



Department of
Higher Education

Mike DeWine, Governor
Randy Gardner, Chancellor

Research Incentive – Spinal Cord – Request for Proposal

Timelines

Request for Proposals Released	February 3, 2020
Proposals Submission Window	February 3 - March 16, 2020
Proposal Review begins	March 16, 2020
Notification of Awarded Proposals	May 11, 2020

Submissions

All proposals should be submitted in the following manner: One electronic PDF file sent to csee@higher.ed.ohio.gov with copy to mdunn@higher.ed.ohio.gov.

Research Incentive – Spinal Cord – Request for Proposal

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**Third Frontier Research Incentives
Request for Proposals
Spinal Cord Research**

I. Program Overview

Section 381.520 (**Research Incentive Third Frontier**) of Amended House Bill Number 166 of the 133rd Ohio General Assembly authorizes the Chancellor of the Ohio Department of Higher Education (ODHE) to use appropriated funds under this section to advance collaborative research at institutions of higher education and support programs and initiatives specifically identified in this section. One of the research areas identified in this section eligible for funding is research related to spinal cord injury. The statute grants the Chancellor discretion to award up to \$1.5 million per fiscal year (up to 3 million over two years) to support research in this area.

II. About Third Frontier Funding

Use of funds appropriated through the Ohio Third Frontier Initiatives are governed by the Ohio Constitution. Specifically, funds appropriated via section 321.250 are governed by Article VIII.02p (**Issuance of bonds for economic and educational purposes and local government projects**). Section 2p (A) (2) of this article authorizes bonds to be issued for “research and development purposes”. **Pursuant to this section, research and development funded under this article must be in support of Ohio industry, commerce, and business.** Projects or initiatives supported pursuant to this article include:

- A. General research meeting the intent of this section
- B. Product innovation
- C. Development and commercialization through efforts by and collaboration among:
 - 1. Ohio business and industry
 - 2. State and local public entities and agencies
 - 3. Public and private education institutions, or research organizations and institutions

Applicants will be required to demonstrate how their proposed project meets the intent of Article VIII.02p of the Ohio Constitution.

III. General Principles Spinal Cord Research

Ohio is home to approximately 26,000 individuals living with paralysis as a result of a Spinal Cord Injury (SCI). According to the National SCI Statistical Center 66% of those individuals remain unemployed with each expected to manage lifetime healthcare costs of \$1-3M. This represents a significant cost to the state and also imposes a severe burden on the quality of life for those living with this impairment.

While there is research in pursuit of improved treatments to ameliorate the effects of paralysis, the field is significantly underfunded relative to similarly sized patient populations or disease with similar lifetime healthcare costs. While the scientific disciplines of neuroscience and biomedical engineering are making progress toward the development of new treatments, there is a lack of systematic and especially localized effort to guide these advances representative of the various stakeholders.

The research funded through this process is specifically targeted to advance and accelerate the development of innovative treatments, product innovation and rehabilitative efforts that lead to the functional improvement of people living with spinal cord injuries. Research topics may include, but are not limited to, discovery science, pharmaceutical development, medical device design and implementation, and the development of novel rehabilitative approaches and techniques.

IV. Eligible Applicants

- A.** State universities as defined in section 3345.011 of the Revised Code
- B.** A community college established under Chapter 3354 of the Revised Code
- C.** A state community college established under Chapter 3358 of the Revised Code
- D.** A non-profit private institution of higher education
- E.** Non-profit organizations whose primary missions is to engage in research working in collaboration with eligible institutions of higher education
- F.** Economic Development organizations working in collaborations with eligible institutions of higher education
- G.** Ohio industry and business organizations working in a public/private partnership with an eligible Ohio institution of higher education
- H.** State agencies working in collaborations with Ohio institutions of higher education

Lead applicants must demonstrate the skills, knowledge, and resources necessary to carry out the proposed research. The application must identify the principal investigator that will lead the research. Postdoctoral fellows and residents will not be considered as lead principal investigators. Post-doctorates, residents, or other individuals are eligible to be listed as key personnel or consultants.

Eligible applicants are encouraged to form collaborative partnerships in order to leverage the collective capabilities of participating entities and increase the statewide impact of project awards.

V. Anticipated Awards

Applicants may request funding across the following tiers:

A. Pilot Grant

Max Request: \$125,000.

Project Time: 2 years + potential for no cost extension.

Project Details: Pilot grants are meant to support research of innovative ideas, often at their early stages of development with little or no preliminary data. It is expected that data supported by pilot grants will be used in support of larger grant proposals to federal programs (e.g., NIH) or nonprofit organizations.

B. Standard Research Grant

Max Request: \$250,000.

Project Time: 2 years + potential-year no cost extensions

Project Details: Standard research grants will support innovative research projects that are more fully-developed but may not be quite ready for a competitive NIH proposal. Compelling preliminary data are required

C. Clinical/Translational Research Grant

Max request: \$500,000.

Project Time: 2 years + potential for no cost extensions.

Project Details: Projects must have concurrent application or funding from federal or industry sources. Preliminary data must be published or in press in a scientific journal or submitted separately as an appendix.

VI. Award Recommendations

The Chancellor has identified an advisory committee who will make recommendations on which proposals the Chancellor should consider for funding. The advisory committee may require applicants to appear before the committee to provide an overview and answer other questions regarding their proposal. After considering the recommendations of the advisory committee, the Chancellor shall make the final determination on which proposals, if any, shall receive an award. The Chancellor's decision regarding awards is final. Funds will be available to awardees after execution of a Memorandum of Understanding with ODHE.

VII. Request for Proposal Submission Process, and Notification Timeline

The RFP will be released on the schedule below. The schedule is subject to revision by ODHE and any changes will be will be posted on <https://www.ohiohighered.org/grants-rfps>.

Request for Proposals Released	February 3, 2020
Proposals Submission Window	February 3 - March 16, 2020
Proposal Review begins	March 16, 2020
Notification of Awarded Proposals	May 11, 2020

All proposals should be submitted in the following manner:

- A.** One electronic PDF file sent to csee@highered.ohio.gov with copy to mdunn@highered.ohio.gov.

Applicants are responsible for timely submissions of proposals. Proposals become property of ODHE and are subject to public record laws of the state. Proposals containing all the required elements will receive careful consideration but cannot be guaranteed funding. Late proposals, or proposals missing any of the required submission criteria listed below will not be considered.

ODHE will provide an opportunity for potential applicants to seek assistance regarding their application through technical assistance. Applicant questions are to be submitted in writing via email to csee@highered.ohio.gov. Responses to questions will be posted online at <https://www.ohiohighered.org/grants-rfps>.

VIII. Proposal Requirements

A. Format

Proposals must be submitted in Arial font, 11 points or larger; there is an exception for tables and images. Please see below for page allocations and directions for each section of the proposal.

1. **Cover Letter (1 page):** Title of project; identify the primary contact plus the fiscal agent by name, title, address, phone number, and email address.
2. **Executive Summary/Project Abstract (1 page maximum):** Include: 1) brief overview of the research to be conducted or the initiative or program to be supported; 2) a synopsis of how the research will be conducted or the plan to support the initiative or program will be executed; 3) a description of the anticipated conclusions of the research or outcomes of the program or initiative; 4) a description of any potential development of new products or innovative advances based upon the research being conducted or program or initiative being advanced; 5) a description of how the research or initiative will support Ohio business, industry, or commerce.

The Program Abstract MUST be written in lay-persons terms and be accessible to a reviewer with little-to-no existing science knowledge.

3. **Project Narrative (10 pages maximum Arial 11 point font):** The narrative must address the proposal criteria in order.
4. **Budget Narrative & Budget Table (2 pages maximum):** The budget narrative will provide background related to the costs of the project and its deployment.
 - a. The budget narrative should include:
 - i. One to two paragraph descriptions of the activities and expenses included in each budget line.
 - ii. Prioritization of activities in order of most critical to project completion or success.
 - iii. Explanation of how the program's costs were calculated.
 - iv. Description of any matching funds that will be leveraged clearly labeled.
 - v. Note: indirect costs are capped at a maximum of 8%.

5. **Attachments:** Proof of commitment from all parties responsible for the implementation of the research or project initiative is required: this includes letters of commitment and/or agreements from collaborative partners if applicable.

B. Project narratives are required to address the following criteria:

1. **Project Rationale**

- Describe the research to be undertaken.
- Provide relevant baseline data or other information used to identify the proposed area of research.
- Describe prior research or work performed in the area of focus, conclusions reached, and why additional research or work is being proposed.
- Describe how the research or execution of the program or initiative will be conducted, and how the chosen method will lead to actionable results.
- Describe preliminary assumptions regarding research outcomes or program or initiatives goals (What are you trying to accomplish).
- Attach any exhibits, maps, data tables, or other relevant information.
- Applicants should identify if the proposed project is part of an existing effort or if the proposal is a new project. If the proposals is part of an existing effort, the applicant should describe:
 - i. Previous funding for the existing project.
 - ii. Available funding at the time of the proposal.
 - iii. How funds, if awarded through this process, will advance the current work.
 - iv. How activities described in this proposal are new and distinguishable from activities previously funded.
- **The Program Abstract MUST be written in lay-persons terms and be accessible to a reviewer with little-to-no existing science knowledge.**

2. **Partnerships and Collaborations** - List and describe any collaborations that will be part of the proposed research project. Describe the specific roles and responsibilities of each project collaborator. Collaborations must be documented in a letter of commitment from each anticipated collaborator.

3. **Support of Ohio Industry** - Describe how the research or initiative will support Ohio industry, business or commerce, specifically describe where applicable

- a. The specific industry potentially impacted by the research.
- b. The size of the potential market impact of the research.
- c. The specific industry problem being addressed.
- d. Any products or technologies being developed.
- e. The potential economic impact of the research.

4. **Sustainability** - Describe how the research or initiative will be sustained beyond the funding period and what potential the research has for long-term and lasting impact. **Note: Applicants should provide evidence of a commitment to project sustainability after the funding period.**

5. **Project Plan** - This section should provide a clear description and timeline for activities to be undertaken.
 - a. Outline the roles and responsibilities of key staff members and provide brief biographies.
 - b. Provide a GANNT chart for the entire project with proposed activities, dependencies, and estimated completion milestone for each activity.

6. **Biographical Sketch** - of Principal Investigator and Senior/Key Personnel including his/her bibliographies (4-page maximum for each individual).

7. **Project Evaluation** - Explain how project success will be measured. The evaluation plan should include both formative and summative measurements where applicable. Project evaluation must include a system to measure, the success of the research, program or initiative and the impact on Ohio business, industry or commerce. Specifically:
 - a. Describe the evaluation design.
 - b. Describe the ongoing evaluation process, including collecting data, analyzing data, responding to data.
 - c. Provide a timeline for the evaluation process, including formative and summative evaluations complementing the project GANTT chart.

IX. Reporting Requirements

The Ohio Department of Higher Education will monitor each project for which an award is granted to ensure that there is fiscal accountability and operating progress, and that the desired outcomes are achieved. Regular reports will be required from all awardees. All award expenditures must be properly documented following Ohio Revised Code and Administrative rules.

X. Legal Notices

The applicant understands that if its application is accepted by the State, the applicant shall enter into an agreement with the State governing the use of the awarded funds. The applicant agrees to comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations in the conduct of the work hereunder.

The State reserves the right to fund any application in full or in part, to request additional information to assist in the review process, to require new applications from interested parties, to reject any or all applications responding to this announcement, or to reissue the announcement if it is determined that it is in the best interest of the State of Ohio. Issuing this

announcement does not bind the State to making any awards. The State reserves the right to adjust the dates for this announcement for whatever reasons are deemed appropriate. The State reserves the right to waive any non-substantive infractions made by an applicant, provided that the applicant cures such infraction upon request.

All costs incurred in preparation of an application shall be borne by the applicant. Application preparation costs are not recoverable under an award. The State of Ohio shall not contribute in any way to recovering the costs of application preparation.

The funding decisions are final. Applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application(s) at the conclusion of the review process.

The applicant understands that the information provided herein is intended solely to assist the applicant in submittal preparation. To the best of the State's knowledge, the information provided is accurate. However, the State does not warrant such accuracy, and any errors or omissions subsequently determined will not be construed as a basis for invalidating this solicitation. Interested parties bear the sole responsibility of obtaining the necessary information to submit a qualifying application. The State retains the right to modify or withdraw this solicitation at any time. By submitting an application, applicants expressly agree to these terms.

XI. Trade Secrets

All lead applicants are strongly discouraged from including in a proposal any information that the lead applicant considers to be a "trade secret," as that term is defined in Section 1333.61(D) of the Ohio Revised Code. All information submitted in response to this RFP is public information unless a statutory exception exists that exempts it from public release under the Ohio Public Records Act in Section 149.43 of the Ohio Revised Code.

If any information in the proposal is to be treated as a trade secret, the proposal must:

- A.** Identify each and every occurrence of the information within the proposal with an asterisk before and after each line containing trade secret information, and underline the trade secret information itself;
- B.** Identify that the proposal contains trade secret information in the cover letter; and
- C.** Include a summary page immediately after the cover letter that lists each page in the proposal that includes trade secret information and the number of occurrences of trade secret information on that page.
- D.** To determine what qualifies as trade secret information, refer to the definition of "trade secret" in the Ohio Revised Code at 1333.61(D), which is reproduced below for reference:
 1. "Trade Secret" means information, including the whole or any portion or phase of any scientific or technical information, design, process, procedure, formula,

pattern, compilation, program, device, method, technique or improvement, or any business information or plans, financial information, or listing of names, addresses, or telephone numbers that satisfies both of the following:

- a. It derives independent economic value, actual or potential, from not being generally known to, and not being readily ascertainable by proper means by, other persons who can obtain economic value from its disclosure or use.
- b. It is the subject of efforts that are reasonable under the circumstances to maintain its secrecy.
 - i. The Ohio Department of Higher Education requires nondisclosure agreements from all non-ODHE persons who may have access to proposals containing trade secret information, including evaluators.
 - ii. If the applicant claims that a record is not subject to disclosure under the Ohio Public Records law based on trade secret, it will bear costs of defending this claim.

XII. Exhibits

A. Proposal Cover Letter –Template Example

Name of Lead Institution (only one)	
Project Start Date	
Lead Applicant	Name and Address of Postsecondary Institution
Chief Contact Individual must be authorized to sign agency grant contract and legally responsible as agency representative.	Name/Title of legal representative Address, Telephone, and E-Mail
Project Director(s) - Key Personnel(s)	Name/Title, Address, Telephone, and E-Mail
Amount of state money requested	\$
Leveraged funds	\$
Brief project description	

XIII. Legal Applicant

Name: _____
Address: _____
City: _____ Zip: _____
Phone: _____ E-Mail: _____
CEO Name: _____

A. Certification by Authorized Official

To the best of my knowledge and belief, data contained in this application are true and correct.
The document has been duly authorized to comply with the required assurances.

Signature of Authorized Official: _____
Typed Name and Title: _____
Date: _____

B. Administering Entity

Address: _____
City: _____ Zip: _____ Phone: _____
Contact Person: _____
Title: _____ E-Mail: _____

C. Collaborating Partners (please submit separate information for each partner)

Company Name: _____
Address: _____
City: _____ Zip: _____ Phone: _____
Contact Person: _____
Title: _____ E-Mail: _____

D. Service Provider and Program Partners (please submit separate information for each partner)

Name: _____
Address: _____
City: _____ Zip: _____
Phone: _____
E-Mail: _____
President/CEO/Director Name: _____

Attachment A: SECTION 381.520. RESEARCH INCENTIVE THIRD FRONTIER

The foregoing appropriation items 235634, Research Incentive Third Frontier, and 235639, Research Incentive Third Frontier-Tax, shall be used by the Chancellor of Higher Education to advance collaborative research at institutions of higher education. Of the foregoing appropriation items 235634, Research Incentive Third Frontier, and 235639, Research Incentive Third Frontier - Tax, up to \$2,000,000 in each fiscal year may be allocated toward research regarding the improvement of water quality, up to \$1,500,000 in each fiscal year may be allocated for spinal cord research, up to \$1,000,000 in each fiscal year may be allocated toward research regarding the reduction of infant mortality, up to \$1,000,000 in each fiscal year may be allocated toward research regarding opiate addiction issues in Ohio, up to \$750,000 in each fiscal year may be allocated toward research regarding cyber security initiatives, up to \$500,000 in each fiscal year may be allocated to the Ohio Manufacturing and Innovation Center, up to \$300,000 in each fiscal year may be allocated toward the I-Corps@Ohio program, and up to \$200,000 in each fiscal year may be allocated toward the Ohio Innovation Exchange program.