REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Rigorous Nutrition Research on Physiological Responses to Macronutrients

In the roughly four decades since the government first started providing dietary advice, the percentage of Americans who are obese has more than doubled, and the number of people with diabetes, according to the Centers for Disease Control, has quadrupled. The lack of credible nutrition research has made it difficult to determine what we should and should not eat in order to be healthy. However, there is growing scientific evidence suggesting that consuming excessive amounts of sugar is harmful to one’s health. More research in this area is urgently needed, and the Laura and John Arnold Foundation (LJAF) is seeking proposals for rigorous research projects that will assess the role that sugar and/or macronutrients play in metabolic responses and fat accumulation. (Note that LJAF has also issued a related solicitation for proposals that are intended to reduce the cost of nutrition studies while improving the quality of the evidence. Details of that Request for Proposals can be found here.)

For purposes of the Request for Proposals focused on rigorous nutrition research on physiological responses to sugar, the team is specifically interested in proposals that address one or more of the following questions:

- What role does the macronutrient content of the diet play in fat accumulation when calories are kept constant?
- To what extent is a diet that is high in sugar harmful?
- To what extent does the source or form of sugar matter? That is, are the sugars that come from natural sources different from added or refined sugars in their metabolic effects and/or effect on fat accumulation?
- How do the health effects of sugary beverages differ from those of sugary foods?
- Are there specific biological conditions, such as diseases, hormonal imbalances, genetic expressions, etc., that predispose certain individuals to suffer substantially greater metabolic effects and/or to accumulate more fat from sugar consumption? We are particularly interested in identifying clinically significant disparities that could explain why people respond differently to various diets.
- To what extent do sugar alternatives—specifically, non-caloric or low-caloric sweeteners—affect health? We are particularly interested in studies that isolate the effects of sugar alternatives from the effects of the calories in the foods and beverages in which they are consumed.

We will consider measurement of various outcomes beyond what we have specified as long as they assess the impact of sugar and/or macronutrients on health. The most competitive projects will: 1) be designed as randomized controlled trials, and 2) include cost-effective ways to administer dietary treatments either in well-controlled inpatient settings or in outpatient settings where researchers have demonstrated technological solutions to monitoring the diets consumed by participants.
**Submissions**

Applicants should submit a research proposal by 5 p.m. CDT Jan. 15, 2017 to SugarRFP@arnoldfoundation.org.

All proposals should include the following sections and should not exceed 10 pages inclusive of the sections listed below, appendices, and exhibits:

- A half-page abstract
- A concise summary of the motivation for the project, a description of how the proposed work addresses a gap in current scientific knowledge and its importance for health policy
- A brief review of relevant literature and a clear statement that explains how the proposed work will provide a meaningful and innovative contribution
- A detailed description of research design and methods, which follows LJAF’s [Guidelines for Investments in Research](#)
- A project budget and timeline including dates for key milestones, deliverables, and completion
- Disclosure of any potential conflicts of interest of all participating researchers
- Vita(e) of the researchers (CVs and bios do not count toward the page limit).

**Selection**

Proposals will be evaluated by a panel of leading experts. The winning project will propose innovative research projects that are intended to improve understanding of the key questions outlined above and inform nutrition policy.

**Additional information**

LJAF grant funds may only be used for charitable, educational, and/or scientific purposes. LJAF does not fund efforts to influence legislation, to intervene in political elections or campaigns, to promote propaganda, or to conduct voter registration drives. LJAF does not make grants or loans to individuals and does not directly fund scholarships, fellowships, or prizes.