

UNIVERSITY of HOUSTON | RESEARCH

Grants to Enhance Research on COVID-19 and the Pandemic Full-Proposal 2020-2021 Guidelines

Proposal Submission Deadline

Monday, August 3, 2020 before 5:00 p.m.

- Combine all files of the completed proposal into a single PDF, name the file LAST_FIRST_2020 where the LAST is your last name and the FIRST is your first name, and attach the PDF to the online cover page. Submit 1 (one) pdf using the online link on the DOR webpage: <https://uh.edu/research/funding-opportunities/internal-awards/grants-to-enhance-research-on-covid-19-and-the-pandemic>

LATE PROPOSALS WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED

Overview

The President announced a new internal grant competition designed to address issues related to COVID-19 and the pandemic. COVID-19 has deeply affected how our society operates with immediate effects on how we live and work with expected long-term reverberations to last for years. The University of Houston is particularly well situated to respond to this current and long-term crisis with a program of research, scholarship, and artistic expression to address the causes, effects and consequences of COVID-19, and develop insights, actions and solutions. This program seeks bold new ideas, showing clear evidence of short-term impact and the possibility of leading to longer-term research, scholarship, or artistic expression that address the causes, effects and consequences of COVID-19 pandemic. Only proposals that meet this purpose will be considered and reviewed. Proposals are particularly encouraged in each of the four institutional research thrusts, including (1) Cyber and Physical Security; (2) Drug Discovery and Development; (3) Sustainable Communities and Infrastructure, including disaster relief and recovery; and (4) Accessible health care, including health disparities because of the disproportionate effects of the virus on communities of color. Projects do not need to be restricted to the institutional thrusts and can include other forms of scholarship and artistic expression as well as effects on business and the economy, legal issues, how people work and live now and in the future. The focus should be on the development of products that enhance our understanding of the causes and consequences of COVID-19 and lead to effective solutions. This program is not a supplement to currently funded research projects or to new faculty startup funds. Faculty are encouraged to build diverse teams and to include external stakeholders.

A total of \$500,000 is available for this competition. Recognizing the broad nature of research and scholarship entailed by issues related to COVID-19 and the pandemic, proposals from all colleges and programs are encouraged. Awards will be made at two levels. The first is for *small grants* of up to \$10,000 and are primarily designed for short-term scoped studies and pilot studies of larger multidisciplinary programs. We anticipate funding eight-12 small grants. The second is for grants of up to \$70,000 for larger multidisciplinary groups. We anticipate making six-10 awards at this level.

Eligibility

Full-time tenured or tenure-track faculty and non-tenure track research and clinical faculty are eligible to apply for these funds. Individual faculty members or groups of faculty may apply. If you have start-up funding, you must provide additional justifications for the request.

Instructional faculty are not eligible to apply. External participants, including community organizations, are encouraged. **A faculty member may serve as PI on only one application and as co-PI on one application.**

Award Requirements

Convincing evidence that the proposal represents high-quality research of significant benefit to the University and society must be provided. Small grants must define a clearly deliverable product by the end of the funding period. Large grants must produce a clearly defined product and/or lead to a proposal that can be submitted to an external agency by the end of the project period. Applications will be stringently reviewed with regard to the likelihood that the applicant will meet these criteria.

The following areas have been established for review:

- Applied Science/Engineering/Technology
- Arts/Humanities
- Biological Sciences/Biomedical Sciences/Bioengineering
- Computational Science/High Performance Computing
- Materials Science
- Medicine
- Health Disparities
- Physical Sciences/Mathematics
- Social and Behavioral Research
- Business
- Law
- Education
- Pharmacy
- Optometry
- For all other categories, please specify on the cover page of the application form.

Restrictions

1. Support for faculty salaries is limited to a total of \$6,000 per grant (salary + fringe benefits \leq \$6,000) across all faculty involved in the application. Salary requests must be accompanied by a convincing justification.
2. Budgets will be critically reviewed. All budget items must have written justifications, and the budget must include fringe benefits for salary requests. If you have start-up funding, you must provide additional justifications for the request.
3. Support for instructional development activities will not be considered for this program.
4. Unless specifically part of the research program (for example, fieldwork), support for travel is not allowed.

Formatting Requirements

All documents must be prepared on the US Letter size paper (8.5"x11") with 1-inch margins on all sides, Arial font size 11 pt. The proposal narrative must have exactly 1.5 line spacing; all other documents may be single-spaced. An Arial font size of no less than 8 pt. should be used for the captions to graphics and tables and may be single-spaced. The text in the captions must be legible. Applications that fail to follow the formatting requirements will not be reviewed.

Proposal Preparation and Submission

The application must be prepared using the guidelines below and submitted by the PI or the PI's affiliated pre-award research administrator. Combine all files of the completed proposal into a single PDF, name the file LAST_FIRST_2020 where the LAST is your last name and the FIRST is your first name, and attach the PDF to the online cover page. Submit 1 (one) pdf using the online link on the DoR webpage: <https://uh.edu/research/funding-opportunities/internal-awards/grants-to-enhance-research-on-covid-19-and-the-pandemic>

Prior to filling out the online cover sheet, you must obtain permission from your department chair and the dean of your college to submit this proposal. Failure to inform your department chair and the dean of your college about this submission and obtain may result in automatic rejection of the proposal or denial of the award if funded. Emails to you, your department chair (or equivalent), your associate dean for research, and your dean will be sent after you submit the proposal in lieu of the previously required signatures. Note that you may be asked to provide evidence that you obtained permission but we do not ask that you submit the evidence with the proposal.

Organize the proposal using the following sections with these headings:

Abstract/Summary

A 200-word single-spaced abstract must be submitted with the proposal.

Proposal Narrative (Up to 6 pages, includes graphics, tables, equations, and formulas)

- a. The proposal narrative must not exceed six pages with exactly 1.5 line spacing and the font size of Arial should be no smaller than 11 pt. with 1-inch margins. The following sections must be included:
 - (1) Objectives and Specific Aims
 - (2) Significance and Impact
 - (3) Preliminary Results and Applicant Expertise
 - (4) Approach (How you will go about producing the project; if this is a research proposal this section would involve the methods)
 - (5) Expected Outcomes and Products
 - (6) Feasibility: Provide a timeline of all activities
- b. References Cited are in addition to the 6-page Proposal Narrative and must be single-spaced.
- c. Only proposals that meet the formatting requirements will be reviewed.

Biosketch(es) (2 pages per investigator)

Provide a two-page biosketch for each PI and Co-PI. NSF/NEH style is preferred, but not required. The narrative format of an NIH Biosketch is not acceptable.

Your résumé should provide the following:

- Current and Past Positions.
- Education: List degrees and dates awarded.
- Awards and Honors: Include dates.
- Other Relevant Professional Activities and Accomplishments.
- Publications: Include full citations for selected publications and presentations.

Current and Pending Support, including overlap with current funding, pending proposals, and start-up funding.

- Provide a list of current and pending support for each PI and co-PI. Include a clear description of overlap of the proposed research with research on current awards or pending proposals.
- If the proposal is related to a project supported by start-up funding, indicate the overlap.
- Proposals seeking to conduct research to improve a prior submitted external proposal that has received high but not-funded ranking must provide the external proposal reviews and describe the specific steps that will be taken to address the deficiencies stated in the reviews.

Budget

The budget must be constructed and presented using the standard UH budget template <http://www.uh.edu/research/resources/dor-forms/proposal-processing-forms/>. Please work with your affiliated pre-award personnel to generate the budget. **The project period is 18 months, but prepare a single-year budget.**

Budget Justification and Fiscal Accountability

Each budget must justify all aspects of the requested budget, including faculty salaries. Faculty salaries must be specified as academic or summer months.

Commitments

This program allows cost sharing or matching from non-DOR sources. Any financial or tangible commitments must be formally documented. Written commitments signed by the sponsoring unit authorities (i.e., dean, center director, and/or department chair) must be submitted when cost sharing or matching is proposed. Startup funds are not eligible for cost sharing because it bypasses the need for a discussion with the department chair/dean.

Space

Space availability and requirements must be identified.

- a. Location of the unit.

- b. What facilities, renovations, and technology needs are anticipated?

It is the investigators' responsibility to prepare the facility for installation and housing of the product. No funds from this program will be used for renovations.

Review Process

These proposals will be competitively reviewed and acted upon by subcommittees of the Research and Scholarship Committee of the Faculty Senate. Winning proposals will be determined based on program criteria, merit, and available funds. Preference will be given to bold new ideas showing clear evidence of high likelihood of producing high quality, high impact products in the short term and viability as a research program in the long-term. Investigators with current funding must state clearly any overlaps between this and their current project portfolio.

Merit Criteria

All applications will initially be checked against the eligibility criteria outlined above. If eligibility is not fulfilled, applications will be returned without additional review alongside an appropriate explanation by Division of Research staff. After the initial screening, applications will be submitted to the Research and Scholarship Committee. Each accepted proposal will be competitively reviewed and acted upon by a subcommittee of the RSC that may include non-RSC members from the campus. The RSC will make recommendations to the VC/VP for Research, who will be responsible for awarding and administering the grant. The Division of Research reserves the right to review and change budgets and ask for clarifications from potential awardees. Reviewers will be internal to UH and may not be disciplinary experts. For instance, a colleague from the College of Arts or the College of Education might review an application from the College of Pharmacy. It is important to ensure that reviewers who are not technical experts in the field of inquiry can understand the proposal narrative. Avoid jargon, unexplained abbreviations, and narratives that are highly technical.

Each reviewer will score each of their assigned proposals in five domains on a 1 (highest) – 5 (lowest) scale and provide an overall score on the same scale. The overall score must be based on the likelihood that the proposal will result in a fundable application. Increments of 0.5 are allowed within the 1-5 range (1.0, 1.5, 2.0, 2.5, etc.):

1. Short-term impact and innovation of proposed research:

Evaluate the short-term impact and novelty of the proposed research.

2. Final product, including feasibility and timeline, which may include a plan for grant submission:

Evaluate the proposed final product. A strong application will have a detailed plan for producing this product, which may include a plan for grant submission at the end of the funding period. If grant submission is proposed, the application should identify the targeted agency, funding mechanism, and program for which the proposal, with a clear timeline for submission and revision.

3. Quality of the approach:

Evaluate the approach taken to producing the proposed product. For subvention costs associated with publishing a book, work of art, or theater production, a copy of the following documents should be submitted:

1. Contract or letter of support from a publisher, curator, or producer showing firm commitment and costs of publication/production
2. short summary of the proposed manuscript, work of art, or theater production

The applicant should be able to provide sufficient proof that the publisher/curator/producer has a scholarly reputation and is not a vanity operation.

If the proposal is a research grant, examine the description of the aims, participants, procedures, and analysis of the data.

4. Investigator expertise and record of accomplishment:

Evaluate the evidence that the investigators have the relevant expertise to produce product. A strong grant would have a publication record in the identified area or clearly show the capacity to move into a new area. A weak grant would have no demonstrable record of accomplishment. A history of prior funding can be considered but should not disadvantage junior investigators with clear evidence of expertise.

5. Long-term potential for substantive contributions to research area:

Evaluate the potential long-term impact of the proposal for a sustained and important contribution to the selected area of research and scholarship.

Congruency Review

Congruency review by the Office of Research Integrity is required for all research submitted to this program. The review must be conducted within three months of the award announcement or the funds will be forfeited. Congruency review includes human subjects, animal usage, biological materials (rDNA, human samples, microorganisms, etc.), and radiation (radioactive materials, lasers, and x-rays).

All projects involving human subjects must be reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) before the grant cost center will be established.

All projects involving the use of animals in research must be reviewed and approved by the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) before the grant cost center will be established.

All projects involving biological materials must be reviewed and approved by the Biological Safety Manager and the Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC) before the grant cost center will be established.

All projects involving radiation must be reviewed and approved by the Radiation Safety Officer (RSO) & Laser Safety Officer (LSO) and authorized by the Radiation Safety Committee (RSC) before the grant cost center will be established.

Intellectual Property

In accordance with University policy, faculty members and the University share in net income generated from intellectual property. For additional information, refer to the [Faculty Handbook](#) or contact the [Office of Intellectual Property Management](#) at 713-743-9155.

Schedule

<u>Program Announcement</u>	June 26, 2020
<u>Application Deadline</u>	August 3, 2020
<u>Announcement of Awards</u>	August 28, 2020
<u>Effective Date of Award for 18 Months</u>	Sept. 15, 2020- Dec 15, 2021
<u>Interim Report 1</u>	February 3, 2021
<u>Interim Report 2</u>	August 3, 2021
<u>Final Report and Product Submission</u>	January 31, 2022

Extensions

Extensions of up to 6 months will be granted only for circumstances that would extend the tenure clock.

Reporting and Acknowledgement

Interim reports are required at 6-month intervals. These reports should be narrative summaries of progress not to exceed one page. The final report should identify the final product and provide documentation of its completion. The final product should be submitted with a 3-page narrative. An online link to submit interim and final reports and products will be created prior to the due date on the internal awards page. Failure to comply with this reporting requirement will disqualify an individual for future consideration in all internal funding programs.

Notice must be given of publications, presentations, exhibitions, or performances resulting from the award. The grantee must acknowledge DOR support in all products and publications resulting from the award and provide one copy of the publication to the Division of Research.

Assistance

All questions related to this program should be submitted to Jack Fletcher, Associate Vice President for Research Administration, at jackfletcher@uh.edu. Please do not call or email regarding the review results because the dates depend on the Research and Scholarship Committee review capacity and are approximate.