2025 Barbara L. Crow Investigator-Concept Grant: Request for Proposal

The Barbara L. Crow Investigator-Concept Grant (ICG) is a research effort in which the investigator designs the study and VisionGift/Grantor acts as the study sponsor, not the investigator. As the sponsor, VisionGift/Grantor assumes all responsibilities for complying with applicable regulatory requirements. The investigator may support the study in the form of product or technical input where necessary.

Important Deadlines

Full proposal – August 31, 2025
Award Announcement at the 2025 American Academy of Ophthalmology – October 28, 2025

Introduction

Currently the World Health Organization estimates that 253 million people worldwide live with vision impairment: 36 million blind and another 217 million with moderate to severe vision impairment. Globally, chronic eye diseases are the main cause of vision loss, and it's estimated that over 80% of all vision impairment can be prevented or cured.

The use of donor ocular tissue in the development of treatments and surgical interventions has a long history. From the treatment of cataracts to the sequencing of genes in glaucoma, research utilizing donated cadaveric eyes has been part of the advancement of ocular medicine for over 100 years. In recent years the cost of recovery and provision of human eyes for research has climbed significantly due to regulatory changes, researcher demands on timelines and preservations, and countless other factors. Because of this increase in cost, many eye banks have limited research tissue recoveries or stopped recovering for non-transplant uses all together. As a result, it can be difficult for clinicians and scientists to conduct early-stage studies using donor ocular tissues. Thus, VisionGift (VG) has created a mechanism to help stimulate innovative early-stage projects that may lead to life-changing treatments for ocular diseases.

Funding details

The goal of this Grant is to develop novel approaches through the proof-of-concept stage for the treatment of ocular diseases. These approaches should demonstrate the potential for the development of a commercial technology to improve patient outcomes. The Barbara L. Crow Investigator-Concept Grant is intended to support clinicians and scientists in the early stages of product/treatment feasibility. Two grants will be awarded this cycle (1 to clinical/academic researchers and 1 to pharmaceutical/industry researchers per year). VG will provide all cadaveric ocular tissue and staff for all research and testing necessary to complete the value of the grant. There will be **no monetary exchange** between VG and grant recipients, and the value for tissue and research performed will be a maximum of $15,000.

VisionGift Laboratory Resources

VG's Vision Research Laboratory boasts contemporary clinical and engineering design and features common to modern operating rooms. We have more than 330 square ft of ISO Certified processing rooms. With a dedicated Research & Development department, VG has completed numerous laboratory and clinical research projects (including contract research), from which we have published peer-reviewed scientific reports that have helped shape the field of corneal transplantation and vision research (see our publications). In addition to our own internal laboratory resources, VG has access to

research instrumentation and techniques such as DNA/RNA sequencing, mass spectrometry, electron microscopy, and histology services through our extensive network of collaborators.

Applicant Eligibility
Academic and industry groups are eligible to submit applications.

Application Guidelines

Project proposal
Please limit your application to a maximum of 3 pages (excluding Budget and Biographical Sketches).

1. Cover page with identifying information: (Limit: 1 page)
- Project Title
- Name and Title of PI
- Department/Institutions
- PI's E-mail
- Telephone
- Co-PI's or Research Mentor/Supervisor Name
- Co-PI's or Research Mentor/Supervisor Contact Information

2. Executive Summary: (Limit: 2 pages)
- Provide a clear, concise description of the proposed project including target population and their needs. If the project is successful, what are the long-term objectives for future studies. How will patients potentially benefit from this research and therapy?
- Without disclosing propriety information, briefly summarize how the tissue will be used to study a specific condition or develop a specific therapy.

3. Budget & Justification: (Limit: 1 page)
- Provide a detailed accounting of how this funding up to $15,000 will be directed using the figure of $1850 per pair of donor whole eyes taking into consideration that further tissue dissections and preservations will increase the cost of the tissue.

4. Biographical Sketches of CVs: (Please limit each Biosketch to 5 pages).
- Include a Biosketch for PI and any Key personnel
- Blank NIH Biosketch templates can be obtained from the NIH Grants and Funding page (link provided below).
    - https://grants.nih.gov/grants/forms/biosketch.htm

Additional Information
Interested parties are encouraged to contact VisionGift Research with any questions regarding tissue costs or about the application itself prior to the application deadline.

Please direct emails to: Grants@VisionGift.org

Submission Guidelines
Applications must be submitted via email to: Grants@VisionGift.org