REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
Provost New Directions for Research and Scholarship Award

$250,000 per Awarded Team

APPLICATION DEADLINE: 5 pm, Monday, March 2, 2020

PURPOSE
The Provost New Directions for Research and Scholarship Award (PNDRSA) supports innovative interdisciplinary research on topics that have not previously received grant funding at USC or elsewhere. The program is highly competitive. The program seeks proposals that are exceptionally novel and demonstrate potential to launch significant directions of scholarship and research that have not previously been explored. To achieve these aims, the PNDRSA provides up to $250,000 in support per award.

PNDRSA is inviting applications from faculty across the entire university, in all schools, centers and institutes. Applicants must show how their team has the qualifications, creativity and ability to make USC a national and international leader in a significant area of study that has not yet been established in academia.

ELIGIBILITY
Applicants must be permanent, full-time faculty at USC at the start of the award period. Applicants must have research as a component of their faculty profile at USC, with sufficient time devoted to research and scholarship to achieve success in the proposed project. 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 faculty, with a research profile, are eligible. Individuals who are non-research adjunct or who are visiting faculty are not eligible to apply.

Applications are invited from all academic disciplines.

TYPES OF ASSISTANCE
- Materials, small equipment and supplies that are necessary to carry out the proposed research or scholarly work, including computers, software, lab materials, etc.;
- Specialized equipment required to achieve project goals is permitted, and becomes university property;
- 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 PI and co-PI (up to one month at 100% effort each), plus fringe benefits, for up to three faculty. Total faculty salary + benefits may not exceed one-third of the total award.
• Travel funds related to the proposal, including conferences and registration.

GRANT CONDITIONS

• PNDRSA does not supplement currently funded efforts or provide interim bridge funding.
• Awardees have discretion in the budgeting and re-budgeting of funds to meet their research and scholarship needs within the general guidelines of the fund and the terms of the proposal; however, funds may not be transferred to another project;
• Awards will include fringe benefits, but awards are not assessed Facilities & Administration Costs (also known as Indirect Costs);
• Awards are not transferable to other institutions or researchers. Recipients must be faculty of USC during the entire 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.

PROPOSAL EVALUATIONS

Proposals 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 Provost and Vice President of Research on which proposals merit funding and at what dollar amount.

In reviewing grant requests, the faculty panel will consider:

a) The novelty and innovation of the proposed work;
b) Potential to establish USC as a leader in significant new areas of scholarship and research;
c) Methodological rigor;
d) Interdisciplinarity, spanning multiple schools;
e) Qualifications of the team;
f) Likelihood that the work plan will be achieved;
g) Appropriateness of the proposed budget;
h) The potential to benefit and engage diverse populations.

NOTIFICATION AND TERM OF AWARD

Award amount: $125,000 per year, up to $250,000
Estimated Number of Awards: Up to three awards.
In the event of a favorable panel recommendation, and approval by the Provost and Vice President of Research, faculty members will be notified of the amount and conditions of the award by June, 2020. Copies of the notification of the award will be sent to school deans.

Funds will not be available for expenditure before **August 16, 2020**, and will expire as of **August 15, 2022**. Funds that are not expended at the end of an award period 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 **July 1, 2021**, a progress report (no more than 2 – 3 pages). Progress reports will be reviewed to assess whether a second year of funding is merited and shall describe:

a) key findings to date;
b) significant accomplishments achieved or pending (i.e., publications, application for patents, etc.);
c) expenditures (the major budgetary categories for which funds were used);
d) planned future directions.

Any publication or creative endeavor arising from work supported by the fund should acknowledge the **USC Provost New Directions for Research and Scholarship Fund**. The Office of Research should also be informed of any grant submissions/awards for which PNDRSA funds were used.

**FURTHER INFORMATION AND PROGRAM CONTACT INFORMATION**

Questions about the PNDRSA 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.
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
THE PROVOST NEW DIRECTIONS FOR RESEARCH APPLICATION

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), 11 point, single-spaced, with one inch margins.

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

a) Proposal title;

b) Principal Investigator and co-PI(s) contact information;

c) Budget summary: fill in appropriate fields on the online budget form as completely as possible.

d) Innovation: (not to exceed 100 words) Summarize the innovation of the proposed research or scholarship and how it will establish USC as a national or international leader in the proposed field.

Sections to be uploaded: Applicants must follow instructions carefully. 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 six 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. Novel Concept
Describe the original idea that is the centerpiece for the proposal and why it is important for establishing a new direction for research. Explain the significance of the concept and the potential for growing new pathways of research as a consequence of USC’s investment. Explain the “state of the field” and who are the key players. Explain why
this is an ideal time for academia to increase research and scholarship in this area. Describe why the proposed concept has not been previously explored, and why this is an opportune time to establish the new direction.

ii. **Research Approach**
Describe the research and scholarly activities to be carried out under the award. Explain how you will address the questions and hypotheses of interest. Explain what obstacles you might encounter and how you might overcome these obstacles.

iii. **Expected Results and Impact on Future Research**
Describe the expected outcomes from the research funded under the award. Importantly, explain how the project and its findings will help lead to new pathways of research.

iv. **Opportunities for Attracting External Funding**
Describe how scholarship supported by a research grant can help to secure subsequent external funding at USC. Describe the funding agencies, foundations, or programs that may be interested in the new topic, and how you will reach out to these sponsors.

v. **Timeline & Milestones**
A clear timeline with milestones for the completion of the project should be included in the application. Identify clear outcomes and products.

c) **References:** (not to exceed one page)
d) **Response to Reviewer Comments** (not to exceed one page)

e) **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.

f) **Curriculum vitae:** (not to exceed five pages per PI and co-PI)
Provide a brief CV or biosketch for each PI and co-PI.

**PROPOSAL SUBMISSION**
Submit your application utilizing the Office of Research application submission and reporting portal.

Go to [https://app.wizehive.com/webform/USCgrants](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 Provost New Directions for Research 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 program or the application submission process, please contact: Melody Pham at VprsCh@usc.edu or 213-821-8163 or Silvia da Costa at sdacostsa@usc.edu.