BD² Cycle 1 Discovery Research Renewal Grant Request for Applications (RFA)

November 2025

PERTINENT DATES	
RFA opens	November 17, 2025
Applications due	April 17, 2026
Applicant presentations	May 2026
Awardees notified	July 2026
Grants awarded	September 2026

We invite Cycle 1 Discovery Grant and Foundational Platform teams to apply for a Discovery Research Renewal Grant. This closed RFA will provide additional funding to selected teams, with up to $1M per year for up to two years. This competitive process will identify teams that are outperforming expectations and providing significant insight into the biology of bipolar disorder. The RFA outlines information and directions to apply for additional funding to continue making significant impacts on the bipolar disorder field. Apply here.

The Opportunity

The goal of the Discovery Research Renewal Grant is to provide additional funding to productive Discovery teams to continue their critical projects, allowing them to perform at an outsized pace. Additional funding will potentially accelerate their pace of discoveries and build on already successful projects. Teams could apply their funding to continue exploring existing hypotheses of their original projects, validate findings, or explore relevant new hypotheses that arose from their current efforts. Funding through this mechanism cannot be used to support completion of the team's already funded project; each application must include a new set of scientific aims. Renewal Grants will provide up to $1M per year for two years of funding following the completion of the current grant term.

Eligibility

The four Cycle 1 Discovery Grant teams, the Brain Omics Platform team, and the Genetics Platform team are eligible to apply. Not all teams may be selected for a Renewal Grant. Co-PIs and lead PIs can be changed with reasonable justification, though not encouraged. The preference is for the team to stay as consistent as possible, as these grants are intended to continue momentum as opposed to supporting new collaborations that would require setup time. A well-justified change would be considered, especially if new scientific or technical expertise is needed, but should reflect a continuation of effective collaboration.

The PM role must be maintained during the renewal period. Teams will be expected to continue to adhere to BD² policies, including the completion of twice-yearly progress reports, compliance with the BD² Open Science Policy, and active participation in collaborative activities. No-cost extensions must be completed prior to the award of new funding no later than December 31, 2026.

Application

Cycle 1 teams will be assessed by three different mechanisms: an internal review performed by the BD² Program Team, as well as a written report and an oral presentation given by the funded investigators. These three mechanisms will assess different aspects of each team's progress and potential impact to determine whether applicant teams are recommended for renewal. Full applications will be submitted via BD²'s SurveyMonkey Apply portal using the team's existing profile, as is used for progress reporting. Apply here.

Written report: Investigators will provide details on their scientific goals and rationale for the two years of follow-on funding, describing the scientific questions and directions to be addressed, as well as detailed experimental approaches. Applicants will also have the opportunity to discuss the impact of their work funded by their initial BD² grant. The report will additionally include team composition, collaboration and open science strategies, and other logistical considerations such as budget, timeline, and institutional letters of support. The written report will consist of:

- Impact statement (max 2 pages)
  - o List the top 3 impacts that your work through the first three years of funding has had on the field of bipolar. These can include key findings, resources generated, and hypotheses tested. We encourage that one of these impacts be a resource.
  - o Impact narrative:
    - – Describe the potential for greater impact in the field.
    - – Identify the gaps and challenges that you are addressing.
    - – Describe how your findings might impact the lives of people with bipolar disorder and what would be required to get there.
- Scientific rationale for two years of follow-on funding (max 5 pages)
  - o Provide a brief lay summary.
  - o Describe the rationale for continued funding; this section should include answers to the following questions:
    - – What is the primary hypothesis being tested? Has this changed since the initial grant award?

- – What scientific questions are addressed based on the foundation provided by the initial grant?

  - – Will renewal funding be used to address ongoing efforts of the current grant, or explore novel directions?

  - o Outline a detailed experimental approach via aims, sub-aims, and a timeline of milestones on a 6-month basis.

  - o References may be uploaded as a separate document, for which there is no page limit.

- Team composition, collaboration and open science strategies (max 2 pages)

  - o Outline the members of the core leadership team (lead and co-PIs) and their relevant expertise.

    - – If any co-PIs are changed, provide a rationale for the updated roster.

  - o Describe the effectiveness of within-team collaboration during the first 3 years of funding and the plan for collaboration across the team moving forward. Include frequency of meetings and communication.

  - o Excluding workgroup activities or funded Collaboration Grants, describe any collaborations formed with other researchers or clinicians in the network. This can include formal collaborations, such as new external grant applications, or informal connections, such as sharing protocols or other resources.

  - o Describe the team's commitment to open science, including workstreams already developed and approaches that will be used for ongoing efforts.

- Budget

  - o Provide a detailed budget in USD, using the template provided in the application portal. Acceptable expenditures shall include salary, fringe benefits, equipment, software, data storage, reagents, project-related travel, and up to 15% indirect costs to support institutional infrastructure. Note that the differences in Article Processing Charges to publish in an open access format versus non-open access formats, and travel to BD²-sponsored events, will be separately reimbursed by BD² and do not need to be budgeted in the proposal.

  - o The Lead PI's institution shall be proposed as the applicant organization, and any other institutions shall be included as sub-grantees, managed by the applicant institution. Each collaborating site must outline its subaward budget to clarify needs for all parties.

  - o The maximum allowable budget is inclusive of indirect expenses, which may not exceed 15% of the total. For applications including sub-grantee(s), the maximum allowable indirect rate at each grantee and sub-grantee institution remains 15% of the total institutional budget.

  - o For international applicants, please note that grants will be made in USD, and BD² is not responsible for changes in conversion rates.

- o Use the 2025 [NIH salary cap](#) for guidance when calculating salary and percent effort for personnel. BD² cannot support salaries above this level.

- o Grants selected for funding will be made payable to the Lead PI's institution. Under no circumstances will funding be paid to an individual. Please note that funds will be disbursed on an annual basis to the Lead PI's organization.

- Letters of Commitment

  - o **Institutional commitment:** Each application must include Letters of Commitment that demonstrate each institution's commitment to administering the grant according to the existing written grant agreement between the lead institution and BD², under which the Renewal Grant will be administered as an amendment if awarded. The letter shall be signed by a department chair or a relevant authorized organizational representative, such as the Dean of Sponsored Research. Applications that have multiple institutions can either have separate Letters of Commitment from each institution or have one Letter of Commitment signed by all relevant authorized institutional representatives from each institution.

  - o **PI commitment and signatures:** Each PI represented in the application shall also provide a letter stating that they are willing and able to continue their commitment to the BD² project, including a commitment of at least 15% full time effort and adherence to the BD² [Open Science Policy](#). The letter must also state that each PI is dedicated to executing this project to its completion and will continue to communicate with the BD² Program Team and the Scientific Steering Committee as needed. Applicants can submit separate Letters of Commitment for each PI or have one Letter of Commitment signed by all PIs.

Oral presentation: Following the written report, teams will be asked to give a virtual oral presentation that gives them the opportunity to summarize their findings from their current funded projects and describe their new proposal. Importantly, this presentation will allow reviewers to ask questions to the teams. The presentation will be conducted through the Zoom platform, and applicants will be given 60 minutes, with 30 minutes allocated to question-and-answer by the reviewers. A potential breakdown of the 60 minutes may look like this:

- 15 minutes: Present your past work and key impact areas
- 15 minutes: Present your proposed plan for use of follow-on funding
- 30 minutes: Q&A from SSC

Internal review: The internal review will assess the productivity of the teams, as well as their adherence to the open science and collaboration requirements of BD². The Program Team will use a variety of metrics conveying each team's adherence to the open science and publication requirements, collaboration metrics that include involvement in seminars and workgroups, and scientific productivity that includes publications and presentations of research results. Additionally, information disclosed in the interim and annual progress reports will be considered. This review will provide an initial snapshot that indicates whether a team has been productive scientifically and if their participation in the network reflects the vision and mission of BD². See the "Assessment Criteria" section for the full list of information to be considered.

Assessment Criteria

Applicants will be assessed within two main domains: (1) their achievements and impact from the initial 3-year funding period, and (2) the feasibility and impact potential of their scientific proposal for the renewal period. BD² will also consider factors related to network involvement, compliance with BD² policies, receipt of funding outside of BD² at the present stage, and likelihood of additional funding after the renewal.

Assessment of initial Cycle 1 efforts:

- **Impact to the field**
    - Collected data and new findings that are significant to the field
    - Developed areas of research, such as new targets or mechanisms
    - Generated new resources such as cell lines, viral tools, mouse lines, or datasets that can be utilized by the field
    - Addressed any scientific gaps and challenges
- **Scientific productivity:**
    - Percent completion of project milestones; shifts in milestones due to scientific findings or circumstances out of the teams' control will be considered
    - List of talks or other external presentations given to the scientific or public audience
    - List of BD²-supported publications, including both scientific and lay publications
    - List of resources catalogued, including protocols, datasets, code/software, and tools
- **Funding sustainability:**
    - List of applied and successful follow-on funding applications from other sources
    - Description of how this renewal grant would complement grants from external sources
    - Responsible use of the budget
- **Data sharing and collaboration:**
    - Participation in BD² activities and workgroups
    - Shared data in public repositories using FAIR principles
    - Shared data and resources with BD² members, including on the BD² Hub, and beyond
    - Formal and informal collaborations within BD²

Assessment of Scientific Rationale for Renewal Application:

Note that it is important for applicants to justify the need for renewal funding. If a team has been scientifically productive but does not demonstrate that a new set of aims would be impactful for the field of bipolar then their application would not be prioritized.

- **Scientific merit:** The quality of the scientific rationale and aims, and use of resources, equipment, and experimental designs to adequately address a causal mechanism of bipolar disorder. This includes innovative use of current resources or unique perspectives of examining current dogma.

- **Technical feasibility:** Experimental design is adequately rigorous, and the study is appropriately statistically powered to produce significant findings, even in the absence of results that support the study hypothesis.

- **Potential impact:** The success of this proposed scope of work would be significant in understanding the biology and mechanisms of bipolar disorder, bringing meaningful change to the lives of individuals living with bipolar disorder. This includes an application's innovation, or ability to bring new ideas to the field and develop unique avenues to investigate bipolar disorder.

- **Team strength:** The team composition continues to reflect appropriate expertise for the planned follow-on study. Any changes in leadership are appropriately justified. The team has a demonstrated record of effective collaboration.

- **Commitment to open science:** The team continues to align with tenets of open science according to the terms outlined. Application exceeds standard methods and approach of sharing data and results with the research community.

- **Cost realism:** The budget is realistic and adequately supports personnel, equipment, overhead, and other needs to carry out the project.

Evaluation and Monitoring

Funded research progress will continue to be monitored by the BD² Program Team with input from the Scientific Steering Committee.

Bi-Annual Updates

Each team will continue the cadence of providing progress reports every six months. The brief interim reports include updates on the milestones outlined in the application and descriptions of any challenges faced. The detailed annual reports also include milestone updates, in addition to a broader summary of progress, resource sharing, challenges faced, and an update to the budget. The intention of these bi-annual updates is for the funded teams to provide clarity on their research activities with respect to scientific advancements made by the team or setbacks encountered.

Network Engagement

Funded teams will be expected to maintain active participation in the BD² community. This network engagement will include participation in the BD² Hub and attendance of seminars and workgroup meetings.

Annual Investigator Meetings

Teams that are renewed will be expected to continue attending in-person meetings on an annual basis. As before, expenses for attending these meetings will be covered under a separate budget provided by BD².

Grant Terms and Policies

Renewal grants will be provided as an addendum to the original grant, and therefore, all terms of the grant will be carried over. Each funded organization will be required to co-sign and agree in writing to the grant addendum — confirming continued adherence to BD²'s grant terms — within thirty (30) days from receipt of notice of the award and prior to additional funds being released. These continued grant terms include the items below.

Use of funds: Funds may be used for scientific and technical personnel, supplies, and standard equipment needs directly related to the successful execution of the proposed scope or work. This also includes travel to relevant conferences and events. However, funds may not be used for laboratory or facility renovations.

Carryover funding: Unused research funds may be carried over to the following year, with approval, and requests for no-cost extensions will be considered.

Indirect costs: Indirect costs are included in the $1 million per year award. Up to 15% of the entire grant budget may be slated for indirect costs. Note that awards may be lower than the maximum $1 million per year. In such a case, only up to 15% of that specified grant budget may be allocated to indirect costs.

Unexpended funds: Any funds not expended or committed for the purposes of the grant by the conclusion of the grant term must be returned to BD² unless otherwise agreed to by BD² in writing.

Supplemental funding: If a funded organization proposes to supplement any funds provided by BD² with funds provided by a third party, the organization must first provide notice to BD² and must ensure that the funding terms associated with any such third-party funds do not preclude sharing of data or publication or project results as outlined in this RFA.

Open Science Policy

The goal of BD² is to develop a deeper understanding of bipolar disorder to facilitate the development of improved interventions through a collaborative, open, and dynamic network of researchers. Open science is a key value of this initiative and allows research data and resources to be accessible online, and free of cost and other barriers. The BD² Open Science Policy promotes the rapid and free exchange of ideas to accelerate research and enable discovery. This policy can be summarized through five primary components:

1. **Post preprints.**
   Draft manuscripts must be posted in an open access preprint repository no later than the time of article submission to a journal for review.

2. **Ensure immediate open access.**
   Publications in a journal must be immediately freely available online with no embargo period. Grantees are required to retain copyright via CC BY 4.0 or CC0 license for least restricted reuse.

3. **Share research outputs and inputs.**
   All previously unpublished research outputs (data, code, protocols, and lab materials) that are included in a publication must be deposited in a publicly accessible repository no later than the time of publication and cited in the publication with their persistent identifier. All previously published research inputs (data, code, protocols, and lab materials) included in a publication must be unambiguously identified.

4. **Include appropriate acknowledgments and affiliation.**
   BD² must be acknowledged with specific language, and all BD²-affiliated authors must share their ORCID in the manuscript.

5. **Share outputs with the BD² network.**
   All BD²-funded Research Outputs arising from BD² grants must also be shared within the BD² virtual community platform, no later than the time of final publication.

Agreement to the Open Science Policy terms by all members of the team and their institutions is a requirement for funding.

Intellectual Property

Intellectual property resulting from, created, developed, conceived, or reduced to practice in whole or in part with funding from BD², including all patents, copyrights, trademarks, trade secrets, and other rights therein (Grant IP), is subject to obligations on the recipient organization to:

- Commercialize any Grant IP that has the potential to benefit patients who have bipolar disorder;
- Allow BD² or its sublicensee to commercialize any such Grant IP that the grantee is unwilling or unable to commercialize;
- Widely disseminate through publication the results of research funded with grants from BD²; and
- Grant a research license to BD², the primary funders of BD², and all of their respective non-profit grantees to use and to practice Grant IP in the field of bipolar disorder.

Funding Awarded at BD²'s Discretion

Responding to this RFA and/or submitting an application does not entitle any individual or institution to receive funding from BD². Funding, if any, will be provided at BD²'s sole discretion pursuant to the terms of a written grant agreement executed by BD² and the selected grantee organization, the terms of which BD² may require to be acknowledged by the PI.

NOTE ON ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE USE

BD² understands that artificial intelligence (AI) tools are being used to support authors. The human authors who use these tools are accountable for anything that AI has developed or edited across all application materials for both the LOI and the full application. Applicants and awardees are expected to abide by best practices in research and publishing ethics and must address any questions pertaining to the accuracy or integrity of any of their work. As all applications are considered confidential, BD² and its peer reviewers will not analyze any submissions using AI.

Contact Information

An automated email confirmation is generated upon application submission. If you do not receive confirmation within 24 hours of submitting your application, please check spam filters, then contact DiscoveryGrants@BipolarDiscoveries.org.

For inquiries about scientific priorities, eligibility requirements, application submission, as well as general and media inquiries, please contact: DiscoveryGrants@BipolarDiscoveries.org.