



## **2018 Stepping Strong Innovator Award for Spinal Cord Research: Request for Applications**

The Gillian Reny Stepping Strong Center for Trauma Innovation announces a **2018 Stepping Strong Innovator Award** with a specific focus to support research and innovation in the field of spinal column and cord injury in the areas of spinal cord, nerve damage and its associated recovery, and affiliated neuroscience complications that impact both civilian and military patients.

The Stepping Strong Center will fund a high-reward project by the best, most creative and collaborative physicians, bioengineers and bench top researchers in the Boston area. Multidisciplinary projects with collaborators at Brigham and Women's Hospital and Massachusetts General Hospital will receive enhanced consideration in this application process.

Stepping Strong expects to provide one grant of up to \$100,000 in 2018.

### **The Gillian Reny Stepping Strong Center for Trauma Innovation**

The Gillian Reny Stepping Strong Center for Trauma Innovation seeks to mobilize interdisciplinary innovation and collaboration to fuel research and care for the benefit of civilians and military heroes worldwide who have suffered devastating traumatic injuries and events. It aims to transform the care of trauma patients through science, innovation, and new technology.

Trauma is one of the most demanding global and under-recognized medical challenges in our nation. In the U.S. alone, traumatic injuries are the third leading cause of death across all age groups and the No. 1 cause of death for Americans between 1 and 44 years old. For those serving in the military, 82 percent of soldiers return from battle with at least one wounded limb. Yet, despite these dire statistics, trauma care research still only receives less than one percent of funding from the National Institutes of Health.

Stepping Strong was established in 2014 by the Reny and Epstein families, who were injured survivors of the Boston Marathon bombings and were grateful for their care at Brigham and Women's Hospital. The Gillian Reny Stepping Strong Center for Trauma Innovation is a major initiative with a global vision to change how we think about traumatic injury. Through its support for trauma research, and collaboration, the center aims to move the field beyond the current paradigm and to translate new ideas directly to transform outcomes and improve patient's lives.

Since its inception, the Stepping Strong Center has taken a multidisciplinary, three-pronged approach to advancing research and clinical programs that allow BWH and Boston-area researchers to accelerate innovations in trauma care and saving lives. The **Stepping Strong Research Scholars** are engaged in exploring topics to advance bone and skin regeneration in trauma patients; the **Stepping Strong Innovator Awards** program supports groundbreaking



projects that address clinical problems that impact both civilian and military patients; and the **Stepping Strong Plastic Surgery Trauma Fellowship** trains the next generation of plastic surgeons in advanced techniques for treating acute and complex traumatic injury. Our physician-scientists are collaborating with medical experts from world-class neighboring institutions, including Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center (BIDMC), and Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH), and our Medical Executive Committee consists of leading physicians and researchers from 11 academic institutions.

Stepping Strong's grants have proven to be the critical early stage funding that innovators and researchers have needed to launch or validate their innovative ideas. To date, Stepping Strong has provided \$1.7 million in Innovator Awards to 12 researchers at BWH. In just a few short years, several of those researchers have leveraged their Innovator Awards and other grants to secure major research grants from private philanthropy, corporations and federal agencies. In aggregate, our Innovator Award winners have raised an additional **\$7 million** in outside funding for their research.

In addition to funding, a Stepping Strong Innovator award connects you to our Medical Executive Committee and a community of over 100 researchers, clinicians and mentors all focused on traumatic injury in the Greater Boston area, as well as our Advisory Board, comprised of leading venture capitalists, investors, life science executives and thought leaders that attend our events and provide strategic advice to the Center and our researchers. Our grant recipients have already started leveraging these networks to begin commercializing their products or gaining national exposure for their work.

Stepping Strong organizes and co-hosts events for researchers and physicians to understand research commercialization, grant writing, and innovation in general, often in partnership with other Centers at BWH and in the Partners network. Stepping Strong also hosts specialty research working groups and provides other opportunities for grant recipients to solicit feedback and share their research with peers to move their work forward.

## **Application Process**

Applications will be evaluated and ranked for funding priority based on a review process at BWH that will evaluate clinical relevance and scientific merit. Please note that the entire selection process may involve review by both BWH faculty (both clinicians/researchers) as well as non-BWH reviewers including faculty at other institutions, donors, venture capitalists, representatives of the biopharma/device industry, and other friends of Stepping Strong. The reviewers will be selected by the Stepping Strong Center for Trauma Innovation. The final selection will be made after review by the Stepping Strong Medical Executive Committee and a presentation session to a group of reviewers who are internal (BWH clinicians/researchers) and/or external to BWH.

Preferential assessment will be given to proposals that include collaborators based at Brigham and Women's Hospital or Massachusetts General Hospital. Please contact Stepping Strong directly if you would like assistance identifying potential collaborators at either hospital.



**Timeline:**

<b>Initial Selection Process</b>	<b>Dates</b>
RFP announcement	June 14, 2018
Full applications due	August 21, 2018
Finalists notified	September 21, 2018
Finalists' presentations to selection committee	October 3, 2018
Recipient announced at Stepping Strong Symposium	November 1, 2018
Funding start date	December 1, 2018

**Eligibility**

- All members of the Boston-area research community including physicians, nurses, allied health professionals, faculty members with instructor rank and above, along with private sector researchers and inventors are invited to apply. Please contact Stepping Strong if you have questions about your eligibility
- Applicants may conduct research jointly with non-profit research institutes, government labs (such as NIH) or private companies.
- Previous applicants of the Stepping Strong Innovator awards are eligible to re-apply
- Individuals may serve as the Principal Investigator (PI) of only one proposal but may be co-PIs on multiple proposals.
- The project must have direct clinical relevance and application potential. A trauma clinician collaborator is strongly encouraged unless the PI himself/herself is a trauma clinician.
- Recipient (or collaborator in the case of an external recipient) must remain at BWH for duration of the award; award may otherwise be forfeited.
- If a project is selected as a finalist, at least one member of the team must participate in the presentation session on October 3, 2018.

**Review criteria**

- Projects must address a well-defined clinical problem related to traumatic spinal cord injury and will be evaluated for clinical significance, impact or commercialization potential.
- The project must be scientifically meritorious and aligned with innovative research in the field of spinal column and cord injury in the areas of spinal cord, nerve damage and its associated recovery, including affiliated neuroscience complications that impact both civilian and military patients.
- The project will be reviewed for its connection to Stepping Strong's mission and vision.
- Innovative ideas and multidisciplinary research in the fields above will be given priority
- The project should be focused and achievable, with a clear strategy and high potential to secure future additional funding.



- Strength of team: investigators must have the requisite skills and experience to carry out the project successfully.

Please note that aspects regarding feasibility or intellectual property might also be considered as part of the review process.

### **Review Process**

- Applications will be solicited per the timeline above. Following a review by the SSCTI Medical Executive Committee, finalists will be selected to participate in a presentation session. The presentation session (October 3, 2018) will be conducted as a meeting with a committee composed of reviewers who are internal and/or external to BWH. One winner will be awarded up to \$100,000 in grant funds.
- Partners Innovation will review finalist applications to review intellectual property prior to any release of their documents to the review committees.
- A portion of the review committee throughout the selection process will be composed of clinicians who treat trauma patients. Additional committee members will be recruited from other relevant departments, institutes and external sources
- The final selection of the Innovator Award winners will occur after the presentation session and winners will be announced on November 1, 2018.
- The funding start date will be December 1, 2018.

### **Responsibilities**

- Recipients will be obligated to provide a quarterly report to the Stepping Strong Center for Trauma Innovation
- Grantees will notify the Stepping Strong Center when other grants are received because of this funding.
- Grantees will notify the Stepping Strong Center as well as Brigham and Women's Communications Department if they are contacted by media sources to talk about their work.
- Grantees will acknowledge the Gillian Reny Stepping Strong Center in media appearances, publications, posters, grants and other professional recognition resulting from this funding support, when such events are due to occur.
- Be available to present at Stepping Strong events, meetings, symposium and individual with donors, etc.

### **Application Format**

Full applications (**due August 21, 2018, 12:00 pm**) should be submitted [via this link](#) and must include the following:

1. Title of research project to be supported
2. Applicant's last and first names, employing institution, department, academic/professional title, email address and telephone number
3. Scientific theme/field your proposal addresses
4. A compelling lay clinical impact summary (no more than 300 words) and a scientific abstract (no more than 300 words)
5. Proposal (5-page limit, excluding references), including:



- a. Introduction
  - b. Specific aims
  - c. Background, significance and preliminary data (if available) about patient and market size worldwide
  - d. Research approach (include experimental details, approximate timeline and contributions of each team member)
  - e. Opportunities for research to have clinical significance, societal impact or to be commercialized as a product, drug or therapeutic.
  - f. Future strategies for raising funding beyond the Stepping Strong grant
6. Bio sketch of Principal Investigator, co-investigators and significant key personnel in NIH format
  7. Detailed budget for one year for a maximum of \$100,000. **Use budget template provided on the BRI funding opportunities website**
  8. Copy of current human or animal use protocol approval letter (if applicable)

*By applying for the Stepping Strong Innovator Awards you agree to release and hold harmless BWH, the Gillian Reny Stepping Strong Center for Trauma Innovation and its subsidiaries, affiliates, societies, advertising and promotion agencies, partners, representatives, agents, successors, assigns, employees, officers and directors from any liability, illness, injury, death, loss, litigation, claim or damage that may occur, directly or indirectly, whether caused by negligence or not, from (i) such Applicant's participation in the Stepping Strong Innovator Award Competition and/or his/her acceptance, possession, use, or misuse of any award or any portion thereof, (ii) technical failures of any kind, including but not limited to the malfunctioning of any computer, cable, network, hardware or software; (iii) the unavailability or inaccessibility of any transmissions or telephone or Internet service; (iv) unauthorized human intervention in any part of the entry process or the promotion; (v) electronic or human error which may occur in the administration of the promotion or the processing of entries.*

## CONTACT

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