

Hussman Foundation Project Funding – General Principles

Mission

The mission of the Hussman Foundation is to provide life-changing assistance through medical research, education, and direct aid to vulnerable individuals having urgent needs or significant disabilities.

To achieve the greatest impact, the Foundation emphasizes projects having the capacity to save or significantly improve lives, at a small financial commitment per person affected. These projects are often on the margin that divides a modest amount of help from nothing at all.

The Hussman Foundation seeks to “tip the balance” in critical areas where research or intervention can significantly alter the course of individual lives, and where resources would otherwise not be available. The Foundation also helps organizations to develop grant-writing and reporting procedures so they can secure long-term funding from broader sources.

The grants made by the Hussman Foundation are project-centered. The Foundation does not provide general funding or unrestricted grants to other organizations.

Project Criteria

Consistent with the mission of the Foundation, *alleviation of suffering or distress* and *low cost per beneficiary* are essential criteria in evaluating grant proposals:

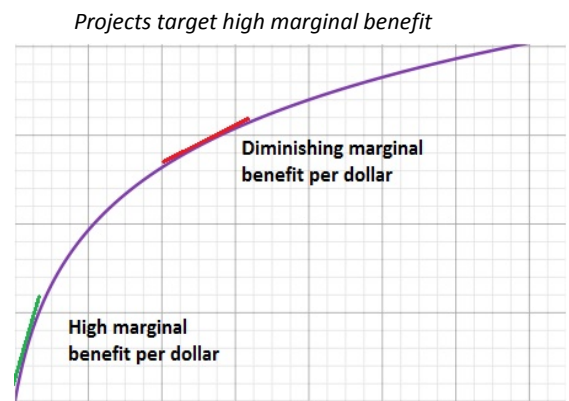
Proposed projects should have a reasonable expectation of having a life-changing or life-saving impact on project beneficiaries, at a small cost per person affected. Ideally, such projects should address debilitating conditions or risks that affect the future life course of beneficiaries, and where a great deal of suffering or distress may be alleviated or avoided per dollar spent.

While some projects might conceivably have millions of potential beneficiaries, we carefully consider the severity of the problem being addressed, the expected size of potential benefits, and the extent to which project benefits are likely to be transmitted to the target population. Even where proposed projects target a population with significant needs or disabilities, we consider the extent to which likely outcomes would be life-changing, with a benefit/cost profile comparable to other available projects.

Except where we have a strong predisposition toward a given line of exploratory research, we generally restrict funding to proposals where prospective benefits are clearly described, where the transmission of project outcomes to the described beneficiaries is likely to be direct, and where the cost per likely beneficiary is quantifiable.

Projects should not duplicate existing efforts by other organizations or serve as substitutes for functions that would otherwise be likely to be performed by government. Model programs, surveys, and other exploratory projects should be limited in scale and should produce deliverables that facilitate broad replication. National-level initiatives are beyond our focus.

In short, the Foundation attempts to operate at the margin “between nothing and something,” where the intervention is life-saving or life-altering, at a low cost per person affected (or where probable benefits directly attributable to research projects can be expected to divide into that result), and where the Foundation’s efforts do not overlap existing activities or governmental roles.



Project Examples

- Supporting promising medical research in autism, neurological disorders, diabetes, malaria, and cancer vaccine development along under-funded lines of investigation;
- Improving the quality of inclusive education, and supporting research and training in alternative communication for individuals with special needs;
- Directly funding surgeries and low-cost interventions to address trachoma-related blindness, guinea worm, cleft-palate; and other conditions. We frequently benchmark other projects based on the benefit/cost that can be obtained through such direct interventions;
- Developing model programs and training materials in a variety of fields, in order to provide proof-of-principle as a springboard for broad replication (e.g. educational inclusion, service delivery models for adults with autism, pediatric diabetes testing, community health centers in developing countries);
- Providing emergency or “stop-gap” assistance to schools, health programs, and shelters, particularly in impoverished countries where individuals suffer life-threatening diseases or are displaced without access to basic education, stable living conditions, or human rights. We emphasize participation and in-kind contributions by local communities (as opposed to “expatriate” aid models) and the transition to multiple sources of sustainable long-term funding.

The Foundation generally does not provide funding for “indirect” expenses of other organizations. However, the Foundation may allow 5-10% indirect allocations where the principal activities of the receiving organization are closely aligned with the mission of the Foundation.

We are committed to working with our partner organizations to promote the foregoing goals, and hope that an understanding of the Foundation’s mission will be helpful in designing appropriate projects.