



The Chancellor's Call to Action Research Program

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS 2024–2025

Overview

The Chancellor's Call to Action Research Program provides support for academic research and the expansion of community-based knowledge that advances the understanding of systemic bias and structural disparities – some of the greatest challenges facing our society. **The goal of the program is to enhance exceptional cross-disciplinary research strengths and expand collaborations to build cultures of research and scholarship that address system bias and social injustice.** We seek high quality, high integrity scholarship and creative activity to fundamentally address the roots of these issues with generative ideas, imaginative strategies, and open, unexpected collaborations.

The successful project will approach this research with clarity about the complexities, fissures, barriers, and assumptions that perpetuate systemic biases and social injustice, as well as present a strong vision for how we might become a more just and equitable university, state, and nation where all can live in their full humanity. We welcome projects that have the potential to make a deeper connection with students and reciprocal partnerships with communities, in addition to those rooted in Illinois' research strengths. Of foremost importance are accountability, sustainability, and impact. A plan for how the work can be continued, improved, and shared beyond the funding year is a critical component of the application. Please see below for the key evaluation criteria.

Focus Areas

For 2024, the research program will focus on areas that span domestic, international, and transnational spaces.

Projects may include but are not limited to:

- Systemic interventions to improve educational outcomes and increase college readiness.
- Research that tackles the complex drivers of health disparities.
- The interrogation of systems of disparity, discrimination, and disenfranchisement.
- Transnational justice (i.e., achieving justice in issues that bridge local, national, and global communities).
- Systemic bias as it affects LGBTQIA+ people and communities.

This year we are especially interested in projects that support the vision of the university's **Campus/Community Compact to Accelerate Social Justice** and that partner with community organizations to solve and/or understand historical and current social injustices as they intersect with race.

Proposals may focus on a single research area or apply an intersectional approach via examining the complex configurations of social determinants and how those social constructs interact to yield outcomes.

Funding Period

The funding period for the third year of the research program is July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025.

If funds are available, a request for a second year of funding to support the project's continuation may be an option. This second year of funding is for those projects that are transformational in that they blur disciplinary boundaries, challenge conventional wisdom and position Illinois to be at the frontier. To request funding for a second year, the PI must partner with a university campus **Center or Institute** signified by a Letter of Support from the director affirming support for the project and the specific support (staff, equipment, other resources). The additional funding amount would require that a portion of the total be matched by the center or institute.

Funding Tracks

The solicitation includes three funding tracks, each with a maximum funding threshold:

- **Community-Based Innovation — up to \$100,000**
- **Systemic Institutional Change — up to \$100,000**
- **Societal Impact — up to \$100,000**

Community-Based Innovation

This category is for an applicant individual or team from Champaign County or the campus community, **with an innovative idea that could contribute to the creation of a more robust society via partnerships or collaborations that leverage the strengths of Illinois' enterprise.** An applicant may or may not have the expertise to transform the idea into an impactful proposal. This funding track will provide the resources for an applicant to collaborate with an expert to develop a research plan of action that explores the current situation, why it currently exists, and how to change it. To submit a qualifying application, an applicant not holding an

appointment at Illinois **must partner with an individual with an appointment. Community collaborators may be from non-profit organizations, public agencies, school districts, etc. but cannot serve as PIs or Co-PIs. Instead, they may be listed as Co-Project Leader and the Illinois individual will serve as the PI. The Principal Investigator must submit the proposal application.**

The goal of the research challenge would be to positively impact the human experience by redressing systemic bias and social injustice to accelerate social justice and well-being in a diverse and changing world. Applicants funded through this solicitation may use the funding to organize workshops, conferences, meetings, and/or other reasonable expenses to gather information and other key resources to help crystallize the research proposal.

The funding would support the development and exploration of the innovative idea's potential impact.
Proposals may be funded up to \$100,000.

Systemic Institutional Change

This category is for an individual or team from Illinois to propose **an innovative systemic change strategy that would better position faculty and staff to address the persistent challenges facing society.**

This track's goal is to increase synergies across campus and promote equity. This would foster increased connections among scholars to come together in new and productive ways. The outcome would be improved conditions for marginalized groups, including international student populations.

The funding would support the development, implementation, and evaluation of the change strategy's impact.

Proposals may be funded up to \$100,000.

Societal Impact

This category is for an individual or team to propose **an innovative solution that would address embedded biases as they affect LGBTQIA+ people and communities or would help to achieve transnational justice external to the university.**

The goal for this track is to broaden the cohort of investigators, focusing its research on systemic inequities. These may include educational and achievement equity gaps, well-being, and differential health outcomes, or improving societal identities and social injustice in local, national, and international contexts.

The funding would support the development, implementation, and evaluation of the proposed solution's impact.

Proposals may be funded up to \$100,000.

Eligibility

Principal Investigators (PIs) and Co-PIs must hold appointments at the University of Illinois at the Urbana-Champaign campus. The PI may be either a tenure-stream or specialized faculty (instructors and lecturers), or an Academic Professional with appointments (0 to 100%) in any unit. The PI is responsible for the design, scientific and technical conduct, administrative oversight, fiscal accountability, regulatory oversight, and reporting for a research, instructional, or public services project. A PI may submit more than one proposal, but it must be a different proposal submitted to a different funding track. A PI can participate in more than one proposal as a research team member.

University members are encouraged to collaborate with community organizations or PreK-12 educational institutions. Community members are also encouraged to initiate collaborations with university members. Community collaborators may be from non-profit organizations, public agencies, school districts, etc. but cannot serve as PIs or Co-PIs. Instead, they may be listed as Co-Project Leader.

Application Guidelines

The application process is comprised of one phase: Full-Proposal. The Full-Proposal submission will be evaluated by internal peer evaluators to determine if it aligns with the Call to Action and if it should be funded.

The Full-Proposal submission must be submitted electronically via the [Special Programs Webtool \(SPWT\)](#).

The SPWT contains the required templates for the Full-Proposal submissions, located in the Application Guidelines section.

Full-Proposal Application Process

Full-Proposal Applicants must submit the following documents:

- **Project Full-Proposal, a required template**, which provides project summary, goals, objectives, alignment with the Call to Action, background, expertise, anticipated outcomes, impacts, and deliverables. (4 pages maximum, single space, 11-point font).
- **Internal Evaluator Agreement to Serve.** The PI will invite four individuals affiliated with UIUC to join the Evaluation Pool for their subject matter expertise in the proposal's research focus area. In addition to faculty who have not submitted a proposal in the funding track for which they seek to evaluate, academic professionals and professional practitioners with subject matter expertise may serve as evaluators. **Each evaluator must complete the "Internal Evaluator Agreement to Serve" webform before the Full-Proposal Submission Deadline. The PI must share the webform link, provided in the SPWT, to each invited individual to acknowledge acceptance of the PI's invitation to join the Evaluation Pool.** Prior to the evaluation phase, evaluators will be selected from the pool and sent an invitation to evaluate the proposals assigned to them. If an evaluator accepts the invitation to evaluate, an evaluator can anticipate evaluating up to approximately 10 proposals from an RFP Research Focus Area.

- **Project Full-Proposal Synopsis, a required template**, which provides a summary of the project that may be shared with the campus and local communities, on university websites, or in university publications.
- **Budget and Budget Justification required templates.**
- **Memorandum of Understanding, a required template**, to acknowledge agreement that if a proposer's project is awarded and accepted, the PI must participate in the Call to Action Annual Symposium, return unspent funds at project completion, and submit progress reports for the first six months and the full 12 months of the project.
- **Two-page biographies for each member** of the project team. There is not a template for the biographies. Please select a format that is the best for your project.
- **Project Timeline.** There is not a template for the project timeline. Please select a format that is best for your project.

In addition to the above, please be prepared to enter in the SPWT the names and emails of the **individuals who have agreed to serve as internal evaluators and have confirmed their agreement webform is submitted**. As a token of appreciation for their time, they will each receive a \$750 Service in Excess (SIE) payment upon completing their assigned evaluations and returning the required document to process the SIE. **The submission period for evaluations will be from December 6, 2023 to January 5, 2024. All evaluations must be submitted via the SPWT.**

Full Proposal Deadline: November 4, 2023, 5 p.m. Central Time

- Full-Proposals may be submitted October 2, 2023 through November 4, 2023, 5 p.m. Central Time.
- No extensions or exceptions will be entertained.
- The selection committee will only consider complete applications. An application is complete when the proposal is submitted in the SPWT, with the "requested information", and the invited internal evaluators' webform entries are completed by November 4, 2023, 5 pm Central Time.

Notification of proposal funding status will occur in February 2024.

If a project is funded and includes work with human subjects, Institutional Review Board Approval from the Urbana-Champaign Office for the Protection of Research Subjects will be required prior to beginning the research. More information is available at: <https://oprs.research.illinois.edu/about-oprs-irb>.

Key Evaluation Criteria

Required Criteria below must be addressed in the proposal submission.

- **Local impact or relevance.** A challenge of significant scale and complexity selected with an eye to long-term vision and expectation of significant results. Underscores Illinois' responsibility and commitment to produce knowledge benefiting the state and local communities.

- **Build on current strength and leadership.** Creates and leverages existing scholarly strengths and emerges from what faculty are already pursuing, especially if faculty have opportunities to strengthen connections with faculty/students from other areas.
- **Impact on the university and its reputation.** Advances Illinois' scholarly leadership in the topic area, as well as its national and global status—looking broadly at the resources and strategic assets we would bring—faculty, staff, students, financial resources, collaborators and partners, and local assets or advantages.
- **Alignment with the mission of a land-grant research university.** Fundamentally draws on our institution's research power and creative activity; foster open, shared advances in fundamental disciplines; and bring together research with education, outreach, and public engagement.
- **Faculty and staff diversity and development.** Broadens the opportunities and expands participation of groups, faculty, and staff who are underrepresented, which is essential to the health and vitality of Illinois' community of scholars. The Office of the Chancellor is committed to this principle of diversity and deems it central to the programs, projects, and activities it considers and supports.

Preferred Criteria

Preferred Criteria below are not required to be addressed in the proposal submission. However, it would be beneficial if the proposal addressed one or more of them.

- **Interconnection with undergraduate and graduate education.** Engages students in innovative and groundbreaking ways. Should centrally involve graduate and professional students, integrate with curriculum, and provide experiential and intercultural learning opportunities for undergraduate students.
- **Engagement of external constituencies.** Capitalizes on Illinois' vibrant research, knowledge infrastructures (centers, institutes, Illinois Innovation Network [IIN], Discovery Partners Institute [DPI], etc.), our diverse state and on our extensive network of national and international partners.
- **Sustainability.** Has the capacity to be sustained over time (via grants, foundations, support from industry, state funding, university development efforts, or other sources).
- **National impact or relevance.** Should be a challenge of significant scale and complexity selected with an eye to long-term vision and expectation of significant results benefiting the nation.

More Information

The Chancellor's Call to Action Research Program is administratively supported by the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion. For questions, please contact **Amanda McGuire** at C2ARFP@illinois.edu or call **217-300-8989**.