

**New York State Stem Cell Research Funding Program
Empire State Stem Cell Board
Summary prepared for the
Interstate Alliance on Stem Cell Research (IASCR)
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In its first year of operation (2007-2008), the Empire State Stem Cell Board (Board) developed a Strategic Plan for the expenditure of funds over the next five years.

The Board's Strategic Plan established its mission as:

“To foster a strong stem cell research community in New York State and to accelerate the growth of scientific knowledge about stem cell biology and the development of therapies and diagnostic methods under the highest ethical, scientific, and medical standards for the purpose of alleviating disease and improving human health.”

Five key areas for funding were identified: research; scientific training; infrastructure development; ethical, legal, social issues and education; and administration. The Board also agreed to examine potential intellectual property and fiscal issues related to evaluating and maximizing the benefits of the NYSTEM program to New York State researchers and residents.

In 2008-09 the Funding Committee reviewed 413 applications submitted in response to the four RFAs and recommended \$2 million in funding be awarded to 18 New York State institutions engaged in consortium planning efforts; \$31.5 million to nine institutions to support core facilities and specialized equipment; \$ 53.1 million for 78 investigator initiated projects which included basic developmental cell biology, translational or preclinical stem cell or innovative higher-risk research proposals; and \$16.3 million to 19 investigators to support cutting-edge research of induced pluripotent stem cells (iPS) and other derivation approaches.

These proposals were all evaluated by a contract supported independent scientific peer-review process through AIBS. To date a total of \$123.4 million has been committed to New York State stem cell research activities.

The Board has approved the issuance of additional funding opportunities including: development of undergraduate curriculum related to stem cells; undergraduate summer

internships, additional support for shared facilities funding; recurring RFAs to support ongoing investigator-initiated stem cell research proposals; an RFA designed to support highly promising stem cell researchers in their transition from fellows to faculty members; an RFA targeted to support research involving the derivation of new human embryonic stem cell lines; and RFPs to coordinate annual scientific meetings after 2009 and the evaluation of the economic impact of the state program.

The first annual meeting of the initial group funded scientists under the 25 Institutional Development Awards is scheduled to be held on June 12, 2009 in Albany. Another meeting of the consortium planning grant awardees will be scheduled later in 2009.

All of the current contracts include requirements related to public access to the findings of the funded research through publications, shared access to the materials developed by the research and institutional intellectual property protections and technology transfer requirements, human subjects protections, animal welfare protections, and oversight of the derivation and provenance of human stem cell lines used in the funded projects.

The Ethics Committee of the Empire State Stem Cell Board continues to consider recommendations for provenance of the human stem cells used in these projects, including drafting model consent forms for gamete, embryo and somatic cell donations. The Ethics Committee is also in the process of analyzing the appropriateness of, and possible limitations on, payments to gamete donors, particularly in the area of egg donation specifically and solely for research.

Current state fiscal constraints have primarily affected administrative elements of staff activity such as the lack of access to travel funds for interstate travel, and the timing of contract execution through the state procurement process. It has not affected the funding available for the contracts or approved projects.