

Overview of the 2020 Michelson Prizes

KEY DATES

- Application portal opens September 9, 2019
- Initial applications due October 31, 2019, 5:00 pm EDT (UTC -4)
- Applicants chosen for full application submission notified in late December 2019
- Full applications due February 7, 2020 5:00 pm EST (UTC -5)
- Notice of award: May 2020
- Award start date July 1, 2020
- Award cycle is July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021

Background

The Michelson Medical Research Foundation (MMRF) together with the Human Vaccines Project established the Michelson Prizes for Vaccine Research in 2017. This \$20 million initiative, funded by the MMRF and administered by the Human Vaccines Project, supports young investigators under the age of 35 who are using disruptive research concepts and inventive processes to significantly advance the discovery of vaccines and immunotherapies for major global diseases.

The 2020 Michelson Prizes will focus on transformative research in human immunology, with trans-disease applications to accelerate vaccine and immunotherapeutic discovery. The committee will be looking for innovative research aimed at tackling the current roadblocks that exist in human vaccine and immunotherapeutic discovery, and expanding our limited understanding of key immune processes that are fundamental to successful vaccine and immunotherapeutics development, (e.g., immune memory, immune receptor recognition, tissue-specific responses, host-microbe interactions, underlying genetic mechanisms, genetic susceptibility, etc.).

The Michelson Prizes are intended to draw young investigators from a wide range of disciplines, including computer science, artificial intelligence/machine learning, protein engineering, nanotechnology, genomics, parasitology and tropical medicine, neurodegenerative diseases, gene editing and others.

Applicants must submit an online initial application that will be judged based primarily on innovation and the ability to bring new insight and approaches to immunology research. Initial and full applications will be reviewed by a distinguished committee of internationally-recognized research scientists.

Award Information

The Michelson Prizes are intended to support individuals early in their careers who possess novel ideas with applications across diseases, and who have significant potential to execute these ideas to affect transformative change in their respective fields. Research should incorporate multiplexed and non-traditional approaches from outside the fields of immunology and vaccinology and demonstrate a high degree of novelty and creative thinking. The successful applicants will clearly articulate a vision that challenges current dogma and demonstrates an ability to look beyond convention to make a lasting impact on vaccine and immunotherapy research.

Eligibility Information

Applicants must be under the age of 35 at the time of application submission (born on or before Oct 31, 1984). Early career independent investigators, postdoctoral fellows, clinical fellows (including residents and interns), and other researchers currently in training positions are eligible for these awards. An eligible applicant, regardless of ethnicity, nationality or citizenship status, must be employed by, or affiliated with, an eligible organization. Examples of eligible organizations include academia, biotechnology companies, foundations, government and non-governmental organizations, and research institutes. Individuals from such organizations, including organizations based outside of the US, are eligible to apply. Each applicant may submit only one Michelson Prize application per year.

While the Michelson Prizes are focused on research outcomes in the field of vaccine and immunotherapy discovery, applicants from the full spectrum of related disciplines, including clinical research, biochemistry, molecular biology, engineering, computer science, biophysics, nanotechnology, neurodegenerative diseases, gene editing etc., are encouraged to apply. *Prior experience in human immunology and/or vaccinology is not required*, however, the pre-application must clearly articulate how the proposed research will impact and advance our understanding of human immunology and/or vaccine science.

Selection Process

Overview

Applying for a Michelson Prize is a two-step process requiring both an **initial application** and a **full application**. The submission process should be started early to avoid missing deadlines. All communications, including the invitation to submit a full application, will be made through email.

How to Submit an Initial Application

- Click the *Apply Now* link on the Human Vaccines Project's website: www.humanvaccinesproject.org/michelsonprizes
- Create a *submittable.com* account, fill out the 2020 Michelson Prizes initial application form directly online, and submit your completed form. If you have any technical issues completing the application, please email support@submittable.com.
- Applications must contain all the required information in order to be submitted.
- Initial applications must be submitted no later than October 31th, 2019, 5:00 pm EDT (UTC -4)

Initial Application Review

Initial applications will be reviewed by highly qualified scientists and clinicians with relevant expertise in the applicant's scientific subject area(s). Initial applications will be evaluated based on innovation, impact and achievability. Each application will be evaluated for its own merit, independent of other applications. **Unfortunately, we are unable to provide any feedback to applicants regarding the specific review of their application.** We will communicate with all applicants once a decision has been reached.

Full Applications

Submission of a full application will be *by invitation only*, after the review of initial applications. We expect to communicate to all applicants in late December 2019 the status of their initial application. If you are selected to submit a full application, you will receive an invitation email from the Human Vaccines Project. Instructions on how to prepare a full application will be provided by email with the invitation to participate. Full applications will be due February 7, 2020 by 5:00 pm EST (UTC -5).

All applicants will be notified by email in a timely manner of any changes in the deadline dates for initial and/or full applications.

Award Announcement

Applicants will be notified of their selection to receive a Michelson Prize in May 2020. The award period commences on July 1, 2020 and ends on June 30, 2021.

Oral Presentation and Awards Dinner

Michelson Prize winners will be required to present a brief overview of their awarded research project at the 3rd Annual *Conference on the Future of Vaccine and Immunotherapeutic Discovery*, as well as attend the 2020 Michelson Prizes awards ceremony dinner, which will be held in June/July 2020 (date and location TBD).

Questions?

Please review our online [Frequently Asked Questions](#) first.

For specific questions about eligibility or the application process, please email us at:

michelsonprizes@humanvaccinesproject.org

Research Conditions

The applicant must maintain a 50% dedication of his/her full-time professional effort during the award period to the research funded by this award. The applicant is expected to assemble a research team that will provide the necessary expertise and collaborative efforts toward accomplishing the research goals proposed in the application.

The allocation of award funds for conduct of the Michelson Prize-funded project is under the control of the awardee and may be used flexibly for items such as salary, equipment, consumable supplies, travel to scientific meetings, and laboratory personnel working with the awardee. Specific limitations include the following: No more than 40% of the total award can be used for salaries, travel costs cannot exceed \$1500 and there is a \$15,000 cap on equipment. The Human Vaccines Project does not pay indirect costs on the Michelson Prizes.

It is the responsibility of the awardee, in conjunction with their institution, to ensure that all academic and research activities funded by this award and carried out in or outside the US comply with the laws or regulations of the US and/or of the foreign country in which the academic and/or research activities are conducted.

Research Involving Human Anatomical Substances, Human Subjects, or Human Cadavers

Research involving new and ongoing research with human anatomical substances, human subjects, or human cadavers must be reviewed and approved by the applicant's local Human Research Protection

Office (HRPO), Institutional Review Board (IRB) or Ethics Committee (EC). Local IRB/EC approval at the time of submission is **not** required.

Research Involving Animals

Research involving new and ongoing research with animals must be reviewed and approved by applicant's local Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) of record. IACUC approval at the time of submission is **not** required.

Specific documents related to the use of human subjects, human anatomical substances, human cadavers and/or animals in the proposed research will be requested **if the applicant is selected for funding**.

The MMRF and the Human Vaccines Project intend that information, data, and research resources generated under awards funded by these prizes be made available to the research community and to the public at large in a timely manner via standard means of scientific communication, including publications and/or presentations in scientific forums. The MMRF and the Human Vaccines Project will not retain any rights to published results or patents that result from research funded by these prizes.

The MMRF and the Human Vaccines Project reserve the right to discontinue award funds if the recipient terminates or suspends their employment or association with their research institution, or terminates or suspends their research activities for any reason (e.g. graduates, leaves the laboratory, leave of absence, etc.).

Award recipients are required to submit a progress report and accounting of the use of funds prior to the conclusion of the award funding cycle, which is June 30, 2021. Any publications or works created by the award recipient must acknowledge support from the Michelson Prizes for Human Immunology and Vaccine Research as follows: Author X and/or this research was supported by the Michelson Prizes for Human Immunology and Vaccine Research. Copies of journal articles and other publications that result from this research prize should be sent to the Human Vaccines Project (contact person will be provided).