

Funders' Value Proposition: Insight from HRA Members

Amy Laster, Ph.D.

Senior Director, Grants and Award Programs

Foundation Fighting Blindness

What has the FIRsT group resolved?

- Funders and Institutions share common goals
- Diverse challenges require diverse solutions
 - Guiding Principles
- Funders provide more than funds
 - Value Proposition

What contributions do you believe your organization makes beyond providing funds?

22%	Expertise in how to place IP (e.g., with an appropriate venture capital firm or pharmaceutical/biotechnology firm)
78%	Funding of very early stage or high-risk research which provides leverage to apply for additional/NIH funding
62%	Purchase of supplies, reagents, animals, infrastructure not funded by NIH
50%	Guidance for project from steering committee, staff or scientific advisory board
28%	Other (Write-in)

Comments from “Other” Category:

- “connection to people to help develop and manage business”
- “workshops that bring researchers together to discuss new ideas”
- “periodic convenings of award recipients, which provides a forum for inter-disciplinary discussion and information sharing”
- “encouraging/supporting young investigators to enter the field”
- “contacts/introductions to accelerate research projects”
- “We will fund early seed out of our corpus, not grants”

What Are Our Next Steps?

- Guiding Principles
 - Grant and Award Agreements
 - Revenue Sharing Terms
 - Reporting Requirements
- Indirect vs Direct Cost
 - Categorizing the true cost of research



A Funder's Perspective

Communication Strategies to Facilitate Productive Negotiations

PERSPECTIVES

- Funders want to ensure inventions lead to commercialization and become available for public benefit
- Institutions want to ensure commercially promising inventions are marketable to potential licensees for development and commercialization



CONCERNS/CHALLENGES

- Funders are obligated to their stakeholders to champion every invention that has promise to benefit patients
- Institutions worry that funder agreements hamper their licensing prospects
 - Without licensee to further develop invention, the potential for commercialization diminishes

FUNDING



INVENTIONS



LICENSEE



COMMERCIAL PRODUCT

COMMUNICATE

- Funding expectations (discovery and/or therapies)
- Objectives and process of patenting
- When pursuit of IP protection has stopped
- When a licensee is being sought
- Potential licensee(s)
- When work has stopped (by inventor or licensee)



Let's Get to Know Each Other

PRACTICAL RESOLUTIONS



- **Share contact information at time of award notification**
 - Post-award administrators
 - Financial matters
 - Inventions and disclosure process
 - Licensing strategies
 - Communication and marketing

PRACTICAL RESOLUTIONS

- **Front Matter/Preamble of Funder's Agreements:**
 - Whereas, The Foundation Fighting Blindness ("FFB") is a not-for-profit organization supported by public contributions; and
 - Whereas, FFB, since its inception in 1971, has used these public contributions to fund scientific research into the causes of and potential cures for retinitis pigmentosa, Usher syndrome, macular degeneration and allied retinal diseases; and
 - **Whereas, FFB has a broad network and deep domain expertise in inherited retinal diseases; and**
 - **Whereas FFB has formed a collaboration with the Harrington Discovery Institute to create The Gund-Harrington National Initiative for Fighting Blindness to provide financial and drug development resources to specifically facilitate bridging the recognized gaps ("Valley of Death") in the translation of laboratory-based translational research to a commercially viable, pharmaceutically acceptable lead product with the specific intent of commercializing the therapy for the benefit of patients with retinal diseases; and**
 - **Whereas, FFB believes that it has a responsibility to adopt policies that will foster Inventions (as defined in Section 8 of this Exhibit E) and progress toward making such Inventions available to the public;**
 - Therefore, FFB hereby adopts the following patent policy (this "Patent Policy").

PRACTICAL RESOLUTIONS

- **Annually report general information on licensing progress to Funders**
 - Confidentiality assurance via secrecy agreement
- **Agree to require in license agreements diligence provisions that the institution will monitor and enforce**



alaster@blindness.org