UNIVERSITY of HOUSTON | RESEARCH

2021 LABORATORY RENOVATION/NEW LAB GRANT GUIDELINES

Proposal Submission Deadline

Thursday, April 1, 2021, before 5:00 p.m.

- **Combine all files of the completed proposal into a single PDF, name the file LAST_FIRST_2021 where the LAST is your last name and the FIRST is your first name, and attach the PDF to the online cover page. Submit 1 (one) PDF using the online *Apply for Internal Awards* link on the DOR webpage: https://uh.edu/research/funding-opportunities/internal-awards/lab-renovations/**

LATE PROPOSALS WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED

Overview

The Vice President for Research and the Provost have initiated a program to invigorate the University research enterprise through targeted investment in the renovation of existing labs or the creation of new small labs. The purpose of the program is to support the core research infrastructure of the University's research enterprise through targeted investments in laboratories that would permit submission of competitive external research proposals. Although a proposal can be submitted for any research area, applicants are expected to demonstrate relevance to one or more of the four institutional thrusts. It is not expected that the lab's entire focus be in a thrust area, but that relevance to one of the thrusts can be demonstrated.

The four institutional thrusts that the Vice President for Research and the Provost developed in consultation with College Deans, and which the Chancellor endorsed, are described here and in the figure below to provide the general area of emphasis and some examples.

(1) Cyber and Physical Security
(2) Drug Discovery and Development
(3) Sustainable Communities and Infrastructure
(4) Accessible Healthcare

Funding Level

An allocation of $2,500,000 is available in the current fiscal year for one round of competition. The total allocation is intended to fund 4-6 laboratory renovations/startups (hereafter, LABORATORY) awards at $500,000-750,000 each.

Reporting Requirements

The LABORATORY Program is intended to increase the technical capabilities of a laboratory or groups of laboratories leading to highly competitive proposals for extramural funding. As such, the PI is expected to complete the following activities and reporting during the 3-year project period. All reports must be submitted as a single PDF file to the Division of Research using the *Internal Award Progress Report Form* located on the Internal Awards webpage: https://uh.edu/research/funding-opportunities/internal-awards/. The reports must be brief (no more than ½ page, single-spaced, and in Arial 11-pt font) and explain progress in applying for grants, renovating the lab, and procuring and setting up any equipment requested.

1. The period for renovation or buildout must not exceed one year. The DOR recognizes that this may not be under the control of the PI, so petitions for extension will be considered.
2. An external grant proposal must be submitted in Year 2 of the project period. If the applicant intends to apply for a competition that does not fit this timeline, an exception must be noted in the proposed timeline. An exception can be granted by petition provided this extension delays the grant submission for no more than 3 months. If the request is in a high-priority area, the grant must be in that area.

3. A resubmission is expected in the next submission cycle following the receipt of reviewer comments until funding is secured or a new application can be submitted while awaiting the outcome of the previous submission. In Year 3, the PI is expected to either submit a second proposal or resubmit the proposal from Year 2.
4. A final report that captures the research output and funding garnered using this program will be due at the end of Year 3 and the DOR will require additional reporting on outcomes during the four years following the end of the award.
5. Should any reporting or grant submission requirements fail to be met, the DOR reserves the right to terminate funding and the appropriate college dean and department chair will be notified.

Eligibility Criteria

Successful LABORATORY proposals must demonstrate efficiency and ensure that investments are used to generate the highest possible return to the laboratory and the institution. It is incumbent on the applicants to make this case. The request may include critical equipment that can be either new or a replacement for old equipment, but the primary purpose of the LABORATORY program is not to purchase equipment. There are other internal award mechanisms for equipment. If equipment is requested, it must be well justified and the overall plan must balance the need for renovation or start-up with the equipment request.

LABORATORY proposals are eligible for funding when they:

- Request to renovate an existing laboratory;
- Request to start a new laboratory in a critical area that will replace a laboratory thatis no longer competitive or provide a critically needed new laboratory; and
- Are located on the University of Houston campus and run by faculty or staff employed by the University.

Any tenured or tenure-track full-time University of Houston faculty member may apply as PI or Co-PI to this program. Each proposal must have one PI. One overall Co-PI is permitted and a Co- PI from each additional laboratory included in the proposal is required. Investigators may not be overall PI or Co-PI on more than one application. Cross college proposals are strongly encouraged.

Proposal Preparation and Submission

The application **MUST** be prepared using the guidelines below and submitted by the 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_2021 where the LAST is your last name and the FIRST is your first name, and attach the PDF to the online cover page. Submit 1 (one) PDF using the online *Apply for Internal Awards* link on the DOR webpage: https://uh.edu/research/funding-opportunities/internal-awards/lab-renovations/ **Prior approval from all Chairs and Deans of departments and colleges for which a PI or Co-PI is identified in the proposal is required, and signed letters indicating approval must be attached to the proposal.** Most applications require a commitment of space or other resources, which should be included in the letter. Emails to you, your department chair (or equivalent), and your associate dean for research will be sent after you submit the proposal.

Formatting Requirements

All documents must be prepared on US Letter paper (8.5"x11") with 1-inch margins on all sides. Use Arial font of 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 at least 8 pt may 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 Documents

Cover Page

The cover page will be generated automatically by entering required data into an online form in the submission portal.

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

The rationale for the proposed LABORATORY grant must be described and must contain:

a. An overview of the strategic research area and how the investment will enhance the applicant's ability to submit competitive proposals in the selected area. The relevance to a thrust area(s) must be explicitly indicated.

b. A brief history of the applicants' expertise in the selected research area.

c. The availability on the University of Houston campus of laboratories and/or research groups of similar function/use and capabilities. If such laboratories/research groups are already available for shared use, why is the new laboratory needed? The justification must explain why a group with overlapping expertise is not part of the proposal.

d. The potential research outcomes (e.g., funding, publications, faculty hiring) of having this LABORATORY grant. Identify any obstacles.

e. Brief plans for its management and maintenance, including what type of continued investment might be required to maintain the lab and its productivity. Maintenance costs for the lab or equipment may not be requested. Any request for equipment must be well-justified and balanced with the need for renovation or a new lab.

f. Plan and timeline for the renovation or start-up. This plan should take into account any need for certifications and related issues necessary to operate the lab.

g. Plan and timeline for the grant submissions in the selected area. Include specific grant mechanisms and an estimate of the budget of the grant that will be pursued.

h. References Cited are in addition to the 6-page Proposal Narrative.

Biosketch(es) (2 pages per investigator)

Provide a two-page biosketch for each PI and Co-PI. NSF style is preferred because the narratives in the NIH style are inappropriate for this type of submission.

Current & Pending Support

a. Provide a list of current & pending support for each PI and co-PI including a clear description of overlap of the proposed renovation with currently funded research, as well as with proposed research on pending proposals.

b. If the proposal is related to start-up funding, indicate the overlap.

c. Proposals seeking 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 (up to 3 pages)

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**. If the budget involves construction, it must be shared with BizOps (Cris Milligan) for prior approval.**

Allowable costs include construction, equipment needed for the lab that is not otherwise available, service agreements. Unallowable costs include personnel, travel, equipment or computer hardware not directly connected to the proposed laboratory, maintenance, and other items not directly related to the renovation or start-up of the laboratory. Colleges and departments are responsible for cost overruns from the original budget.

Budgets will be critically reviewed. Vendor quotes are required for the submission and must be made available to the reviewing committee. When awarded, the purchase must follow the University policies and guidelines. **Failure to provide a justification in this format may delay or result in not funding the proposal.**

Budget Justification and Fiscal Accountability (up to 3 page)

The budget justification must address the following topics:

a. Describe the impact of funding on the improvement of resources or services within the unit.

b. Describe how funds will contribute to the success and sustainability of the unit.

c. Describe how these funds will benefit internal users within the unit.

d. Will the lab be available to other research groups to maximize use of the facility?

e. Is there a plan for covering long-term maintenance costs?

f. If the PI leaves or the lab and equipment are under-utilized, is there a plan to reallocate the equipment to another laboratory or core facility?

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.

Space

Space availability and requirements must be identified.

a. Location of the laboratory unit.

b. What facilities, renovations, and technology needs are anticipated?

User Groups

Provide a list of the users, including PI and co-PIs, and include their departmental and institutional (if not UH) affiliation.

a. Who are the primary expected users of the facility, including PI and co-PIs, whose research program will benefit?

b. What is the anticipated usage?

c. How will users gain access to the lab?

Review Process

All applications will initially be checked against the eligibility criteria and formatting requirements outlined above. Only eligible and compliant applications will be forwarded to the RSC for evaluation.

Each accepted proposal will be competitively reviewed and acted upon by a subcommittee of the RSC that may include non-RSC members who have content area expertise from the campus. In addition, an external reviewer not connected in any way to the applicants will be identified and asked to review the proposal. The RSC will make recommendations to the VC/VP for Research, who will be responsible for awarding and administering the grant.

The proposals must be clear, concise, and explicit about the benefits of the activities to be undertaken and must provide clear justification for expenses. Proposals must be written to be understandable to reviewers who are from a range of disciplinary fields. Some reviewers may not be disciplinary experts. It is important to ensure that the proposal narrative can be understood by reviewers who are not technical experts in the field of inquiry. Avoid jargon, unexplained abbreviations, and narratives that are highly technical with no explanation.

Criteria for Award

Each proposal must supply convincing evidence that the following criteria have been met or will be met:

1. The proposed activities will lead to high-quality research of significant benefit to the University and society.
2. The renovation/start-up must be completed in Year 1. The DOR recognizes that this may not be under the control of the PI, so petitions for extension will be considered.
3. A grant must be submitted in the identified research area during Year 2 of the project period.
4. The PI must demonstrate the potential to compete in the designated area by virtue of publication record and prior funding or the potential to be competitive by virtue of other completed research.

5. The review committee will rank each proposal in five domains on a 1 (highest) to 5 (lowest) scale:
    a. Impact and innovation of proposed renovation/startup, including the timeline;
    b. The probability that the LABORATORY grant will lead to competitive external funding, including the timeline;
    c. Need for the LABORATORY grant and plan for maintenance;
    d. Investigator expertise, track record or potential;
    e. Long-term prospects for substantive contributions to the selected research area.

Depending on the number of reviewers, grants may be ranked from highest to lowest based on average scores or a Concordance method based on pairwise comparisons may be used. Regardless, the final ranking will be a consensus of the committee.

Congruency Review

Congruency review by the Research Integrity and Oversight office is required for all proposals submitted to this program. *The review must be conducted within three months of the award announcement or the funds will be forfeited.* Congruency review includes human subjects, animal usage, biological materials (rDNA, human samples, microorganisms, etc.), and radiation (radioactive materials, lasers, and x-rays).

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.

Program Dates

The PI shall submit applications to the Division of Research using the online fillable form no later than 5:00 PM. Proposals shall be submitted as a single PDF file using the format "LAST_FIRST_2021".

- Application deadline: **April 1, 2021**
- Initial Review Completed: May 3, 2021
- Announcement of successful applications: May 17, 2021
- Funding available/Project start date: June 15, 2021

- Funding expiration: June 15, 2024
- **Progress reports due dates:**
    - January 15, 2022
    - July 15, 2022
    - January 15, 2023
    - July 15, 2023
    - January 15, 2024
    - Final report July 15, 2024
    - Follow-up reporting on outcomes until Spring 2028

For Questions

All questions related to this program should be submitted to Jack Fletcher, Associate Vice President for Research Administration, at jackfletcher@uh.edu. Please do not call or email regarding the review results because the dates depend on the Research and Scholarship Committee review capacity and are approximate.