This year, the Foundation awarded Young Investigator Grants, (valued at $35,000 per year for two years) to eight researchers: Gabriel E. Hoffman, Ph.D. and Halene Tobias, M.D., Ph.D. for work on schizophrenia/psychotic disorders; Lorna Alice Farrelly, Ph.D., Orna Issler, Ph.D., and Elsa Suberbielle, D.V.M., Ph.D. for work on mood disorders; Drew Donovan Kiraly, M.D., Ph.D., and Xiaofan Li, Ph.D., for work on addiction/substance-related disorders; and Laura Marianne Huckins, Ph.D., for work on multiple disorders.

In fact, five Icahn School of Medicine researchers serve on the Foundation’s Scientific Council, including Fritz A. Henn, M.D., Ph.D., winner of the 2014 Colvin Prize for Outstanding Achievement in Mood Disorders Research; Eric J. Nestler, M.D., Ph.D., winner of the 2008 Goldman-Rakic Prize for Outstanding Achievement in Cognitive Neuroscience; and Schahram Akbarian, M.D., Ph.D., winner of the 1997 Klerman Prize for exceptional clinical research by a Young Investigator.

As the nation’s top non-governmental funder of mental health research, the Foundation is a critical source of private funding at a time when future prospects of government funding for scientific research are uncertain. It offers scientists opportunities to conduct important, novel and clinically relevant studies that are not being funded through the traditional NIMH mechanisms because of a shortage of money and, in some cases, risk aversion.

The Foundation’s successful model helps scientists throughout their careers: Young Investigator Grants support scientists at the advanced post-doctoral or assistant professor (or equivalent) level for up to $35,000/year for one or two years; Independent Investigator Grants, provide $50,000 per year for up to two years during the critical period between the initiation of research and the receipt of sustained funding; and Distinguished Investigator Grants support scientists at the full professor (or equivalent) level for up to $100,000 for one year.

While scientists often receive several NARSAD grants, they can make a huge impact in the career of a young scientist: recipients of Young Investigator grants received an average of 11 to 19 times the original grant amount in subsequent funding.

Since 1987, the Foundation has awarded more than $365 million to fund 5,000 grants to over 4,000 scientists around the world, leading to over $3.5 billion in additional funding.

Grants are selected by the Foundation’s Scientific Council, comprised of 168 leading experts across disciplines in brain and behavior research, including two Nobel Prizewinners; four former directors and the current director of the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH); four recipients of the National Medal of Science; 13 members of the National Academy of Sciences; 26 chairs of psychiatry and neuroscience departments at leading medical institutions; and 55 members of the Institute of Medicine. Since the Foundation began, members of the all-volunteer Scientific Council have reviewed more than 25,000 grant applications.