

Small Grants Program (SGP)

Proposal Submission Deadline

Friday, November 3, 2023, before 5:00 p.m.

- Combine all files of the completed proposal into a single PDF, name the file LAST_FIRST_2024 where the LAST is your last name and the FIRST is your first name, and upload it to the online cover sheet using the “Apply for Internal Awards” link on the DOR webpage: <https://uh.edu/research/funding-opportunities/internal-awards/small-grants/>

LATE PROPOSALS WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED

Overview

The purpose of the SGP is to provide funding for unique or unusual research and scholarly projects not routinely supported by departments or colleges or not currently funded from external sources. Preference will be given to proposals from faculty who presently have limited alternative sources of funding and to proposals that have partial financial support from their department or college. Small grants may be requested for the publication of books. These awards are specifically targeted for scholarly activity in the humanities, arts, social sciences, and education. Pilot projects from any area, including engineering, natural sciences, and mathematics, will be accepted if they meet the criteria for submission. Awards will be made based on the merit and DOR review.

Up to \$10,000 per year may be requested. Be advised the review committee or DOR may award partial amounts at its discretion in order to support a greater number of faculty projects. Individuals may submit only one application for this program per year. An applicant is only eligible to have one funded SGP over a 2-year period. A total of \$150,000 is available for the Small Grant Awards program.

Eligibility

Any University of Houston (UH) tenured, tenure-track, or promotion-eligible non-tenure track faculty member who carries a full-time faculty appointment and who has attained the terminal degree in his or her field may apply.

- Individuals may submit only one (1) SGP per year. Renewals of previously awarded projects will not be accepted except in the case of a book subvention, where the proposal is for a different part of the book. A progress report must be submitted as a separate addendum explaining how the proposal builds on the previous award.
- A faculty member currently holding a small grant award may not apply, including awards that were extended.
- Faculty applicants should not have received start-up funds exceeding \$50,000 during the past five years (does not include personnel costs or renovations).

- Faculty applicants who apply for SGP may not also apply for New Faculty Research Grants (NFRG)

Small grants only support unique research and scholarly activity, including disciplinary equivalents in the performing and creative arts. The program does not cover course preparation for faculty or students, instructional projects, or activities primarily classified as faculty development. The small grant award cannot be used as a supplement to an existing award from any source. All expenditure of funds must comply with State of Texas guidelines.

Due to limited funding in the program, the Research and Scholarship Committee (RSC) established three areas of priority for funding:

1. Funding that is essential to maintain an ongoing research project initiated at UH.
2. Initial support for a project with the potential to attract external funding.
3. Travel:
 - a. To meet with program directors at potential sponsoring agencies. SGP will fund not more than 50% of such expenses. Proposals must indicate specific individuals or offices to be contacted and include any other supporting documentation available.
 - b. To carry out specific research activities, including field work and archival research. Applicant must clearly identify the specific research activity which cannot be carried out on the UH campus and for which travel is therefore required (e.g., to access a library collection not available through interlibrary loan). Applications should reflect the real costs as described in the Allowable Costs section below. Foreign and domestic travel will be given equal priority. All foreign travel requires prior approval by the UH President.

Note: Expenditure documents for the SGP will not require prior approval of the DOR. Signature authority and compliance for the SGP award resides with the Department Business Administrators (DBA).

The following areas have been established for review:

- Applied Science/Engineering/Technology
- Arts/Humanities
- Biological Sciences/Biomedical Sciences/Bioengineering
- Computational Science/High Performance Computing
- Materials Science
- Medicine
- Health Disparities
- Physical Sciences/Mathematics
- Social and Behavioral Research
- Business
- Law
- Education
- Pharmacy

- Optometry
- For all other categories, please specify on the cover page of the application form.

Formatting Requirements

All documents must be prepared on the US Letter size paper (8.5"x11") with 1-inch margins on all sides, Arial font size 11 pt or greater. The proposal narrative must have exactly 1.5 line spacing; all other documents may be single-spaced. An Arial font size of no less than 8 pt. should be used for the captions to graphics and tables and may be single-spaced. The text in the captions must be legible. Applications that fail to follow the formatting requirements will not be reviewed.

Proposal Preparation and Submission

The application must be prepared using the guidelines below and submitted by the Principal Investigator (PI) or the PI's affiliated pre-award research administrator. Combine all files of the completed proposal into a single PDF, name the file LAST_FIRST_2024 where the LAST is your last name and the FIRST is your first name, and upload it to the online cover sheet using the "Apply for Internal Awards" link on the DOR webpage: <https://uh.edu/research/funding-opportunities/internal-awards/small-grants/>

No prior approval from chairs and deans is required unless the application requires a commitment of space or other resources, in which case a letter of commitment should be included. Emails to you, your department chair (or equivalent), and your associate dean for research will be sent after you submit the proposal in lieu of the previously required signatures.

Organize the proposal using the following sections with these headings:

Abstract/Summary

A 200-word single-spaced abstract must be submitted with the proposal.

Proposal Narrative (Up to 6 pages, includes graphics, tables, equations, and formulas)

The proposal narrative must not exceed six pages with exactly 1.5 line spacing and the font size of Arial should be no smaller than 11 pt. with 1-inch margins. The following sections must be included:

- a. Objectives and Specific Aims
- b. Significance and Impact
- c. Preliminary Results and Applicant Expertise
- d. Approach (How you will go about producing the project; if this is a research proposal this section would involve the methods)
- e. Expected Outcomes and Products
- f. Feasibility: Provide a timeline of all activities

References Cited are in addition to the 6-page Proposal Narrative and must be single-spaced. Only proposals that meet the formatting requirements will be reviewed.

Biosketch(es) (2 pages per investigator)

Provide a two-page biosketch for each PI and Co-PI. NSF/NEH style is preferred, but not required. The narrative format of an NIH Biosketch is not acceptable.

The biosketch should provide the following:

- Current and Past Positions.
- Education: List degrees and dates awarded.
- Awards and Honors: Include dates.
- Other Relevant Professional Activities and Accomplishments.
- Publications: Include full citations for selected publications and presentations.

Current and Pending Support, including overlap with current funding, pending proposals, and start-up funding.

- Provide a list of current and pending support for each PI and Co-PI. Include a clear description of overlap of the proposed research with research on current awards or pending proposals.
- If the proposal is related to a project supported by start-up funding, indicate the overlap.
- Proposals seeking to conduct research to improve a prior submitted external proposal that has received high but not-funded ranking must provide the external proposal reviews and describe the specific steps that will be taken to address the deficiencies stated in the reviews.

Budget

The budget **MUST** be constructed and presented using the standard UH budget template <http://www.uh.edu/research/resources/dor-forms/proposal-processing-forms/>. Please work with your affiliated pre-award personnel to generate the budget. This person must sign the budget template, indicating that they prepared and approved the budget. **The project period is 18 months but prepare a single-year budget.**

- Request must be specific (i.e., funds for a specific research or scholarly project, not for general or instructional purposes).
- If external reviewers for a future grant submission are considered as part of the proposed activities, the PI must acknowledge that they are aware of the potential for a conflict of interest if the identified reviewer is a member of the agency's review panel. Specifically, if the funding opportunity is from an agency that publishes the roster of their review panels (e.g., NIH), the PI must acknowledge that they will check all relevant rosters and refrain from sending any inquiries for an external review to such members. If the PI plans to pay external reviewers for reviews, this must be explicitly included in the budget.
- Requests for the following will NOT be funded:
 - a. Purchase of computer hardware (e.g., monitors, keyboards, printers, various peripherals, except for peripherals with specific application for the project, such as scanners)
 - b. Generic computer software for which the University has a license, except for packages directly related to the project such as mathematical analysis toolboxes.

- c. Travel to meetings and conferences or travel to training workshops.
- d. Supplementation of other internal or external support.
- e. Faculty salary. Funds for a course buyout are allowed (see budget).
- f. Publication costs unless they are related to a book subvention. Journal publication costs are not allowed.
- g. Graduate student tuition and fees (these costs should be covered by GTF)

One course buyout during the course of the project may be requested as part of the budget. This buyout is permitted only for faculty who have at least a 2+2 teaching load. The buyout must be approved by the department chair prior to submission and the department chair must write a letter indicating approval of the course buyout and the budgeted amount. Faculty with any type of approved course release may not request an additional buyout (e.g., distinguished professorship, startup package, administrative release). The budget must reflect the cost of hiring a replacement adjunct professor and not the cost charged to a grant for a course release. In many departments, a course release is charged at \$10,000 to a federal grant, while the cost of hiring an adjunct is \$3,000; the latter cost should be budgeted and justified.

Budget Justification and Fiscal Accountability

Each budget must justify all aspects of the requested budget. The justification must address each item for which funding is requested and explain why it is needed.

Commitments

This program allows cost sharing or matching from non-DOR sources. Any financial or tangible commitments must be formally documented. Written commitments signed by the sponsoring unit authorities (i.e., dean, center director, and/or department chair) must be submitted when cost sharing or matching is proposed. Startup funds are not eligible for cost sharing because it bypasses the need for a discussion with the department chair/dean.

Space

Space availability and requirements must be identified.

- a. Location of the unit.
- b. What facilities, renovations, and technology needs are anticipated?

It is the investigators' responsibility to prepare the facility for installation and housing of the product. No funds from this program will be used for renovations.

Review Process

These proposals will be competitively reviewed and acted upon by subcommittees of the RSC of the Faculty Senate. Winning proposals will be determined based on program criteria, merit, and available funds. Preference will be given to bold new ideas showing clear evidence of high likelihood of producing high quality, high impact products in the short term and viability as a research program in the long-term. Investigators with current funding must clearly state any overlaps between this and their current project portfolio.

Merit Criteria

All applications will initially be checked against the eligibility criteria outlined above. If eligibility is not fulfilled, applications will be returned without additional review alongside an appropriate explanation by DOR staff. After the initial screening, applications will be submitted to the RSC. Each accepted proposal will be competitively reviewed and acted upon by a subcommittee of the RSC that may include non-RSC members from the campus. The RSC will make recommendations to the VC/VP for Research, who will be responsible for awarding and administering the grant. The DOR reserves the right to review and change budgets and ask for clarifications from potential awardees. Reviewers will be internal to UH and may not be disciplinary experts. For instance, a colleague from the College of Arts or the College of Education might review an application from the College of Pharmacy. It is important to ensure that reviewers who are not technical experts in the field of inquiry can understand the proposal narrative. Avoid jargon, unexplained abbreviations, and narratives that are highly technical.

Each reviewer will score each of their assigned proposals in five domains on a 1 (highest) – 5 (lowest) scale and provide an overall score on the same scale. The overall score must be based on the broader impact this research will make in addition to the likelihood that the proposal will result in an externally funded research grant. Increments of 0.5 are allowed within the 1-5 range (1.0, 1.5, 2.0, 2.5, etc.):

1. Short-term impact and innovation of proposed research:
Evaluate the short-term impact and novelty of the proposed research.
2. Final product, including feasibility and timeline, which may include a plan for grant submission:
Evaluate the proposed final product. A strong application will have a detailed plan for producing this product, which may include a plan for grant submission at the end of the funding period. If grant submission is proposed, the application should identify the targeted agency, funding mechanism, and program for which the proposal, with a clear timeline for submission and revision.
3. Quality of the approach:
Evaluate the approach taken to producing the proposed product. For subvention costs associated with publishing a book, work of art, or theater production, a copy of the following documents should be submitted:
 - a. Contract or letter of support from a publisher, curator, or producer showing firm commitment and costs of publication/production
 - b. Short summary of the proposed manuscript, work of art, or theater productionThe applicant should be able to provide sufficient proof that the publisher/curator/producer has a scholarly reputation and is not a vanity operation. If the proposal is a research grant, examine the description of the aims, participants, procedures, and analysis of the data.
4. Investigator expertise and record of accomplishment:
Evaluate the evidence that the investigators have the relevant expertise to produce product. A strong grant would have a publication record in the identified area or clearly

show the capacity to move into a new area. A weak grant would have no demonstrable record of accomplishment. A history of prior funding can be considered but should not disadvantage junior investigators with clear evidence of expertise.

5. Long-term potential for substantive contributions to research area:

Evaluate the potential long-term impact of the proposal for a sustained and important contribution to the selected area of research and scholarship.

Congruency Review

Congruency review by the Research Integrity and Oversight (RIO) Office is required for all research submitted to this program. Congruency review includes human subjects, animal usage, biological materials (rDNA, human samples, microorganisms, etc.), and radiation (radioactive materials, lasers, and x-rays).

All oversight committee approvals must be secured within three months of the award announcement, or the funds will be forfeited:

- All projects involving human subjects must be reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) before the grant cost center will be established.
- All projects involving the use of animals in research must be reviewed and approved by the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) before the grant cost center will be established.
- All projects involving biological materials must be reviewed and approved by the Biological Safety Manager and the Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC) before the grant cost center will be established.
- All projects involving radiation must be reviewed and approved by the Radiation Safety Officer (RSO) & Laser Safety Officer (LSO) and authorized by the Radiation Safety Committee (RSC) before the grant cost center will be established.

Intellectual Property

In accordance with University policy, faculty members and the University share in net income generated from intellectual property. For additional information, refer to the [Faculty Handbook](#) or contact the [Office of Technology Transfer and Innovation \(OTTI\)](#) at 713-743-9294.

Schedule

Program Announcement	September 11, 2023
Application Deadline	November 3, 2023
Initial Review Completed	January 19, 2024
Announcement of Awards	February 15, 2024 (approximate)
Effective Date of Award for 18 Months	March 15, 2024-September 15, 2025
Final Report and Product Submission	September 15, 2025

Extensions

Extensions of up to 6 months will be granted only for circumstances that would extend the tenure clock. There is additional flexibility for unanticipated events that affect the entire university, such as a pandemic and the suspension of travel and human participant's research. No requests for extension will be granted if initiated after the expiration date of the project.

Reporting and Acknowledgement

Use the *Internal Grant Reports* button on the DOR Internal Awards webpage. The final report should detail the final product(s) and provide documentation of its completion. More specifically, it should provide a summary of data and/or outcomes as it relates to the proposed research objectives. The final report should not exceed 3 pages. Failure to comply with this reporting requirement will disqualify an individual for future consideration in all internal funding programs.

Notice must be given of publications, presentations, exhibitions, or performances resulting from the award. The grantee must acknowledge DOR support in all products and publications resulting from the award and provide one copy of the publication to the DOR.

Assistance

All questions related to this program should be submitted to Dr. Ezemenari Obasi (emobasi@uh.edu), Associate Vice President for Research Administration.

Please do not call or email regarding the review results because the dates depend on the RSC review capacity and are approximate.