



Child Health Research Awards Program Frequently Asked Questions - September 2026 Funding Cycle

Application Process

What is the new 2-step review process for the Child Health Research Awards Program?

Beginning in 2026, applicants will submit a **Concept Paper** as the first step. Following scientific review, selected applicants will be **invited to submit a Full Proposal**. The two-step process was designed with the investigator's experience and the quality of our funding decisions in mind. This change reduces applicant burden and improves review quality by ensuring aligned, competitive concepts move to the Full Proposal stage.

Additionally, the Concept Paper stage provides Foundation staff with early visibility into the full landscape of incoming research ideas. This creates a valuable window of time between Concept Paper selection and Full Proposal submission during which our program staff can proactively provide guidance on strengthening specific aspects of their approach, and connect investigators with relevant resources, collaborators, core facilities, or datasets that may strengthen their proposed work, as well as ensure the breadth of expertise of the scientific review committee.

Applicants **not** invited to submit a Full Proposal will receive **brief, constructive feedback** summarizing the review. This feedback is intended to help you strengthen your proposal for future cycles, whether with the Foundation or with other funding agencies.

What are the deadlines for the September 2026 funding cycle?

Specific dates will be posted in the Guidelines and online application portal:

- **Concept Paper deadline:** *April 15, 2026*
 - **Notification of invitation:** *May 26, 2026*
 - **Full Proposal deadline (by invitation only):** *July 7, 2026*
 - **Final funding decision:** *by August 31, 2026*
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Eligibility

How is eligibility determined for PhD scientists?

PhD applicants must be within **five years** of starting employment after completion of their final postdoctoral fellowship. All prior independent research positions, academic or industry, count toward this window.

How is eligibility determined for physician-scientists (MD/DO)?

Physician-scientists must be within **seven years** of completing ACGME-accredited subspecialty training (or, for generalists, residency). The difference in eligibility windows reflects the additional mentored research time required after clinical training.

Does employment outside the U.S. count toward the five- or seven-year limit?

Yes. All independent research or faculty positions, domestic or international, count toward eligibility.

What other employment counts towards eligibility?

In addition to all previous academic positions, any independent research position in a for-profit company or similar professional setting must be included in the five- or seven-year timeframe.

My appointment is Staff Clinician at a hospital. Does this count as a “faculty” appointment?

If you have completed your training and are within the five- or seven- year window, you are eligible.

My faculty appointment is at an out-of-state institution, but I am currently in a temporary position in a New England institution. May I apply for this grant?

No. The applicant’s primary faculty appointment must be at a New England institution.

As a non-pediatrician, am I eligible for a Hood grant?

Yes. The Foundation supports projects that have direct relevance to child health; the investigators do not need to be pediatricians.

How does parental leave affect eligibility?

Applicants receive a **six-month extension** for each child born or adopted during their applicable eligibility window **in addition** to any employer leave. For example:

- 3 months employer leave + 6 months Hood extension = 9-month eligibility extension.

Do leaves of absence count toward the eligibility clock?

No. Time not working due to documented family or medical leave does not count toward the five- or seven-year limit. The Chair’s Letter must confirm the duration of leave.

Research Independence

How does the Foundation define research independence?

Applicants must demonstrate an **independent research program**. Criteria for research independence may include:

- A research direction distinct from their mentor's
- Full access to institutional resources required for the project
- Space/resources appropriate for independent work
- Senior or corresponding authorship

Am I eligible if I am still on a NIH K Award or equivalent?

Potentially, yes. Applicants on mentored awards (e.g., K08, K23) may apply if:

- They are **within two years** of the scheduled end date, *or*
- They are in the **R00 phase** of a K99/R00

Applicants must clearly document:

- The end date of the K Award
- Their current independence (in the application, independence form, and Chair's Letter)

Can senior faculty serve as mentors on the award?

No. Applicants must propose and conduct an **independent** research project; this award does not support mentored research.

Funding Limits & Existing Support

Am I still eligible if I have already secured significant external funding?

Firstly, that is a fantastic accomplishment, and we congratulate you. The Child Health Research Awards are intended to support the early, emerging independence phase, when funding is critical to sustaining an independent research career. In addition, the Hood Foundation seeks to provide support to promising early career investigators who may not have received such support previously. For both of these reasons, applicants most likely will be considered ineligible if they are currently or have previously been designated as Principal Investigator or Co-P.I. on an R01, P01, Pioneer Award, New Innovator Award, or Early Independence Award.

One important clarification this cycle is that applicants holding a current K Award must be within two years of the scheduled end date to qualify for consideration for a Child Health Research Award.

Otherwise, applicants may remain eligible **as long as** their total external funding (*direct* costs only) does **not exceed \$500,000 during Year 1 of the Hood Award** and any single large multi-year awards currently or previously received from other sources (including but not limited to federal agencies or national foundations) do **not exceed a total of \$1,000,000 in direct costs**.

These limits **exclude**:

- Start-up packages
- Intramural support
- The Hood Award itself

Examples:

- Two private foundation awards totaling \$150,000 → *Eligible*
- Year 1 direct costs from all external awards = \$500,000+ → *Ineligible*
- Holding (or previously holding) an R01, P01, Pioneer, New Innovator, or Early Independence Award → *Ineligible*

If funding status changes during review:

- Awards **confirmed on or before April 15, 2026** and causing Year-1 direct costs to exceed \$500,000 → *Ineligible*
- Awards **confirmed after April 15, 2026** → *Remain eligible*

If I hold an R21, may I still apply to the Hood Foundation?

Yes, as long as the direct costs from all federal and non-federal grants do not total \$500,000 or more during the first year of the Hood Award.

Applicants must notify the Foundation immediately of any new funding.

Research Scope

Are international or non–New England research sites allowed?

Yes, research may be conducted anywhere, provided the **Principal Investigator's primary faculty appointment is at a New England institution.**

Are prenatal exposure studies eligible?

Studies focused solely on prenatal exposures are **not** eligible. Projects using animal or human models to investigate **postnatal outcomes**, diagnosis, or treatment **are eligible.**

Resubmission Eligibility

Am I allowed to submit a Concept Paper if I previously submitted a proposal that was not funded?

This program allows a single resubmission, whether on the same or a different topic from the original submission, which must be received within one of the two funding cycles immediately following the original submission. If you submitted a prior proposal in either **Spring 2025** (for the July 2025 funding cycle) or **Fall 2025** (for the January 2026 funding cycle), you may submit a Concept Paper this cycle so long as you continue to meet all other eligibility criteria.

If I applied before Spring 2025, may I resubmit?

No. Only applicants who applied for either the **July 2025 or January 2026 funding cycle** remain eligible to resubmit, so long as they continue to meet all other eligibility criteria.

Submitting an Application

I cannot find my saved application. What should I do?

Use the **“Return to a saved application”** link rather than “Start a new application.” Your saved application will appear after logging in.

What is the difference between the “Authorized Institutional Representative” and the “Institutional Officer to Receive Funds?”

The Authorized Institutional Representative is often in the Office of Sponsored Programs and signs off on the application to ensure that the applicant/PI and the Institution have met the eligibility requirements. This person is also responsible for research oversight. The Institutional Officer to Receive Funds is typically the Fiscal Officer and receives award payments, prepares fiscal reports and oversees other financial requirements of grants.

For the Full Proposal submission, is a biosketch required?

Yes. Please use the most recent **NIH Biosketch format**.

I am an Instructor but still collaborating with my former fellowship mentor. For the Full Proposal submission, can that person provide a letter of recommendation?

Yes, one of the two required letters of recommendation must be from the Postdoctoral Mentor or Residency Director. The other must come from the Department or Division Chair. Because research independence is required, the Mentor must clarify how your research project is your own scientific inquiry and unique from the Mentor’s research.

For the Full Proposal submission, to whom should the recommendation letters be addressed?

They may be addressed to the “Hood Foundation Scientific Review Committee.” These letters are submitted confidentially through the online application portal.

Can any letter be mailed separately?

No. If invited to submit a Full Proposal, the two or three letters of recommendation as well as any collaboration letters must be forwarded directly to the applicant for inclusion in the document upload by the application deadline.

May I list collaborators or Co-Investigators?

Yes, but the program **does not recognize Co-PIs**. The applicant/PI and their Institution must be solely responsible for the project.

For the Full Proposal, are letters of cooperation / collaboration acceptable and, if so, where should they be placed?

Letters confirming the availability of resources outside the applicant's institution are required; letters confirming any significant collaborative relationship either within or outside the applicant's institution are also required. The applicant must ask the collaborator(s) to forward their letter(s) to him/her so that they can be included in the upload. These letters are placed after the Research Proposal (see Table of Contents). Please note: these are brief letters, up to one page, addressing the collaboration or availability of resources, not letters of recommendation.

Shall I include the C.V. of a collaborator?

No, additional C.V.s are not required. However, if this is a significant collaboration, that person's letter to be included with the Full Proposal upload should describe the particular expertise that s/he is bringing to the project.

Budget and Allowable Costs

For the Full Proposal, do the budget pages reflect total project cost or only what I request from the Hood Foundation?

Forms A-1 and A-2 show **requested costs** from the Hood Foundation. Form B shows the **full project budget**, including other sources.

Are subcontracts allowed?

Yes, as a line item under **Other Expenses**. The Foundation does not pay other personnel directly.

Is graduate tuition allowable?

Yes, if the graduate student plays a **significant role** in the project.

Does the text on Form C (for those invited to submit Full Proposals) need to fit onto that one page?

If necessary, you may use an additional page.

Review Process

What criteria are used to evaluate applications?

Career Development Criteria

1. Demonstrated independence
2. Potential for a child-health-focused research career
3. Alignment of proposal with career trajectory
4. Institutional support

Scientific Criteria

1. Clear hypothesis based on sound precedent
 2. Direct relevance to child health
 3. Technical and operational feasibility
 4. Qualified personnel
 5. Adequate institutional resources
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Award Information

What are the terms of the award?

Terms—including indirect costs, reporting, payment schedule, and allowable expenses—are available on the Foundation’s website: <https://charleshoodfoundation.org/research-grants/apply-child-health-grant/>.

What are my chances of being funded?

Historically, the program funds approximately **15%** of applications each cycle. Resubmissions responsive to reviewer critiques are funded at approximately **26%**.

Additional Questions

Please contact:

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