

**Dean's Fund for Scientific Advancement**  
**2020 Acceleration Award: SPECIAL COVID-19 RFA**

**Notice of Intent:** In an effort to quickly convene ad-hoc reviewers, we request that you submit an NOI, including your name, department, and a 2-3 sentence description of your project to ORSD ([hconrad@hsph.harvard.edu](mailto:hconrad@hsph.harvard.edu)) by cob Thursday, April 9.

**Application Deadline: Thursday, April 16, 2020**

**Submission requirements:** All proposals should be submitted directly to ORSD ([hconrad@hsph.harvard.edu](mailto:hconrad@hsph.harvard.edu))

**Contact regarding questions:** Heather Conrad at [hconrad@hsph.harvard.edu](mailto:hconrad@hsph.harvard.edu)

The **Dean's Fund for Scientific Advancement** expands the School's internal research funding program and is designed to create a pipeline of support that facilitates the exploration of early ideas, the development of strong interdisciplinary team science, and the creation of new transformative research collaborations that advance the frontiers of science. Acceleration Awards represent a critical component of the funding program and are intended to nurture collaborations in research, develop platforms, and support educational projects.

For this year's Acceleration Award, a portion of the funds will be offered as part of this Special COVID-19 RFA. Remaining Acceleration Awards funds will be competed according to the standard process ([RFA](#)) and timeline with applications due at the end of June and awards made in the Fall. Applications for COVID-19-related proposals will be accepted and reviewed in a separate, expedited competition. The timeline and proposal content have been condensed with the goal of awarding funds as soon as possible in May 2020.

OVERVIEW AND GOALS OF THE SPECIAL COVID-19 ACCELERATION AWARD RFA

The goal of the COVID-19 Acceleration Award is to ensure that the Harvard Chan School can rapidly and reliably respond to the COVID-19 outbreak by executing critical and timely research relevant to the pandemic. Given the high volume of faculty who have expressed interest in applying for the Dean's Emergency Response Fund and the limited amount of funding available through that program, these additional funds directed towards COVID-19 related research are being offered as a way to increase the School's capacity to respond to this urgent public health crisis. Research findings are expected to contribute in real time to the emergency response and/or address critical needs raised by this outbreak. Preference will be given to projects that directly address the current, urgent needs of the COVID-19 outbreak but applications will also be accepted for projects that assess the longer-term health impacts of the outbreak.

AWARD AMOUNT AND DURATION

Awards will be made for up to \$100,000 (direct cost) for projects that are designed to be completed in a 12-month project period and an automatic 6-month no-cost extension will be granted, if needed.

ELIGIBILITY

Primary Harvard Chan School faculty whose research operation is based at the Harvard Chan School are eligible to apply. Co-investigators or team members may include individuals with any academic appointment. Applicant teams must include at least two Chan School departments and it is strongly encouraged that proposals involve collaborators from at least one other Harvard School. If you have any questions regarding your eligibility to apply for this award, please contact Heather Conrad at [hconrad@hsph.harvard.edu](mailto:hconrad@hsph.harvard.edu).

PROPOSAL CONTENTS AND PAGE LIMITS

Please submit the following materials in a single PDF document:

1. Face Page (download [here](#))
2. Proposal (2 pages maximum responding to the review criteria outlined below)
3. Current [NIH Biosketch](#)
4. Budget Request: Budget estimates should be submitted on [NIH PHS 398 detailed budget form](#) with major divisions of funds (personnel, equipment, etc.). The full amount of the award must be used for direct costs.
5. Budget Justification

#### Additional Application Guidelines:

- **Preliminary data:** Because the goal of the program is to foster rapid innovation in response to real-world problems, preliminary data will not be required as part of the application process.
- **Subcontracts:** External collaboration is permitted in cases where there is a clear scientific rationale for why the work needs to be done externally. A letter describing the subcontractor's commitment to the work outlined in the proposal and the scope of their contribution should be submitted at the time of application. All other paperwork needed to set up the subcontract can be submitted if and when the project is funded.
- **Indirect costs:** Indirect costs should not be included. The full award should be used to support direct project costs.

#### REVIEW PROCESS AND CRITERIA

Proposals will be reviewed by an ad-hoc committee of faculty with the goal of streamlining the review process to allow for rapid turnaround in response. Reviewers will evaluate applications based on the following review criteria:

- a. **Impact:** Potential scientific and/or clinical impact
- b. **Urgency:** Does the project address a current, urgent need of the COVID-19 outbreak?
- c. **Scientific Basis:** Is there a need for high quality research to address the evidence gaps identified in the proposal?
- d. **Feasibility:** Is it feasible for the PI/s to conduct research in the specific emergency context within a reasonable timeframe?
- e. **Investigator/s:** Does the Investigator/Team have the technical expertise and knowledge to complete the proposed project?

#### ADDITIONAL PROJECT SUPPORT

All awardees will receive additional support from the Office of Research Strategy and Development (ORSD) during the project period. Specifically, ORSD will work with teams to identify and connect with additional resources and collaborators, as needed. There will be periodic check-ins with ORSD staff to identify roadblocks and facilitate solutions.

#### REPORTING

Each awardee is expected to complete a final report within 30 days of project completion. In addition, following the completion of the project, each awardee will be expected to work closely with ORSD to summarize the outcomes of their work and identify potential avenues to further the visibility and impact of the project.

#### ADDITIONAL TERMS OF THE AWARD

- Should the PI leave the Harvard Chan School, the remainder of the award will be forfeited (i.e., may not be transferred to another institution).
- Awarded projects will receive additional development support from ORSD.