



Establishing an iPSC vendor for BD² and ARIA

Request for Proposals

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Establishing an iPSC Biorepository Provider

Request for Proposals

KEY DATES	
RFP Release Date	October 7, 2026
Candidate Vendors to Submit Questions/Clarifications Related to the RFP	October 19, 2026
FAQs Shared with all Vendors Based on Submitted Questions	October 26, 2026
Proposal Submission Deadline	November 16, 2026
Virtual Presentation	Week of December 14, 2026
Anticipated Award Notification Date	January 2027
Anticipated Funds Release	End of Q1 2027

Opportunity

The [Aligning Research to Impact Autism](#) (ARIA) initiative and [Breakthrough Discoveries for thriving with Bipolar Disorder](#) (BD²) invite selected vendors to submit proposals to serve as a biorepository for iPSC quality control, expansion, and storage. We are seeking a vendor to generate, store, and distribute up to 3,000 iPSC lines over the next five years for the ARIA initiative and for BD² Programs.

About ARIA

[Aligning Research to Impact Autism](#) (ARIA) is an initiative to accelerate scientific discovery and create more therapeutic opportunities for people with profound autism and people on the spectrum who seek additional support to improve daily life.

ARIA's strategy is built on four interconnected elements:

- **Research Hubs:** We support research hubs with the shared goal of creating a coordinated, collaborative environment that drives innovation and advances scientific discovery.
- **Community Collaborators:** We integrate the voices of patients, family members, and community advocates throughout the research process. This ensures lived experiences of autistic individuals and their families meaningfully guide our work.
- **Open Science Infrastructure:** We are accelerating autism research through open science practices that maximize the accessibility, impact, and reusability of our work.
- **Centralized Services:** We collaborate with a variety of organizations to ensure consistency, scalability, and data interoperability across ARIA projects.

About BD²

[Breakthrough Discoveries for thriving with Bipolar Disorder](#), or BD², is a science nonprofit that funds bipolar disorder research and promotes improved care, with the vision that all people with bipolar disorder thrive. Its goal is to catalyze scientific breakthroughs to improve the biological and clinical understanding of bipolar disorder to develop improved tools, diagnostics, and interventions for people with bipolar disorder. BD² is organized around four programmatic areas:

- **Discovery Programs:** We support hypothesis-driven, cross-disciplinary efforts to expand our understanding of the biology of bipolar disorder.
- **Integrated Network:** We've built a clinical research network focused on understanding the trajectory and heterogeneity of bipolar disorder.
- **Clinical Transformation:** We rapidly translate findings and programs to real-world settings through partnerships and programs.
- **Network and Community Strengthening:** We accelerate knowledge transfer, attract and retain talent, and create a strong community within and beyond BD²-funded investigators.

Proposal Requirements

The proposal must adhere to the following structure and content requirements to be considered for review. Applicants should submit a proposal capped at 12 total pages plus a Cost Proposal and relevant Supporting Documentation. All documents must use at least 11-point font and 1-inch margins on all sides of the document, adequately addressing the following sections:

- Vendor Profile (up to 1 page)
- Technical Proposal (up to 5 pages)
 - Complete all questions under Organizational Eligibility
- Staffing Plan (up to 1 page)
- Timeline (up to 1 page)
- Relevant Experience (up to 4 pages)
- Cost Proposal (no page limit)
- Supporting Documentation (no page limit for certifications; up to 5 pages for appendices)

All applications should be submitted in two formats: PDF and DOCX, and submitted through the application portal at bd2.smapply.io. Below is an overview of the details to include within each section of the proposal.

Vendor Profile (up to 1 page)

Please provide a concise overview of your organization's name, age, mission statement, offered services and products, and a brief history of experience in managing the transport of PBMCs, derivation of iPSCs, QC, expansion, storage, and distribution.

Technical Proposal (up to 5 pages)

Organizational Eligibility Questions (11 Questions):

1. **Summary Statement:** Provide a statement outlining the services, capacity, and workflow of your organization.
2. **Storage Capacity & Sample Accommodation:** Discuss your experience with large-scale storage. How much storage is available at your facility? What kinds of samples can you accommodate, and at what volume? Describe your temperature-controlled storage capabilities (e.g., -80°C freezers, vapor-phase liquid nitrogen) and backup systems for maintaining sample integrity. Describe any time restrictions you have on holding samples and your policies for long-term sample storage and sustainability. Describe your continuous temperature monitoring and alarms, emergency power, backup cryostorage capacity, and disaster-recovery plan.
3. **Sample Tracking & Inventory Management:** Describe your Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS) and how your organization documents the chain of custody, your process for inventory requests, and any additional information about how sample inventory and location are maintained. Include details on audit trails and quality control monitoring.
4. **Deposition and Intake Process:** Please describe the typical workflow and timeline from initial contact with an investigator through the MTA and QC processing; a Gantt chart is encouraged. Explain if your team has any restrictions on where they can accept cells from (e.g., academic vs industry, international).
5. **iPSC Preparation Services:** What differentiation protocol does your team typically use to generate iPSCs from PBMCs? Are you capable of deriving iPSCs from fibroblasts? Please provide information on the QC procedures you perform when generating an iPSC line in-house.
6. **iPSC Quality Control Services:** Does your team have a typical SOP for intake and QC of iPSCs from external sources? Please provide details on the typical QC process and the metrics you use to confirm that the iPSCs are viable for distribution.
 - QC procedures, including: sterility, mycoplasma testing, cell-line identity and authentication, confirmation of pluripotency, karyotyping (G-band, for larger insertions/deletions during engineering), array-based genotyping (for smaller indels during engineering), and QC strategies or standardized measures of pluripotency and differentiation potential for differentiation to key cell types, i.e. glut neurons.
7. **Scale:** Discuss your team's previous experience with handling large-scale generation, storage, and distribution of iPSC lines. What systems will set you up to be successful in large-scale efforts, and what experiences have you had with other projects that speak to this success?
8. **Biorepository Access:** Describe how investigators can access your available iPSC lines. Please include details of your request and review process, contracting process, and typical turnaround times. Describe how you validate potential users to ensure proper use of cell lines.
9. **Project Management & Communication:** Describe how you work with project sponsors/partners from an administrative and operational perspective. Include information about regular reporting cadence and stakeholder engagement.

- 10. Material Transfer & Sample Distribution:** Describe your processes for Material Transfer Agreements (MTAs), sample request and approval workflows, aliquoting services, and procedures to minimize freeze-thaw cycles when distributing samples to researchers.
- 11. Regulatory Compliance & Documentation:** Detail your Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), licenses held, accreditation status (CLIA, CAP), regulatory compliance frameworks (HIPAA, GDPR), and documentation practices, including version control and audit trails.

Staffing Plan (up to 1 page)

Provide an overview of employees from the vendor team who will be assigned to provide the service if your organization is selected. This overview should identify the types of roles required to complete the work. It should also provide the name of the primary point of contact and, where possible, for additional key personnel (e.g. Project Manager, Laboratory Technicians), who are responsible for specific workflows. Include a short description of each employee's relevant expertise. Indicate dedicated FTE effort, cross-training/backup personnel, staff continuity plans, and their ability to accommodate periods of increased sample volume.

Timeline (up to 1 page)

Highlight the key service milestones, deliverables, and associated timelines for the proposed statement of work. A Gantt chart or table highlighting these details is encouraged.

Relevant Experience (up to 4 pages)

Include examples, with references, of up to three successfully completed projects of similar scope that provide evidence of your organization's expertise and capabilities, and include information on which types of biospecimens were utilized in the studies.

Cost Proposal (no page limit)

Include cost sheets that correspond directly to your technical proposal. As previously noted, the estimate for the number of lines to be generated is 3,000 over five years. The cost sheet should detail:

- Per-sample and batch pricing
- Costs for shipping, processing, and project management
- Costs for sample storage and distribution
- Optional or value-added services
- Any assumptions, dependencies, or volume-based discounts

Supporting Documentation (no page limit for certifications or Return-of-Results report; up to 5 pages for appendices)

- Attach relevant certifications and materials that substantiate your capabilities.
- Supporting materials such as process diagrams, sample workflows, licensing, or SOP excerpts may be included in appendices.

Virtual Presentation Requirements

In addition to submitting a written proposal, we will ask finalists to participate in a live demo with the ARIA and BD² teams during the week of December 14. During this session, vendors will present a slide deck outlining key details of the proposal, followed by a walkthrough of the proposed services.

To help guide the discussion, we will share a list of clarifying questions approximately one week before the demo. These questions will be addressed during the session as part of the review process.

NOTE ON ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE USE

ARIA and BD² understand 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, ARIA and BD² and its peer reviewers will not analyze any submissions using AI.