

# HSC Bridge Funding Program (BFP)

## Overview

The HSC Bridge Funding Program (BFP) provides up to 12 months of support for full-time faculty members to maintain their research activities during a lapse in funding and resubmit more competitive grant applications for successful funding. Typically, applicants have been unsuccessful in a recent attempt to renew or replace a major federal grant (e.g., R01) but are likely to be funded upon resubmission of a revised application, based on the overall impact score, and summary statement/critiques of the previously unsuccessful application.

Applications are evaluated by a review committee that will be formed for each application. Applicants must demonstrate that their research program is jeopardized by the lack of extramural funding, that they have one or more rounds of unfunded extramural applications, and that they will contribute a significant portion of their available discretionary or start-up funds to maintain their lab. Funds may be used to support the investigator's existing efforts (e.g., lab costs, staff, equipment) or conducting new efforts (e.g., gathering pilot data), however preference will be given to activities that enhance the likelihood of future funding by addressing specific comments from the critiques of a previous external review. Intellectual property arising from funded project activities will be governed by the policies of the HSC.

## Eligibility

- Applicants must be full-time faculty members. Priority will be given to applicants that meet the following criteria:
  - Faculty who have lost all extramural funding in their research portfolio and anticipate a deleterious effect (e.g. loss of critical research personnel or animals).
  - Recent grant applications (last two years) that received promising scores (close to the funding range) but did not receive funding; the applicant should explain how the reviewers' critiques will be satisfactorily addressed.

NOTE: Bridge Funding applications may be submitted up to six months prior to the expected funding loss. Established investigators must have independent research programs with continuous, peer-reviewed, extramural funding during the previous three-year period. Applicants must include the summary statement from at least one recent well-scored but unfunded application.

- Faculty who have received Bridge Funding Program funds within the past three fiscal years are not eligible to apply.
- Applicants should consult with their Associate Dean of Research and/or Chair before applying to the Bridge grant.
- Request for funds must be made before submitting a revised application and response to the initial external review.
- The number of proposals funded will depend on available funds and the number of meritorious, qualified applications received. Awards will be for **up to \$75,000** for up to one year. Unspent funds, or funds that have not yet been used when external funding is received, must be returned to REAP for redistribution. Faculty are expected to report any external funding received during the year of BFP support.

Because time is of the essence for the program's success, Bridge Funding Program applications may be submitted at any time of year, and will be reviewed on a "first-come, first-served" basis.

## Funding:

The Bridge Funding award may be used to support:

- Supplies/project expenses;
  - Animal care or core facility services;
  - Participant costs; or
  - Salaries/benefits for non-faculty research personnel
- BFP award funds may **NOT** be used to support:
    - Faculty salaries;
    - Travel;
    - Equipment;
    - Budget overdrafts;
    - Administrative costs (i.e., school and departmental surcharges); and
    - Subawards

## Review Criteria

The applicant must have an independent research program and adequate laboratory space, if research is lab-based. Review will use the **NIH scoring criteria** and consider the following additional criteria:

1. The applicant has demonstrated conscientious efforts to establish and maintain extramural funding and to diversify funding streams.
2. Support of the Department/School/Administrative Unit(s), including documentation of the financial commitment to the applicant and a statement that the Unit(s) will provide 15% of the BFP award. Any existing direct funds and F&A funds retained by the PI should be committed to the Bridge Funding project and described in the *Budget and Justification*. (Note: When there are remaining or unspent balances, any matching fund from the supporting unit will proportionally be returned.)
3. Quality of the applicant's research portfolio and research productivity.
4. Recent grant applications (last two years) that received favorable scores (close to the funding range); the "pay-line" for the programs should be included (if available); the applicant should explain how the reviewers' critiques will be addressed.
5. Budget and Justification: will the funds be used according to program guidelines and will they support sufficient research to address the concerns from the previous extramural review.

## Review Process

- Chair's and/or Dean's assessment of quality and trajectory of research plan and program,
- Applications will then be submitted to InfoReady (managed by REAP) two weeks prior to a scheduled RAC meeting in order for a regulatory and financial compliance review,
- Applications will then be sent to RAC for scientific and feasibility review:
  - Ad hoc review panel (three or four members) selected by RAC which can also involve non-RAC ad hoc reviewers
  - Ad hoc review panel makes a recommendation to RAC
  - RAC will make a funding recommendation to the Executive Vice President for Research and Innovation
- If the award of funding is approved, awards will be processed/managed by REAP.

## SMART Goals

Funds will be made available in three tranches based on progress made according to agreed-upon SMART goal milestones, or earlier if requested by an investigator who has met his/her milestones. SMART goals will be used as project progress markers at days 120, 240 and 360. Goals must be Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time-bound.

SMART goals are intended to measure project progress, not outcomes. For the Bridge Funding Program, awardees will be expected to participate in grant writing workshops specifically for revising and resubmitting grants that will be coordinated by REAP and relevant College/School personnel. The SMART goals for this program will include an estimated date for submission of the revised application (which may be after the funding period) and participation in professional development activities and grant writing workshops to facilitate the resubmission. REAP will meet with the PI at 120, 240, and 360 days to determine progress on the SMART goals. If there are any scientific issues reported at any of these meetings, a member of RAC and/or appropriate Associate Dean for Research (or a faculty member designated by the relevant College or School Dean) will meet with the PI to modify the SMART goals. After Day 360, REAP will audit all expenditures, and any unobligated funds will be recovered.

Action	Amount	Upon
Tranche 1	50% of approved budget	Day 0 (launch meeting)
Tranche 2	25% of approved budget	Day 120 <u>and</u> attaining SMART goal 1
Tranche 3	25% of approved budget	Day 240 <u>and</u> attaining SMART goal 2

## Application Materials

- **BFP Cover Page**
- **Detailed Budget** and **Budget Justification** for the Bridge Period (use BFP form)
- **NIH Biosketches**
- **Summary Statement** of recent grant submissions and their pay-lines (if known) for relevant programs
- **Specific Aims** of the research during the Bridge Funding period (one-page limit)
- **Research Plan:** Two-page description of the research that will be conducted during the Bridge Funding period
- **Plans for Obtaining Extramural Support:** Plans to obtain renewal support for this sponsored program. Include the Specific Aims section that is planned for the extramural grant application and SMART goals (total two-page limit).
- **Other Support:** A list of all funds available in existing research accounts, start-up funds or institutional research funds committed to the applicant. The availability of other sources of support for the applicant's program will be considered in the decision. A list of pending alternative grant applications should be included.
- **Letter of Support from the Administrative Support Unit**

*Note:* Any inquiry about BFP should be addressed to REAP.

*Faculty under a department or college Performance Enhancement or Improvement Plan are not eligible for BFP funding.*