2027 Regenerative Medicine Minnesota (RMM) RFP

Building the Future of Regenerative Medicine in Minnesota

The mission of Regenerative Medicine Minnesota (RMM) is to bring breakthrough regenerative medicine therapies to Minnesotans and patients worldwide. Achieving this vision requires not only advancing novel therapies, but also the innovations, capabilities, collaborations and pathways that enable them to ultimately reach patients. Recognizing the need for a multi-pronged innovation strategy, RMM is calling for proposals that align with this vision through the 2027 Request for Proposals (RFP). By strategically investing across these areas, RMM aims to accelerate transformative regenerative medicine therapies, strengthen Minnesota's leadership in regenerative medicine and generate lasting health and economic benefits for Minnesotans.

This RFP is designed to solicit projects that are aligned with one or more of the following objectives:

1. Advance novel regenerative medicine **therapies and products** towards clinical application. Proposed therapies or products should have a clearly defined target use, indication or disease area.
2. Develop **enabling innovations and platforms** that improve the ability to discover, develop, manufacture, or deliver regenerative medicine therapies across multiple applications.
3. Build sustainable **capabilities and infrastructure** that accelerate clinical translation and commercialization in Minnesota.
4. Foster **collaborations** across institutions and sectors that strengthen Minnesota’s regenerative medicine ecosystem.
5. Expand **patient access** to regenerative medicine therapies to benefit patients across Minnesota, including greater Minnesota.

Particular areas of interest for funding under this RFP include, but are not limited to:

- Platform-based approaches that can be applied to many diseases, particularly rare diseases, such as gene editing/replacement strategies, therapeutic approaches, delivery methods, manufacturing models, regulatory strategies, clinical trial designs, etc.
- Device-enabled regenerative medicine innovations such as biologic/cell-device combination therapeutics, biomanufacturing devices or tools, therapeutic delivery, etc.
- Strategies to improve immune compatibility and therapeutic durability, including promoting immune tolerance or reducing immune rejection

For examples of funded projects from previous RFP cycles see here.

AWARD INFORMATION

The typical maximum award amount and duration is up to $400,000 total ($200,000/year) for up to two years. Award amount limits include both direct and indirect costs.

Budget requests beyond the typical maximum amount require additional and strong justification. If the budget request is not sufficient to complete the proposed project or is partial support of a larger project, applicants must demonstrate commitment and availability of funds from another matching or supplemental funding source for project activities that are not supported by the RMM budget request, but are necessary to achieve the goals of the project.

Funds will only be provided for work critical to advance a project. Only request the amount that is needed. The reasonableness of the budget requested will be factored into the funding decision as the program aims to support as many projects as possible. Project costs must be adequately justified and are subject to adjustment prior to the issuance of an award.

See Eligibility and Award Administration sections for more details on expenses, award issuance and conditions.

ELIGIBILITY

Project

- Projects must focus on regenerative medicine approaches that help the body replace, restore, or regenerate damaged cells, tissues, or organs. Eligible innovations include cell and gene therapies, tissue-engineered products, small molecules/biologics, and combination products, as well as diagnostics, medical devices, tools, platforms, processes, methods, and other enabling technologies that support the discovery, development, manufacturing, or clinical use of regenerative medicine therapies.
- Activities may include, but are not limited to: feasibility and proof-of-concept studies, preclinical and IND/IDE-enabling work, regulatory preparation, clinical trial start-up, diagnostic and biomarker development, therapeutic design and delivery strategies, creation of human-based disease models, AI/machine learning–driven discovery and optimization, development of innovative manufacturing, analytical, or data tools, improved clinical trial design and patient recruitment strategies.

Organization

- Minnesota-based academic institutions and small businesses performing scientific and/or medical research in the state of Minnesota are eligible for this opportunity.
- A small business is defined as having at least 2 and no more than 100 affiliated full- or part-time employees, and must be based, owned (≥50%), and operating in Minnesota.
- Small businesses must be registered with the state of Minnesota’s Secretary of State Office (https://www.sos.mn.gov) prior to the application being submitted. Applicants will be asked to verify registration during the submission process.

PI

- If an application includes more than 1 PI, it must be clear who is designated as the primary PI
- PI(s) must be an employee of the applicant organization and authorized by the applicant organization to conduct the research and assume the responsibilities of the PI.
- PI(s), key personnel and any business leadership of small businesses must be in good standing (not have been convicted of, or are under investigation for, crimes involving fraud/misappropriation or research misconduct).
- The funding history and performance of applicants previously supported through the RMM program will be taken into account during the review process.

Expenses

- Direct and indirect expenses are allowed.
    - Eligible direct costs include all allowable NIH costs. Faculty salary requests should be based on the current NIH cap, if appropriate.
    - Indirect costs may be applied at the established NIH-negotiated rate or, in the absence of a federally-negotiated rate, up to 10%. Small businesses should confirm their indirect rate with their financial manager prior to submission as the rate cannot be changed if the award is issued. Indirect calculations for equipment, patient care costs, etc., should be consistent with NIH policies
- Subcontracts or consulting agreements with laboratories, universities, medical centers, industry partners are allowed.
    - Each organization's budget will need to be itemized separately with their institutional indirect rate.
    - RMM funding is administered through the University of Minnesota (UMN). Awards to UMN will be issued as a Notice of Grant Award (NOGA) and awards to organizations external to UMN will be issued as a Subaward Contract from UMN.
    - If an award to an external organization involves work being completed at UMN, administratively, a UMN PI will be required to serve as Primary PI and the budget will need to itemize the Subaward Contract to the external organization (not the UMN collaborator).
- Work to be completed by vendors should be based on accurate quotes.
- Funds should remain and the work should be performed in Minnesota. Exceptions may be considered for materials or services not available within the state, or collaborations necessary to achieve one of the aims of this RFP. The location of collaborators or vendors outside of Minnesota, as well as the rationale for their inclusion, should be clearly noted in the proposal and budget for eligibility consideration.

APPLICATION PROCESS & CONTENT

Applications must be completed and submitted via InfoReady.

The main components of the application include the following key sections:

1. Principal Investigator Information
2. Institution Information (responsible for receiving and disbursing grant funds)
3. For small businesses: Provide a brief overview of the company, including its goals, founders/key personnel, and current status. Describe the company's organizational and business structure. Describe fund raising history (if any) for the past three years, including any grants, contracts, private investment or other financing. Explain how the proposed scope of work aligns with the company's overall business strategy.
4. Application title
5. Enter the total dollar amount requested for the duration of the project (including direct and indirect costs)
6. Provide a brief, jargon-free summary of the project that could be understood by a lay audience. Clearly state the overall goal of the project, how it will be accomplished, how it aligns with the goals of the RFP, and the potential for impact, including on the State of Minnesota's health and/or economy. (This may be made publicly available)
7. If this application is a resubmission from previous RMM review cycles, provide a brief statement on how this application addresses the previous reviewers' critiques if applicable.
8. Describe the proposed innovation (therapeutic, platform, solution, approach, product, tool, treatment, capability, infrastructure, etc.) in development.
    - What unmet medical need or critical translational barrier does it address?
    - How does it improve upon current approaches or competing solutions?
    - What is the anticipated value for the intended patient or user population?
    - Why is it likely to be adopted or broadly used?
9. Summarize prior research, preliminary data or other evidence that supports the proposed scope of work. Explain how these reduce technical or translational risk. Figures may be uploaded as a separate file in the Additional Supporting Information section.
10. Detail the specific aims/milestones that will be completed during the project. For each aim/milestone outline:
    - Overall goal or objectives
    - Key activities and methods
    - Criteria for success and anticipated outcomes
    - Potential pitfalls and alternative approaches
    - Estimated timeline and budget
11. Upload a project timeline showing the anticipated timing of each aim/milestone over the project period. Clearly indicate any dependencies and whether activities are sequential or overlapping.
12. List any current or pending funding related to this project. Include source, funding amount, award period and overlap with the proposed project. If any are intended to be matching funds or supplemental support, describe what activities will be completed and how they relate to the goals of the project.

13. Describe how successful completion of this project will enable achievement of the next major translational milestone or opportunity (e.g. regulatory, clinical trial, follow-on funding, strategic partnership, commercialization, implementation, etc), how it would benefit Minnesota and the anticipated impact if the funding is not received.
14. Describe the longer-term strategy for advancing and sustaining the innovation beyond the proposed project.
15. Describe how the project will create value beyond the proposed work. Explain how resulting innovations, resources, datasets, protocols, processes, expertise, capabilities or other project outputs will be shared and made accessible to strengthen Minnesota's regenerative medicine ecosystem.
16. Describe the roles, expertise and responsibilities of the PI(s) and key personnel (include only individuals who will play a prominent role on the project).
17. If the project involves collaboration, explain why the collaboration is essential for project success. Describe which project components each organization will perform and why the project could not be achieved independently without the complementary strengths of each organization.
18. Briefly describe the available facilities and resources, including collaborator or partner facilities and resources that will be utilized for the project.
19. Briefly describe any IP relevant to this project, including status (e.g., provisional filed, issued patent), ownership, and how it supports future translation, commercialization or broader dissemination.
20. Describe how successful completion of the project will improve health outcomes or care delivery in Minnesota, strengthen Minnesota's regenerative medicine ecosystem and/or position Minnesota as a leader in Regenerative Medicine.
21. References
22. Budget Information:
    - Include both direct and indirect costs.
    - For each expense category in the budget, provide a justification for what it will be used for and how it relates to the scope of work.
    - If a project includes multiple organizations, each organization will need to provide a separate budget that includes indirect costs calculated using their designated indirect rate.
    - If a project includes the UMN as a collaborator, the subcontract must be set up to go to the external organization (not the UMN). Download and complete the UMN Budget and Justification template and include the external organization subaward total as a line item.
    - Budgets must be provided for each individual year of the award.
23. CV/Biosketches/Resume for key personnel
24. Letters of Support Limit letters to 1 page each
25. Additional supporting information, including figures

REVIEW PROCESS & CONSIDERATIONS

Pre-submission Consultation: Prospective applicants are encouraged to contact RMM with questions or to discuss their project's eligibility before applying.

Eligibility Review: RMM program will assess whether the proposed project meets eligibility requirements and intent of the program and specific RFP. Projects that do not meet eligibility requirements will be removed from further review and funding consideration.

In-depth Review: The RMM Leadership Team and subject matter expert reviewers will evaluate proposals according to the review criteria described below. Applicants may be asked to address issues raised in the proposal review prior to a funding decision being made. Applicants selected for funding may be asked to make revisions to their project (work plan, budget, and/or team) reflecting feedback from reviewers. Therefore, the final approved scope of work may differ from the originally submitted proposal.

Review Considerations

Significance and impact

- Does the project have the potential to impact an important unmet medical need or a critical bottleneck to discovery, development, manufacturing, translation, commercialization or implementation of regenerative medicine.
- Does the proposed innovation provide a meaningful improvement over existing or emerging approaches?
- Is there a clear value for the intended users and likelihood for adoption or broad use?
- Does the project have potential to strengthen Minnesota's regenerative medicine ecosystem?

Team

- Does the project team have the expertise, experience, and resources to successfully conduct the proposed work?
- If the project involves a collaboration, is there sufficient rationale for why it is essential and creates value beyond what could be achieved by a single organization?

Project Plan

- Is the project appropriately planned and designed to meet the objective of the project?
- Are milestones clearly defined with measurable criteria for success?
- Are potential pitfalls identified with appropriate risk mitigation strategies or alternative approaches?
- Is there a strategy for advancing and sustaining the innovation beyond the proposed project?

Feasibility

- Is the proposed work achievable within the timeline and budget?
- Does preliminary evidence support feasibility for the project?
- Are the proposed activities appropriate for the current stage in development?

Consideration of past RMM award information (if applicable): RMM may consider funding history and performance of applicants and projects previously supported through the RMM program as a part of the review process and funding decisions. This may include, but is not limited to, compliance with the program requirements, achievement of specific milestones, data, and outcomes for a previous or related RMM award involving the same applicants, project, or innovations.

Funding decision: Applications that have the highest potential to help achieve the vision and goals of the RMM program (programmatic relevance, portfolio balance, adherence to the intent of the mechanism) and this specific RFP will be selected for funding. Although the evaluations of the subject matter expert reviewers are a key factor, the additional consideration of programmatic fit and portfolio balances means that applications are not funded using an established "pay line" based solely on a numeric scoring system.

Confidentiality and Data Privacy: RMM's confidentiality and conflict screening policies apply to everyone who will have access to applications or who will participate in any review meeting in which confidential information is discussed. Through administration of the RMM program, the University is committed to protecting the information submitted in your proposal as allowed under state data privacy laws and University policy. Minnesota's Government Data Practices Act contains specific provisions on public grant data and protected trade secret information. In the application, you will be asked to identify specific sections that you believe qualify as your trade secret information (https://mn.gov/admin/data-practices/data/types/tradesecrets/).

FUNDING EXPECTATIONS, TERMS & CONDITIONS FOR AWARDEES

Stewardship of State Funds

RMM is funded by the State of Minnesota and takes seriously its responsibility to manage these funds on behalf of Minnesotans. The funding expectations, terms and conditions for awardees and program practices outlined below reflect RMM's commitment to responsible and effective management of state and program resources. RMM works to ensure that funding is directed only to milestones and costs that are critical to advance the project throughout the award period. RMM may discontinue funding when projects are no longer progressing toward their goals so that unspent funds can be reinvested in Minnesota research and innovation.

Issuance of Award

The funding source for this program is the State of Minnesota through Regenerative Medicine Minnesota. An RMM award is issued through the Sponsored Projects Office at the University of Minnesota, via a Notice of Grant Award (NOGA) and/or Subaward Contract document, which is a formal contract that defines the terms and conditions of an award and documents the commitment of the funds from RMM. RMM reserves the right to modify or establish funded project activities and the associated budget prior to issuance of a NOGA/Subaward Contract, including, when applicable, establishing project milestones, success criteria, and timelines at its sole discretion after consultation with the PI(s) and based on information provided in the application. The process for receiving the NOGA or subaward (the project funding) can take up to 12 weeks from award notification. Continuation of funding is contingent upon programmatic review and approval of progress reports demonstrating adequate progress as measured by achievement of specific aims or other milestones (see Progress Updates and Reporting Requirements below). Payments are made on a cost-reimbursement basis. For University of Minnesota awards, this is done automatically up to the award amount. For non-University of Minnesota awardees, invoices must be submitted per the contract document.

Use of Funds

Awardees are expected to carry out the project activities as outlined in the approved Scope of Work reflected in the Award Letter. Utilization of funding for any activities outside of the approved Scope of Work and budget without prior authorization from RMM may result in a revocation of project funding, and may impact eligibility for future funding from RMM. Awardees are responsible for compliance with all institutional processes and policies, including contracting and payment policies in utilization of awarded funds.

Project No-Cost Extensions and Change Requests

Awardees are expected to carry out the project activities as outlined in the approved work plan. Any changes to the project including to the team (PI, key personnel, vendors), approved Scope of Work, timeline or budget, require prior approval from RMM. If changes are anticipated, awardees must discuss potential changes with RMM and submit a formal change request including a summary of progress, award balance, change(s) requested, justification for the change(s) and how the change(s) advance the project toward its expected outcome. Change requests must be submitted prior to the award end date, preferably at least 90 days prior to the project end date. RMM will review change requests and determine if the change is appropriate, adequately justified and necessary to advance the project towards completion. Awardees should not assume RMM approval of any change request.

Progress Updates and Reporting Requirements

Awardees will have ongoing communication with the RMM Program throughout the duration of the award and partner with RMM to foster the success of the project. Awardees are required to provide regular updates, including informal and formal written reports as requested by RMM. Informal check-ins are conducted periodically throughout the duration of the project. A formal

final report template will be provided prior to the project end date, and due within 30 days following project completion. Updates include, but are not limited to, a summary of progress, outcomes achieved (such as follow-on funding, commercial or translational milestones, dissemination, etc.), and financial reporting.

RMM carefully reviews all progress reports and check-ins to ensure progress and adherence to the project milestones, timelines and budget. If at any time RMM determines that a project is not progressing in accordance with the expectations based on the project aims/milestones/activities, timeline or budget, encounters an insurmountable technical or translational roadblock, or is not complying with the terms and conditions of the award, the project may be closed and unspent funds returned to the program.

Following project completion, awardees are expected to provide brief annual updates on project progress and outcomes achieved (such as follow-on funding, commercial or translational milestones, dissemination, etc.) for up to 5 years.

The RMM program may use general, non-confidential information about the project such as title, a broad description of the technology, technology stage of development, and achievement of translational or commercial milestones in reports and presentations to internal and external audiences, including the Minnesota Legislature and state agencies. Awardees are expected to acknowledge RMM funding in any publications or publicity resulting from the award.

Research Policies and Procedures

The PI(s) and organization are responsible for being in compliance with federal, state, and institutional research regulations at all times during the funding period, including having active approvals from all regulatory agencies (e.g., Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee). A copy of the approval document(s) must be available upon request.

Intellectual Property

Inventions arising from RMM-funded projects are required to be reported to RMM. As with federal funding, RMM permits businesses and nonprofits (including universities) to retain ownership of the inventions, while also giving the Minnesota state government the license to practice the subject invention. In turn, the organizations are expected to file for patent protection and to ensure commercialization for the benefit of public health. Awardees are responsible for ensuring that any and all intellectual property is properly disclosed to their institution’s intellectual property office.

PROPOSAL SUBMISSION TIMELINE

EVENT	DATE
Applications Due	October 22, 2026, 1:00 p.m. CT
Application Review	November 2026 through March 2027
Awards Announced	April 2027
Earliest Start Date	June 2027

PROGRAM CONTACT INFO

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