REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS:

Research and Innovation Grants
Office of Research and Innovation
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

OFFICE OF RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

Application Deadline(s): October 1, 2025, and April 1, 2026
Proposals must be submitted in NuRamp.

Program Overview

Research and Innovation Grants (R&I Grants) provide support to University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) faculty members seeking to advance their programs of research, scholarship, and/or creative endeavors. Faculty may leverage R&I Grants to launch a new project; further develop an ongoing project; or initiate a new area of research, scholarship, and/or creative endeavors.

Proposals submitted to the R&I Grants program must clearly describe how the proposed work will 1) advance a faculty member's research, scholarship, and/or creative endeavors and 2) contribute to at least one of the following outcomes:

- Enhanced competitiveness for extramural funding.
- Advanced scholarly output (e.g., publications, patents, exhibitions, performances).
- Increased societal impact of research, scholarship, and/or creative endeavors.

While not an exhaustive list of allowable activities, funds may be used to support:

- Preliminary studies, pilot projects, or prototype development.
- Data collection or analysis.
- Travel to conduct research/scholarship/creative endeavors or meet with collaborators.
- Demonstration of societal impacts such as educational/public service programs, activities, or resources.
- The preparation, development, and/or hosting of performances, recordings, and exhibitions.
- Publication subventions.

Award Information

Award amounts: Up to $15,000 is available per award. However, applicants are not required to seek the maximum level of funding. Budget requests should reflect the scope and scale of the proposed work.

Project duration: The project duration for R&I Grants is 12 months. For this award cycle, the award periods are:

- January 1, 2026, to December 31, 2026, for proposals submitted to the October deadline.
- August 1, 2026, to July 31, 2027, for proposals submitted to the April deadline.

Expected number of awards: The number of awards issued will be determined based on proposal quality (see Proposal Review Process and Timeline below) and availability of funds.

Eligibility

Applicant eligibility: Full-time UNL faculty members are eligible to serve as principal investigator (PI) and submit a proposal to this competition. Postdoctoral fellows, faculty with part-time appointments, and visiting or adjunct appointees are not eligible to apply as PI.

Other personnel: Other essential project personnel (e.g., co-investigators) must hold a paid UNL appointment. Individuals from external institutions or holding only courtesy or adjunct appointments at UNL may not be included as project personnel.

Limit on the number of applications: Individual PIs may submit one proposal to this competition per deadline. There is no limit on the number of applications to which an individual may contribute in another role (e.g., as other project personnel).

Limit on the number of awarded grants: UNL faculty may have no more than one active award from the R&I Grants program as PI. Additionally, individuals may not serve as a PI on more than two internal grants awarded by R&I in any four-year fiscal period (excluding Biomedical Research Seed Grants, Book Fellowship and Manuscript Workshop Program awards, Invited Scholar Grants, and Revision Grants).

PIs who are unsure about their eligibility based on current or prior R&I-funded grants received within the last four years are strongly advised to contact R&I staff to discuss the potential allowability of another award before applying (see the Additional Information section below).

Repeated R&I funding for the same project: Applicants cannot receive funding for the same project from multiple R&I-funded grants. Applicants proposing projects similar to work currently or previously supported by an R&I-funded grant must demonstrate that the new scope of work is significantly different from the previous project or a substantial advancement of the prior project.

Resubmissions: Declined proposals may be resubmitted following substantive revision in response to reviewers' comments. However, all proposals will be treated as new applications. Resubmissions should not be described as revised applications, and revisions should not be called out in proposal narratives.

Proposal Requirements

Overall instructions and formatting: Proposals should be prepared using an 8.5" x 11" page size with 1" margins and single-spaced 11-point font (Arial, Calibri, Aptos, Georgia, or Times New Roman). The font sizes used in captions, graphics, tables, and detailed budgets may be smaller, but this text must be legible when printed.

Importantly, the proposal must be written in lay language understandable to non-specialist reviewers and should include sufficient detail to demonstrate its scientific, scholarly, or creative merit and potential to achieve the stated outcomes. Avoid the use of technical jargon and acronyms to the extent possible.

Proposal components: Please prepare the following information—in the order described—as a single PDF. The inclusion of appendices or documents in addition to those requested below are not allowed.

1. ***Coversheet and Project Abstract*** *(two-page maximum)*

Provide:

- The project title.
- An indication of which of the following three R&I Grant outcomes the proposed project will contribute to. Applicants must indicate at least one and can list up to all three.
  o Enhanced competitiveness for extramural funding.
  o Advanced scholarly output.
  o Increased societal impact of research, scholarship, and/or creative endeavors.

  Note: An explanation of how the project will contribute to these outcomes is not needed here. Simply list all relevant outcomes.
- A list of all project personnel, including their titles, UNL departments/units, and roles. Clearly identify the project PI.
- The total amount requested for the R&I Grant.
- An indication of whether funded external contractors will be involved (see Budget Guidelines below for information about allowable external contractors).
- A 300-word project abstract that summarizes the challenge or opportunity the project will address, the goal and specific objectives of the proposed project, and how the project will advance the PI's program of research, scholarship, and/or creative endeavors.

2. ***Proposal Narrative*** *(three-page maximum)*

   A. ***Introduction***

- Pose a clear research/scholarly/creative question or topic.
- Detail relevant background information and rationale to demonstrate the need for the proposed project. This may include situating the project in existing literature, research, or practice in the relevant field(s); describing relevant preliminary study, data, or work by project personnel; and/or providing background information on societal needs that the project will help to address.
- State the PI's long-term goal that the proposed project will contribute to and list the project's overall goal and specific objectives.
- Summarize the significance and potential impact of the proposed project. In particular, describe how the project will contribute to the PI's long-term career trajectory/goals and advance relevant fields of research, scholarship, or practice.
  o ***If the PI is developing a new area of research, scholarship, and/or creative endeavors***, explain how the proposed project fits with the applicant's previous work and justify how the new direction will contribute to the PI's long-term career trajectory/goals.

   B. ***Proposed Plan***

- Describe the specific research/scholarship/creative endeavors to be conducted with the funds with enough specificity so reviewers may understand how the proposed objectives will be accomplished. The scope of the activities must align with a one-year funding period and the requested budget.
- As appropriate for the project, describe data/information sources to be used; methods of analysis or development; engagement with relevant technologies, platforms, resources, or audiences; etc.
- If the project is collaborative, summarize the roles and responsibilities of the PI and other essential project personnel.

C. Outcomes

- Describe specific outcomes and/or deliverables expected from the project.
- Clearly articulate how the outcomes/deliverables will advance the PI's program of research, scholarship, and/or creative endeavors. In particular:
  - *If targeting external grants as an outcome*, describe how the project will enhance competitiveness for subsequent external funding. Identify at least one specific external funding opportunity (program and funding agency) and describe the fit of the proposed project to the external funding opportunity or opportunities.
  - *If targeting scholarly output as an outcome*, summarize how the project will contribute to the PI's future work or longer-term efforts. Detail plans for disseminating project outcomes/deliverables to scholars and/or other relevant audiences.
  - *If targeting societal impact as an outcome*, explain the measurable societal impact(s) expected from the proposed project and/or how the effort is expected to set the stage for enhanced measurable impact(s) in future work.
- Summarize, where appropriate, the project's alignment with national and/or institutional priorities.

D. Timeline

- Provide a timeline summarizing 1) when key project activities will occur during the one-year project period and 2) immediate future activities needed to accomplish and/or capitalize on the primary project outcomes. In particular:
  - *If targeting external grants as an outcome*, include activities related to preparing the external grant submission. Include the external funders' proposal submission deadline(s).
  - *If targeting scholarly output as an outcome*, include activities needed to complete and disseminate the proposed product or activity, which may occur during or immediately following the award period.
  - *If targeting societal impact as an outcome*, provide a timeline for pursuing additional future activities expected to drive enhanced societal impact of the PI's body of work.

3. References Cited *(one-page maximum)*

- Provide a list of references cited in the proposal.

4. Biographical Sketches *(three-page maximum per person)*

- Provide a biographical sketch for the PI and any essential project personnel.
- Proposers may use any format they choose. However, the same format should be used for all project personnel regardless of the format chosen. Proposers may use:
  - The template available [here].
  - An agency-specific format (e.g., NIH, NSF, or USDA).
  - Another format.

5. Current and Pending Support *(no page limit)*

- Provide a listing of current and pending support (internal and external) for the PI and any essential project personnel.
- Proposers may use any format they choose. However, the same format should be used for all project personnel regardless of the format chosen. Proposers may use:
  - The template available [here].

- o   An agency-specific format (e.g., NSF or USDA).
- o   Another format.
- Regardless of the format chosen, the listings of current and pending support should include, at a minimum, the project title, total awarded/requested amount, funding period, funding agency, and percent effort or person months dedicated to each project.

6. ***Budget and Budget Justification*** *(one-page maximum for budget; one-page maximum for justification)*
- Provide a detailed budget (Excel or Word document) and budget justification for up to $15,000.
- See Budget Guidelines below for information on allowable and unallowable costs.
- Applicants should provide strong rationale in the budget justification about how the funds will be used to carry out the proposed project.
- If the PI received a start-up package in the last three years, include a brief section in the budget justification that outlines the need for funds relative to the availability of funding from the start-up.
- Proposers may wish to consider and make use of the budget template and budget justification samples curated by the Office of Sponsored Programs on its Proposal Preparation Resources webpage.

Incomplete proposals will not be reviewed.

Proposal Submission Process and Deadline

Applications for internal funding must be submitted via the Internal Competitions module in NuRamp (https://nuramp.nebraska.edu). Sign in to NuRamp using your institutional credentials.

Proposals must be submitted by 5:00 p.m. Central on Wednesday, October 1, 2025, or Wednesday, April 1, 2026.

Late proposals will not be reviewed.

Budget Guidelines

Budget requests must comply with applicable university policies.

Allowable costs
- Costs to support well-justified activities for research, scholarship, and/or creative endeavors
- Salary for non-tenure track research faculty, postdoctoral associates, graduate or undergraduate student research assistants, and technical personnel. Requests for salary support must include benefits (including graduate student tuition remission and health insurance stipends, when appropriate).
- Requests for travel must be strongly justified. International travel must not exceed $5,000.
- Publication charges are allowable budget expenses. However, proposers are encouraged to leverage the open access publishing agreements available through the UNL Libraries whenever possible. These agreements with scholarly publishers allow UNL authors to publish in selected open access journals at no cost or at reduced rates. More information about participating publishers and journals is available here. If publication charges are included in the budget, the budget justification should explain why publishing through one of these journals is not suitable for the proposed work.

Unallowable costs

- Salary for tenure leading/tenured faculty
- Teaching release time (i.e., course buyouts)
- Normal operations (e.g., office space, administrative assistance)
- Equipment acquisition or development
- Alteration/renovation of facilities
- Facilities and administrative (F&A) costs (sometimes known as indirect costs)

Sub-recipients/external contractors: Sub-recipients are not allowed. However, external contractors providing goods or services may invoice UNL for project-related costs. Click here to access federal definitions of subrecipients and contractors.

Compliance Guidelines

Funds cannot be released unless all personnel identified on the project routing form have an approved conflict of interest (COI)/conflict of commitment (COC) disclosure in place. Participating UNL personnel who do not have a currently approved COI/COC disclosure should complete the online COI/COC Annual Disclosure Form in NuRamp as soon as possible.

Outstanding compliance approvals—such as those required for research involving human subjects, Human Embryonic Stem Cells and/or their derivatives and Human Fetal Tissue and/or their derivatives, animal subjects, transgenic animals, recombinant DNA, biohazards, select agents, radioactive materials, regulated plant materials, and/or the export laws and regulations of the United States—will delay the release of funds following award notification. Contact Research Compliance, Integrity, and Security for more information.

Proposal Review Process and Timeline

Review process: R&I will recruit peer reviewers from across the UNL community to provide non-technical reviews. Applicants should not expect peer reviewers to be subject matter experts in their fields and should prepare their grant proposals accordingly.

R&I staff will prepare a report summarizing the proposal review process and review outcomes and share it with the Chancellor and Vice Chancellor for Research and Innovation. These senior university leaders will make the final funding decisions.

All applicants will receive summarized written feedback on their applications based on the review process when notified about the funding outcome.

Proposal review criteria and rubric: Proposals will be reviewed based on the following scoring rubric (100 points possible):

Proposal Review Criteria – Research and Innovation Grants	Maximum Value
Significance and fit with the R&I Grants competition: The extent to which the project will advance the PI's program of research, scholarship, and/or creative endeavors; is important for the PI's long-term career trajectory/goals; and will advance relevant fields of research, scholarship, and/or practice.	25

Proposal Review Criteria – Research and Innovation Grants	Maximum Value
Scientific, scholarly, or creative merit: The extent to which the proposal presents feasible goals and objectives, relevant background information and rationale for the project, a realistic plan of work, methods that are appropriate to the project and discipline, and a realistic timeline for activities during and beyond the grant period.	25
Potential to achieve program-relevant outcomes: The likelihood that the project will lead to the primary program outcomes identified by the applicant (i.e., enhanced competitiveness for extramural funding; advanced scholarly output; and/or increased societal impact of research, scholarship, and/or creative endeavors). Where appropriate, the extent to which the project will contribute to national and/or institutional priorities.	25
Qualifications of PI/personnel: The extent to which the PI/personnel are well-qualified to successfully complete the proposed project and, for collaborative projects, the roles and responsibilities of all personnel are clearly explained.	15
Quality of the budget and justification: The extent to which the outlined costs are appropriate, reasonable, and realistic in relation to the scope, duration, and objectives of the project and the strength of the rationale in the budget justification.	10

Award timeline:

- **For proposals submitted to the October deadline:** Award announcement will be made no later than December 2025. The award period is January 1, 2026, to December 31, 2026.
- **For proposals submitted to the April deadline:** Award announcement will be made no later than July 2026. The award period is August 1, 2026, to July 31, 2027.

Award Conditions and Requirements

Reporting: Recipients must submit a final report to R&I no later than 30 days after the end of the funding period or award termination date. A report template will be sent with the award notification.

External grant submission (if applicable): Awardees pursuing a primary outcome to enhance their competitiveness for external grants must submit a proposal for external funding (grants and/or fellowships) within 24 months of receiving the R&I Grant.

No-cost extensions: Requests for a no-cost extension of up to six months will be considered if needed. Any requests for a no-cost extension of awarded funds must be made by the start of the final month of the award period to allow for processing. Only one no-cost extension will be considered for each grant.

Unused funds: Funds must be used by the project end date, unless a no-cost extension is granted. Any unused funds at the completion of the grant must be returned. University purchasing and travel reimbursement guidelines and timelines must be followed; thus, applicants are encouraged to spend grant funds in a timely manner to avoid last-minute purchases near the end of the grant term.

Budget reallocation: Minor reallocations of funds among existing, approved budget categories are allowable without approval from R&I, provided the reallocation does not alter the scope of the funded project. However, reallocations involving 25 percent or more within an approved budget category or for new, unapproved items or budget categories must be approved by R&I in writing in advance of the reallocation.

Transfer of grant: If a PI leaves the university before the project start date, or during the award period, the funds remaining in the account must be returned. If a PI leaves the university, project funds may not be transferred to another faculty member.

Failure to meet award conditions or requirements may disqualify PIs from future internal R&I funding.

Volunteer to Serve as a Peer Reviewer

Given the number of internal grant applications R&I receives, many faculty volunteers are needed to serve on review panels. If you are interested in learning more about the internal review process and/or volunteering to serve as a reviewer, please visit our peer reviewer volunteer webpage.

Note: Faculty will not serve on review panels of competitions to which they have submitted a proposal.

Additional Information

For programmatic questions (e.g., the fit of a project idea with the priorities of the program), contact Matthew Dwyer, Senior Research Development Program Coordinator in R&I, at mdwyer4@unl.edu or 402-472-1661.

For questions regarding proposal submission, contact Mari Greer, Administrative Coordinator in R&I, at mgreer1@unl.edu or 402-472-2851.