Interdisciplinary Research Grant

Deadline: Friday, January 15, 2021, 12:00 pm EST

The diversity throughout CUNY’s 25-college system makes it well placed to meet the most pressing problems facing our society. Our University has faculty experts in crucial research areas, strong ties to city and state agencies, and is integrated into every NYC neighborhood. These strengths give CUNY a foundation for working together on COVID-19, climate change, health disparities, AI and social justice, and other urgent scientific and societal challenges.

In 2021 the CUNY Office of Research will make an investment in collaborative research in two significant research areas: **COVID-19 and climate change**. We invite proposals that will deliver COVID-19 or climate change solutions that benefit our region and beyond.

Our best course of action for addressing these urgent scientific and societal challenges is to work across disciplines in a convergent manner. Innovative solutions spring from teams of faculty who have different research backgrounds. This program will provide seed funding for projects that combine expertise across disciplines, and which are geared toward providing a pathway to NEW external funding. This pathway should be clearly laid out in submitted proposals. There should be, at minimum, two investigators: the lead PI and at least one Co-PI must be from different disciplines and ideally from different CUNY colleges, schools, and centers.

It is anticipated that this program will fund up to eight (8) COVID-19 research projects and eight (8) climate change research projects with budgets not exceeding $40,000 each. $300,000 in Research Foundation funds and $300,000 in tax-levy funds have been designated for this grant program. Award announcements will be made in February 2021.

Proposals must involve a clearly defined project that advances research and scholarship related to one of two themes:

1. **COVID-19**: The public health pandemic arising from COVID-19 has had immediate impacts across many areas of personal lived experience and social and scientific inquiry. Approaches to addressing public health and safety include understanding and exploring many potential research areas including but not limited to: the differential impact of the pandemic on vulnerable populations, predicting and mitigating pandemic threats (e.g., data science based efforts to understand case numbers and secure cyber welfare), methods for ensuring the equitable distribution of treatments and vaccines, developing and testing effective communications that drive public health behaviors, using algorithms to assist healthcare providers in discerning the availability of resources (from testing to ICU beds), and designing and developing new protective procedures and materials.

2. **Climate change**: Global climate change has far reaching impacts that affect every size organism and every ecological niche in many ways, from elevated water levels to greenhouse gases. Approaches to our rapidly changing climate include social and technological mitigation and adaptation strategies. These strategies must take into account human behavioral elements that impact efforts to solve complex climate change problems, including: environmental sustainability, public health, green economic strategies, usage of technologies, internal and international migration, and clean energy.
Eligibility

- Proposals must choose one theme: COVID-19 or climate change
- Proposals must involve either: a) collaborations between faculty from two or more CUNY colleges; or b) interdisciplinary collaborations that may include faculty at the same college but from different departments. Collaborations with more than five participating PI’s require pre-approval from the Office of Research.
- Faculty may participate in only one proposal as a PI or Co-PI. Lecturers, adjunct faculty, and postdoctoral fellows are ineligible.
- Only authentic interdisciplinary research projects are eligible. Web or media development, book authorship, or similar types of initiatives that do not pose or inform people about a researchable question are ineligible.
- Research involving human or animal subjects must be approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) or Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) prior to the release of any funds. For more information about IRB and human subjects research, visit: http://www.cuny.edu/research/research-compliance/human-research-protection-program-hrpp/
- Awardees (PI teams) must submit a final report at the end of the funding period.

Budget & Budget Justification

The Period of Performance will be February 1, 2021 – January 31, 2022. Funds will be disbursed as a mix of tax levy and Research Foundation monies. Funds can be requested in the following categories:

1. Personnel costs: Research Associates and Research Assistants (may include undergraduates, graduate students, and postdoctoral researchers)
2. Summer Salary: All investigators may request summer salary, but the cumulative maximum cannot exceed $10,000 for all investigators on a grant
3. Course release with college approval
4. Fringe benefits
5. Other Than Personnel Services (OTPS) including: research supplies, equipment, installation, service contracts, travel and field expenses

Important budgetary notes:
- Funds requested for course release are determined by your college and must include applicable salary and fringe benefit rates.
- All student research assistants funded by IRG awards must complete Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) training in compliance with federal requirements. For further information visit CUNY Research Compliance: https://www.cuny.edu/research/research-compliance/responsible-conduct-of-research-rcr/
- Funding levels for successful proposals will depend on the budget request, the Review Committee’s view of budgetary need, and the ranking of the proposal. In all instances, funding is subject to the availability of funds and budgetary approvals.
Submission Guidelines

Complete proposals must be submitted via the online proposal submission form, which can be accessed through the following link:
https://ybephbsyus.formstack.com/forms/2021irg_proposal_submission_form_round_28

Proposal Package

The proposal must be approved and signed on the signature page by an appropriate administrative official at the applicant’s college and should follow the standard college proposal approval process.

The entire package (1. project summary, 2. signature page, 3. project description with citations, 4. statement of interdisciplinary collaboration, 5. budget, 6. budget justification, 7. 2-page biosketch, and 8. current & pending grant information) must be converted into a single PDF for submission via the online system. A proposal template, with signature page, may be found here.

Please use the following naming convention:
Theme 1: IRGCOVID-19_LeadPILastName.pdf
Theme 2: IRGClimate_LeadPILastName.pdf

1. Project Summary: 200 words maximum. Please include project title and the names, disciplines, department, and institutional affiliation of the PI and co-PI(s).

2. Signature Page: Application packages must include a scanned copy of this form including Grants Officer and college endorsement signatures (e.g. Department Chair or Dean) from each participating institution. College endorsement is required only if a PI is requesting salary support (electronic signatures are accepted).

3. Project Description: Three (3) pages maximum, single-spaced, exclusive of references/citations, with one-inch borders and 12-point type.

   What aspect of COVID-19/Climate change is being addressed? What knowledge will be generated and what outcomes are expected? How is the project innovative?

   What are the future funding goals of the research team (e.g., specific grant submissions) if IRG funding is awarded? PIs should identify at least one program officer and program at a federal funding agency (e.g. DOE, NEH, NIH, EPA, or NSF) that will be contacted to assess the potential of the project for further funding.

4. Statement of Interdisciplinary Collaboration: Clearly describe (up to 200 words) the interdisciplinary nature of the collaboration, i.e. the role of each investigator within the collaboration and their interdependence.

5. Proposed budget: See funding stipulations outlined above.
6. **Budget justification**: Indicate the distribution of resources among the investigators and departments/campuses and the role played by each investigator.

7. **Biographical sketch**: Each participating faculty member must submit a 2-page biosketch in NSF or NIH format, or use the proposal template found [here](#).

8. **List of current and pending funding**: Each investigator must submit a list of active and pending research funding, including startup funds. This section must indicate the percent effort committed to existing/pending grants for all investigators, and the percent effort proposed for this RFP.

**Proposal Evaluation**

All eligible proposals will be evaluated by a CUNY review panel composed of senior faculty and administrators.

Proposals will be evaluated based on four criteria:
1. Interdependence of collaboration, creativity, and innovation of the interdisciplinary approach
2. Significance of the issue being addressed and potential to ameliorate the impact of COVID-19/Climate change
3. Technical quality and feasibility
4. Potential to receive external funding

The review panel will be asked to look for a demonstrated record of scholarly achievement and promise. Senior faculty will be judged on their publications and external funding record; junior faculty will be judged on the promise of their individual research programs and on the role they play in the collaboration.

**Submission Timetable**

Complete submissions must be uploaded no later than 12:00 PM on Friday, January 15, 2021 to: [https://ybephbsyus.formstack.com/forms/2021irg_proposal_submission_form_round_28](https://ybephbsyus.formstack.com/forms/2021irg_proposal_submission_form_round_28)

We anticipate that funding decisions will be made in February 2021.

Please direct any questions to:
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