

Keck School of Medicine of USC  
Dean's Pilot Funding Program  
Fiscal Year 2021-2022

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The Office of the Dean would like to collaborate with KSOM departments and institutes to provide faculty members with funding for initial exploration of new research areas. ***Priority will be to obtain feasibility data that will lead to submission of new NIH R-series or other major research proposals.*** The primary target audiences include junior investigators starting a research program and established investigators moving to a new area of research that is clearly distinct from their prior research. The eligibility requirements, terms, and application process are outlined below:

#### **Eligibility Requirements (all required)**

- Full-time KSOM or CHLA faculty member as of July 1, 2020
- Single or multiple PIs
- Co-Is from other USC schools are allowed, but all funds will be disbursed directly through KSOM rather than through satellite accounts to other schools or through purchase orders to CHLA if an award is issued.

#### **Previous Awardee Eligibility Requirements (all required)**

- Applicants who have received a Dean's pilot award in previous years are eligible to apply for support for a new and separate project only if:
    - The previous award has been completed, including the timely and complete expenditure of funds from the previous funding year by the application deadline (prior award cannot be in no-cost extension); and
    - productivity from the prior award is demonstrated in the form of published or accepted manuscripts and/or grant applications submitted or funded.
- Past recipients of Dean's pilot award(s) must include an additional 250-word summary of the prior award outcomes to address these points, which will be considered during the review process of a new proposal.

#### **Resubmission Requirement**

If this is a re-submission of an application that was reviewed but not funded in a prior application cycle, please submit a ½ page (250 words; single-spaced) cover letter indicating how you have responded to the reviewers' comments.

## Terms of Award

- Up to \$37,500 for one year composed of a 2:1 ratio of funds from the Dean's office and investigators' home department(s) or Institute(s). For example, the maximum award would be \$25,000 from the Dean and cost share of \$12,500 from the home department(s) or institute(s) of the participating investigator(s).
- Applications must include a letter of commitment specifying the amount and source(s) of the cost share.
- The cost share may come from any combination of participating departments and institutes; it is up to the investigators to secure the matching funds.
- A no-cost extension of up to one additional year may be granted upon review of a written request to the Dean of the Keck School
- PI salary is not allowed in the budget request
- The Keck School anticipates making up to ten awards in FY21, utilizing funds from the Christiansen Estate Endowed Fund.

## How to Apply

- Full proposal must be submitted [here](#) by 5 p.m. (PDT) on **Friday, September 25, 2020 (portal will open September 1, 2020)**
- Proposal must include the following in this order:
  - cover page
  - ½-page abstract
  - focused (≤ 3 pages) research plan
  - <1-page bibliography
  - biosketches of all investigators
  - for applicants with rank of assistant professor or below, a letter from the mentor or mentoring team describing the mentoring plan in support for the applicant and project.
  - for applicants who are proposing a major change in research direction, a letter from collaborators with relevant expertise is encouraged, but not required.
  - cost share letter signed by chair(s) and/or director(s) of departments or institutes committing to the cost share;
  - budget and budget justification
  - For Resubmissions Only: Introduction of up to 250 words, as described above.

Applications will be considered incomplete and, therefore, not reviewed until all materials are submitted.

## Review and Funding Decision

Applications will be peer-reviewed internally at USC using the following review criteria:

- Innovation of the research and novelty of the area of research to the PI(s)
- Feasibility of the primary hypothesis and/or importance of the stated purpose of the research

- Approach: Quality and appropriateness of the study design, methodology, data acquisition and analysis
- Investigators: Qualifications to conduct the proposed research. For applicants with rank of assistant professor or below, strength of mentoring team and mentoring plan. For applicants with rank of associate professor or higher, expertise of collaborators in the new area of research they are entering to qualify for a Dean's Pilot grant.
- Resources and Environment: Quality and availability of resources needed to conduct the research
- Potential to lead to extramural funding, focusing on three areas:
  1. specific justification regarding the nature of the data to be collected and how it will be used to strengthen one or more follow-on grant applications;
  2. milestones for collection of the data and timeline for submission of extramural application(s)
  3. specific funding mechanisms or opportunities that would be targeted for extramural funding applications

Recommendations for funding will be made by a committee appointed by the Dean of the Keck School, while final approval will be by the Dean.

#### **Follow-up**

- Awardees must submit an interim progress report six months after notification of award so that any delays in progress can be addressed
- A final progress report will be due February 1, 2022 for projects that do not receive a no-cost extension, or within one month after such extension ends if one is granted.
- By accepting an award, awardees will agree to provide information on publications and follow-on funding at least annually for five years after completion of the award.

#### **FY21 Review Timeline**

- Application Deadline: 5 p.m. PDT on September 25, 2020
- Funding Decision: November 16, 2020
- Funding Initiation: January 1, 2021
- Progress Report due February 1, 2022 (unless no cost extension approved prior to this date)