REQUEST FOR LETTERS OF INTENT (LOI)

DIABETIC RETINOPATHY BIOMARKER DISCOVERY AND VALIDATION:

PURPOSE
JDRF is committed to facilitating the translation of pre-clinical discovery of promising targets or therapeutics in diabetic retinopathy to the patient with Type 1 Diabetes (T1D). To this end, JDRF is soliciting letters of intent for research to identify and validate predictive and prognostic biomarkers for diabetic retinopathy (DR).

BACKGROUND
Diabetic retinopathy is a sight-threatening complication of diabetes and the largest cause of blindness in the US. Despite recent advances in the treatment of diabetic macular edema, there remains a large unmet clinical need to prevent or reverse vision loss via the treatment of earlier stages of disease, such as non-proliferative diabetic retinopathy (NPDR). Progression of NPDR to vision-threatening consequences can be slow creating a challenge in the design of clinical trials to treat disease at the earliest possible stage. Therefore novel biomarkers are needed to identify NPDR patients that are at highest risk for progression to more severe disease. In addition, to increase information that can be gained from clinical trials, shorter-term biomarkers are needed which may predict treatment response as surrogates to endpoints currently accepted by regulators, such as differences in visual acuity or 3-step progression on the Early Treatment Diabetic Retinopathy Study (ETDRS) scale.

OBJECTIVES
Letters of intent are sought from investigators to identify and validate novel functional, genetic or biochemical biomarkers of diabetic retinopathy with potential to 1) predict progression of NPDR, or 2) predict long-term treatment response. Studies may include:

1) Ancillary studies of ongoing interventional or observational clinical trials to add additional measurements related to progression of diabetic retinopathy
2) Analysis of data from current or past clinical trials to identify factors which predicted progression of NPDR or response to therapy
3) New clinical studies to address these questions

Preclinical studies using animal or cellular models of diabetic retinopathy are not suitable for submission to this call.

MECHANISM
Projects will be developed as Clinical Strategic Research Agreements. Budget should be proposed consistent with the proposed activities. Support for up to 3 years may be sought; investigators with should seek permission from the scientific contact in advance of submitting a letter of intent for studies exceeding this duration.

ELIGIBILITY
Applications may be submitted by for-profit entities as well as nonprofit organizations, public and private universities, colleges, hospitals, laboratories, units of state and local governments. There are no citizenship requirements.
EXPRESSION OF INTEREST
An approved LOI is required prior to submission of a full proposal. Please see below for complete instructions.

- Request for LOI Release Date: April 21st, 2014
- LOI Submission Deadline: June 20th, 2014
- LOI Notification: July 2014
- Full Application Deadline: September 16th, 2014
- Response to Applicants Date: January 2015
- Earliest Anticipated Start Date: February 2015

SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS
**Please note that JDRF has transitioned to a new online grants management system called RMS360 in the spring and summer of 2013. Accordingly, please follow these instructions carefully to ensure your LOI is submitted by the June 20, 2014 deadline.**

Beginning April 21, 2014, applicants should register and submit their completed LOI in RMS360 (http://jdrf.smartsimple.us). The deadline to submit a completed LOI is June 20, 2014.

REVIEW CRITERIA
JDRF will review and select LOIs to be developed into full proposals. Please direct queries about the suitability of your proposal to the scientific contact below.

SCIENTIFIC CONTACT
Helen Nickerson, Ph.D.
JDRF, 26 Broadway, 14th Floor
New York, NY 10004
☎ 212-470-7522
✉ hnickerson@jdrf.org

ADMINISTRATIVE CONTACT
Amanda Rieder
JDRF, 26 Broadway, 14th Floor
New York, NY 10004
☎ 212-479-7575
✉ arieder@jdrf.org

If you have any grant-specific questions as you work within RMS360, please contact the administrative contact listed above. For any non-grant-specific inquiries or issues, please contact SmartSimple Support Services via email support@smartsimple.com or phone (866) 239-0991. Support hours are Monday through Friday between 5:00am and 9:00pm US Eastern Standard Time.