
2023 Stepping Strong Innovator Awards: Request for Applications

The Gillian Reny Stepping Strong Center for Trauma Innovation (the Stepping Strong Center) is pleased to invite proposals for the **2023 Stepping Strong Innovator Awards**. The Innovator Award program supports research and innovation to prevent traumatic injury before it occurs, to improve the treatment and care of traumatic injury when it does occur, and to ensure its associated recovery. Up to four (4) awards in the amount of \$100,000 each will be granted for a one-year period, inclusive of up to 20% indirect costs. Applications that focus on accelerating the translation of an innovative idea into a clinical or community setting through a **multidisciplinary, collaborative** approach will be given top consideration.

Areas of Focus

Proposals will fall into one of the following three focus areas:

1) Injury Prevention

- Proposals that highlight the design, evaluation, and implementation of community- and hospital-based interventions with a focus on reducing or avoiding injuries
- Considerable preference will be given to the following areas:
 - Actionable and scalable primary prevention interventions
 - Interventions with a proven pathway toward implementation in real-world settings (pilot projects and preliminary data collection will still be considered)
 - Projects that align with the Centers for Disease Control's [research priority topics](#)

2) Intra-Trauma: Prehospital/Triage, Acute Care, and Recovery

- Basic science, translational, and clinical research and innovation projects that may improve and optimize the following:
 - Survival at the point of injury
 - In-hospital efforts to minimize morbidity and mortality and preserve function
 - Inpatient and outpatient interventions to facilitate healing and wellness in the acute period
 - New strategies for enhanced therapeutic outcomes
- Examples include:
 - Hemorrhage control interventions, tissue/organ preservation techniques, triage strategies
 - ICU protocols, emergency department interventions, operation stabilization techniques, infection and wound management, secondary reconstructive techniques
 - Development of new therapeutics, strategies for targeted and enhanced drug bioavailability

3) Rehabilitation, Recovery, and Reentry

- Basic science, translational, and clinical research and innovation proposals that maximize long-term functional, clinical, and psychological status
- Examples of rehabilitation innovation and research that would be supported include:
 - Studies that evaluate interventions to address trauma-induced long-term physical and psychological outcomes
 - Innovations for upper- and lower-limb amputees; the development of prostheses
 - Physical medicine and rehabilitation (PM&R) strategies

For projects falling into the Intra-trauma and Rehabilitation focus areas, specific research topics of interest align with those detailed in the 2016 National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine report entitled, “[A National Trauma Care System: Integrating Military and Civilian Trauma Systems to Achieve Zero Preventable Deaths After Injury.](#)”

Additional Considerations

A targeted area of interest for the Stepping Strong Center is the **bidirectional translation of military medical innovation between military medicine and the civilian setting (“Military-Civilian Translation”)**. To that end, top consideration will be given to injury prevention, intra-trauma, and rehabilitation projects that align with the trauma-related programs of the [Congressionally Directed Medical Research Program \(CDMRP\)](#).

An additional, special area of focus for the 2023 award cycle is **injuries due to motor vehicle collisions**. In the United States, motor vehicle crashes are a leading cause of death and kill over 100 people every day. The Stepping Strong Center seeks to advance the prevention and care of these traumatic injuries by supporting innovative research in this area.

Applicants are encouraged to visit the Stepping Strong Center website at BWHsteppingstrong.org to learn more about the center’s mission, leadership team, and accomplishments since its inception in 2014.

Timeline

Initial Selection Process	Dates
RFA Announcement	February 15, 2023
Letters of intent due	March 17, 2023
Invitations to submit full proposal sent to applicants	March 24, 2023
Full applications due	April 28, 2023
Finalists notified	May 26, 2023
Finalist presentations to review committee (finalists attend one session)	June 7 and 8, 2023
Award recipients notified	June 23, 2023
Earliest funding start date	July 1, 2023
Public announcement of award recipients at Stepping Strong Annual Research Symposium	November 16, 2023

Eligibility

- Healthcare professionals, including clinicians, academic researchers, nurses, allied health professionals, and post-doctoral fellows, along with private-sector researchers and inventors, are invited to apply. Research can be conducted jointly between the public and private sectors.
- At least one collaborator must have their primary affiliation at a Mass General Brigham institution. (For assistance identifying potential Mass General Brigham-based collaborators, please contact the Stepping Strong Center at steppingstrong@bwh.harvard.edu).
- Previous applicants of the Stepping Strong Innovator awards are eligible to re-apply. Previous Innovator Award recipients may re-apply two years after receiving their initial award.
- Applicants may serve as the Principal Investigator (PI) on only one proposal but may serve as co-I on multiple proposals.
- U.S. and non-U.S. citizens are welcome to apply.

- If an application advances to a finalist presentation, at least one team member must be available to participate in the presentation session to which the application is assigned (sessions are scheduled for June 7 from 4-5pm and June 8 from 4-6 pm).

Application Process

Letter of intent - **due March 17, 2023 at 12:00 pm EDT:**

1. Cover Sheet including project title, principal investigator's name, employing institution, department, academic/professional title, email address, and telephone number
2. 1-page letter of intent outlining:
 - a. Objective(s) of your study
 - b. How the proposed research aligns with the mission of the Stepping Strong Center
 - c. How the proposed work fits in the continuum of trauma care
 - d. The future direction of the research, and specifically, how your work will advance trauma care

The Letter of Intent must be in Arial, 11-point font. Single spacing is allowed, with margins of at least 0.5 inches. **Please compile the two documents, in the above order, into a single PDF and email to steppingstrong@bwh.harvard.edu no later than 12:00 pm EDT on March 17, 2023.**

Letters of Intent will be reviewed by Stepping Strong Leadership and as required, additional established researchers with content expertise. **Based on Letters of Intent, select applicants will be invited to submit full proposals for review.** Decisions will be communicated by March 24, 2023 and will be final. No written feedback will be provided.

Full application - **due April 28, 2023 at 12:00 pm EDT:**

1. Cover Sheet (see "Letter of Intent" above)
2. A lay clinical impact summary (300-word limit)
3. A scientific abstract (300-word limit)
4. Research Statement (five-page limit, excluding references):
 - a. Introduction/background, including the problem or challenge you will address
 - b. Specific aims, significance (including potential clinical significance, societal and/or patient impact, the potential for commercialization and market size and, if applicable, the extent to which your research will improve upon any current gold standard), and preliminary data (if available)
 - c. Approach (include methods, approximate one-year timeline, and contributions of each team member)
 - d. Future strategies for raising funding beyond the Stepping Strong Innovator Award
5. Biosketch of principal investigator, co-investigators, and significant key personnel using NIH format
6. A one-year, detailed budget and accompanying budget justification for up to \$100,000. The total amount should be inclusive of up to 20% indirect costs and submitted using the detailed Mass General Brigham budget template provided.
7. Copy of current human or animal use protocol approval letter (if applicable)

The text of the Research Statement must be in Arial, 11-point font. Single spacing is allowed, with margins of at least 0.5 inches. **All items must be compiled, in the above order, into a single PDF and emailed to**

steppingstrong@bwh.harvard.edu no later than 12:00 pm EDT on April 28, 2023. Incomplete applications may not be considered.

Review Process and Criteria

Proposals will undergo an initial review by the center's leadership team to confirm alignment with the center's mission to catalyze *multidisciplinary collaborations* that inspire groundbreaking innovation, effective prevention, and compassionate intervention to transform care for civilians and military heroes who endure traumatic injuries and events. Proposals that fulfill these criteria will advance to a rigorous scientific review by an expert panel, which will include the center's faculty leadership and members of the Stepping Strong Medical Executive Committee. Additional expert reviewers, including from outside Brigham and Women's Hospital, may be engaged as needed. Applications will be scored and ranked according to NIH criteria for prioritization to advance to the finalist presentation session, where applicants will have the opportunity to present additional information about their projects to the review panel. The final selection will be made by the Stepping Strong Center leadership team based on review committee scores and finalist presentations.

Program Terms

- Award recipients will participate in the Stepping Strong Annual Trauma Research and Innovation Symposium, scheduled for November 16, 2023.
- Recipients will submit a six-month progress report and a final project report.
- Recipient (or collaborator in the case of an external recipient) must remain employed by Mass General Brigham for the duration of the funding period; award may otherwise be forfeited.
- Recipients will inform the Stepping Strong Center as well as the Brigham's Office of Strategic Communication of any media appearances or coverage of their work.
- Recipients must cite the funding source in media appearances, publications, posters, other grants, and other professional recognition related to this project.
- Recipients will participate in Stepping Strong Center events and meetings, where they will present their work to internal or external audiences, as needed and appropriate.
- If you found a startup from this project, you will be expected to donate to the Stepping Strong Center 1% of the founders' equity per \$100,000 of grants awarded, up to a maximum of three times the total amount of grant funding awarded. This amount is in addition to any equity or royalties paid to Mass General Brigham.
- For at least three years post-award, recipients will report publications, additional funding, inventions (whether patentable or not), and other award outcomes to the Stepping Strong Center within 60 days.

By applying for the Stepping Strong Innovator Award you agree to release and hold harmless Brigham and Women's Hospital, The Gillian Reny Stepping Strong Center for Trauma Innovation and its subsidiaries, affiliates, societies, advertising and promotion agencies, partners, representatives, agents, successors, assigns, employees, officers and directors from any liability, illness, injury, death, loss, litigation, claim or damage that may occur, directly or indirectly, whether caused by negligence or not, from (i) such Applicant's participation in the Stepping Strong Innovator application process and/or his/her acceptance, possession, use, or misuse of any award or any portion thereof, (ii) technical failures of any kind, including but not limited to the malfunctioning of any computer, cable, network, hardware or software; (iii) the unavailability or inaccessibility of any transmissions or telephone or Internet service; (iv) unauthorized human intervention in any part of the entry process or the promotion; (v) electronic or human error which may occur in the administration of the promotion or the processing of entries. Your application also means that you agree to the program terms governing the Stepping Strong Innovator Awards.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

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