

**Request for Applications:  
Biomedical Research Seed Grants**



**Office of Research and Economic Development  
University of Nebraska-Lincoln**

***Letter of Intent Deadlines: April 1, 2014 and October 1, 2014  
Application Deadlines: May 1, 2014 and November 3, 2014***

**Overview and Goal**

The goal of the Biomedical Research Seed Grants program is to enhance the competitiveness of University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) faculty submitting grant proposals requesting biomedical research funding from the National Institutes of Health (NIH). During the last several years, the level of federal funds available for scientific research has been reduced. The implementation of sequestration during 2013 further decreased the amount of funding available for federal agencies to distribute through competitive grant programs. As a result of federal budget reductions and lingering financial uncertainty, the success rates for new NIH grant applications are expected to further decline. This program will provide seed funding to facilitate preliminary study or data collection and expert feedback from a panel of external reviewers, which is intended to improve the competitiveness of NIH proposals. Investigators are expected to leverage seed funding to accumulate evidence in support of a working hypothesis; demonstrate the feasibility of a new approach; or build reviewers' confidence in the project team's ability to handle cutting-edge technologies, understand methods, and interpret results. Evidence of prior work or preliminary data is a necessary component of most biomedical research proposals and will improve the likelihood of success for faculty pursuing NIH funding.

**Award Amount and Project Scope**

ORED will commit up to \$500,000 toward Biomedical Research Seed Grants during 2014. Applicants may request up to \$50,000 for a maximum 12-month project period. Biomedical Research Seed Grants are made possible by the Nebraska Tobacco Settlement Biomedical Research Fund administered by the Office of Research and Economic Development (ORED) and may not be used for research or activity involving the use of human fetal tissue obtained in connection with the performance of an induced abortion or involving the use of human embryonic stem cells or for the purpose of obtaining other funding for such use.

**Eligibility**

Tenured/tenure-track and research faculty are eligible to serve as the principal investigator (PI) on applications submitted to the Biomedical Research Seed Grants program. Co-investigators (Co-Is) must hold a full-time appointment at UNL, but they do not need to hold a tenured/tenure-track or research faculty position. Co-Is also may be affiliated with other institutions. The PI must agree to develop and refine a NIH proposal requesting R01 (research project grant program) support. Proposals requesting support to develop smaller-scale NIH proposals (e.g., those requesting R03 or R21 support) will not be considered. Investigators with current biomedical research funding will not be at a competitive disadvantage for funding from the Biomedical Research Seed Grants program. However, applications to the program must be for new projects aimed at obtaining a new funding stream and not aimed at a continuation of existing work. PIs may submit one application to the Biomedical Research Seed Grants program per calendar year.

Faculty interested in developing proposals that do not meet the eligibility guidelines for the Biomedical Research Seed Grants program are encouraged to contact the [Office of Proposal Development](#) for assistance and to utilize ORED's [expert review of grant proposals](#) program.

### **Program Requirements**

During the Biomedical Research Seed Grants project period, recipients must complete the following steps:

- Hold a telephone conversation or face-to-face or virtual meeting with the cognizant program officer to discuss the technical merit of the proposed project and its alignment with current priorities at NIH or within a funding program at a specific Institute or Center. An assessment of programmatic fit should be a key component of this conversation.
- Submit a R01 grant application to NIH within 12 months following the end of the Biomedical Research Seed Grants project period.
- Commit to a complete review of the updated proposal package by ORED staff at least three weeks prior to final submission to NIH. The [Office of Proposal Development](#) will be responsible for providing feedback on the proposal narrative and ancillary documents (e.g., biographical sketches, facilities and other resources, etc.), and the [Office of Sponsored Programs](#) will provide a review of the proposal budget and budget justification.

### **Notice of Intent to Submit**

Faculty who plan to submit a proposal to the Biomedical Research Seed Grants program must provide notice of intent to submit. Faculty planning to submit to the May 1, 2014, deadline should provide notice of intent to submit by April 1, 2014. Faculty planning to submit to the November 3, 2014, deadline should provide notice of intent to submit by October 1, 2014. Notices of intent to submit will enable ORED to effectively plan for review of applications submitted to the Biomedical Research Seed Grants program.

To provide notice of intent to submit, send an email to [unresearch@unl.edu](mailto:unresearch@unl.edu). Include the text "Biomedical Research Seed Grants – Intent to Submit" in the subject line of the email. In the message, list the name, title, and affiliation for the PI and each co-I; the title of the proposed project; the sponsoring NIH Institute or Center; and the program targeted for submission (e.g., Research Project Grant (Parent R01) or a specific Request for Applications using the R01 mechanism).

### **Application Requirements**

Please prepare the following information – in the order described – as a single PDF file:

- A letter of transmittal that details the application title and the names and affiliations of all senior/key personnel.
- A Biomedical Research Seed Grants project plan of no more than five pages that details the following:
  - Brief project overview (written in language accessible by non-experts)
  - Plans for preliminary study and/or data collection to enhance grant proposal competitiveness
  - Alignment with institutional strengths and relevant prior investment (e.g., personnel, facilities, equipment, etc.)
  - Fit with federal research priorities and investment
  - Contact information for up to six potential expert reviewers from outside UNL who are qualified to serve as expert reviewers and provide technical feedback regarding the draft proposal submitted at the time of application for seed grant support (external reviewers will be recruited and compensated by ORED)

- Contact information for the relevant program officer (and, if applicable, a brief summary of relevant interactions with and feedback from the program officer)
- Description of key personnel and their project role and substantive contribution
- Proposal submission timeline
- A detailed budget and budget justification of no more than two pages for funds requested from the Biomedical Research Seed Grants program. Applicants should provide strong rationale for their budget request and describe how funds will be used to support preliminary study and/or data collection (e.g., GRA or postdoctoral research associate support, travel, etc.).

Funds may not be used for faculty summer salary or teaching release time, which may be provided by the PI's academic unit or college to strengthen institutional commitment to the proposed effort. Sub-awards are not allowed; however, external collaborators may invoice project-specific expenses.

- Drafts of the complete R01 proposal narrative (i.e., project summary/abstract, narrative, specific aims, and research strategy), the corresponding project budget and budget justification, and biographical sketches for key project personnel (i.e., PI and Co-Is). These materials must be developed in accordance with NIH proposal preparation guidelines.

[Public Health Service Grant Application Instructions \(PHS 398\)](#) detail the guidelines and templates for preparation of NIH applications that are not submitted through Grants.gov. [DHHS PHS Grants.gov Application Guide SF 424 \(R&R\)](#) provides instructions and templates for additional format pages to be used for Grants.gov submissions. ORED staff curate a web page listing NIH application resources, including relevant outlines and templates, which is available at <http://research.unl.edu/stories/story.php?ID=390>.

### **Application Submission**

Biomedical Research Seed Grant Program applications must be submitted via the Internal Competitions module within NUgrant (<http://nugrant.unl.edu>).

### **Application Deadlines**

Applications to the Biomedical Research Seed Grant Program will be accepted twice during 2014: May 1, 2014 and November 3, 2014.

### **Selection Criteria and Review Process**

Primary selection criteria include:

- A clear fit between the proposed research project and alignment with federal priorities for biomedical research.
- The technical merit and quality of the draft R01 proposal, and its high potential for generating new NIH funding.

Applications will be reviewed initially by senior research administrators from ORED and the applicants' academic unit(s). In addition, ORED will solicit external reviewers (and possibly internal reviewers) to aid in the decision-making process. The Vice Chancellor for Research and Economic Development will make the final selection. Award notification will occur within eight weeks following application receipt.

### **Additional Information**

For additional information regarding the Biomedical Research Seed Grants program, contact Nathan Meier, director of research strategy (402.472.3902 or [nlm@unl.edu](mailto:nlm@unl.edu)), or Monica Norby, assistant vice chancellor for research (402.472.4180 or [mnorby1@unl.edu](mailto:mnorby1@unl.edu)).