

# NEXT GEN PREGNANCY INITIATIVE

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**Application deadline:**

December 1, 2020  
(3:00 pm EST)

BURROUGHS  
WELLCOME  
FUND 

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# KEY DATES

<b>Application deadline</b>	December 1, 2020, 3:00 pm (EST)
<b>Finalist interviews</b>	April 14, 2021
<b>Notice of award</b>	May 21, 2021
<b>Award start date</b>	June 1, 2021
<b>Initial installment</b>	July 15, 2021
<b>Award end date</b>	March 31, 2025

# PROGRAM BACKGROUND

Building upon the original goals of the BWF Preterm Birth Initiative, a recently convened Pregnancy Think Tank has helped shape the next generation of BWF preterm birth awards. Growing evidence suggests the interrelatedness of the duration of pregnancy, fetal growth, and adverse pregnancy outcomes such as preterm birth, preeclampsia, intrauterine growth restriction, stillbirth, and maternal medical complications including maternal mortality. Other areas of interest are climate change and environmental impact on pregnancy, complications associated with ART, and epigenome-wide association studies. We seek to expand the scope of this award mechanism to capture these and other pregnancy outcomes as we believe they will be mutually informative and accelerate discovery. Each award will continue to provide up to \$500,000 over a four-year period (\$125,000 per year).

The initiative is designed to stimulate both creative individual scientists and multi-investigator teams to approach healthy and adverse pregnancy outcomes using creative basic and translation science methods. The formation of new connections between reproductive scientists and investigators who are involved in other areas is particularly encouraged. Postdoctoral fellows nearing their transition to independent investigator status through senior established investigators are encouraged to apply.

Molecular and computational approaches such as genetics/genomics, immunology, microbiology, evolutionary biology, mathematics, engineering, and other basic sciences hold enormous potential for new insights independently or in conjunction with more traditional areas of parturition research such as maternal-fetal medicine, obstetrics, and pediatrics. We encourage applications seeking actionable therapeutic interventions, novel diagnostics, and device development for real time data capture, and particularly those investigating mechanisms of racial disparities in pregnancy outcomes.

# ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

- Public or private non-profit organizations in the United States and Canada, including degree-granting academic institutions, research institutes and teaching hospitals, are eligible to receive Burroughs Wellcome Fund support.
- Postdoctoral fellows nearing their transition to independent investigator status through senior established investigators are eligible to apply.
- Proposals should address the biomedical causes and molecular mechanisms underlying adverse pregnancies and their outcomes including but not limited to peri-implantational events, placentation, fetal determinants, fetal-maternal immune responses, biological basis for racial-ethnic disparities, mechanisms relating preterm birth to other adverse pregnancy outcomes, biology of normal labor, genomics, evolutionary influences, maternal complications and other approaches. Proposals seeking to identify biomarkers predicting preterm birth are welcome.
- Citizens and non-citizen permanent and temporary residents of the U.S. and Canada who are legally qualified to work in the U.S. or Canada are eligible.
- Candidates who are temporary U.S. residents must hold a valid U.S. visa (J-1, H1B, F-1 or O-1 visas).
- Temporary Canadian residents must hold a valid Canadian visa (Study Permit, C-43, C-44, C-10, or C-20 work permits/visas).
- If you are a postdoctoral candidate, your visa status must allow you to remain in the U.S. or Canada during the project period of the grant. If a grant is awarded and your visa does not allow for such a stay, BWF may terminate the grant. BWF will not intercede on behalf of non-citizens whose stay in the U.S. or Canada falls out of visa compliance.
- Proposals can be submitted by individual investigators or research teams designating a contact principal investigator. At least one member of the team must have training and expertise outside the traditional areas of reproductive science.
- BWF is also interested in Preterm Birth Risk Stratification using artificial intelligence and machine learning.
- Proposals that cross institutional boundaries (partnerships between multiple universities or collaborations within larger universities) are welcomed.
- Current or active BWF preterm birth grant recipients are not eligible to reapply.
- Former BWF preterm birth recipients whose grant has been completed may reapply for another award provided the proposal submitted is a substantially different proposal (must not be a continuation or slight modification of previous work). The principal investigator must demonstrate successful outcomes and highlight significant achievements from the earlier award.

**Note:** Postdoctoral fellows nearing transition to independent investigator status are **strongly encouraged** to contact Senior Program Officer Rolly Simpson directly at [rsimpson@bwfund.org](mailto:rsimpson@bwfund.org) or (919) 991-5110 about their planned proposal, competitiveness for the award, transferring to a new institution, and other issues.

For additional information regarding permitted use of funds, see Terms of Grant.

## IMPORTANT NOTES

- BWF strongly encourages applications from women and underrepresented minorities, including Blacks or African-Americans, Hispanics or Latinos, Native Americans, Alaskan Natives or Native Hawaiians.
- An Internal Revenue Service determination letter of the institution's non-profit status will be requested by BWF staff if said letter is not on file in our database.
- Candidates who currently hold a Burroughs Wellcome Fund award must contact BWF staff ([ktucker@bwfund.org](mailto:ktucker@bwfund.org)) prior to beginning an application.

## SELECTION PROCESS

BWF utilizes an interdisciplinary [Advisory Committee](#) to review applications, interview finalists, and make recommendations for approval by the Fund's [Board of Directors](#).

Selection will be based on the creativity, novelty, and innovation of the proposal as well as the likelihood of a significant impact in the area of adverse pregnancy outcomes.

BWF does not provide critiques or written comments of unfunded proposals.

# TERMS OF GRANT/ USE OF FUNDS

## **Indirect costs may not be charged against the awards. Institutional overhead may not be charged against BWF grants.**

Awards will be made to public or private non-profit organizations in the United States and Canada, including degree-granting academic institutions, research institutes and teaching hospitals on behalf of the principal investigator. The principal investigator's institution is responsible for disbursing the funds and for maintaining adequate supporting records and receipts of expenditures.

Scientific publications or presentations that result from these awards must acknowledge the principal investigator's receipt of a Burroughs Wellcome Fund Next Gen Pregnancy Initiative award. Copies of journal articles and other publications should be sent to BWF along with the annual progress report.

The principal investigator should follow their institutions' patent, copyright, and intellectual property policies regarding discoveries that result from research conducted under these awards. The principal investigator must adhere to all federal, state, and local regulations regarding the participation of human subjects, and the use of animals, radioactive or hazardous materials, and recombinant DNA in their research projects. BWF expects the appropriate federal, state, and local guidelines with regard to scientific misconduct are in place and enforced at all institutions with which BWF grant recipients are affiliated.

The principal investigator should share scientific findings in a timely manner via the standard means of scientific communication, including publications and/or presentations in scientific forums. BWF will not retain any rights to published results or patents that result from the research.

The principal investigator must provide BWF with an annual progress report detailing scientific progress. Institutions must provide an annual financial report. Both reports must be submitted (on forms that will be provided) by June 1 of each award year. Continued funding will depend on both the timely submission of these reports and their favorable review by BWF and its program advisory committee.

The support allocated for research is under the control of the principal investigator and may be used flexibly for items such as equipment, consumable supplies, travel to scientific meetings, and laboratory personnel working with the principal investigator. Prior approval by BWF is required when, within an award year, purchases of equipment exceed \$20,000 or travel costs exceed \$8,000.

During the award period, unused research funds may be carried over to the succeeding year. The principal investigator may receive a no-cost extension; requests explaining why an extension is needed must be submitted in writing at least two months prior to the end of the award. At the termination of the grant period, grant balances of \$500 or less may be retained by the institution.

For grant recipients in the U.S., the administrative fee is intended to cover the cost of medical insurance and other benefits, such as retirement. For grant recipients in Canada, the administrative fee is to be used as a contribution to the employer's benefit plan.

Award recipients may not hold concurrent BWF awards.

Up to six (6) research grants will be awarded. Research grants will provide \$500,000 over a four-year period (\$125,000 per year) and are expected to begin June 1, 2021.

# INSTRUCTIONS ON HOW TO PREPARE AND SUBMIT A COMPLETE PROPOSAL

## Application Process

**Full proposals.** Interested candidates who meet the grant criteria will need to submit one online proposal through BWF's Grant Application System. A completed full proposal consists of data entry fields submitted through the online Grant System plus required PDF attachments. Application Deadline: **December 1, 2020 by 3:00 pm (Eastern).**

Proposal Elements:

- Primary Applicant Information
  - Basic Information of Principal Investigator
  - Education and Training
  - Demographic Information
  - Biographical Sketch of Principal Investigator
- Collaborator Information (9 Maximum)
  - Collaborator Details
  - Collaborator Biographical Sketch
  - Collaborator Letter of Support
- Applicant Institution Information
  - Institutional Details
  - Institutional Certification Form (template provided)
  - IRS Determination Letter
- Proposal Information
  - Lay Abstract
  - Scientific Abstract (template provided)
  - Research Plan (12-page limit)
- Project Budget (Budgets MUST total \$500,000)
- Certification
  - IRB Certification
  - Animal Care Certification
- Reprints/Publications (10 Maximum)

All communications, including the invitation to interview and declinations, will be made through email.

BWF does not provide critiques or written comments of unfunded proposals.

[Download Forms and Templates](#)

## How to Submit an Online Proposal Application

To create your new BWF Grant Tracker account and begin an application submission on or after August 7 use this link: <https://bwfund.ccgrantracker.com>

It is recommended that applicants bookmark this page to return to an application in progress.

Applicants will be required to establish an account to access the BWF Grant Tracker system and accept the terms of the condition of the site. A valid email address that is unique to the applicant will be required. Remember the login and password to access the application at a later time.

Once access is gained to the system, the applicant will need to do the following to start the application:

- Complete a basic details page, requesting standard contact information, and click save. The applicant will then be directed to the BWF Grant Tracker homepage.
- Scroll to the bottom of the homepage and click the new grant application link
- Click the apply link to access the Next Gen Pregnancy Initiative

## Key Application Components:

Be prepared in advance to populate the application with the following data components and required documents in addition to the Principal Investigator (Primary Applicant) information.

### A. Collaborator Contact Information

Enter the contact information of all investigators involved in the proposed project that will be assisting the principal investigator (maximum of 9). At least one member of the team must have training and expertise outside the traditional areas of reproductive science.

### B. Lay Abstract (one page)

Describe a brief summary of your research project to explain the significance, innovation, impact, and relevance of the proposed research to people who do not have prior knowledge about the subject.

### C. Scientific Abstract (one page)

Using the template provided, describe the proposed work, including specific aims that is understandable to a multidisciplinary group of scientific reviewers. Use 11 or 12 point font for the text.

### D. Research Plan (12-page limit)

Using the standard NIH-format, allow one-page limit for Specific Aims and remaining 11 pages for the Research Plan, including tables, graphs, figures, diagrams, and charts. Your plan should describe the interdisciplinary nature of the proposal, the research plan, and the impact of the work on adverse pregnancy outcomes. It should be a complete, cohesive, and coherent scientific document that tells a story. Use a standard 11-point font for the text, and no smaller than a 9-point font for figures or tables. Text must be single-spaces, with one-inch or larger margins on all sides. Number the pages of the research plan.

A bibliography or reference list is optional and not considered part of the 12-page limit. The list of literature references should be directly related to the research plan. Published papers may be cited.

### E. Biographical Sketches

Provide the standard NIH biographical sketch of the Principal Investigator and at least one scientist working outside the area of reproductive science, and all other collaborators/partners. Each biosketch should not exceed five pages. Do not exceed 10 biosketches (including PI). A five-page CV may be substituted for applicants at Canadian degree-granting institutions.

### F. Letters of Support from all Collaborators or Partners

Provide letters of support from all collaborators or partners discussing their expertise and role(s) in this research project and include at least one letter from one scientist working outside the area of reproductive science. Maximum of nine letters.

### G. Budget

Complete the budget and justification that explains how this research grant will be spent over four years. The proposed budget may be used for consumable supplies, equipment, travel expenses, administrative personnel, student stipends, salaries and benefits, and other appropriate expenses relative to the research.

The principal investigator is allowed up to \$20,000 per year to be used for salary support, including fringe benefits. There is no limit for salary support including fringe benefits for other laboratory or clinical personnel working with the award recipient. Equipment purchases should not exceed \$20,000 per year and travel costs should not exceed \$8,000 per year without written authorization. **No indirect costs or institutional overhead can be charged to this grant.**

## H. IRB Certification

Certification from all collaborating institutions' IRB if human subjects are to be used – one page approval sheet only. Note: IRB certification must be obtained by the start date of the award (June 1, 2021).

## I. Animal Care Certification

Certification from all collaborating institutions Animal Care and Use Committee if animal models are to be used – one page approval sheet only. Note: Animal care certification must be obtained by the start date of the award (June 1, 2021).

## J. Reprints/Publications

Include relevant publications or manuscripts submitted for publications that demonstrate your capabilities and research accomplishments. Maximum of 10.

## K. Institutional Certification Form

Using the template provided, complete the form including signature of an authorized signing official (grants/contracts office, sponsored programs) of the principal investigator's institution.

## L. IRS Determination Letter

Upload a copy of the institution's most recent IRS determination letter that indicates the institution is recognized as a 501(c)(3) organization.

## Note to Applicants:

Proposals will not be accepted after **3:00 pm** Eastern Time on **December 1, 2020**. The online application system shuts down automatically at the deadline and the SUBMIT button will no longer be available.

- Plan to submit your application well in advance of the grant deadline to allow adequate time to troubleshoot any issues.
- Out of fairness to all applicants, late submissions will not be accepted. No exceptions or extensions will be granted.
- After the deadline, applicants with incomplete proposals and those not adhering to instructions will be disqualified without prior notice.
- Only proposals submitted through BWF online application website will be accepted.

## Questions?

Questions and Eligibility inquiries should be directed in advance to BWF program staff by contacting:

Rolly L. Simpson, Jr., Senior Program Officer  
[rsimpson@bwfund.org](mailto:rsimpson@bwfund.org), 919-991-5110

Kendra Tucker, Program Associate  
[ktucker@bwfund.org](mailto:ktucker@bwfund.org), 919-991-5115

## Submission Process

Once the application is complete, do the following:

- Click the "Validation Status" on the sidebar to see if any errors are identified. All information must be provided **prior to application submission**.
- All information and required attachments must be provided before the "SUBMIT" button is available.
- Click the "SUBMIT" button to transmit the application to the Burroughs Wellcome Fund.

An automated message will confirm that the application was successfully submitted.