The McPherson ERI is offering two awards of $50,000 to advance research in age-related macular degeneration (AMD) and one award of $50,000 to advance research in retinitis pigmentosa (RP). These awards are funded by generous gifts from Roger and Lynn Van Vreede and the Robert A. Brandt Macular Degeneration Fund.

(*Please note, if you require further clarification with regard to this funding opportunity or the application process, contact Chris Lacey (chris.lacey@wisc.edu), who will forward your question to the McPherson ERI Leadership Committee.)*

**Purpose:** To support basic and/or translational research that (1) leads to an improved understanding of the pathophysiological mechanisms underlying AMD or RP, and/or (2) advances promising therapies for AMD or RP. (For the purpose of this award, RP is broadly defined as any inherited outer retinal degenerative disease; i.e., targeting RPE or photoreceptor cells.)

**Eligibility:** Applications will be accepted from McPherson ERI members at UW–Madison. Applicants must be faculty, permanent principal investigators, or have limited PI status. The proposed project must not be funded through any other internal or external grant mechanism up until the time that it is awarded (thereafter, outside grant applications that utilize data obtained with AMD/RP Research Award funds are highly encouraged). Collaborative projects are welcomed but not required. Funds remaining one year after issuance of the award will be retained by the Institute unless a one-year no cost extension is granted.

**Expectations:**
- Awardees are expected to present data obtained via their AMD/RP Research Award within 1–2 years at a McPherson ERI-sponsored event such as the monthly seminar series or the Fall poster session.
- A 1–2 page written report is required at the end of the funding period that describes key results and future directions of the project supported by the award.
- Publications that result from the funded project should acknowledge support from a “UW–Madison McPherson Eye Research Institute AMD/RP Research Award.”

**Submission deadline:** October 3, 2022

Submit grant applications to Chris Lacey: chris.lacey@wisc.edu

**Application format:**

1. Check the appropriate box on the application to indicate whether you are applying for an AMD or RP award.

2. Complete the application (which includes a brief lay abstract and budget statement) on the provided fillable form using single-spaced text, Arial font no smaller than 11 point, and page margins of 0.5 inches. The form must be signed by the principal investigator.
PLEASE NOTE that your lay abstract should be written in language that a reviewer who is not in your field can fully understand. Your application will be judged in large part by your lay description and its overall understandability. The review panel is comprised of researchers from several different scientific fields, including psychology, neuroscience, computer science, medical genetics, human development and family studies, biostatistics and medical informatics, engineering, ophthalmology and visual sciences, and many others. Make sure you convey the purpose and importance of your research project so that a researcher from any school, college, or department can fully understand it.

3. As a separate, single pdf file, submit the following:
   A. Brief research proposal (up to 4 pages), including text and figures (latter not required). Include the following sections: background/rationale; significance/innovation; specific aims; research plan and methods; and anticipated results.
   B. References cited, immediately following the research proposal, beginning on a separate page (no page limit).
   C. For both 3A and 2B above, use single-spaced text, Arial font no smaller than 11 point, and page margins of 0.5 inches.

4. An NIH- or NSF-style biosketch must be submitted with your application.

5. A compliance form, indicating use/non-use of human or animal subjects and biosafety protocol.

Budget statement: In a few sentences and included on the application, outline how you will use the funds—up to $50,000—to advance your project over the one-year award period. Use can include personnel salary, but not tuition remission. Other possible allocations include, but are not limited to, equipment, supplies, reagents, core facility costs, etc. Of note, travel can only be included if critical to conduct the research. Do not include travel to attend meetings or conferences.

Award restrictions: An AMD/RP Research Award is non-transferable. Funding is available for use over a one-year period; thereafter, unused funds will be returned to the Institute unless a one-year no cost extension is granted. Award funds cannot be used for tuition remission or for meeting/conference attendance.

Proposal review: Written proposals will be reviewed by the McPherson ERI Leadership Committee. NEW TO THIS FUNDING OPPORTUNITY: Selected applicants will then be invited to present a succinct, 10-minute, 5-slide (template provided) talk to the Leadership Committee describing their proposed research, followed by a 5-minute question and answer period.

Review criteria include (1) the understandability of the lay abstract, (2) the significance of the proposal from an AMD or RP research standpoint, (3) the inclusion of innovative concepts, tools, or methods, (4) the rigor of the experimental approach, (5) the clarity/completeness of the proposal. Assessments of both the written proposal and live presentation will be used in determining which projects will receive funding.

Timeline:
October 3, 2022: Submission deadline
December 2022: Grant recipients announced