

# BD<sup>2</sup> Collaboration Grants Cycle 2 Draft Request for Applications (RFA)

January 2026

## PERTINENT DATES

Application portal opens	January 15, 2026
RFA Webinar	February 18, 2026, at 12 p.m. ET
Application Deadline	April 15, 2026
Award Notification	June 2026

The BD<sup>2</sup> Collaboration Grant opportunity is a mechanism to encourage additional collaboration studies across the BD<sup>2</sup> Funded Investigator community. This RFA outlines the goals and requirements for the second cycle of this mechanism, with Integrated Network teams from Wave 1 and Discovery Grant teams from Cycles 2 and 3 now also eligible to apply.

## Goals

These grants aim to provide opportunities to bridge datasets, findings, and expertise between funded teams, thereby enabling the development of new insights into etiology, progression, diagnosis, and care of bipolar disorder. Collaboration Grants provide BD<sup>2</sup>-funded teams with additional support to develop new collaborations across the BD<sup>2</sup> ecosystem, accelerating and amplifying new findings and pushing discoveries even further.

## The Opportunity

One of BD<sup>2</sup>'s main pillars is promoting transformative and meaningful collaboration. These one-time, \$150,000 grants—offered annually—allow funded PIs to form new collaborations across the BD<sup>2</sup> network. A maximum of 15% can be applied to indirect costs.

## Eligibility

The following teams are eligible to apply for Collaboration Grants:

- Discovery Grant Cycle 1, Cycle 2, and Cycle 3 teams
- Genetics Platform
- Brain Omics Platform
- Integrated Network Wave 1 sites; Wave 2 sites are ineligible to apply in this cycle

**Team Criteria:** Collaboration Grant applications must have at least two PIs and represent at least two different BD<sup>2</sup> teams or sites. Within-team applications are considered ineligible. There is no maximum number of permitted PIs. Each Collaboration Grant PI must hold a doctorate (e.g., PhD, MD) or equivalent degree. Each PI must be an investigator who is able to accept funds and be affiliated with an institution eligible to receive and manage these funds. Collaboration PIs must be a named investigator on a BD<sup>2</sup> contract, or have at least 15% full-time effort on a BD<sup>2</sup> project, and provide a statement outlining their role. Lead PIs of the teams represented by the collaboration do not need to be named investigators, but must be made aware of the application to ensure alignment of the proposal with currently funded BD<sup>2</sup> projects.

**Collaboration Lead Criteria:** One PI must be designated as the Collaboration Lead—this Collaboration Lead may or may not be the Lead PI on an existing BD<sup>2</sup> grant. The Collaboration Lead must be at an institution that has an existing BD<sup>2</sup> grant agreement, through which the funds will be provided as a supplement via contractual amendment. Collaboration Grant PIs must be listed on their respective BD<sup>2</sup>-funded project budget to be eligible to apply. However, Collaboration Grant PIs do not need to be designated as a Lead PI or Co-PI on their respective BD<sup>2</sup>-funded project to apply.

**Scientific Scope:** These grants are intended to enhance funded projects by layering new expertise, methods, equipment, or compounds to further the understanding of bipolar etiology, progression, diagnosis, and care. For example, Collaboration Grant funding can be used to share cell lines or other compounds across teams or provide new statistical analyses on existing datasets.

## Ineligibility

**Teams:** Integrated Network Wave 2 sites are not eligible to apply this cycle. Collaborations with individuals outside of the funded network are ineligible.

**Scientific Scope:** Any grants outside the focus of bipolar disorder are ineligible.

**Integrated Network Biosamples:** To ensure a rigorous, responsible, and standardized approach to the banked biosamples collected from Integrated Network members, these resources will not be eligible for use in this cycle.

## Application

One application is required per Collaboration Grant. Each application will be submitted via the SurveyMonkey Apply portal. The Collaboration Lead will apply on behalf of their team. The application should convey the scientific concepts and hypotheses that will be tested, as well as outline the corresponding strategies. See below for specific application content and formatting requirements.

## Scientific Rationale (3 pages)

- **Project title**
- **Lay project summary (5-7 sentences):** Describe your project to a public, non-scientific audience. *If funded, this will be posted on the BD<sup>2</sup> website.*
- **Scientific goals:** Describe the central question the collaboration seeks to address, as well as the proposed platforms (e.g., animal models, cell lines, datasets, and existing patient registries) and methods (e.g., specific assays such as genetic methods, circuitry approaches, pharmacological strategies, or clinical paradigms) that will support the collaboration. Clearly describe the potential impact of this collaboration on advancing the understanding of bipolar etiology, progression, diagnosis, or care. *If funded, this will be posted on the BD<sup>2</sup> Hub (viewable by the BD<sup>2</sup> Network only).*
- **Cost estimate:** Provide a rough, total estimate of the cost to fund the collaboration's execution. The estimate must not exceed \$150,000, inclusive of all costs, **including indirect costs**. Refer to the budget section below for additional details on items eligible for budget inclusion.
- **Milestones:** Outline the various milestones that the collaboration will encompass. Milestones must be in six-month increments and be specific, attainable, and measurable. Milestones will be used to assess progress during the award phase.
- **Figures:** Figures are included in the 3-page limit.

## Supplemental Information (2 pages)

- **Roster of PIs:** Provide the name, institution, and expertise of the Collaboration Lead and all other PIs on the team.
- **Collaboration Plan:** Outline the team's strategies for ensuring collaboration among the PIs. These should include the frequency of meetings, modes of communication, and data-sharing strategies.
- **Resources:** Provide a catalog of resources available from each PI. Resources include expertise, reagents, equipment, clinical and research cores, existing datasets, and access to biobanks.
- **References cited:** Provide citations supporting the scientific rationale of your proposed project. Include a DOI link for each citation. There is no specific formatting requirement. This must be within the 2-page supplement.

## Detailed Budget (use template)

Each application must include a detailed budget in USD, prepared using the template provided via the application portal. Acceptable expenditures include salary, fringe benefits, equipment, software, data storage, reagents, project-related travel, and up to 15% indirect costs to support institutional infrastructure. Note that cost differences associated with making a publication open access will be covered by BD<sup>2</sup> and do not need to be budgeted in your proposal. The Collaboration Lead's institution shall be proposed as the applicant organization and must have an existing grant agreement with BD<sup>2</sup>. All other institution(s) shall be included as sub-grantees, managed by the applicant institution. Each collaborating site must outline its sub-award budget to clarify needs for all parties.

- The maximum allowable budget is inclusive of up to 15% indirect expenses. For applications including sub-grantee(s), the maximum allowable indirect rate across all grantee and sub-grantee institutions remains 15% for each, as well as across the total award budget.

- For international applicants: Please note that grants will be made in USD, and BD<sup>2</sup> is not responsible for changes in conversion rates.
- Grants selected for funding will be made payable to the Collaboration Lead's institution. Under no circumstances will funding be paid to an individual. Please note that funds will be disbursed in whole at one time to the Collaboration Lead's organization.

## Selection Criteria

Applications that display strength and creativity across the following domains are more likely to succeed. The Collaboration Grant selection criteria are based on the following characteristics:

**Scientific merit:** The quality of the scientific rationale and aims, and the use of resources, equipment, and experimental designs to adequately address bipolar etiology, progression, diagnosis, and/or care. This includes innovative use of current resources or unique perspectives on examining current dogma.

**Technical feasibility:** The 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 hypotheses within the original application.

**Potential impact:** The collaboration will significantly advance the understanding of bipolar disorder etiology, progression, diagnosis, and care, leveraging smart partnerships and the effective use of existing resources and expertise.

**Team capabilities:** The team demonstrates synergistic potential, and the Collaboration Lead has demonstrated significant leadership capacity. Each institution has demonstrated the ability to adequately support the proposed research.

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

**Relationship to funded work:** The proposed study is meaningfully additive to current BD<sup>2</sup>-funded work, is unlikely to be completed without additional funding, and will not negatively impact progress on primary goals of the Discovery Research teams and/or Integrated Network sites.

## Review Process

The BD<sup>2</sup> Scientific Leads, Program Team, and Scientific Steering Committees (SSCs) will conduct a multi-step review process.

- **Eligibility review:** Prior to content review, all applications will be assessed to ensure that all eligibility criteria listed in this RFA are met. Applications are subject to rejection if one or more of these criteria are not met.
- **Scientific Steering Committee review:** Members of the SSCs and BD<sup>2</sup> Program Team will review each application to ensure that its scientific scope aligns with this RFA. Funding will not be considered for applications that are out of scope. SSC members will not review applications for which they have COIs.
- **Overarching scope review:** Applications will be reviewed in partnership with BD<sup>2</sup> leadership to ensure that potentially funded grants fit within BD<sup>2</sup>'s overall scientific vision and mission.

## Evaluation and Monitoring

Once the grants are awarded, grantee progress will be monitored by the BD<sup>2</sup> Program Team. These actions will ensure that grantees can work together within the newly formed teams and partnerships, share data, and conduct their research using best practices and standardized approaches implemented across all funded projects.

- **6-month update:** Each team will provide a short 6-month update on their milestone progress and any challenges they have faced along the way. Milestones will be outlined in the applications, and disclosing progress against these milestones on a bi-annual basis will provide clarity on scientific advancements or setbacks made by the teams.
- **Final report:** After the 12-month scope of work is complete, each team will provide a report highlighting the accomplishments and challenges of their collaboration. The report will include an assessment of milestones and a budget review.

## Grant Terms and Policies

Collaboration Grants are supplementary funds to an existing grant agreement between BD<sup>2</sup> and an institution. This funding will be provided through an amendment to the existing grant and will be pursuant to the same grant terms. Each funded organization will be required to co-sign the amendment within thirty (30) days from receipt of notice of the award and prior to funds being released.

BD<sup>2</sup>'s grant terms include, but are not limited to, the following items:

### Use of Funds

Each team will be applying for a grant that would provide up to \$150,000 over 12 months.

- **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 may also include travel to relevant conferences and events, but does not include laboratory or facility renovation.
- **Carryover funding:** Upon request, a no-cost extension will be considered for unused research funds. Otherwise, any funds not expended or committed for the purposes of the grant by the conclusion of the grant term must be returned to BD<sup>2</sup> unless otherwise agreed to by BD<sup>2</sup> in writing.
- **Indirect costs:** Indirect costs are included in the \$150,000 award. Up to 15% of the entire grant budget may be slated for indirect costs, e.g. no more than \$22,500 for an award of \$150,000. Note that awards may be lower than the maximum \$150,000 annual grant. In such cases, only up to 15% of the 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 BD<sup>2</sup> unless otherwise agreed to by BD<sup>2</sup> in writing.
- **Supplemental funding:** If a funded organization proposes to supplement any funds provided by BD<sup>2</sup> with funds provided by a third party, the organization must first provide notice to BD<sup>2</sup> and must ensure that the funding terms associated with any such third-party funds do not preclude the sharing of data or publication of project results as outlined in this RFA.

## Data Sharing

Open and responsible data sharing is a key tenet to preventing roadblocks and delays in research findings. Therefore, data sharing and open science are foundational pillars of BD<sup>2</sup>. Teams and their affiliated institutions should review the BD<sup>2</sup> [Open Science Policy](#), as the Collaboration Grants are pursuant to the terms therein. Per the Open Science Policy, the terms that funded collaborations must comply with include, but are not limited to:

- **Sharing of All Research Outputs:** All BD<sup>2</sup>-funded research outputs, including datasets, protocols, code/software, and newly generated lab materials (e.g., tools, reagents, cell lines), must be made publicly available to the scientific community in an open-access format no later than the time of final submission for publication. Sharing outputs as early as possible and prior to publication is encouraged. Outputs are expected to be shared in accordance with FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, and Reusable) standards and to include all necessary metadata and documentation. Human-derived data should be as open as possible, but as closed as necessary, to ensure that protected health information remains private.
- **Posting Preprints and Using an Open-Access Format for Publications:** All publications related to this funded work must be submitted to a preprint server, such as bioRxiv, before or concurrently with the first submission to a journal. This funding opportunity requires an open-access journal format and publishing with the least restrictive license. In addition, early sharing of null and incremental results, within the network and publicly, is encouraged. Scientific publications, preprints, and presentations that result from this award must be acknowledged as being supported by this funding.

## Intellectual Property

Intellectual property resulting from, created, developed, conceived, or reduced to practice in whole or in part with funding from BD<sup>2</sup>, including all patents, copyrights, trademarks, trade secrets, and other rights therein (Grant IP), would be subject to obligations on the recipient organization to:

- Commercialize any Grant IP that has the potential to benefit patients who have bipolar disorder;
- Allow BD<sup>2</sup> 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 BD<sup>2</sup>; and
- Grant a research license to BD<sup>2</sup>, the founding funders of BD<sup>2</sup>, and all of their respective non-profit grantees to use and practice Grant IP in the field of bipolar disorder.

## Funding Awarded at BD<sup>2</sup>'s Discretion

Responding to this RFA and/or submitting an application does not entitle any individual or institution to receive funding from BD<sup>2</sup>. Funding, if any, will be provided at BD<sup>2</sup>'s sole discretion pursuant to the terms of a written grant agreement executed by BD<sup>2</sup> and the selected grantee organization, the terms of which BD<sup>2</sup> may require to be acknowledged by the PI.

### **NOTE ON ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE USE**

BD<sup>2</sup> 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, BD<sup>2</sup> and its peer reviewers will not analyze any submissions using AI.

## **Contact Information**

You will receive an automated email confirmation once your application is submitted. If you do not receive confirmation within 24 hours of submitting your application, please check spam filters, then contact [DiscoveryGrants@BipolarDiscoveries.org](mailto:DiscoveryGrants@BipolarDiscoveries.org).

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