

Steven & Alexandra Cohen Foundation

Cohen Lyme and Tickborne Disease Initiative

Request for Proposals (RFP)

June 2019



RFP Title: Lyme and Tickborne Disease – Research Opportunities (2019)

RFP ID #: Lyme 2019-B

1. Background/Introduction

Lyme and tickborne diseases are a constant and growing threat to public health. Each year, the number of new cases rise and the number of patients with persistent illness swells. However, the diagnostic and therapeutic breakthroughs remain out of reach. Moreover, scientific debate rages over the pathogenesis, diagnosis and treatment strategies for Lyme and other tickborne diseases, which perpetuates clinical mismanagement of patients and continued suffering.

Since 2015, the Cohen Lyme and Tickborne Disease Initiative has committed over \$60 million to more than 25 Lyme and tickborne disease projects. The Foundation will continue to support and track the progress of grants while selectively seeking out new investment opportunities to combat these complex illnesses.

2. Areas of Interest for Proposals

The Foundation is requesting proposals for the following areas:

Proposals should include, but are not limited to, information on the following topics:

- 1. Diagnostics for Lyme and other tickborne diseases:** Development of innovative diagnostic tools for Lyme and other tickborne disease with a focus on direct detection methods and diagnostic tools to facilitate therapeutic clinical trials (e.g. diagnosis after treatment and resolution of disease/symptoms). This could include, but not limited to, clinical assays, predictive or diagnostic biomarkers, and microscopy methods.
- 2. Pathogenesis of post-treatment Lyme disease syndrome (PTLDS) and/or persistent symptoms after confirmed or suspected Lyme disease:**

Better understand the pathogenesis or development of disease/symptomatology after exposure to Lyme disease with a focus on persistent symptoms unresolved by standard treatment protocols. Persistent symptomatology is a hotly debated topic in the research, patient and policy community; therefore, applicants are encouraged to submit projects to elucidate the underlying cause of persistent symptoms, such as persistent infection, immune suppression, auto-immune condition, and/or systemic damage from initial infection.

- 3. Pathogenesis of co-infection/co-morbidity:** Better understand the pathogenesis or development of disease or symptomatology after exposure to multiple tickborne infections or co-morbidity. While ticks can transmit more than a dozen diseases, little is known about how co-infection or co-morbidity impacts the host immune response, diagnostic accuracy, and treatment effectiveness.
- 4. Pathogenesis of other tickborne disease:** Better understand the pathogenesis or development of disease and symptomatology after exposure to other (non-Lyme) tickborne diseases including but not limited to Babesia and Bartonella.
- 5. Therapeutic development for tickborne disease:** Development of innovative therapeutic compounds or strategies to treat Lyme and/or other tickborne diseases with a focus on Babesia and Bartonella.
- 6. Economic analysis of Lyme and tickborne disease diagnosis and treatment:** Conduct an economic study of the financial costs to patient and health insurers of tickborne disease treatment with a focus on collateral costs of misdiagnosis and delayed treatment. The study should investigate the economic value of early, concise diagnosis and treatment relative to delayed care. In other words, how much economic benefit will patients and health insurers/payers receive from early, accurate identification and treatment of tickborne disease (relative to the risk of incorrect diagnosis and potential persistent symptomatology).
- 7. Program supporting new/emerging researchers or clinicians:** Create program to identify new/emerging researchers or clinicians in the field of Lyme or other tickborne diseases and provide relatively small amounts of financial support to further their activities, projects or studies.

3. Eligibility and Multiple Submissions

Applicants are eligible to apply if they are:

- **501(c)(3) charitable organization:** the organization must be recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as a charity having tax-exempt status under section 501(c)(3); and
- **Project activities exclusively based in the United States:** the funding request must be for activities and operations exclusively based in the United States.

Applicants are typically researchers, scientists, and/or medical providers from accredited academic or other non-profit institutions.

Applicants can submit multiple grant requests within a single application round. Each grant request must be for a discrete project (i.e. not overlapping with each other) and be submitted using a separate application form for each project.

4. Anticipated Decision Timeline

The planned timeline for submission and decision is outlined below:

Stage	Date
Request for Proposal published	June 30, 2019
Grant management portal open for application submission	Aug. 1 – Aug. 15
Programmatic and scientific review	Aug. 15 – Sept. 15
Foundation decision	Sept. 15 – Oct. 15
If accepted, formulation of contractual agreement	Oct. 15 - Dec. 30

Please note, these dates are subject to change.

5. Time and Place of Submission of Proposals

Proposals must be submitted through the Foundation's grant management portal:

<https://giveportal.smapply.io/>

The grant management portal will be open from August 1 – August 15, 2019 to accept applications. Prior to August 1, applicants will not be able to enter the application portal.

6. Elements of Proposal

Below are the requested elements for each proposal. Proposals should not exceed 4,000 words (excluding bios) and 20 figures (i.e. graphics, tables, charts, images or attachments).

- **Grant Summary:** Overview of the proposal (max 50 words)
- **Impact Potential / Rationale:** Existing evidence that would support the grant idea as well as the long-term vision for the project and how it would make a difference in the field.
- **Grant Detail:** Summarize the major activities that would be conducted and the related timeline. Please include a description of the methodology, strategy/approach, and/or analyses to enable a robust programmatic and scientific review of the application.
- **Risks:** Biggest risks associated with the project and the steps you would take to mitigate them.

- **Detailed Grant Budget:** Please include a detailed grant budget for the length of the project proposed. In addition, please note:
 - **Disaggregation:** The budget must be disaggregated by 1) project year; and 2) major cost categories (e.g. personnel, supplies, equipment, travel, other costs, indirect costs).
 - **Other sources of funds:** If there are other major funders supporting this work, please identify the source and amount contributed (or planned) for the project.
 - **Indirect costs:** The Foundation will allow an indirect cost rate of 12.5%.
 - **Personnel list:** Please provide a list of personnel and associated percent of time allocation (e.g. Lab Technician – 40% FTE) corresponding to the Salaries and Fringe budget line.
 - **Attachments:** Please attach additional spreadsheets if needed.
- **Leadership:** Bios (Professional Summaries) of individuals who will lead the project
- **Organization Background:** Important background context to know about your organization
- **Key Deliverables:** Please list the key deliverables (up to 5) to be accomplished by the end of the grant period.
- **Project Milestones:** Please list the key milestones and activities for the project. For Year 1, please list milestones / activities by calendar quarter. If project is more than one year, please list milestones / activities for the first and second half of the second year. For years beyond the second year, please list milestones / activities on an annual basis.
- **Collaborations:** Please list any planned collaborations with other clinicians, researchers, institutions, or organizations.
- **Uptake:** Please outline the anticipated mechanism for your approach, products or other deliverables to be used by other stakeholders in the future (e.g. other researchers, other institutions, private sector, clinicians, the public, etc.).
- **References:** Please provide professional references, who can attest to your professional skills and collaborative attitude.
- **Additional information:** Please provide any additional information that the Foundation should consider when reviewing the application.

7. Evaluation Criteria

Each proposal will be evaluated on the following criteria:

- Consistency with Request for Proposal requirements
- Alignment with Foundation's strategic vision
- Scientific assessment: an external peer review based on six (6) criteria:
 - o Significance: Does the project address an important issue or barrier in the field?
 - o Investigator: Are the researchers well-suited to the project and goals?
 - o Innovation: Does the project challenge current research or clinical practices?
 - o Approach: Are the methods and strategy appropriate to accomplish project goals?
 - o Environment: Does the working environment contribute to probability of success?
 - o Overall Impact: Likelihood of project making important contribution to the field.
- Budget and value for investment

8. Budget

- Grants will support discrete, time-bound projects.
- No specific dollar limit is defined.
- Clinical care grants are generally awarded for 1 - 4 years.
- Projects requesting more than \$300K in any year will require enhanced financial review.

9. Additional Information

For questions regarding the Request for Proposal, please email:
grantinquiries@steveandalex.org.

Please include the RFP title and identification number in the email.