UNIVERSITY of **HOUSTON** | RESEARCH

National Centers Planning Award

Overview

President Khator's *Research Preeminence: 50 in 5* initiative calls for a doubling of our national centers from the current five centers to ten centers within five years. Applying for a center grant is a major effort. In recognition of this effort, the Division of Research (DOR) is offering internal planning grants to prepare for a center grant application.

The funding is intended to provide up to 14 months of support to teams of researchers led by a University of Houston (UH) faculty member to prepare for the submission of a proposal to a targeted funding opportunity. Contact Dr. Claudia Neuhauser; cmneuhauser@uh.edu to confirm eligibility. A Letter of Intent is required no later than two weeks prior of the submission of the planning grant proposal.

If the submission deadline is less than six months away from the date of the request for a planning grant, the proposal can still be accepted; however, it must include additional justification explaining the feasibility of preparing a strong submission within the time frame.

The DOR will accept submissions through August 31, 2023 or until the funds are exhausted, whichever occurs first. The Centers and Institutes Subcommittee of the Research and Scholarship Committee (RSC) in conjunction with the Committee on Academic Centers and Institutes (CACI) in the Office of the Provost will evaluate the proposals (typically within two weeks of submission) and make a recommendation to the VC/VP for Research. If a proposal is declined, a resubmission will not be considered until a minimum of three months from the date of the initial submission has passed. Resubmissions that are deemed substantially similar to a previous proposal by the hybrid RSC/CACI review committee will be returned without further review.

Eligibility

- The Principal Investigator (PI) must be a full-time tenured, tenure-track, or promotion eligible non-tenure track faculty member at UH System (any campus). There are no such restrictions for Co-PIs or Other Key Personnel that may come from other universities or industry.

- UH System faculty members serving as PI or Co-PI may only apply for one planning grant within a three-month period as PI or Co-PI, but they may serve on more than one application as an Other Key Personnel.

- Proposals must target a specific center grant application with a deadline of no more than 14 months from the date of submission of the planning grant.

- If the external program is a limited submission, only the team(s) awarded with slot(s) to submit the full proposal(s) will be considered for this internal support.

- Applicants to this program will not be eligible for proposal development support under other internally funded programs.

Award Budget Information

- The maximum award will be $100,000 over a maximum of 14 months. The amount requested must reflect the size of the center sought.

- The funds must be designated for the direct support of proposal development activities; consulting support; travel, meeting and hosting costs; pilot data collection; and other needs identified in the application.

- Funds can be used to support a course buyout or faculty salary (up to one month of summer salary for the PI and up to one month of summer salary for one Co-PI with an active faculty appointment at UH System) using institutional base salary.

- Funds can be used to pay for an external consultant to help prepare the proposal, but permission must be obtained from the Associate Vice President for Research prior to contracting with a consultant.

- Funds cannot be used for salaries on administrative personnel, service contracts, subawards to other institutions, or computers.

- This internal award will not generate indirect costs.

- Funds cannot be used toward any cost sharing/matching requirements posted by the external sponsor for the full proposal submission.

Review Criteria

Proposals will be judged on scientific merit, likelihood to be competitive in the targeted opportunity, strength of the team, and justification of the budget request.

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_2023 where the LAST is your last name and the FIRST is your first name, and attach it to the cover page using the application link on the DOR webpage: https://uh.edu/research/funding-opportunities/internal-awards/national-centers-planning-award/

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.

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. or grater. 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.

Letter of Intent

1. **Cover page**

   The cover page must identify the proposed center name, short abstract (max. 200 words), PI and Co-PI names and affiliations, target center grant program name, ID, and deadline.

2. **Center Team Members** (Up to 2 pages)

   Provide a list of the center team members, including PI and Co-PIs, and include their departmental and institutional (if not UH) affiliation.

3. Submit the Letter of Intent to Dr. Claudia Neuhauser, Associate Vice Chancellor and Vice President for Research, cmneuhauser@uh.edu

Proposal Documents

Proposal Narrative (Up to 3 pages, includes graphics, tables, equations, and formulas)

The rationale for the proposed center planning grant should be described and must contain:

a. Target announcement and deadline.

b. Synopsis of the goal and purpose of the targeted funding opportunity (can be copied from the funding announcement as long as appropriate attribution is given).

c. Proposed activities and how they address the goal and purpose of the targeted funding opportunity.

d. Detailed milestones against which progress will be evaluated.

e. Describe the roles of the PI, Co-PI(s), and Other Key Personnel and the potential for synergy. Identify gaps in expertise and provide a plan on how the gap may be closed.

f. Explanation for why the team believes they are well-positioned to compete successfully. Demonstrate results from current and previous collaboration among team members, if any.

g. References Cited are in addition to the 3-page Proposal Narrative.

h. Attach a copy of the program announcement as Appendix 1.

I. **Biosketch(es)** (2 pages per investigator)

   Provide a two-page biosketch for the 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.

II. **Current & Pending Support**
Provide a list of current & pending support for each PI and Co-PI(s). Identify the activities closely related to the proposed center.

III. **Budget** (1 page)
The budget must be constructed and presented using the standard UH budget template (for Main Campus: http://www.uh.edu/research/resources/dor-forms/proposal-processing-forms/). Please work with your affiliated pre-award personnel to generate the budget. This person must sign the budget template indicating that they prepared and approved the budget.

<u>Allowable costs include</u> one course buyout or one month of summer salary for the PI and up to one month of salary for one UH Co-PI, pre-approved consultant(s), travel to planning meetings, and related accessories.

<u>Unallowable costs include</u> indirect costs, other personnel, travel not related to the center planning, lab renovation, and any expenditure for academic programs.

IV. **Budget Justification and Fiscal Accountability** (1 page)

V. **Commitments**
This program allows cost sharing or matching from non-DOR resources. 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.

VI. **Space**
Space availability and requirements should be identified.

a. Location(s) of the laboratory unit(s).

b. What facilities, renovations, and technology needs are anticipated? These needs should be part of the center grant proposal and are not appropriate for the budget request.

VII. **Center Team Members** (Up to 2 pages)
Provide a list of the center team members, including PI and Co-PIs, and include their departmental and institutional (if not UH) affiliation.

Criteria for Award

Each proposal must supply convincing evidence that the following criteria have been met or will be met:

1. The proposed activities must represent high-quality research of significant benefit to the University and society (scientific merit).

2. A successful center grant must be submitted within 14 months of funding. Provide a clear timeline for submission.

3. The PI must demonstrate the potential to compete for a center grant by virtue of publication record and prior funding.

4. The review committee will rank each proposal in the following four domains on a scale of 1 (highest) to 5 (lowest):

   a. Impact and innovation of proposed research.

   b. Plan for external center grant submission, including the timeline.

   c. Investigator expertise, track record or potential.

   d. Need for planning funding.

Program Dates

- Application deadline: **This is a rolling deadline and submissions will be accepted through August 31, 2023 or until the funds are exhausted**

- Review deadline: immediate submission to the review committee after the administrative compliance review by the Research Integrity and Oversight Committee.

- Announcement of successful applications: Monday after the most recent RSC meeting assuming a 2-week review period.

- Funding expiration: Awards are effective until one month after the targeted submission deadline of the center proposal.

Review Process

All applications will initially be checked against the eligibility criteria and formatting requirements outlined above. Only eligible and compliant applications will be forwarded to the RSC for evaluation.

Each accepted proposal will be competitively reviewed and acted upon by a hybrid committee of the Centers & Institutes Subcommittee of the Research and Scholarship Committee (RSC) and the Committee on Academic Centers and Institutes (CACI) in the Office of the Provost. The committee of the hybrid review committee is chosen by a mutual agreement of the VPR and provost with at least two members from the CACI and two members from the RSC Centers & Institutes Subcommittee. At the discretion of the chair, members external to the UH campus who have content-area expertise may serve as ad hoc, non-voting members of the review committee. Typically, within two weeks of proposal submission, the review committee will make a

recommendation to the VC/VP for Research, who will be responsible for awarding and administering the grant.

The proposals should be clear, concise, and explicit about the benefits of the activities to be undertaken and must provide clear justification for expenses. Proposals should be written to be understandable to reviewers who are from a range of disciplinary fields. Reviewers will be internal to UH and some might lack relevant disciplinary expertise.

Congruency Review

Congruency review by the Research Integrity and Oversight (RIO) Office 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.

Reporting and Acknowledgement

Use the Progress Report Form on the DOR Internal Awards webpage to submit progress reports that are due on the established dates regardless of progress through the congruency review. Reports are due every three months until the proposal to the targeted opportunity is submitted. A final report is expected one month after receiving the summary statements from the external review. An in-person/video conference meeting between the award team and representatives of the DOR and the hybrid RSC/CACI review committee will be held at the midpoint after the start of the planning grant to review progress and assist the team in meeting their project goals.

At any time during the award period, the DOR reserves the right to ask the hybrid RSC/CACI review committee to assess progress and rescind the award if no substantive progress has been made toward the goals of the proposal.

Assistance

If interested in the opportunity and want additional information please contact: Dr. Claudia Neuhauser cmneuhauser@uh.edu, Interim Vice Chancellor/Vice President for Research.