Chan Zuckerberg Initiative

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
Advancing Imaging Through Collaborative Projects RFA and
Dynamic Imaging RFA

This FAQ aims to answer questions about the two recently announced requests for applications (RFA). Many items are addressed in the Advancing Imaging Through Collaborative Projects [RFA packet](#) and Dynamic Imaging [RFA packet](#) and we encourage you to read those materials carefully. Please contact sciencegrants@chanzuckerberg.com with additional questions.

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Advancing Imaging Through Collaborative Projects RFA

Scope & Project Alignment

If new instruments are adopted, is there room for additional design development, or is the RFA geared towards instrument replication?
We do not support technology development within this RFA, but minor adjustments aimed to improve the adoption of the new technology are allowed.

What imaging modalities are eligible for adoption? Can we apply with a project that aims for validation and dissemination of new medical imaging, preclinical imaging, or image analysis methods?
Yes, all these modalities are eligible.

One of the supported categories of the RFA is "Validation and Dissemination of New Imaging Technologies." What qualifies as a "new imaging technology"? Does it refer to equipment that an imaging core did not have and would like to obtain?
The focus of this RFA is to improve collaboration between imaging technology developers and user communities. It is not the priority of the RFA to support the adoption of commercially-available new equipment by Imaging cores unless the adoption of this technology can be demonstrated to lead to impactful cross-institutional and interdisciplinary collaboration.

Budget & Eligible Expenses

What is the budget limit?
There is no explicit budget limit. Proposed budgets should reflect the project scope. Proposals requesting amounts exceeding $350,000 USD will be subject to additional scrutiny.

What are the eligible expense categories?
Supported expenses are listed on the RFA web page at the end of the Opportunity section.

Can funds be used for equipment purchase and/or use?
Applicants can purchase parts and tools necessary to adopt the new imaging technology.

If justified, can the RFA funds be allocated with the Coordinating PI for year one and with a Co-PI for year two?
The funds can potentially be subcontracted or the award can be transferred to the Co-PI in Year 2. If you require this particular funding arrangement please email us at sciencegrants@chanzuckerberg.com to discuss.

What are the regulations for sub-contracting?

The relevant policies include: "Institutions outside the U.S. may not subcontract to U.S. institutions, so please be mindful when selecting the Coordinating PI/institution;" "Indirect costs may not be assessed on capital equipment or subcontracts, but subcontractors may include up to 15 percent indirect costs of their direct costs" (see the "Eligibility" and "Policies" sections of the RFA).

Can funds be used for travel costs for collaborators from the U.S. to travel outside the U.S.?
If the funds are awarded to the U.S. institution, they can be used for collaborators from the U.S. to travel outside of the U.S. Please be mindful when selecting the Coordinating PI/institution. Due to tax laws, non-U.S. institutions may not use grant funds to conduct activities in the U.S., e.g. subcontracting to U.S. organizations, and travel expenses to/from the U.S. International grantees must use all grant funds exclusively for activities conducted outside the United States of America.

Can funds be used for consumables?
Consumables are a valid expense if it is necessary for supported project categories (e.g. for validation or for educational events).

Can funds be used to pay for instrument usage fees at an imaging core or at the technology developer's lab?
This is a valid expense if it is aligned with the project scope. Examples of projects with instrument usage fees being a valid expense include validation of a new technology, generation of educational materials, and hands-on trainings.

Can funds be used to upgrade the software and workstation that operate an instrument, if that is necessary to adopt a new technology?
Yes.

Coordinating PI and Co-PIs

Can postdocs (not independent researchers) apply as PI and/or Co-PI?
Postdoctoral researchers can apply as Co-PIs.

I will soon be starting a faculty position. Am I eligible to apply?
Yes, provided that the faculty position is independent and active by the award start date (estimated to be March 1, 2023).

Are grantees from other programs eligible?
Yes, grantees from other CZI programs (including within or outside of the Imaging Program) are eligible to apply. Applicants can also apply to both the Dynamic Imaging and the Advancing Imaging through Collaborative Projects RFAs as long as the work is distinct.

Is it required to have a U.S.-based Coordinating PI or co-PI(s) to apply?
No.

Can an imaging facility director without a faculty appointment apply?

The coordinating PI should be in a position to distribute funds, coordinate cross-institutional activities, and receive the necessary administrative support from their institution to perform these responsibilities. We are therefore requiring that coordinating PIs hold a faculty appointment or equivalent position.

If the imaging facility is hosted by an institution that has faculty appointments, the facility director must be a faculty (research or tenure track) in order to apply as a Coordinating PI. Otherwise, they can be a Co-PI on the application.

Is there a limit to the number of contributors to a submitted project (not all submitted as co-PIs)?

No, there is no limit.

Evaluation

Is there guidance about the expected type of metrics? Is the Imaging Program moving away from the classical way of evaluating scientific merit - publications?

Publications remain an important way to evaluate scientific value. New metrics will help to evaluate community development work, which is rarely published. The new set of metrics will also help to evaluate the projects quicker and be used to highlight successful projects to ensure sustainability.

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Dynamic Imaging RFA

Scope & Project Alignment

Which profile is better suited for this call: high-risk high-gain novel (disruptive tech) or incremental technology development?
This RFA will support the development of new tools or significant enhancements of existing tools. High-risk high-gain projects align better with this priority.

Will MRI and CT scans be considered as imaging for this call?
Yes, if the goal of the project is development of technology to image at cellular and molecular resolution.

I am developing a technique to develop real-time tracking of biological processes, but it's not an imaging technique. Is my project eligible?
No, it's beyond the scope of this RFA.

Are projects using fixed samples within scope of this RFA?
No, imaging in fixed samples does not align with the scope of the Dynamic Imaging RFA.

Is it required that the technology under development achieves deep tissue imaging?
No.

Is high-throughput brain imaging encouraged for this RFA?
If the spatial resolution of the technique is at cellular or molecular resolution, and the imaging is being performed in real-time, then the project is eligible for the Dynamic Imaging RFA.

Budget & Eligible Expenses

What is the budget limit?
There is no explicit budget limit. Proposed budgets should reflect the project scope.

Will the Dynamic Imaging grant support equipment purchases?
Yes; however, indirect costs should be not assessed on capital equipment.

Can the grants be used to partially fund positions such as PhDs?
Yes. Supported expense categories include salary for personnel to help run the project.

Is there guidance on what constitutes a reasonable budget? Could a proposal be rejected based on the budget alone?

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The proposed budget should be sufficient to accomplish the specific aims presented in the proposal, as budgets vary depending on the nature of the work proposed. CZI will work with awardees to determine a final budget.

Coordinating PI and Co-PIs

Can postdocs (not independent researchers) apply as PI and/or Co-PI?
No. Postdocs may be neither coordinating PIs nor Co-PIs, but they may be supported through a Dynamic Imaging grant.

I will soon be starting a faculty position. Am I eligible to apply?
Yes, provided that the faculty position is independent and active by the award start date (estimated to be March 1, 2023).

Are grantees from other programs eligible?
Yes, grantees from other CZI programs (including within or outside of the Imaging Program) are eligible to apply. Applicants can also apply to both the Dynamic Imaging and the Advancing Imaging through Collaborative Projects RFAs as long as the work is distinct.

Is it required to have a U.S.-based Coordinating PI or co-PI(s) to apply?
No.

Can imaging facility directors without a faculty appointment apply?
If the imaging facility is hosted by an institution that has faculty appointments, the facility director must be a faculty (research or tenure track) in order to apply as a Coordinating PI. Otherwise, they can be a Co-PI on the application. If you have questions related to PI eligibility, please email sciencegrants@chanzuckerberg.com to discuss.

Is there a limit on the number of applications per institution?
No, there are no limits on the number of applications per institution.

Is the inclusion of unfunded collaborating partners allowable (and if so, is it acceptable to include letters of support)?
Each application is limited to up to two Co-Principal Investigators (Co-PIs). Only Co-PIs should upload letters of support. Applicants are welcome to include additional unfunded collaborating partners which should be described as such elsewhere in the application.

Are applications from a single PI with no co-PIs eligible?
Yes.

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Will the experience (junior faculty vs. full professor) of the PI be an important factor?
PI/co-PIs will be evaluated for their abilities to complete the proposed work regardless of career stage.

Evaluation

The Project Proposal section references milestones instead of specific aims. Should we structure the proposal so as to be milestone-driven, instead of driven by specific aims?
The proposal should still use specific aims to detail the goals the investigators propose to achieve, but may use milestones/deliverables that are stepping stones to the aims.

How are applications evaluated?
Selection of awardees will be based on: proposal quality; expertise of the group for addressing the proposed project; significance and potential impact of the project; and the potential of the awardee to contribute to and benefit from a collaborative interdisciplinary network.