2022 Downstate Health Sciences University Seed Grant Program

Overview

The DHSU Office of the SVPR is excited to announce the 2022 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 2022 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 teams (two or more) of DHSU faculty investigators who have not received federal (or other substantial) funding together in the last 4 years.

Research in either track can be of any modality (laboratory, clinical, computational [including secondary data analyses], or epidemiological [quantitative and qualitative]), as long as it is appropriate for a federal funding mechanism. Collaborative projects (encouraged for Track 1 or 2; required for Track 3) 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 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 (Track 1 and 2 only): up to $30,000.
- Multi-investigator projects (all Tracks): up to $50,000.

We anticipate making 10 awards in total, across all tracks (for a total expenditure of up to $400,000). It is anticipated that there will be additional seed-grant programs in the coming years, although the requirements and tracks may change.

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 funded DHSU 2021 Seed Grant Program award are not eligible to apply as contact PI for 2022. Such faculty can participate via non-contact MPI or Co-I roles.

- 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.
- For Track 3 only: At least one of the MPIs must have been PI or MPI on at least one major (federal or similar) research award that has been active (including no-cost extensions) within the past three years.

Application Process – due April 18, 2022

The following must be submitted to svp-research-office@downstate.edu. With the exception of the budget spreadsheet (which should be attached separately in its excel format), all of the following should be combined in order into a single bundled PDF 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 an explanation of how the seed money is expected to favorably position the research for securing extramural federal 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. 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 immediately thereafter. **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. 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, 2022.
- Funding will also be contingent on completion, by all project PIs, of all compliance requirements (e.g., CITI, COI) as required by the Office of Compliance and Audit Services.
- 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 federal grant application related to the funded project within 6-9 months after the end of the seed-funding period. Alternatively, applications for substantial funding to non-federal entities might be acceptable, but must be discussed with the SVPR office in advance.
- 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 progress report 6 months after funds are dispersed. The format of the progress report will be released 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.