

Bioethics Grant Program, Spring 2016

Making a Difference in Real-World Bioethics Dilemmas

The Greenwall Foundation will fund the next cycle of its bioethics grants program, ***Making a Difference in Real-World Bioethics Dilemmas***, to support research to help resolve an important emerging or unanswered bioethics problem in clinical care, biomedical research, public health practice, or public policy. Our aim is to fund projects that will have a **real-world, practical impact**. Priority for funding will be given to **collaborative projects** involving a bioethics scholar and persons working in other fields in which bioethics dilemmas arise, for example, clinical care, scientific research, technology innovation, or public service. Projects may be either empirical or conceptual/normative. Letters of intent are due **January 8, 2016** by 12:00pm ET, for projects to begin on or after **July 1, 2016**.

For this cycle, **priority topics** are:

- **Ethical and policy issues in new approaches to protecting research participants.** With proposed revisions to the Common Rule underway, the Foundation encourages projects concerning the effectiveness of existing and evolving protections for research participants. Projects might explore, for example, the distinction between biospecimens and information derived from biospecimens, the adequacy of privacy safeguards, alternative models of informed consent, additional safeguards and best practices for respecting potentially vulnerable individuals (including persons whose capacity to consent might be impaired), and the operation of the minimal risk standard in practice. *This is a new priority topic for this cycle.*
- **Ethical and policy issues related to advances in biomedical research and the translation of research into clinical practice**, including:
 - The increasing use of big data and mobile health applications in clinical care and research;
 - Advances in neuroscience and in research and clinical care of persons with degenerative brain diseases; and
 - The impact of changes in the FDA regulatory process on access to new therapies and the safety of approved therapies.
- **Ethical and policy issues that are particularly salient in certain cultural, ethnic, and demographic communities**, including dilemmas arising in health disparities research, in clinical and system interventions to reduce health disparities, and in clinical care. We are particularly interested in policies and procedures that, while neutral on their face, may have unintended adverse consequences in practice for certain groups.

Proposals for projects that address other real-world, practical bioethics problems are also welcome.

In evaluating proposals, the Foundation will consider:

- The real-world importance of the bioethics problem to be studied and the likelihood the project will have a constructive real-world impact.
- The innovative nature of the project's approach and how it goes beyond previous work on the issue.
- The appropriateness and rigor of the methods, analysis plan, strategy, and approach.

- The professional background of the proposed investigators, and their close, practical familiarity with the bioethics problems to be addressed. Priority will be given to collaborative projects involving a bioethics scholar and researchers and clinicians working on the topic of the proposal.
- The previous success of the principal investigator in carrying out similar projects (mentoring, collaboration, normative implications of empirical research, or primary data collection). Young investigators who have not previously published results from a bioethics project are advised to apply for a mentored project (see #4 below).
- The success of the investigators in publishing practical bioethics articles, similar to what is proposed, in top-tier journals with a broad audience.
- The value added by interdisciplinary collaboration.
- The reasonableness of the budget, including the amount and duration of funding requested. (Salaries for investigators are capped at 1.5x the current NIH cap for the basis of the percent effort allocation and fringe rates will be capped at 35%.) All things being equal, projects with smaller budgets will receive priority.

Under this request for proposals, we will fund four types of bioethics research grants:

1. Senior collaborations
2. Analyses of normative implications of empirical research conducted with other funding
3. Empirical projects
4. Mentored projects

1. Senior collaboration projects. *Grants to allow innovative biomedical or clinical researchers or leaders of healthcare organizations or government agencies to partner with an established bioethics scholar to carry out research on the intersection of their primary work with bioethics.* For example, a leading researcher in innovative biomedical research could bring deep knowledge of that field to help analyze important unresolved bioethics problems in it. As another example, a physician-leader in a safety-net hospital or a public health agency could analyze ethical problems she or he had encountered and struggled with. Both collaborating senior scholars are eligible for salary support.

2. Analyzing the normative implications of empirical research being conducted with other funding. Researchers who have obtained funding from other sponsors to carry out empirical research on a bioethics dilemma or issue may lack support to write about the conceptual or normative implications of the findings of this empirical research. We will fund investigators to write conceptual or normative analyses, providing that the empirical study is well-designed and the findings interesting.

3. Empirical bioethics research involving primary data collection. We invite projects that involve the collection of primary data, are tightly linked to an active real-world bioethics problem or policy dilemma, and are likely to contribute to its resolution. Priority will be given to important bioethics problems or bioethics policy questions, particularly those being actively debated by policy makers. The research team must demonstrate the ability to carry out such projects within the proposed time frame. Methodology should be rigorous (e.g., attention to response rates, representativeness of the sample, and minimizing bias). These projects may have extended time frames and annual budgets larger than \$100,000, however, all other things being equal, cost-conscious projects will receive priority; for example, by adding questions to already-funded survey projects or using cost sharing arrangements such as with existing grants or research trainees whose salary is supported from other sources (provided that trainees do not have conflicting class work or clinical responsibilities). Partial salary support may be requested for staff to manage the budget/finances and

administration as appropriate. Proposals may be submitted to collect pilot or preliminary data for a larger project to be funded by another source.

4. Mentored research projects. *Awards to a senior bioethics researcher to carry out a mentored bioethics research project with a post-doctoral fellow or junior faculty member.* The close mentoring will help ensure that the project is completed within a year. The Foundation will provide salary support for the effort of the mentor on the project. Projects where the mentee already has salary support will receive priority. Proposals in which the mentee has other responsibilities that compete with carrying out such a research project, like courses for a degree program and clinical responsibilities by resident physicians or fellows, will be considered only in exceptional circumstances. Mentored research projects may analyze the normative implications of empirical research conducted with other funding (as described in #2). For projects that involve secondary analysis of existing data sets, the team must include expertise in the obtaining, merging, and analysis of such datasets. For mentored projects, primary data collection will be considered only in exceptional circumstances. Proposals to collect pilot or preliminary data for a larger project for the mentee will not be considered.

The Greenwall Foundation will fund 10% indirect costs to the grantee institution for salary and benefits only.

We expect grantees to disseminate their research through practical articles in one or more peer-reviewed journals that reach the appropriate audience for the topic studied, through presentations in relevant national and international professional meetings, and in other ways that will increase real-world impact.

While we will give strong preference to proposals that meet these criteria, we will also consider exceptional proposals outside these criteria that meet our strategic goal of supporting bioethics research that will have a real-world impact. More than one applicant may apply from each institution, but principal investigators may submit only one letter of intent per funding cycle.

Projects with the following characteristics will **not** be funded under this initiative:

- Projects that implement or make incremental improvements in established approaches to bioethics problems, build institutional infrastructure, or provide bioethics education, training or coursework.
- Projects that simply describe or analyze bioethics issues or provide a conceptual framework, without making practical recommendations for resolving the issues. However, projects that present normative recommendations that are based on previous empirical research are encouraged (project category #3).
- Projects whose main goal is to convene or enhance a meeting, unless there is a well-developed plan to produce a peer-reviewed publication resulting from the meeting.
- Projects to support or extend ongoing or core activities of an organization.
- Projects with a principal investigator that does not have one of the following graduate degrees: PhD, JD, MD, or its equivalent.
- Applications from unaffiliated individuals and from institutions outside the United States. The Greenwall Foundation awards grants only to tax-exempt institutions in the United States.

Please e-mail inquiries about this initiative to rboxt@greenwall.org.

Application Process: Spring 2016

Application Timeline

Letters of Intent due by January 8, 2016, 12:00pm ET

Invited Full Proposals due by March 4, 2016

Invitations to submit full proposals may contain suggestions from reviewers for strengthening the application, and reviewers may provide additional suggestions after full proposals are received. Working with The Greenwall Foundation is a collaborative process. Our goal is to work with applicants to develop strong proposals that are positioned to have the greatest impact in real-world, practical settings.

Projects to commence on or after July 1, 2016

Directions for Submitting a Letter of Intent

Click on https://www.grantrequest.com/SID_1837?SA=SNA&FID=35006.

In order to access the online application, you must allow cookies in your browser. If you have any issues accessing the online application, a common fix is to clear your browsing history.

You will need to create a username and password by clicking on “New Applicant?” under the “email” box on the left side of the page. Please store your login credentials in a secure place because you will need them to access your application. If you have applied for a Greenwall grant previously using our online platform, please enter your credentials.

You will need to save your application frequently so that your input is captured; any unsaved information will be lost. There is no option to save and continue working, so you must select “Save and Finish Later”. You can return to your “In Progress” application by clicking on the blue link on the new page that will appear in your browser. Upon clicking “Save and Finish Later,” you also will be emailed a link to the application portal and a copy of your application will appear in the body of the email.

To access your application after you have logged out of the online application system, use the link that was emailed to you when you clicked “Save and Finish Later.” It is important to use the link that is emailed to you to resume work on an application. If you use the link listed here, you will always be brought to a NEW application, not the one you were previously working on.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the online application process, please contact Rebekkah Buxt by email at rboxt@greenwall.org or phone at 212-679-7266. We will not accept late applications because of technical issues with the online application portal, so please try logging in and entering your information in advance of the deadline.

Letters of intent require the following information be entered into our online application from:

- PI Contact information (please do not input administrative assistant information; this should be the best contact information for the principal investigator)
- Title
- Type of project: senior collaboration, normative implications, empirical, or mentored project
- Priority topic area, if any: ethical and policy issues in new approaches to protecting research participants, ethical and policy issues related to advances in biomedical and clinical research and the translation of research into clinical practice, or ethical and policy issues that are particularly salient in certain cultural, ethnic, and demographic communities
- The amount and duration of funding requested (salaries for investigators are capped at 1.5x the current NIH cap for the basis of the percent effort allocation and fringe rates will be capped at 35%)
- A one-sentence summary of the project for a lay audience
- Names of the proposed research team and copies of CVs (no more than 3 pages each, single-spaced, highlighting publications relevant to the application) of the two main investigators (or mentee and mentor), all in NIH-style biosketch format
- A narrative organized around the following headers:
 - The bioethics problem to be addressed
 - The specific aims or research questions of the project
 - How the proposed project is innovative and goes beyond the current work on the problem, particularly in its potential to have a real-world impact
 - The nature of peer-reviewed publication(s) expected from the project and how the target journal's audience includes key individuals who can change practice or policy

This narrative should be no longer than 3 double-spaced pages plus references. Please do not send any additional information. Please title it: "PI Last Name, Institution, Project Title."

Letters of intent for this cycle must be submitted [online](#) by January 8, 2016 at 12:00pm ET.

However we **strongly** encourage applicants to submit letters of intent earlier, so that they have time to correct any technical errors that might arise during the application process. Invited full proposals will be due March 4, 2016, with project periods to start on or after July 1, 2016. Because of the relatively tight deadline

for full proposals, with financial information approved by an appropriate officer, there may be some allowance for budget deadlines. However, priority will be given to fully completed proposals.

We will fund another cycle of grants in Fall 2016. The request for proposals and due date for this cycle will be announced in Summer 2016.