The Longer Life Foundation

An RGA/Washington University Collaboration

Call for Applications: Developmental Research Awards – 2022

Background:

A collaboration of Washington University in St. Louis School of Medicine and Reinsurance Group of America, Incorporated (RGA), The Longer Life Foundation has as its mission:

> *To fund and support the study of factors that either predict the mortality and morbidity of selected populations or influence improvements in longevity, health, and wellness.*

Scope of work:

The Foundation announces the 2022 Call for Applications for Washington University in St. Louis faculty for Pilot and Feasibility Research Projects addressing topics related to the Foundation's mission. We are looking to fund research studying determinants of long-term prognoses for common human ailments. Preference is given to clinical research that involves the potential for new discoveries rather than the implementation of existing therapeutic strategies. We also fund studies that investigate methods to improve disease prognosis or prevent disease from occurring, thereby improving quality and quantity of life. However, these studies should involve diseases specifically posing a risk or are known to shorten life expectancy.

We are interested in individual pilot and feasibility studies as well as pilot projects that are a component of larger or established studies, such as analyses of existing databases.

<u>General</u> **areas of interest include** *but are not limited to***:**

- Prognosticators of disease progression, survival, and longevity
- Mechanisms or interventions that prevent disease and promote longevity
- The impact of common comorbid conditions on outcomes in diseases that shorten life expectancy or the healthspan
- Cancer screening and tumor markers
- Determinants to further understand the aging process
- Physical and cognitive/mental impairments in older adults and their effect on disease severity and survival
- Cardiometabolic disorders and obesity and impact on health

Examples of <u>specific</u> topics of interest include *but are not limited to*:

- Pandemic risk modeling and ways of mitigating catastrophic outcomes
- Long-term impact of COVID-19 on mortality and morbidity outcomes
- Understanding the psychological factors that prevent many people from following medical advice about serious medical conditions including, but not exclusive to, viral pandemics
- Tracking and predicting short- and long-term population mortality rates and life expectancies
- Risk factors and identifiers of dependence on opioids or other drugs of addiction, including alcohol
- Identifying and assessing risk of mental health disorders and/or risk predictors of suicide
- Long-term impact of antimicrobial resistance on mortality and morbidity
- Short- and long-term health implications of vaping
- Impact of genomics on the taxonomy of disease and, in particular, the future of cancer staging and cancer prognosis
- Impact of climate change on health, wellness, and mortality
- Assessment of engagement and wellness programs utilizing the methods of implementation science:
  - How are they best designed?
  - How to determine if they work?
  - What are key drivers of a pharmacy adherence program and do they lead to better outcomes?
- Modeling mortality through the use of new and emerging non-traditional risk factors
- Tools for pre-clinical screening and early identification of cognitive impairment
- Impact of social determinants and socioeconomic status and disparities on health outcomes
- Novel use of synthetic data to emulate large clinical studies
- Understanding and evaluating the reliability of diagnostic and administrative codes when being used for predictive modeling
- Quantifying the predictive value of family history in assessing individual morbidity and mortality risk
- Analysis of longitudinal data and enhanced predictive value (e.g., blood pressure or other biometric data) measured over the course of time

General criteria for evaluation:

Following are several criteria considered during The Longer Life Foundation's review of grant applications. These criteria are in addition to the topic selected. One or more of these criteria should be considered for inclusion in each application, if consistent with the proposal. No one criterion is more important than any other:
- Applicability to broad audiences or populations
- Elucidation of mechanism of disease, even if patient population is not large
- Enhancement of length or quality of life
- Clear pathway and suggested timeline outlined to achieve clinical application

- Primary prevention of a particular disease or disability and prevention of sequelae or complications of disease
- Applications from researchers with international collaborators are encouraged
- Application of new technologies to questions related to The Longer Life Foundation's mission

More information on The Longer Life Foundation and a listing of past funded studies can be found on the Foundation's website: www.longerlife.org.

Who is eligible:

- Young investigators with at least two years of research experience who are interested in longevity-related research and have yet to obtain independent funding

- Established investigators who are developing a new direction in research on determinants of health and longevity

Investigators must have an M.D., Ph.D., or similar degree in their field and have an affiliation with Washington University in St. Louis. Post-doctoral fellows are not eligible.

Awards:

The project period will be October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2023. The amount of funding for each grant will be up to $50,000 (**direct costs**). Following the review of proposals for scientific merit, budgets may be negotiated with individual investigators. Investigators may request a second year of funding by submitting a competing renewal application in the 2023 grant cycle, in which satisfactory progress must be demonstrated and justification provided for a second year of funding.

Terms of awards:

All applications must have appropriate institutional regulatory approval submitted with the proposal. Grantees will meet with the Chairman of The Longer Life Foundation's Scientific Review Committee at the beginning of the project period to discuss their study, and again at six months to review their progress and discuss future plans for the research. Grantees are required to submit a final report at the completion of their study, or a progress report after the year of funding if a no-cost extension is requested and approved. This report will be posted on The Longer Life Foundation's website.

Grantees are asked to inform the Foundation when their research is published by peer-reviewed publications, and all publications should acknowledge support from The Longer Life Foundation: A RGA/Washington University Collaboration.

Important Dates:

- Letters of Intent are due by midnight of February 18, 2022
- Decisions regarding approval to submit a formal application will be provided by April 22, 2022
- Applications are due by midnight of May 27, 2022

- Notification of grants will be made by September 6, 2022
- Funding begins October 1, 2022

Application Procedure:

Investigators interested in applying for funding **MUST** submit a Letter of Intent to The Longer Life Foundation. All Letters of Intent will be reviewed by the Foundation's Scientific Review Committee and Advisory Group. Only those investigators whose Letters of Intent have been approved by the Committee after review will be invited to submit a full application. Decisions to invite an investigator to submit or not submit a full application are based upon the relevance of the research to the Foundation's mission and the number of grants that can be awarded that year. All investigators are provided with feedback about the award decision.

Letter of Intent:
Letters of Intent are due by midnight, <u>February 18, 2022</u>. Letters should include:
- A one- to two-page description of the research, including project title, aims, method of approach, relevance to the mission of The Longer Life Foundation, and Scope of Work.
- An NIH-format biographical sketch

The Letter of Intent and biographical sketch should be submitted as a **SINGLE** electronic file.

Please submit Letters of Intent to:
Daniel D. Zimmerman, M.D. dzimmerman@rgare.com
David Alpers, M.D. dalpers@wustl.edu
cc: Rachel Hauck rhauck@wustl.edu

Letters of Intent will be reviewed and feedback provided by April 22, 2022.

Application:
Applications must be submitted before midnight on <u>May 27, 2022</u>. The application should be submitted in a **SINGLE** electronic file and must include:
1. Title of proposed study
2. Abstract
3. Summary and description in lay language
4. NIH-format biographical sketch
5. Information about other support
6. Research plan (six pages maximum, excluding references and budget). Please include:
    a. Specific aims
    b. Scope of work and relevance of project to the mission of the Foundation
    c. Background and significance
    d. Preliminary data or progress report if applying for a second year of funding
    e. Research design and methods
7. Plans for obtaining additional extramural funding arising from the proposed research
8. References
9. NIH-format budget and budget justification
10. OSRS Institutional Official Approval letter

Additional instructions:
Format: Single-spaced, 11- or 12-point font
Header on **each page** of application: Title of research, investigator's name

Please submit completed application to:
Daniel D. Zimmerman M.D. dzimmerman@rgare.com
David Alpers M.D. dalpers@wustl.edu
cc: Rachel Hauck rhauck@wustl.edu

For a copy of the Regulations Governing Grants from The Longer Life Foundation or additional information, please email Rachel Hauck at rhauck@wustl.edu.