

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
THE ROSE HILLS FOUNDATION INNOVATOR GRANT PROGRAM
RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP APPLICATION**



APPLICATION DEADLINE: 12:00 pm., Monday, February 4, 2019

PURPOSE

The Rose Hills Foundation is a legacy of the founders and directors of Rose Hills Memorial Park. The Foundation aims to fund research that has the potential to make a measurable impact to the greatest number of people, and, in particular, that shows demonstrated benefits to the people of Southern California.

The primary purpose of the Rose Hills Fellowship is to provide junior faculty in the fields of science, technology, engineering and math (STEM), with seed funds to launch their scholarly research careers. It does so by providing grants that assist faculty in developing self-sustaining research programs or serve as a stepping stone to external funding agencies for faculty who do not already have significant sponsored research programs. Non-traditional biomedical research, such as psychology or behavioral studies, *are not* eligible to apply; investigators in these fields are directed to apply to the Zumberge Individual Research Award (<http://research.usc.edu/for-investigators/funding/usc/zumberge/>)

The Rose Hills Fellowship is a bi-annual award program that provides up to **\$75,000** in research support, renewable for a second year. Funding provided under this solicitation will be available the beginning of **August, 2019**.

ELIGIBILITY

Assistant Professors: To be eligible, faculty must be of the rank of Assistant Professor (Ph.D. or MD) and have research as a job expectation.

Faculty Rank: Applicants must be permanent, full-time faculty at USC at the start of the award period. Applicants who are not currently permanent faculty, but expect to have a permanent appointment at the start of the award period, should include a brief letter from their department chair or dean indicating the pending appointment. Tenure track and non-tenure track (research) faculty, with a research profile, are eligible. Individuals who are adjunct or visiting faculty *are not* eligible to apply.

OTHER ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

External Funding: Among eligible faculty, potential for future external funding will be an important consideration in making awards, with priority given to awards that make an appreciable difference in faculty research potential. **Applicants must have previously applied for external funding to federal or state agencies** (such as the NSF or NIH) and are required to submit reviewer comments from their previous submission as part of the application process. Applicants who have been previously awarded an NIH R01 grant (or similar) *are not* eligible.

Fields of Research: Research must be conducted in the areas of science, technology, engineering and math (STEM). Biomedical research is allowed, however, non-traditional STEM research, such as psychology or

behavioral research, is *not* eligible. Investigators in these fields are directed to apply to the Zumberge Individual Research Award (<http://research.usc.edu/for-investigators/funding/usc/zumberge/>). The program will not supplement research already being funded under other Provost programs.

TYPES OF ASSISTANCE

- Research materials, small equipment and supplies that are necessary to carry out the proposed research, including computers, software, lab materials, etc.;
- Research expenses related to acquisition of preliminary data, such as the use of core or shared resource facilities;
- Salary support for post-docs, graduate student RAs and other student wages;
- Assistance with publication, including manuscript permission fees, where grants will not cover page and plate charges;
- Salary for applicant (up to one month at 100% effort), plus fringe benefits;
- Travel funds related to the proposal, including conferences and registration, as well as for the conduct of research, to complete research that promises to lead to publications or other research product.

GRANT CONDITIONS

- The Rose Hills Research Fellowship *is not* intended to supplement currently funded efforts or to provide interim bridge funding.
- Awardees have discretion in the budgeting and re-budgeting of funds to meet their research needs within the general guidelines of the fund and the terms of the proposal; however, funds *may not* be transferred to another project.
- Permanent equipment required for the conduct of a research project, and purchased with Rose Hills Fellowship funds, becomes the property of the University.
- Awards will include fringe benefits, but awards *are not* assessed Facilities & Administration Costs (formerly known as Indirect Costs).
- Awards *are not* transferable to other institutions or researchers. Recipients must be faculty of USC during the award period.
- Awards *do not* fund student tuition and other student fees (such as health insurance);
- Awards *do not* pay for consultants.
- All USC rules, with respect to conflict of interest, human subject research, animal research, etc., apply to projects funded under this program. Funding *will not* be provided until all pertinent reviews are complete.

RESEARCH PROPOSAL EVALUATIONS

Research proposals submitted to the Rose Hills Fellowship are evaluated by interdisciplinary faculty panels. Typically, the reviewers will be USC faculty members, but when the necessary expertise does not reside on campus, external reviewers may be used. The panels advise the Vice President of Research on which proposals merit funding and at what dollar amount. Priority will be given to innovative and cutting edge research.

In reviewing research grant requests, the faculty panel will consider:

- a) The significance of the proposed scientific research;
- b) The originality of the proposed scientific research;
- c) Evidence that the project can be completed within the proposed timeline;
- d) The impact of funding on investigator's ability to initiate scholarly research;

- e) The likelihood that the project will lead to external funding;
- f) The likelihood that the project will lead to a sustained program of scholarly research (whether externally funded or not);
- g) Appropriateness of budget for proposed research.
- h) The potential to make a measurable impact to the greatest number of people and, in particular, that shows demonstrated benefits to the people of Southern California.

NOTIFICATION AND TERM OF AWARD

In the event of a favorable panel recommendation, and approval by the Vice President of Research, faculty members will be notified of the amount and conditions of the award by the beginning of **June, 2019**. Copies of the notification of the award will be sent to school deans.

Funds will not be available for expenditure before the fiscal year beginning **August, 2019**, and will expire as of **September, 2020**. Funds that are not expended at the end of a fiscal year will be returned to the Office of the Provost. No-cost extensions *may* be granted, under exceptional circumstances and at the discretion of the Office of Research, and must be requested in writing, justifying the need for the extension.

If review committee approval (e.g., IRB) is required for the applicant's project, approval must be received *prior to funding*.

REPORTING AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF SUPPORT

Awardees are required to submit, by **April, 2020**, a brief interim progress report (no more than 2 – 3 pages), which shall describe:

- a) key findings to date;
- b) how the research is self-sustaining;
- c) significant accomplishments achieved or pending (i.e., publications, application for patents, etc.);
- d) external funding support applied to or received;
- e) expenditures (the major budgetary categories for which funds were used);
- f) proposed research activities and budget for the second year.

Recipients are expected to apply for external peer-reviewed funding and will be asked to share panel reviews within their progress report (if available). Reports will be reviewed to assess whether a second year of funding is merited. Portions of the report may also be reprinted to build support for the Rose Hills Fellowship among the university community and to make decisions about how best to use the fund to promote productivity in the future.

Any publication or creative endeavor arising from work supported by the fund should acknowledge the **Rose Hills Foundation Innovator Grant Program** and the **USC Provost's Office**. The Office of Research should also be informed of any grant submissions/awards for which Fellowship funds were used.

FURTHER INFORMATION AND PROGRAM CONTACT INFORMATION

Questions about the Rose Hills Innovator Grant Program or the application submission process can be directed to Melody Pham at Vprsch@usc.edu or 213-821-8163.

For submission instructions, see Proposal Guidelines.

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GUIDELINES

PROPOSAL GUIDELINES

Before preparing a proposal, applicants should read closely the program description, including the sections on eligibility and evaluation criteria.

Proposals must be submitted using the Office of Research online application system (see page 6).

Format: Proposal documents should be written using a standard font (e.g., Arial or Times New Roman), **12 point, single-spaced, with one inch margins.** Documents should be uploaded as PDFs. Apart from their use in formulas, preferably do not use “symbols” text format (use “alpha” instead of “α”).

Cover page information (*to be filled out on-line*)

- a) Proposal title;
- b) Keywords
- c) Principal Investigator contact information;
- d) Budget summary: fill in appropriate fields on the online budget form as completely as possible

Sections to be uploaded: Materials for each item below should be uploaded as a **single PDF**. It is requested that applicants follow instructions carefully and **do not** submit additional materials not requested by this RFP. Information that is uploaded beyond what is requested **will not** be included in the proposal package provided to reviewers.

- a) **Abstract:** (*not to exceed 20 lines of text*)
The project abstract is meant to serve as a succinct and accurate description of the proposed work when separated from the application.
- b) **Project Narrative:** (*not to exceed five pages*, no other ancillary text, appendices, etc., will be accepted; page limits are inclusive of figures and tables and must include the following components (**use headers below**):
 - i. **Research Question or Project Objective**
Specify your research question(s), hypotheses, or aims of your project. Describe the project’s design and placement in the literature of the field. Proposals should be addressed to a broad audience of reviewers who may not be from the same discipline. It should be clearly explained why the questions, hypotheses or aims of your project are significant and original, and the ways in which your project will provide novel and important insights.

- b) *Research Methods*
Describe the research activities to be carried out under the Rose Hills award. State your research design and explain how it will allow you to address the questions and hypotheses of interest. Explain what obstacles you might encounter and how you might overcome these.
- c) *Expected Results and Impact on Long-Term Research Program*
Describe the expected outcomes and deliverables from your research. Importantly, explain how the project and its findings are part of, or will help lead to, a *sustained research program* that will generate scholarship *beyond the period of the award*.
- d) *Opportunities for Attracting External Funding*
Describe how scholarship supported by a research grant can help to secure subsequent external funding, and include references to specific funding agencies, foundations, or programs. Describe what research steps or outcomes need to be achieved in order to be competitive for these opportunities.
- e) *Timeline*
A clear timeline with *specific milestones* for the completion of the work should be included in the application. *Clear deliverables must be identified*.
- c) **References:** (not to exceed **one page**)
- d) **Budget Justification:** (not to exceed **one page**) Clarify the role of individuals for whom salary support is requested. Justify any request for salary support in terms of the objectives of the project. Explain how travel funds will be used to conduct the research. List major equipment and materials purchases, and describe how they are necessary to carry out the proposed research. No specific format is required so long as the budget and explanation contain the relevant information.
- e) **Current Funding:** (not to exceed **two pages**) **List all other sources of internal and external support awarded during the past three years, or currently pending, both as PI or co-PI as well as start-up funding.** For each, give the title, period, amount, sponsor, and describe the relationship of each to the current proposal. Statements of sources of support will be verified by the Office of Research. Failure to list sources will be a cause for rejection. In cases in which existing funding appears to be similar to the proposed project, take special care to explain the differences.
- f) **Reviewer Comments of Previous Grant Submission** (no page limit)
Applicants are required to provide a copy of the reviewer comments of your most recent grant submission (to a major external funding agency, such as the NIH, NSF, DOE, etc.). Failure to provide grant reviewer information will be a cause for rejection of the application.
- g) **Curriculum vitae:** (not to exceed **four pages**)
Provide a brief CV or biosketch.

PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

Submit your application proposal utilizing the new Office of Research application submission and reporting portal.

Go to <https://app.wizehive.com/webform/USCgrants> to log in (or create an account for yourself), using your USC email address.

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By submitting the online application, applicants indicate their agreement to comply with the terms and conditions of the Rose Hills Innovator Grant program as well as all other applicable USC policies.

If review committee approval is required for the applicant's project (e.g. IRB), approval must be received prior to funding.

FURTHER INFORMATION AND PROGRAM CONTACT

For additional information or inquiries about the Rose Hills Innovator Grant program or the application submission process, please contact: Melody Pham at Vprsch@usc.edu or 213-821-8163.