

Lions Clubs International Foundation (LCIF)
SightFirst Research Grant
Request for Proposals

Introduction

The LCIF SightFirst program strengthens eye care systems in underserved communities enabling them to fight blindness and vision loss and assist those who are blind or visually impaired. The program funds high-quality, sustainable projects that deliver eye care services, develop infrastructure, train personnel, increase public awareness of eye health, and/or provide rehabilitation and education for persons who are blind or have low vision.

SightFirst funds are now available to support public health research initiatives that produce a definite result which directly influences the operation of the SightFirst program and, in some cases, that of other global blindness prevention efforts as well. SightFirst research projects will evaluate existing approaches, identify and validate innovative or improved program strategies, determine the eye care needs of a particular region or population, and/or assess the barriers to uptake of eye care services.

For more information about SightFirst funding priorities, please download the SightFirst strategic plan at: www.lcif.org/EN/files/pdfs/lcif500.pdf. Other materials about SightFirst may be found at: <http://www.lcif.org/EN/our-programs/sight/sightfirst-materials.php>.

Research Objectives & Grant Award Information

SightFirst research grants of up to US\$100,000 will be awarded to support an experienced individual, institution, organization or consortium engaged in a public health research project to be completed in 12-18 months. Projects must investigate one of the following objectives:

1. Innovative public health approaches to reduce blindness from **cataract** that align with the SightFirst strategies of infrastructure development, human resources training or service delivery;
2. Innovative public health approaches to reduce blindness from **trachoma** that align with the SightFirst strategy of supporting TT surgeries in the context of SAFE strategy implementation;
3. Innovative public health approaches to reduce and correct **refractive errors in school-age children** or;
4. **Epidemiological surveys** in geographical areas where there is no recent data available or where repeated surveys may inform existing trends.

Project types might include, but are not limited to: pilot or feasibility studies, secondary analysis of existing data or small, self-contained research projects which advance work in progress.

Priority will be given to proposals that demonstrate a direct link to the operation of current or future SightFirst projects as well as potential for additional development of the same, wider geographic application and/or immediate impact.

Eligibility Information

Eligible institutions and organizations must have a proven track record of success and may include: public or state controlled institutions of higher education, private institutions of higher education, nonprofits, and governmental agencies or institutions of any nation.

Eligible individuals or groups of individuals include any person(s) with the skills, knowledge and resources necessary to carry out the proposed research as the Project Director (PD)/Principal Investigator (PI) with his/her organization or consortium.

Grant Application Process

Letter of Intent

The SightFirst research grant opportunity requires a Letter of Intent (LOI). The LOI should be no more than three pages in length and include the research question or hypothesis to be tested, a summary of the specific aims of the project and their relation to SightFirst priorities, as well as, the research strategy, budget and a brief professional history/biography of each research team member.

LOIs should be submitted to the attention of Phillip Albano, Manager, LCIF Sight Programs, via fax at: 1 630 706 9250 or e-mail at: phillip.albano@lionsclubs.org. Electronic LOIs should be sent in .pdf file format. Applicants may submit more than one LOI provided that each project is scientifically distinct. The deadline for Letter of Intent submission is **February 20, 2012**.

If selected, applicants will be invited, no later than March 19, 2012, to submit their full proposal by April 23, 2012.

Proposal Preparation & Submission Information

If invited by LCIF to submit a full proposal, the packet must include a cover letter with PI/PD contact information and project site location(s). Research plans must include the following information:

- Introduction
- Specific aims and their relation to SightFirst priorities
- Full research protocol
- A GANTT chart illustrating major milestones and deliverables
- Department resources, collaborators & contractual arrangements

- Project leadership plan (for consortiums)
- Research team professional history/biography
- Literature review, pilot data
- Letters of support
- Publication plan

The proposal budget should accompany the research plan. Cost sharing is not required, but is also not restricted. The budget must be submitted in US dollars and itemized according to the following categories:

- Personnel (salaries, per diems, honoraria, etc.)
- Equipment (including consumables, rentals, etc.)
- Travel

Proposals should be submitted **by April 23, 2012** to the attention of Phillip Albano, Manager, LCIF Sight Programs, via fax at: 1 630 706 9250 or via e-mail at: phillip.albano@lionsclubs.org. Electronic proposals should be sent in .pdf file format.

Due Dates

January 9, 2012 – Request For Proposals opens
 February 20, 2012 – Deadline for LOI submissions
 March 19, 2012 – Invitations to submit full proposal distributed
 April 23, 2012 – Deadline for submission of full proposals
 August 2012 – SightFirst Advisory Committee proposal review
 September 3, 2012 – Notice of award

Proposal Review & Selection

To be eligible for consideration, completed proposals must be submitted no later than **April 23, 2012**. Proposals will undergo a preliminary review during which applicants may be asked to follow-up with further detail and/or revisions by a specific deadline. Final review and selection by the SightFirst Advisory Committee will occur at their meeting in August 2012.

The grant will be awarded based upon the scientific and technical merit of the proposed project. The Committee will also consider the following criteria:

Relevance

Does the proposed project align with SightFirst priorities such that potential outcomes may directly influence program operation? Does the proposed project seek to evaluate existing SightFirst strategies or identify new and innovative alternatives? Does the proposed project seek to assess the eye care needs of underserved populations in countries/regions where SightFirst currently

operates or where it plans to operate in the future? Does the proposed project identify barriers to the uptake of eye care services in countries/regions where SightFirst currently operates or where it plans to operation in the future?

Approach

Are the conceptual or clinical framework, design, methods, and analyses adequately developed, well reasoned, and appropriate to address the research hypothesis? Does the proposer acknowledge potential problem areas and consider alternative tactics? For proposals designating a consortium, is the leadership approach, including the designated roles and responsibilities, governance and organizational structure consistent with and justified by the aims of the project and the expertise of each of the members of the consortium?

Investigator

Are the PI and consortium members appropriately trained and well suited to carry out this work? Is the work proposed appropriate to the experience level of the PI and other members of the consortium? Do the PI and consortium members bring complementary and integrated expertise to the project (if applicable)?

Environment

Do(es) the scientific environment(s) in which the work will be done contribute to the probability of success? Do the proposed studies benefit from unique features of the scientific environment(s), or subject populations, or employ useful collaborative arrangements? Is there evidence of institutional support? Does the proposer acknowledge potential risks to working in the environment and propose measures to mitigate any such risks?

Budget

Does the proposed budget seem reasonable for the requested period of support in relation to the proposed research?

Award Information

A formal Notice of Award will be provided to the grant recipient no later than **September 3, 2012**. Funding may be awarded in two disbursements, with the second disbursement being sent upon receipt and approval of a mid-term progress and financial report. Subsequent funding is not guaranteed, but may be available based upon the findings of the initial grant project and their relevance to the advancement of SightFirst priorities.

Reporting Requirements

The grant recipient is required to submit a progress report and financial statement every 6 months and a comprehensive final report at project end. The reports should detail the following information: expenditures, work accomplished, results, problems encountered and mitigating actions taken.

Project Communications

When appropriate, research findings will be published and made available to ophthalmologists, optometrists and other eye care and public health professionals through seminars and professional meetings. All materials suitable for the lay public may be made available and distributed through the LCIF website and at appropriate events. The grant recipient may be required to discuss their research findings with Lions, the media and others as part of the SightFirst communications plan.

For More Information

LCIF welcomes inquiries regarding this Request for Proposals. Please direct questions or comments to:

Phillip Albano, Manager Sight Programs, Lions Clubs International Foundation	Email: phillip.albano@lionsclubs.org	Tel: 1 630 468 6895 Fax: 1 630 706 9250
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