

**Request for Applications:
Biomedical Research Seed Grant Program**



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

Deadline: Biomedical Research Seed Grant proposals are accepted on a rolling basis.

Overview and Goal

The goal of the Biomedical Research Seed Grant program is to enhance the competitiveness of University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) faculty submitting grant proposals to the National Institutes of Health (NIH). This program will provide expert feedback from a panel of external reviewers and seed funding to facilitate preliminary study or data collection, which is intended to improve the competitiveness of NIH proposals submitted by UNL Principal Investigators (PIs). 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

Applicants may request up to \$50,000 for a maximum 12-month project period; however, requests are limited by the NIH funding mechanism being targeted. **Category 1** proposals may request up to \$25,000 to support the development of R21 applications. **Category 2** proposals may request up to \$50,000 to support the development of R01 applications. 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 PI on applications submitted to the Biomedical Research Seed Grant 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 R21 (exploratory/developmental research grant award) or R01 (research project grant program) support. Proposals requesting support to develop smaller-scale NIH proposals (e.g., those requesting R03 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 Grant 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 Grant program per fiscal year.

Faculty interested in developing proposals that do not meet the eligibility guidelines for the Biomedical Research Seed Grant 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 Grant project period, recipients must commit to the following:

- 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.
- Complete the proposed seed grant project (preliminary study or data collection) prior to submission of the R21 or R01 grant application to NIH, to ensure investment in the seed project is leveraged for optimal competitiveness of the NIH application.
- Submit a R21 or R01 grant application to NIH within 12 months following the end of the Biomedical Research Seed Grant 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 are strongly encouraged to contact Jen Nelson at 402-472-0321 or jnelson18@unl.edu before submitting an application to discuss eligibility.

Faculty who plan to submit a proposal to the Biomedical Research Seed Grant program must provide notice of intent to submit. Notices of intent to submit will enable ORED to effectively plan for review of applications submitted to the Biomedical Research Seed Grant program. These notifications should be provided at least two weeks prior to Biomedical Research Seed Grant proposal submission.

To provide notice of intent to submit, send an email to unlresearch@unl.edu. Include the text “Biomedical Research Seed Grant Program – 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 target program (e.g., Exploratory/Developmental Research Grant Award (Parent R21), Research Project Grant (Parent R01) or a specific Request for Applications using the R21 or R01 mechanisms).

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 Grant 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 four 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
- NIH proposal submission timeline
- A detailed budget and budget justification of no more than two pages for funds requested from the Biomedical Research Seed Grant 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 a complete R21 or 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://goo.gl/Nenj7D>.

Application Submission

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

Application Deadlines

Applications to the Biomedical Research Seed Grant Program are accepted on a rolling basis, following submission of notice of intent to submit (see above).

Selection Criteria and Review Process

Primary selection criteria include:

- A clear alignment between the proposed research project and federal priorities for biomedical research
- The technical merit and quality of the draft NIH proposal, and its high potential for generating new NIH funding
- The likely impact of the proposed seed grant project on NIH proposal competitiveness

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 six to eight weeks following application receipt.

Additional Information

For additional information, contact Jen Nelson, Director of Research Strategy and Infrastructure (402.472.0321 or jnelson18@unl.edu) or Mari Greer, Administrative Coordinator (402.472.2851 or mgreer1@unl.edu).