2020 Big Idea Generator (BIG) COVID-19 RESPONSE GRANTS
Request for Proposals

Sponsored by Research Development Support of the Office of Research and the National Laboratories, Office of the Provost

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES:
This special BIG COVID-19 Response Grants program encourages the development of rapid and innovative responses to help curb the COVID-19 pandemic. The program seeks to slow the spread of COVID-19, particularly in underserved areas, and support the development of innovative and scalable solutions.

FUNDING
A total of $10,000 to $80,000 for two to 12 months, depending on the tier of the award. Matching funds from the PI’s division are required and are reflected in the budget allocation.

PROGRAM PRIORITIES:
Preference will be given to projects that demonstrate the ability to bring solutions and innovations to scale rapidly (e.g. by the end of 2020), are novel in their approach, highly collaborative, with a high likelihood of achieving external support.

Examples of projects might include:
- Develop new point-of-care diagnostics for coronavirus.
- Novel approaches to vulnerable community health tracking using data at multiple scales.
- Examine the role of social determinants of health influencing COVID-19 outcomes.
- Develop novel COVID-19 modeling techniques, integrating approaches from multiple disciplines.
- Design rigorous analysis of policy recommendations around effective COVID-19 governance, surveillance and response using multiple data sources and approaches.
- Design models of vaccine and drug development.

FUNDING TRACKS:
Three tiers of funding are available:

Pilot Grants (up to $10K and up to two months in duration; one page): Acquiring fast, preliminary data, developing a proof of concept, establishing a framework for collaboration, conducting problem-focused hackathons, planning for large-scale proposals.

Seed Grants (up to $25,000 and up to six months in duration; three pages excluding references), and

Vision Grants (up to $80,000 and up to twelve months in duration; five pages excluding references).

Both Seed grants and Visions grants should focus on novel research approaches to studying COVID-19 and must address the following requirements:
1. **Novelty:** Discuss the novelty and merit of the idea. Why is BIG funding required (e.g., high risk, lack of preliminary data, methodological issues, etc.)?

2. **Risk:** What are the risks associated with the project (intellectual, institutional, logistic) and how can the University help to mitigate the risks?

3. **Feasibility:** How can the proposed project be accomplished in three-six months (for Seed grants) to a year (for Vision grants)? Define the milestones, with a start date of July 2020.

4. **Impact:** What is the expected impact if the project is successful?

5. **Growth:** Name specific future funding lines (federal agencies, foundations, corporate funders, etc.) once the project moves past the initial phase.

Proposals using a team science based approach with collaborations across disciplines are strongly encouraged.

**ELIGIBILITY:**
Proposals are invited from any field. Lead PIs must be UChicago faculty. Junior faculty are encouraged to apply. Postdocs may participate under the direction of a UChicago faculty PI. Preference will be given to UChicago teams of researchers. PIs are limited to one proposal per funding category (Seed, Growth, Vision).

All proposals should adhere to the Research Guidelines posted on [https://researchcontinuity.uchicago.edu/](https://researchcontinuity.uchicago.edu/) and receive approval from your division prior to the initiation of any awarded project.

**Budget:** Funds are in direct costs only. Proposers will be required to include a budget justification for each line of the budget.

**Proposal Review and Selection:** Proposals will undergo a rigorous review process by an internal cross-disciplinary Faculty Advisory Board (FAB). Therefore, proposals should be accessible to a broad research audience. Initial proposal reviews will be conducted blindly. Funding decisions will be made by the FAB, chaired by the Vice Provost for Research. Top scoring proposals will be invited to present their projects to the FAB as part of the final selection process.

**BIG 2020 Timeline Overview:**
- Applications deadline: May 10th, 2020 (midnight CT)
- Faculty Advisory Board Reviews: May 18th, 2020
- Finalist Round: May 25th, 2020
- Award Announcement: end of May, 2020
- Funds Dispersed: June 5, 2020

**Progress Reporting:** Seed grant awardees will have to present exit reports within two months of start date. Growth and Vision grant awardees will be required to submit progress reports. Growth awardees’ reports are due three months following the start date. Vision grant awardees’ reports are due three and six months following the start date, as well as upon completion of the project.

**APPLICATION DEADLINE**
May 10, 2020 midnight

**APPROXIMATE OFFER DATE:**
May 31, 2020
Submission Guidelines and the application form are posted on the internal funding portal and should be submitted at

https://uchicago.infoready4.com/#competitionDetail/1807640

Questions? Contact: covid-research@uchicago.edu