foundation encourages collaboration between investigators and institutions. If the project would benefit from a collaborative approach, please describe the nature of the collaboration and the scientific benefits. Although collaboration is not required for the 2019 cycle, evidence of meaningful collaboration will be considered in funding decisions.

*Note: If the Hood Major Grant funds are intended to augment a currently funded study, clearly describe the additional research to be conducted with Hood funding.*

## **∞ Grant Selection Criteria**

*The Major Grants Program uses a two-stage evaluation process. The Letters of Intent will be reviewed by the Board of Trustees of the Charles H. Hood Foundation. The invited Full Proposals will be assessed by an external review panel.*

The Trustees will use the following criteria as a guide in selecting which candidates to invite back for Full Proposal submissions:

- Qualifications of the Principal Investigator and evidence of exceptional creativity;
- Research Project is highly innovative and addresses either of the challenges in child health as previously defined;
- Successful proposals must describe research that would likely lead to improvements in child health, children's clinical outcomes or health care access, affordability, and quality.