

2024 Downstate Health Sciences University Seed Grant Program

Overview

The DHSU Office of the SVPR is excited to announce the 2024 DHSU Seed Grant Program to advance the research enterprise of SUNY Downstate via targeted investments in projects that are deemed to be competitive for federal extramural research support. For the 2024 Seed Grant Program, applications are solicited from faculty in all of DHSU's colleges and schools in three tracks:

- *Track 1:* Projects focused on health equity or health disparities (as described by NIH [NIMHD](#)) from individuals or teams of DHSU faculty investigators.
- *Track 2:* Projects with focus on Digital Health. Digital health is defined broadly as information and communications technologies in medicine and other health professions to manage illness, health risks and promote wellness (as defined in a book titled [Digital Health.](#))
- *Track 3:* Projects in any area from a single DHSU investigator or teams (two or more) of DHSU faculty investigators.

Research can be of any modality (laboratory, clinical, computational [including secondary data analyses], or epidemiological [quantitative and qualitative]), as long as it is appropriate for an extramural (federal preferred) funding mechanism. Collaborative projects may help to create synergies among DHSU investigators and spur researchers to transform individual projects into larger programs with increased impact and visibility.

One of the awards will be named the "The Robert F. Furchgott Society Seed Grant" in recognition of a generous financial contribution to the seed grant program from the Furchgott Society. Please note that applications should **not** request to be considered specifically for The Robert F. Furchgott Society Seed Grant slot, as the committee will make a nomination for that assignment out of the grants that it recommends for funding.

Funding Available

Budgets will be for a **single 12-month period**:

- Single-investigator projects (permissible in all Tracks): up to \$30,000.
- Multi-investigator projects (permissible in all Tracks): up to \$50,000.

Eligibility Requirements

- All full-time, salaried faculty with primary appointments at DHSU are eligible, unless otherwise excluded via the criteria below.
- Faculty who were contact PI on a previously funded DHSU 2022 or 2023 Seed Grant Program award are not eligible to apply as contact PI for 2024. Such faculty can participate via non-contact MPI or Co-I roles. However, the 2023 application should be distinct from the previous submission. Please reach out to Ayesha Joshi, PhD for any questions or clarifications.

- Faculty with unrestricted accounts (e.g., start-up, etc.) on either the State or RF side with balances in excess of \$10,000 cannot be contact PI. Such investigators can be a non-contact MPI, in which case it is envisioned that they bring specific expertise to a project that might otherwise not “fly” without them.
- For multi-PI (MPI) projects, one individual must be named as the contact PI for the proposal.
- For MPI projects, each PI should bring a unique set of skills and experience to the overall project with the combined efforts of the PIs resulting in a cohesive joint project.
- Only one proposal is allowed per investigator (as PI or MPI) per application cycle.

Application Process – due April 10, 2024

Applications will be accepted via the [Downstate Application Portal](#). Log in using Downstate email credentials. The 2024 Seed Grant Program opportunity will be listed on the home page. Please contact Ayesha Joshi, PhD, Director of Research Programs Development <ayesha.joshi@downstate.edu> if you have trouble accessing the portal or the opportunity.

The following documents must be submitted using Helvetica or similar sans-serif font, 11-point minimum (smaller for figures and legends allowed), and 0.5-inch margins minimum:

Cover Page: Use the Application Form as cover page.

Research Strategy (3-page limit, excluding references):

- Specific Aims
- Significance and Innovation
- Preliminary Data
- Study Design, Expected Results, and Alternative Approaches
- Future Extramural Funding: include a well-supported explanation of how the seed money is expected to favorably position the research for securing extramural grant funding. Please list intended funding mechanism and agency/institute, with as much specificity as is known.

Leadership Plan (if multi-PI) (up to ½ page): Describe the contributions of the participating PIs and how the seed funding will enable the building of a synergistic team going forward.

Biosketches and Other Support: NIH biographical sketch (which should clearly highlight relevant publication and research expertise) and NIH Other Support document for each investigator. Adhere to NIH rules for style and length.

Brief Description of Facilities (up to ½ page): Describe the facilities available to complete the project.

Budget: Complete the budget spreadsheet and attach to the email as a separate excel attachment.

Budget Justification (up to 1 page): Provide detailed justification for each Budget line item. Resources cannot be used for travel or PI salaries and fringe. If including personnel effort (graduate students, research associates or technicians), please note that funds can be used to support CURRENT STUDENTS OR EMPLOYEES ONLY and not for new hires. The process of hiring new employees can take more than 2-3 months, delaying progress on the project. Requests for new hires will be considered on a case-by-case basis only, with sufficient justification. Indirect costs are not to be included.

IACUC/IRB/IBC: It is expected that IACUC/IRB/IBC protocols for the studies proposed will be submitted either at the time of application or within 15 days after the deadline. **Applications will not be reviewed without protocol submission.**

Optional: Append study-section (or similar) summary statement(s) relevant to the proposed project. Such summary statements are valuable as they demonstrate commitment to pursuing funding for the project idea.

Selection Criteria

A peer-review committee, comprised of faculty primarily from outside of DHSU, will evaluate each proposal and make recommendations to the Senior Vice President for Research about funding priority. Reviewers will be excluded from the evaluation and discussion of any applications for which they have a real or perceived conflict of interest.

Reviewers will evaluate applications according to the following criteria:

- Quality of the research proposal.
- Potential of a project to lead to competitive extramural federal grant application.
- Track record of research productivity and funding by the applicants, including assessment of past and current funding (including past funding through this seed grant program, if applicable). Early-stage investigators (as per [NIH definition](#)) will not be held to the same level of expectation as their senior colleagues.
- For multi-PI projects:
 - Potential to create clear synergies and long-term collaborations.
 - Evidence that the individual PIs bring unique strengths and skills to the overall project.
- Optional, but will be viewed favorably:
 - Increases research training opportunities for trainees.
 - For multi-PI projects: team is comprised of PIs from different colleges and schools.

Note: to minimize reviewer burden, formal written reviews will not be collected or distributed. However, a brief review summary will be provided for each application.

Funding Terms

- Funding will be contingent on obtaining any required IACUC/IRB/IBC approvals for the project, if applicable. Please ensure that the protocols are submitted in a timely manner to IACUC/IRB/IBC to enable a funding start date of September 1st of this year.
- To be eligible for seed-grant funding, faculty must be fully compliant (or become compliant within 30 days of notification of non-compliance) with all rules and regulations, including those established by external regulatory authorities (including EPA, OSHA, PESH, Fire Marshal) and all relevant DHSU facilities and oversight entities (including, but not limited to, RF, FM&D, EHS, and OCAS).
- Post-award management and funding will be handled by the Research Foundation according to institutional research expenditure rules and regulations.
- **Funds must be spent during the 12-month budget period. Request for unspent funds carry-forward, for up to 6 months, must be made at least 3 months before the end of the 12-month budget period and will be considered by the SVPR office only if substantially justified.**

Post-award requirements

- All awardees are expected to submit an extramural grant application related to the funded project within 6-9 months after the end of the seed-funding period.
- Awardees must inform the Office of the SVPR when an application for extramural grant funding is submitted and the outcome of the review.
- Awardees must inform the Office of the SVPR of any papers or awards attributable to research discoveries advanced through the seed grant.
- Awardees must file a 6 month and final progress report after funds are dispersed. The format of the progress report will be provided to the awardees by the Office of the SVPR.
- Awardees must present their findings at an awardee symposium that will be scheduled approximately one year after funding starts.

Questions

Please address any questions to Ayesha Joshi, PhD, Director of Research Programs Development <ayesha.joshi@downstate.edu>.

Frequently Asked Questions

How many applications can faculty submit?

Faculty can submit only one application as contact PI and one as non-contact PI.

Can salary for non-DHSU faculty/students be included in the budget?

Non-DSHU faculty/students cannot be listed as personnel and salary cannot be requested for them. They can however be designated as consultants and appropriate funds can be requested.

Can funds be requested for services at non-DHSU facilities or laboratories?

Outside entities providing service can be listed as fee-for-service in the budget.