Special Call for Proposals on COVID-19 Research

Rolling Submission Deadline from May 15 – June 30, 2020

As a result of some philanthropic efforts, the Vice President of Research, Economic Development, and Graduate Education (VPREDGE) Office has been able to rapidly secure and implement funding for COVID-19 research. Initial investments over the past 4-6 weeks went into some natural infrastructure and seed grants (e.g., transition of Biosafety Level 3 facility, faculty with history of infectious disease research, etc.). However, from the beginning of these efforts, VPREDGE envisioned holding back at least half the available funds for a campus-wide call for COVID-19 research. As such, we are announcing a short-term, special call for COIVD-19 research grants. This program will support new preliminary data, or the development of new research methods or procedures, that will be used in subsequent proposals to external funding sources related to COVID-19 research. Full-time faculty (tenure, tenure-track, and research) at Montana State University who have earned terminal degrees are eligible to apply.

CRITERIA

A faculty committee with a history of external funding will evaluate proposals according to the following criteria:

- The project's alignment with an external federal agency or other funding sponsor(s).
- The project's intellectual significance and its potential impact and contribution to the field.
- The appropriateness of the project's methodologies and approach, as well as the feasibility of the work plan.
- The qualifications and expertise of the researcher in relation to the project goals and the stage of the applicant's career.
- The potential for success, including the likelihood that the project will be completed within the projected timeframe, and the appropriateness of the budget.

Please address each criterion in your proposal and write in a way that is accessible to your Montana State University colleagues who may not be in your discipline.

Each applicant may submit only one application to this COVID research program call. Preference will be given to any faculty (tenure, tenure-track, or research) that can quickly shift to a COVID-19 research project within next 2-3 months in anticipation of COVID-19 funding announcement in the summer and fall from federal agencies and other sponsors. Funding requests should be for 6 months or less.

Within three months of completion of the project, successful applicants shall provide a written report of grant activities and outcomes to the VPREDGE Office, their dean, their department head or center/institute director, and the chair of the COVID Grant Review Committee. To be eligible for future VPREDGE funding, this report should include brief description of the external grant submitted (or in progress to be submitted). The submission of this final project report is required as a criterion for future VPREDGE proposal consideration.

Questions about program requirement and expectations may be directed to Mark Jutila (mark.jutila@montana.edu), while questions concerning electronic submission and budgets can be directed to Shana Wold (shana.wold@montana.edu).

BUDGET

Applicants may request funds for supplies, an approved course buy out, travel, personnel (including graduate students), and other expenses necessary to complete the proposed project. COVID grants will not support summer salary. Award amounts will vary, but most will range between $20,000 (minimum) and $50,000 (maximum). **These funds will expire and revert back to the VPREDGE Office after 6-months from award activation.**

- If a fall course buyout is requested, the application must include a letter of support from the department head. The cost of a course buy-out should be the salary for someone to teach the course (rather than based upon the faculty member's salary). Explain the need for a course buyout in the budget narrative.
- For travel expenses, explain projected travel expenses in the budget narrative, being as specific and realistic as possible about the cost of transportation, lodging and other expenses. When budgeting for travel, please follow State approved In-State, Out-of-State and International rates regarding per diem, mileage and lodging.
- Budgets must include the 6% admin fee that will be assessed to your award by the Vice President for Finance and Administration Office.
- The following items are unlikely to be funded unless specifically justified: computers; equipment, unless it has a direct and clearly explained relation to the proposed project; post-production costs of books, articles or other creative activities; travel to professional conferences regularly attended by the applicant.

SUBMISSION

Please submit your proposal electronically to the Office of Sponsored Programs via the Electronic Proposal Clearance Form (ePCF). A full proposal needs to be submitted with MSU Vice President of Research (MONVIC001) selected as the sponsor. Please enter the Program ID **MSU COVID 2021**. Instructions and a link to the forms can be found on the OSP website:
http://www.montana.edu/research/osp/

Applicants should submit the following as a **single PDF document**, which will be distributed to external reviewers and REF Grant Review Committee members. Attach to the "Required Program Document" section of the ePCF.
- A cover sheet, including a brief abstract of the project (see attached below).
- A narrative of no more than five single-spaced pages addressing the significant and impact of the project, and how it will significantly advance the competitiveness for COVID external funding including funding agencies/sponsors to be targeted; a plan of work, including brief descriptions of methodologies and approach to be used; and a timetable for completion of the project.
- A budget, including budget notes or a narrative explaining budget items.
- A maximum 5-page curriculum vitae/biosketch.

In a separate document, applicants should also attach the following within the ePCF:
- **"Miscellaneous Attachments"** – the narrative, budget and final report of any REF grant you received in the last three years. Submit each year's funded grant as a single PDF document.

REVIEW TIMELINE

Once a COVID grant is submitted, it will be forwarded to the chair of the COVID review committee (Dr. Jutila). With assistance from the Office of Sponsored Programs, the chair will secure three

reviewers for the grant, with at least one reviewer being from a different department/college. Reviewers will be asked to provide their comments and recommendation within two weeks. After receiving the independent reviews, the COVID chair will share comments and recommendations with the COVID executive review committee. The COVID executive review committee will review comments and make a recommendation to the VPREDGE within approximately one week. When coupled with some administrative review time on the front and back end of the review process, applicants can expect to receive feedback approximately 4-6 weeks after submission.

Project extensions beyond the 6-month period are highly unlikely. These are designed to serve as short-term, emergency funds to quickly shift research efforts that will allow for some competitive grant submissions. If this timeline is not conducive to your research, you are encouraged to consider the normal REF process, which has longer timeline.

INFORMATIONAL SESSIONS

WebEx forums to assist potential applicants will be held the following days. Please email Mai Allen (naon.allen@montana.edu) if you would like to sign up and receive a calendar invite.
- Monday, May 4th at 10:00am
- Tuesday, May 5th at 4:00pm

Cover Sheet

Special COVID-19 Research Funding Program

Name: **Department or School:**

Rank:

Applicant's Email Address:

Title of Project:

Amount Requested: **Award Period Requested:**

<u>Abstract of Proposal (not to exceed 250 words)</u>