

Masonic Institute for the Developing Brain REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

The Masonic Institute for the Developing Brain (MIDB) is pleased to announce its annual seed grant competition. Two award mechanisms will be supported in the current year: one for graduate students/trainees/fellows and one for faculty. We welcome proposals that represent the full breadth of MIDB researcher interests in neurobehavioral development – from basic science to clinical and translational research, to intervention studies and implementation science. Human clinical, cognitive, behavioral, or affective scientific studies are encouraged as are preclinical studies that contribute to our understanding of the developing brain. Work that has clinical implications and/or includes community partners is encouraged. We are committed to a varied and multidisciplinary research portfolio that advances brain health through innovative, evidence-based research.

MIDB Trainee Awards: Proposals may request up to \$20,000. Up to 5 grants will be awarded.

These awards are intended to support graduate students and postdoctoral trainees (including medical residents and medical fellows) who are pursuing training in child development, psychology, psychiatry, neuroscience, or a related discipline. Human/clinical as well as preclinical studies are eligible. The proposed work must be consistent with the [mission of MIDB](#) and preferably conducted at MIDB. Cross-departmental and/or interdisciplinary collaborative work is highly encouraged but not required for the trainee award. Applicants must indicate who is advising/mentoring their work.

Application instructions:

- A. **Letter of intent (LOI).** Please submit a LOI by **April 24, 2026**. This should include your name, your position (graduate student, postdoctoral trainee, resident or fellow), your home department, the tentative title of your project, the names and affiliations of your research mentor(s), and a brief synopsis of your proposal's rationale/significance, aims, approach, and potential impact. As applicable, indicate which MIDB service hubs will be utilized to facilitate the research. The LOI should be written as a formal letter and no more than one page.
- B. **Full proposal.** If your LOI is approved, you will be notified and instructed to submit a full proposal by **June 24, 2026**. Please schedule a discussion with relevant MIDB hub service leads (if warranted) to discuss their role and budget needs early in the development process for your full proposal. Full proposals should be understandable to a general scientific audience and avoid the use of discipline-specific jargon and acronyms. Please submit the following as one single integrated PDF document:
 - a. Research proposal (limited to 3 single-spaced pages; 0.5 inch margins; 11 pt Arial or Times New Roman font) which includes your study aims, background/rationale for the proposed project, methods, and data analytic plan.
 - b. Hub statement: Identify whether the study will take place at MIDB and which MIDB hubs will be utilized to facilitate the research. Use of MIDB hub services is encouraged but not required. Descriptions of these services can be found on this [Seed Grant Resources page](#). If your proposal does not necessitate support from any of the service hubs, state why/how you already have the

- support you need.
- c. Lay summary: A one paragraph summary describing the goals of the project in lay language and how the results will further the mission of MIDB
 - d. Up-to-date NIH biosketch for the applicant, their primary mentor(s), and any other key personnel
 - e. Current transcript if you are a graduate student (this can be an unofficial transcript)
 - f. A letter of endorsement from proposed mentor(s) – no more than one page.
 - g. Detailed budget and budget justification with timeline. Either one- or two-year research plan duration is acceptable with a total budget not to exceed \$20,000. Note that budgets cannot include funds for graduate student support/stipends or for faculty salaries. Within your budget justification, please include the support, if any, that you will need from MIDB (e.g., technician time; scanning hours; EEG facility – if you include funds for the service hub be sure to budget for the hub PM).
 - h. Please include information regarding the project's IRB/IACUC status.

MIDB Interdisciplinary Faculty Research Awards: Proposals may request up to \$100,000 paid over 2 years (up to \$50,000 per year). Up to 4 grants will be awarded.

MIDB Faculty Research grants are intended to encourage exploratory/developmental research by providing support for early stages of project development that could lead to subsequent externally funded projects (e.g., NIH R21 or R01 grants). As above, proposals can involve preclinical or human research and must have direct application to the [mission of MIDB](#). Faculty from all ranks are eligible to apply. Applicants must have a position that is in a faculty or P&A research track (must meet PI status) to apply for this award. Interdisciplinary research will be prioritized in review (e.g., research involving faculty or scientific personnel from at least two departmental units, divisions, or schools) and the project must utilize the services of at least two [MIDB research hubs](#).

Application instructions:

- A. **LOI phase.** Please submit your LOI by **April 24, 2026**, including your name, your position, your department, and name/positions/departments of key investigators, the tentative title of your project, a brief synopsis of your proposal's rationale/significance, aims, approach, and highlight the potential impact and interdisciplinary nature of your team/proposed work. Indicate which MIDB service hubs will be utilized to facilitate the research. The LOI should be written as a formal letter and no more than one page.
- B. **Full proposal.** If your LOI is approved, you will be notified and instructed to submit a full proposal by **June 24, 2026**. Please schedule a discussion with relevant MIDB hub service leads (if warranted) to discuss their role and budget needs early in the development process for your full proposal. Full proposals should be understandable to a general scientific audience and avoid the use of discipline-specific jargon and acronyms. Please submit the following as one single integrated PDF document:
 - a. Research proposal (limited to 3 single-spaced pages; 0.5-inch margins; 11pt Arial or Times New Roman font) should include a detailed description of the project (aims, background, methods, data analytic plan, and highlight the

- significance, innovation, and interdisciplinary nature of the work).
- b. Hub statement: Identify whether the study will take place at MIDB and which MIDB hubs will be utilized to facilitate the research. Use of MIDB hub services is strongly encouraged. Descriptions of these services can be found on the [MIDB website](#) under the “Research” tab.
 - c. Lay summary: A one paragraph summary describing the goals of the project in lay language and how the results will further the mission of MIDB.
 - d. Up-to-date NIH biosketch for each faculty member involved in the proposal; clearly indicate the affiliations of each faculty collaborator.
 - e. Detailed budget and budget justification with timeline. Budgets of up to \$50,000 per year for 2 years (\$100,000 total) will be considered. Up to \$10,000 can be used to support faculty researcher salary for no more than 2 or 3 faculty members. Funds may be used to support laboratory staff/personnel (including students/trainees) in activities necessary to complete this research project. Funds cannot be used for tuition or non-research related activities.
 - f. List non-sponsored funding sources: For all participating faculty, please list sources of non-sponsored funding available for your use and current balances and note whether these funds will be used to support the proposed work. Cost-sharing is encouraged. Researchers with substantial non-sponsored funds should carefully consider whether this is the right time to apply for this mechanism.
 - g. Please include information regarding the project’s IRB/IACUC status.

Provisions for both award types:

1. The proposed work must fit the overall mission of MIDB.
2. Priority will be given to work that will be conducted at MIDB unless it is impossible to use the facility for data collection (e.g., hospital or community setting is needed given the research question or population of study; the work is preclinical bench research).
3. For trainee awards, the primary or co-mentor of the student/trainee must be an active MIDB member. For interdisciplinary faculty awards, at least one faculty PI must be an active MIDB member. Information about MIDB membership can be found on the [MIDB website](#) (under the “About”) tab.
4. Projects with a duration of 1 or 2 years are appropriate for these mechanisms. If an extension is needed beyond the planned timeline of your project, this must be formally requested. A one year no cost extension (NCE) will be considered if necessary and justified.
5. If the project plans to use MIDB hubs, the project must be [registered with the MIDB](#). The services of the MIDB service hubs are provided at cost to investigators (e.g., technician time; MRI scanning hours). A budget for these services, if utilized, must be part of your proposal. If you have questions about this aspect of your budget, please [contact the relevant hub leads](#) for further information. **Please do not wait until the last minute to seek guidance regarding hub services or associated costs.** We cannot guarantee that they will be able to accommodate your request. Once your LOI is approved, we encourage you to immediately schedule time with the service hub representatives.
6. Funds will not be allocated until IRB/IACUC approval is obtained.
7. We anticipate that awards will be allocated in the late summer with start dates to begin around September 1, 2026.
8. **To submit your application**, please email all requested components to this address: midbresearch@umn.edu. Please include a subject heading of “MIDB seed grant application attached”. If you have questions, contact Brie Katterjohn, MIDB Research

Administrative Associate at katte021@umn.edu.

REVIEW / EVALUATION: A subcommittee of the Research Advisory Council including the MIDB CSO will evaluate all LOIs and determine which applicants to invite for a full proposal. Review considerations include the following: 1) innovation and significance of the work for advancing brain health from the earliest phases of development throughout the lifespan; 2) likelihood of return on investment (e.g., data collected will anchor a successful R submission or generate data and subsequent products that will augment career progression for the investigator); 3) maintaining a diverse funding portfolio – we want to fund investigators from all MIDB stakeholder units, different types of research (e.g., clinical and preclinical) and across levels of analysis, and varying degrees of high-risk high-reward research; 4) availability of non-sponsored funds to complete the project. Reviewers will be Research Advisory Committee (RAC)/MIDB members and drawn from the larger research community at the University of Minnesota/Medical School as expertise requires. Full proposals will be reviewed by at least two faculty members. Review criteria include those stated above as well as NIH-like criteria of the importance of the research question, rigor and feasibility of the approach, and expertise of the study team to conduct this work. All applications and their corresponding reviews will be considered by the multidisciplinary MIDB Research Advisory Council who will make funding recommendations to the directors.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS: An interim progress report will be required after year one (for multi-year awards) and a final progress report and financial report of funds expended will be required 30 days after the end of the award period. A 1-year extension request will be considered on an as-needed basis. If money remains after the extension, PIs will be notified that funds will be recovered by MIDB.