

Objective of the 2024 Discovery Grant

This Grant program aims to accelerate research that enables Kabuki syndrome therapeutic discovery. Prospective applicants may submit proposals aimed at the identification or development of: 1) endpoints/ biomarkers/ outcome measures AND/ OR 2) potential druggable targets for therapeutic development. The outcome of the two-year project must be translational in nature such as the validation of identified biomarkers for use in clinical trials, the development of novel therapeutic targets with clear potential for therapeutic intervention, or the advancement of preclinical studies that bridge the gap between basic research findings and clinical application.

Applicant Eligibility

Applicants must form teams composed of two or more people based at two or more research or academic institutions, biotechnology or pharmaceutical companies. Academic and industry collaborations are strongly encouraged to foster synergy between academia and industry, promoting translational research and the potential for outcomes that positively impact patients. Recipients of current Discovery grants cannot apply until the expiration of their current grant.

Award Duration and Funding

The Discovery Grant program provides funding for up to two years with a maximum budget of \$150,000. Lower funding requirements that can achieve the objectives would be appreciated. KSF is also able to co-fund with other granting organizations, or add to funding from other organizations that would improve outcomes or accelerate timelines, as long as there isn't duplication of funding. In order to proceed to the second year of funding, clear milestones (approved at initiation) must be met and data reviewed. KSF does not fund indirect costs or overhead.

Application Process

The 2024 Discovery Grant application process comprises two stages.

Stage 1: Expression of Interest

Option A: Pitch&Connect Event

1. Submit Pitch&Connect [expression of interest form](#)

- a. To facilitate collaborations, KSF will organize a meeting for invited industry representatives and academics to pitch their technology platforms and Kabuki syndrome research interests/resources, respectively. Submission of an expression of interest form is required to participate in the event.
2. Pitch&Connect event
 - a. Academics will be invited to pitch their research interests/skills using a presentation template outlining:
 - i. Introduction to yourself and academic institution, including an overview of your expertise and focus of your research in Kabuki syndrome
 - ii. Your research interest or skills related to the identification or development of endpoints, biomarkers, outcome measures, and/or potential druggable targets
 - iii. Detail the Kabuki syndrome-related resource available within your lab/ institution that could facilitate the collaborative project
 - iv. Showcase your capability and commitment to impactful research including any previous successful collaborations, research achievements or publications related to the proposed collaboration area.
 - b. Industry representatives will be invited to pitch their technology platform and company capabilities using a presentation template consisting of:
 - i. Introduction to yourself and organization, including key capabilities, expertise, and therapeutic area focus
 - ii. Brief overview of the technology platform or methodologies your company employs in endpoint/biomarker development or target identification. Highlight any unique strengths or innovations.
 - iii. Detail the resources your company would be willing to commit to the collaboration, including expertise and technology access
 - iv. Showcase any successful collaborations or projects that demonstrate your organization's capability and commitment.
3. Form teams to jointly develop grant application
 - a. During the Pitch&Connect event, participants will be asked to fill in a feedback form indicating other groups they want to work with to help form teams with mutual interest.
 - b. KSF will help facilitate the first connection between interested parties and participants are encouraged to engage, collaborate, and develop joint grant applications.

- c. Teams formed during the Pitch&Connect event may choose to proceed directly to Stage 2 (see Figure 1 below) by submitting a full application without submitting a Letter of Intent (LOI).

Option B: Letter of Intent (LOI)

1. Submit a joint LOI using the [LOI template](#). It should outline the following:
 - a. Project Team (Investigator names, emails and institutions/ organizations)
 - b. Summary of project with a brief outline of the methodology
 - c. Aims of the research and anticipated results
 - d. Significance of proposed research
 - e. Estimate of timelines and costs
2. KSF will review submitted LOIs, approving those that align with the program's focus and requirements for full application submission.
3. Teams with approved LOIs will receive notification and will be eligible to proceed to Stage 2 by submitting a comprehensive full application.

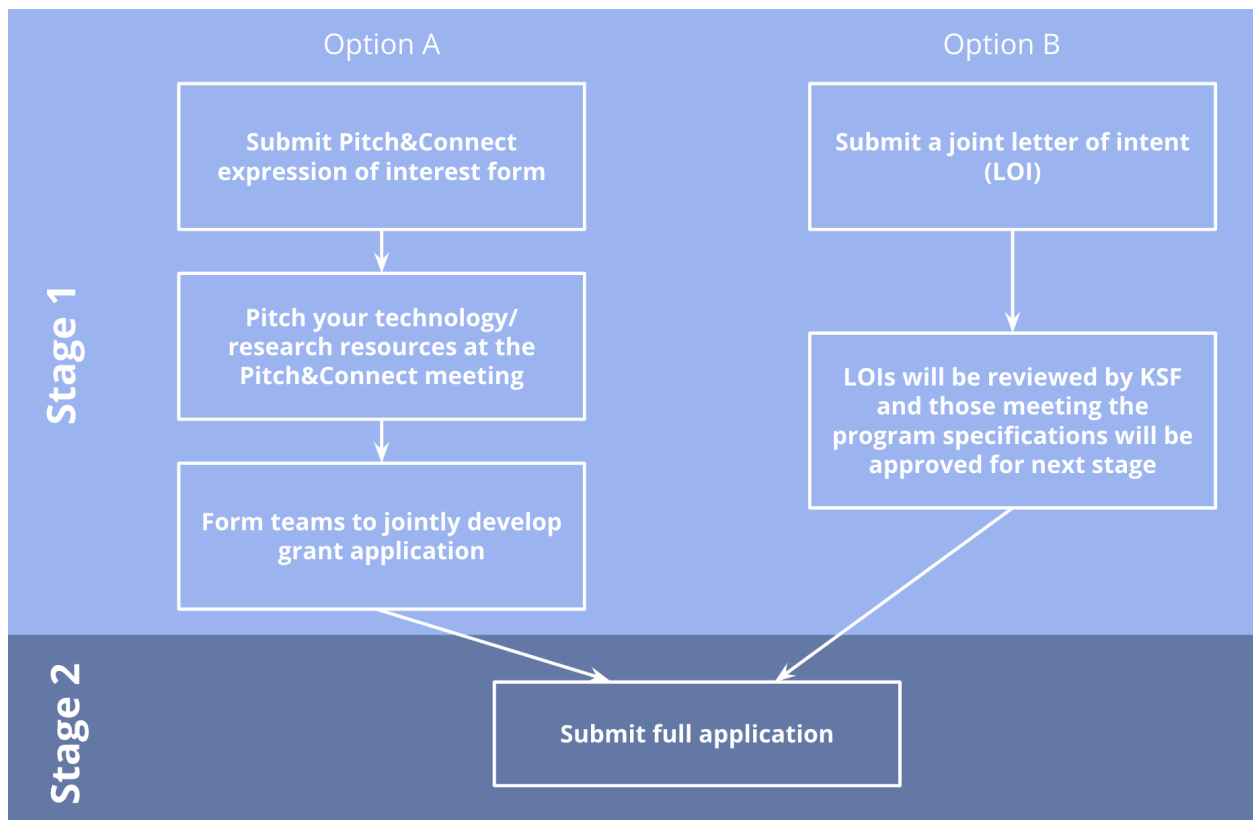


Figure 1: the 2024 KSF Discovery Grant application process

Stage 2: Full Application Submission

The second stage will include submitting a detailed research plan using the [application template](#). Applicants should email the application in one electronic document (PDF format) to clara@kabukisyndrome.foundation.org with '*DISCOVERY GRANT: [Project title]*' in the subject before the advertised deadline.

Full applications should include the following:

- Project Title
- Project Team (Investigator names, emails and institutions)
- Abstract (scientific summary of project) – no more than 350 words
- Lay summary of project – no more than 350 words
- Introduction
- Hypothesis to be tested
- Specific aims
- Significance of proposed research
- Impact of research on the community
- Methods and Procedures
 - Cells, animals, or patients selection/handling
 - The Grant may be used to cover the development of novel models or reagents required for the project, please justify this in the application
 - Research methods/tools
 - Materials used
 - Data collection methods and analyses - the appropriateness and rigor of the methodology and experimental design would be evaluated in depth. The applicant should set out and justify the following:
 - measures for avoidance of bias (for example, blinding, randomisation)
 - number of experimental and control groups and sample size per group
 - how the sample size was calculated, showing power calculations and including justification of effect size
 - overview of the planned statistical analyses in relation to the primary outcomes to be assessed
 - frequency of measurements and interventions to be used
 - circumstances in which power calculations are not appropriate to determine sample size.
- Anticipated results & potential pitfalls with some solutions
- Project timeline and expected milestones
 - Please segment your project into defined phases with clear milestones outlined
 - Continual payment of Grant will be linked to achieved milestones

- Project budget
 - Please break down the project budget into the phases defined in the project timeline. Each item and its cost must be clearly detailed in the budget and justified within and directly related to the project description.
 - The award requires that funds not be used for the support of institutional indirect or overhead costs.

Grant Review Process

1. Reviewers evaluation

The Grant applications will be sent to a group of subject-matter experts bound by confidentiality, who will review the Grant application, provide feedback and score each application based on the evaluation criteria outlined below. The evaluation will be based on several factors, including the quality and necessity of the collaboration applicants, the quality and feasibility of the Grant application, its alignment with the Grant program's objectives, costs and timelines, the potential impact on therapy discovery or validation, and the applicants' capacity to carry out the project.

The top applications will also be reviewed by pre-selected members of the patient community for feedback to ensure applications resonate with and meet the unmet needs of the community.

2. KSF Board decision

KSF Board of Directors make the final funding decision based on feedback from the subject-matter expert and community reviewers.

3. Funding decision announcement

Grant is awarded to the successful applicant and the grantee is then expected to carry out the proposed project within the terms and conditions of the Grant award.

2024 dates

- Last day to submit a Letter of Intent: April 8
- Last day to submit a Pitch&Connect expression of interest form: April 15
- Full application deadline: July 9
- Funding decision announcement: October

Application Evaluation Criteria

The application will be assessed according to the following criteria:

1. Significance, impact and relevance of the proposed research
 - How important are the research questions, or gaps in knowledge, that would be addressed?
 - What is the potential of the proposed research to advance the field?
 - How likely would the proposed research lead to significant new scientific understanding and therapeutic development for Kabuki syndrome?
2. Methodology and feasibility of the proposed research
 - How convincing and coherent are the proposed research project methods and study design?
 - Are the proposed experiments and data analyses likely to achieve the proposed research objectives and milestones?
 - Is the approach innovative? Could it lead to new insights?
 - Have the project risks been well identified and will they be mitigated?
3. Timeline, milestones and financial plan
 - Are the timeline, milestones, budget and proposed expenses accurate, appropriate and feasible?
 - Do the timeline, milestones and budget align with the proposed research methods and objectives?
 - Do the timeline, milestones and budget appear reasonable and realistic?
4. Collaborative plan
 - Is the research team suitable to conduct the proposed research?
 - Does the team have the necessary collective expertise, skills, experience, capacity and resources to deliver the proposed research within the planned duration?
 - Is there a collaborative plan in place? Are the roles and responsibilities of each team member clearly defined and proposed collaboration feasible?

Each reviewer will score each award criterion on a scale from 1 (best) to 9 (worst), similar to the NIH grant application scoring system.

Table 1: Relationship between the level of impact, scores, and descriptors.

Overall impact/ criterion strength	Score	Descriptor
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High	1	Exceptional. The proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion with essentially no weaknesses.
	2	Outstanding. The proposal addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion extremely strongly with negligible weaknesses.
	3	Excellent. The proposal addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion strongly with minor weaknesses.
Medium	4	Very Good. The proposal addresses the criterion very well, but numerous minor weaknesses are present.
	5	Good. The proposal addresses the criterion well, but at least one moderate weakness is present.
	6	Satisfactory. The proposal addresses the criterion well, but some moderate weaknesses are present.
Low	7	Fair. The proposal broadly addresses the criterion, but there are at least one major weakness.
	8	Marginal. The criterion is inadequately addressed, there are few major weaknesses.
	9	Poor. Proposal fails to address the criterion with numerous major weaknesses or cannot be assessed due to missing or incomplete information.

Definitions:

Minor: easily addressable weakness that does not substantially lessen the impact of the project.

Moderate: weakness that lessens the impact of the project.

Major: weakness that severely limits the impact of the project.

Ratings are in whole numbers only, KSF expects that scores of 1 or 9 to be used less frequently than the other scores. Five is considered an average score.

After subject-matter experts have reviewed the full application, the lay summary of top applications will be shared with pre-selected members of the community for feedback.

The averaged scores, feedback from subject-matter experts and community reviewers will be shared with the KSF Board of Directors for their decision.

Grant conditions

As a condition of accepting funds from KSF, applicants must agree to the following conditions:

- Subject to keeping assets and information confidential for publication or pursuing intellectual property prosecution, grantees will disseminate the outcomes, findings, or developments resulting from the funded research to the research, clinical and patient communities. This is crucial for maximizing the impact of the funded research and fostering collaborative advancements in the field.
- Acknowledge funding provided by KSF in any publications or presentations of the research
- Make published results available to KSF for distribution
- Be available to attend KSF conferences to present the findings upon reasonable notice and where expenses are covered by KSF or by the Grant
- Share quarterly updates on research progress and an annual financial update with KSF