**UNC Idea Grant**

Program Goals and Award Overview

The UNC Idea Grant is a pilot funding program that encourages researchers to develop novel ideas that address important problems or clear roadblocks to de-risk a current line of inquiry. This competition is open to any field of research and/or scholarship conducted by UNC-CH faculty researchers. Proposers must demonstrate how their proposed research project will have impact by addressing an important problem in their research field. The goal of this program is to provide initial support to projects so that researchers will be more competitive for additional external or large-scale internal funding. This funding program will not serve as bridge funding or to supplement existing funding.

This program is part of the Vice Chancellor for Research’s university-wide pilot funding portfolio, with the goal of furthering the University’s pre-eminence as a national and world-renowned leader in foundational research, creative practice, and the translation of research into social settings.

Important Dates

Competitions for the UNC Idea Grant will be held once annually. Proposal applications will be due in March of each year to the Office of Research Development (ORD). The deadline for this year is **11:59 pm on Monday, April 19, 2021**. [Details of the application process are published on the ORD website](https://research.unc.edu/research-development/finding-funding/internal-funding/).

Funding

Idea Grants will range between $5,000 - $ 20,000, commensurate with the scope of work, for up to 1 year.

Eligibility

Applicants must hold a primary tenure-track or research-track faculty appointment at UNC-CH.

Early career investigators who are within five years of their faculty appointment are strongly encouraged to apply. The Office of the Vice Chancellor (OVCR) for Research is committed to building and supporting a diverse, inclusive, and welcoming research culture at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. The OVCR supports UNC’s Diversity and Inclusion mission statement, “to build understanding across differences, create conditions to ensure the equitable educational and social benefits of diversity, and cultivate a welcoming and supportive environment…” Our goal is to recruit and nurture inclusive research teams to foster a creative scientific workforce.

Application Requirements

Proposal should be submitted as one document in PDF format to ORD@unc.edu by **11:59 pm on Monday, April 19, 2021.**

The proposal should contain the following:

***Cover page*** – *please use the provided template*

* Proposal Title
* Lead PI(s)
* Other team members
* Total amount of funding requested
* Approval signature of the applicant’s dean, chair, or other supervisor
* Answers to compliance questions
* Abstract – 200 words

***Project Description***, (*3 pages, 1-inch margins, single-spaced, no less than 11-point font*)

* The project description should contain the following:
  + Significance: Description of the idea, problem or roadblock being addressed;
  + Approach: How the proposed project will address this problem;
  + Innovation: What expected impact your idea or proposed solution(s) will have on the problem or in the field and discipline;
  + Rationale for Support: Description of why funds are critical to the project objectives;
  + Milestones and Anticipated Outcomes: General timeline of milestones to be pursued, and expected project outcomes. For example, will this support lead to increased success obtaining extramural research funding, or perhaps produce a dataset or platform that will attract external funding; and
  + Continuation Plan: Description of potential funding opportunities that will be targeted, or describe steps that the project team will take to ensure sustainability of seed-supported products.
* Idea grants may be awarded to a single investigator or to collaborative teams. If the project consists of a collaborative team, select a single contact investigator, and describe how the combined strengths benefit the project.
* Proposals should be written with a broad scholarly audience in mind, as there is no guarantee that reviewers will be technical experts in the same field.
* References Cited are not counted in the page limit.

***Biographical Sketches*** (*no limit on number of biographical sketches, but each should not exceed 5 pages*).

* Required for Lead PI and any key personnel listed as a team member.
* Use a biographical sketch that is discipline-appropriate (e.g. NSF, NIH, DOD).

***Budget and Budget Justification***

* All funds must be well-justified within the scope of work. These funds can be used for activities that will support development of ideas to make the project more competitive for external funding or large internal seed funding.
* Allowable Costs - Examples of acceptable cost that could be supported by this funding include, but are not limited to,
  + Cost associated with the generation of preliminary data or prototypes, such as research consumables, research scientist/GRA/Postdoc support, core facility services;
  + Travel to sponsors, collaborators or other appropriate sites are allowable but must be well justified.
  + Costs for team formation activities, such as workshops and meetings (e.g., food costs, meeting venue) must not exceed $2,000.
  + Publication costs if manuscripts are an expected product of the research endeavor.
* Unallowable costs
  + In general, no faculty salary is allowed. In limited, well justified circumstances, early career faculty may request summer salary.
  + No purchase of items not normally allowable on extramurally funded sources.

***Collaboration***

* Early career investigators are encouraged, but not required, to include a more senior researcher to serve as advisor/mentor. These individuals are not required to be listed as a co-PI on the proposal. Advisor/mentor are encouraged to provide a letter of support outlining their role in the process.

Key Review Criteria

* Innovation and Impact – Projects that address an important problem or roadblock to a current line of inquiry. Applicants must demonstrate how the proposed project will be beneficial to their research field.
* Project Outcome – Applicants must outline what the anticipated outcome of the funds will be. Examples include:
  + Proposals seeking external funding or larger internal funding (e.g. Creativity Hubs, Eshelman Institute for Innovation funds, etc.)
  + Development of a dataset, platform, or other research resource that will be of broad use to researchers internal and external to UNC
  + Other PI-defined deliverable that is likely to attract strong interest and support from outside the university

Terms of Award

* Award is for 1 year, but a no-cost extension for up to 6 months is allowable with proper justification and approval from ORD.
  + Requests for a no cost extension must be made at least 90-days prior to the expiration of an award.
  + No-cost extensions will only be granted for extenuating, well-justified circumstances.
* Unexpended funds will revert to the OVCR.
* Two final reports are due at the project’s conclusion.
  + A summary of the project and accomplishments.
  + A detailed financial report with comprehensive invoicing of all expenses.
* After the project end date, awardees are expected to:
  + If requested, serve as reviewers on Idea Seed Grant competitions.
  + Provide updates to ORD for up to 3 years about progress in obtaining funding to sustain the project.

Assistance from the Office of Research Development

ORD can provide support for identifying external funding opportunities that align with ideas. Additionally, for large, complex proposals, ORD can provide project management services as outlined here: <http://research.unc.edu/research-development/large-complex-proposal-support/>

Questions

For all questions related to this program, please contact the Office of Research Development at [ord@unc.edu](mailto:ord@unc.edu)