

***Joint RRP and EvansMDS***

**2021 FIRE Grant Program**  
**(Focused Impact Research)**

Request for Letters of Intent for Studies of  
Inflammation and Clonal Hematopoiesis

Up to \$200,000 per year for up to two years

Letter of Intent Submission Deadline:  
February 1, 2021

## **Joint RRP & EvansMDS 2021 FIRE Grants on Inflammation and Clonal Hematopoiesis**

Founded in 1984, The Edward P. Evans Foundation is a non-profit Charitable Trust dedicated to funding research on Myelodysplastic Syndromes (MDS) through its EvansMDS initiative. We are seeking to fund the discovery of new knowledge that will lead to the development of better MDS therapies and ultimately, disease cures. Patients are waiting for effective treatments and we seek to fund the research that will help create them.

The *RUNX1* Research Program (RRP), is a non-profit organization with the mission to improve the quality of life and prevent cancer in *RUNX1* familial platelet disorder (*RUNX1*-FPD) with predisposition to hematologic malignancies. Patients with *RUNX1*-FPD have a 35-50% lifetime risk of developing hematologic malignancies, with over 80% of those malignancies represented by MDS and acute myeloid leukemia (AML). RRP pursues its mission through funding world-class, collaborative research, and building an empowered patient network integrated within the medical research community.

EvansMDS and RRP are working together to multiply our impact on a highly specific area of research that we think will benefit patients if given focused attention. Inflammation arising from natural aging processes and other sources has been implicated in the progression of clonal hematopoiesis to MDS and ultimately to AML. We want to support investigations that address whether **modulating these inflammatory processes can halt disease progression**. By bringing together both the RRP and EvansMDS research communities we are confident that the level of expertise brought to bear on this critical question will advance our collective understanding and enable the development of treatment interventions that delay or even block progression from clonal hematopoiesis to MDS to AML.

We are particularly interested in funding projects that are considered high-risk/high-reward. Priority will be given to projects that focus on *RUNX1*-FPD but other projects are welcomed. If submitting a project without focus in *RUNX1*-FPD, it is imperative the investigators clearly communicate how a proposed study has direct relevance to, or potential impact on *RUNX1*-FPD.

Other immediate priorities include:

- Strategies for therapeutic intervention in high-risk patient populations with germline mutations that predispose to MDS/AML.
- Leveraging FDA-approved or advanced investigational agents that target pro-inflammatory pathways to determine if such agents can halt disease progression.
- Inclusion of data derived from patient specimens to inform hypothesis-driven translational studies directed toward future clinical studies.
- Investigator-initiated proof-of-concept clinical trials.
- Formation of multidisciplinary teams that include expertise in basic, translational and clinical research.

Through this funding mechanism, RRP and EvansMDS have allocated approximately \$800,000 to this grant program. Each proposal can request funding for 2 years. We will support approximately two (2) studies.

We anticipate this to be a highly selective and highly competitive process. Applications will be peer-reviewed by an independent review panel led by both RRP and EvansMDS.

The review panel will be composed of expert academic researchers who will select the most impactful studies for funding. The review panel will carefully evaluate each project and determine the appropriate award amount.

**Application process:**

Applicants for *FIRE Grants* should submit a letter of intent (LOI) that will determine eligibility for full application. RRP and EvansMDS will issue a request for a full proposal to those investigators submitting LOIs found to be of interest.

The LOI shall consist of the following items, which will be shared with a panel of accomplished investigators in this field (the *Joint Reviewing Committee*) as well as the governing Trustees from both Foundations:

1. *Cover Letter* (limited to one page) – The cover letter must include a description of the specific aims that will be addressed by the project and how achieving these will advance the prevention or treatment of disease.
2. *Project Description* (limited to one page) – The *Project Description* should describe the experimental strategy that will be used to achieve the specific aims described in the cover letter.
3. *Cited References* (optional, limited to one page, may be included on the *Project Description* page).
4. NIH-style Bio sketch for the Principal Investigator (PI).

Applicants must be established independent investigators in a tenure-track or tenured position at the Assistant Professor level (or equivalent), or higher, at a recognized 501(c)(3) university or non-profit institution in the United States.

Letters of intent are due **February 1, 2021** and will be reviewed by a *Joint Reviewing Committee* comprised of Scientific Advisors from each Foundation. All documents must be submitted in electronic form, as a single pdf file, by email, to [grants@epefoundation.org](mailto:grants@epefoundation.org).

Applicants selected to submit a full proposal will be notified in early March 2021. The deadline for submission of the full proposals will be in early April 2021. It is intended that funding will be initiated by **September 1, 2021**.