

Ono Pharma Foundation

Ono Pharma Breakthrough Science Initiative Awards Program

Program Information & Overview

Introduction

Ono Pharmaceutical Co., Ltd. is a leading global healthcare company committed to delivering new, innovative pharmaceutical products to patients and championing the fight against disease and pain. Ono Pharmaceutical carries out these goals in cooperation with researchers, patients, their families, and healthcare providers.

The Ono Pharma Foundation was established to support academic research in relevant scientific fields, which have the potential of making significant impact on therapeutic approaches to disease. The Foundation's competitive awards program, the *Ono Pharma Breakthrough Science Initiative Awards Program* ("Ono Initiative"), is the embodiment of the Foundation's commitment to focus on and accelerate researcher-driven open innovation by supporting high-risk and high-reward science research projects which have the potential to lead to science discoveries/solutions and, possibly, based on further research, to breakthrough treatments for patients.

This document includes the following sections:

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1. Mission

The purpose of the Ono Initiative is to support scientist Principal Investigators ("PIs") with creative ideas in selected scientific research fields with the mission of seeking discoveries/solutions and development of high impact science.

The goals of the Ono Initiative are to:

- Identify and develop innovative research proposals and results that could lead to the development of breakthrough treatment solutions for patients.
- Support academic research and the career development of promising young and mid-career scientists
- Build strong relationships within the community in order to lead to transformative research aligned with the Ono Initiative's goals.

2. The Ono Initiative

Annually, the Ono Pharma Foundation considers proposals from PIs for research that could ultimately transform human health. Although additional areas of research may be added in future years, in 2026 the Ono Pharma Foundation will only consider proposals for scientific research projects addressing the following field of science:

- **Chemical Biology Research**

Chemical Biology includes all scientific disciplines that aim to understand and control cellular and human biology at the chemical level. The Ono Initiative places a strong emphasis on original research projects showing innovation, and therefore, the criteria for this field are intentionally broad to ensure that potentially innovative and groundbreaking projects are not excluded. We prioritize rigorous, comprehensible, mechanistic chemical biology. We welcome proposals from both basic and applied sciences.

Awards: Applications comprising laboratory investigation will be considered. Project duration may last up to three years with annual funding of \$300,000/year, totaling a maximum of \$900,000 for the normal term of a research project.

The Ono Pharma Foundation will provide up to a maximum of an additional 15% (\$45,000) per year of the funding to be used for indirect costs of the PI's institution. The total amount of the three-year grant would be up to \$1,035,000.

Three Awards are planned for 2026, contingent upon Ono Pharma Foundation appropriations and the submission of sufficient meritorious applications.

Symposium: Awardees will be invited to the annual science symposium hosted by Ono Pharma Foundation. For those invited as presenters, the Foundation will reimburse transportation and accommodation costs.

3. 2026 Application Schedule

There are two steps to the application process:

1. Letter of Interest (“LOI”) must be submitted by all nominated, interested, and eligible PIs.
2. A full Proposal must be submitted by invited and qualified PIs.

The timetable for both steps of the Application Process is outlined below in detail.

Step	Timeline	Responsible Party
Funding Opportunity Program Announcement	November 18, 2025	Ono Pharma Foundation
LOI submission open	November 18, 2025	Ono Pharma Foundation
LOI submission due date	February 13, 2026, 5pm ET *	PI/Institution
Request for Proposal (“RFP”) sent out	April, 2026	Ono Pharma Foundation
Proposal due date	May 15 2026	PI
Announcement of the Awards	July, 2026	Ono Pharma Foundation
Project Start	August - October, 2026	PI

**Addenda, supplemental materials, changes, or updates will not be accepted after the deadline for submitting either the LOI or the Proposal.*

***As a US private foundation, Ono Pharma Foundation grants to Canadian institutions are conditioned on an equivalency determination by the Foundation. This may require additional documentation and information from the institution not currently listed in the application process.*

Brief reports will be required every six months after the granting of the Award. These reports will be a means for assuring that the research follows the approved Proposal in content and timeframe. A final study report will be due 180 days after Project completion.

Selection Committee: Review of LOIs, final Proposals, and selection of Awardees will be carried out by a Scientific Advisory Board (“**SAB**”) made up of experts from the previously identified science fields but external to Ono and the Ono Pharma Foundation.

- *All submitted material will be kept strictly confidential. The selected final Proposals will be attached to the Award document and to an agreement with the Nominating Institution.*
- *A preliminary review of submissions will be carried out by the Ono Pharma Foundation to ensure proposals fall within the scope of research areas and that there are no obvious concerns with the proposed research. If concerns are identified, the Proposal may not be accepted prior to evaluation by the SAB.*
- *Members of the SAB are not eligible to apply for an Award. However, serving as a mentor to a PI/ Applicant is permitted/encouraged.*

4. Eligibility Requirements

Applicants must meet the following requirements. LOIs and final Proposals from applicants not meeting the requirements listed below will not be considered.

- PIs applying must be working at one of the nominating institutions. Nominating institutions might be replaced or added in subsequent years.
- The PI must have an MD and/or a PhD degree.
- The PI must be a new applicant to the Ono Initiative, or, if they are a returning applicant, must be applying for a project different from the one they previously proposed.
- The PI must be a young and/or mid-career scientist (15 years or less of experience since starting an independent academic position).
- The PI must not have been, nor currently be, engaged in other sponsored research and/or collaborative research with Ono Pharmaceutical Co., Ltd. and/or grant program with Ono Pharma Foundation.
- The PI may not apply for funding to amplify current work. However, PIs may research a new idea based on a prior finding of the PI.
- The PI must not be a healthcare professional (defined as individuals currently holding an active state license for which they are (a) qualified to prescribe, administer, use or supply any medicinal or medical products or (b) perform any professional clinical services). A PI with an MD but without an active state medical license is still eligible.
- PIs serving on a healthcare formulary or similar committee are not eligible.

2026 Applicant Nominating Institutions in Chemical Biology Research *

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| 1. Albert Einstein College of Medicine | 36. The University of Texas – Austin |
| 2. Baylor College of Medicine | 37. The University of Texas – Southwestern Medical Center |
| 3. Boston College | 38. The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center |
| 4. California Institute of Technology | 39. The University of Utah |
| 5. Carnegie Mellon University | 40. University of Alberta |
| 6. Columbia University | 41. University of British Columbia |
| 7. Cornell University | 42. University of California – Berkeley |
| 8. Duke University | 43. University of California – Davis |
| 9. Emory University | 44. University of California – Irvine |
| 10. Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Institute | 45. University of California – Los Angeles |
| 11. Georgia Institute of Technology | 46. University of California – San Diego |
| 12. Harvard Medical School | 47. University of California – San Francisco |
| 13. Harvard University | 48. University of California – Santa Barbara |
| 14. Johns Hopkins University | 49. University of California – Santa Cruz |
| 15. Massachusetts Institute of Technology | 50. University of Colorado Anschutz |
| 16. McGill University | 51. University of Florida |
| 17. Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center | 52. University of Illinois at Urbana – Champaign |
| 18. Michigan State University | 53. University of Massachusetts – Amherst |
| 19. Northeastern University | 54. University of Massachusetts Chan Medical School |
| 20. Northwestern University | 55. University of Michigan |
| 21. Ohio State University | 56. University of Minnesota |
| 22. Oregon Health and Science University | 57. University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill |
| 23. Princeton University | 58. University of Notre Dame |
| 24. Purdue University | 59. University of Pittsburgh |
| 25. Rice University | 60. University of Southern California |
| 26. Salk Institute for Biological Studies | 61. University of Toronto |
| 27. Stanford University | 62. University of Virginia |
| 28. Texas A&M University | 63. University of Washington |
| 29. The Broad Institute of Harvard and MIT | 64. University of Wisconsin – Madison |
| 30. The Ohio State University | 65. Vanderbilt University |
| 31. The Pennsylvania State University | 66. Washington University in St Louis |
| 32. The Rockefeller University | 67. Yale University |
| 33. The Scripps Research Institute | |
| 34. The University of Arizona | |
| 35. The University of Chicago | |

**Each Nominating Institution may nominate up to two (2) applicants in Chemical Biology Research.*

5. Research Proposal Requirements

Applicant PIs are expected to:

- Propose meaningfully novel research.
- Design studies and generate data to address at least one of the aforementioned fields of science.
- Complete the research, generally, within the full term of the Awards.

6. Selection Criteria

Applications will be assessed, and Awards will be made based upon the following criteria:

- Scientific merit of the research Proposal
- Relevance of proposed research to the mission of the Ono Initiative
 - Significance
 - Innovation
 - Approach
- Technical considerations for the research
- Qualifications and relevant experience of the PI
- Evidence of a suitable research environment

7. How to Apply

- **LOI:** PIs should first contact the administration office of their Institution. Institutions will be asked to nominate PIs, but only the PI may submit LOIs and Proposals. An LOI should be submitted through the Ono Pharma Foundation online portal. To access the website, please click on the link below, select “Submit a Request,” and follow the online instructions. If this is your first time visiting the portal, you will be sent your login information within 24 hours of submitting your “Registration”.

Please see below for links to the Ono Pharma Foundation website and application portal:

- Website: www.onofound.org
- Application Portal: <https://ono.fluxx.io>
- **LOI:** An LOI submission must include the following information:
 - Contact Information
 - Abstract – no more than 150 words. The abstract should provide a brief description of the PI’s project’s goal(s).
 - Vision of the Proposed Research – one-page, single-spaced 12pt font. CV and reference list do not contribute to word/page limit. Figures may be included but should not exceed an additional two pages. If there is a figure that best explains your project, please indicate which one. This will help our Scientific Advisory Board as they review.
 - Curriculum vitae (“**CV**”)
 - The CV may not exceed five pages;
 - NIH Biosketch format is preferred. The new format extends the page limit for the biosketch from four to **five pages** and allows researchers to describe up to five of their most significant contributions to science, along with the historical background that framed their research. Investigators can outline the central findings of prior work and the influence of those findings on the investigator’s field.
 - The CV must disclose all grants or awards currently received or pending which would be relevant to the Proposed Research.

- **Proposal:** PIs invited to submit a full Proposal will receive instructions via email and in the Ono Pharma Foundation portal. The Proposal – in response to the RFP – must include the following information:
 - A detailed Research Plan (no more than seven pages), including:
 1. Background on the area(s) of research and key gaps in our understanding of the field or important challenges to be addressed.
 2. Recent progress by the PI, focusing on the past five years. Do *not* repeat material adequately covered in the prior CV or Biosketch. Do *not* include a Publication List. Only include references as needed from the CV.
 3. Overview of the Research Proposal. This should be a description of the key questions or challenges the PI plans to address and the general strategies. A detailed experimental plan is not expected. The proposed direction of the PI's scientific project will be considered in the review process. If new opportunities or directions arise during the course of the research, the PI will have the flexibility to change course and pursue them. If such a development should occur, the PI should be in touch promptly with the Ono Pharma Foundation.
 - Other research, describing overlap with Ono Initiative
 - Itemized PI budget for the Proposal– not part of the Proposal page/word limit
 - If needed, the prior CV can be updated.

8. Frequently Asked Questions

See the *Frequently Asked Questions* (“FAQs”) for additional help. You may also e-mail questions to TCC Group: ono@tccgrp.com.