Planning Grant Program

The Division of Research encourages the submission and acquisition of major extramural grants. In support of that objective, the division offers planning grants to facilitate the development, preparation, and submission of proposals to extramural funding agencies.

Planning grants are intended to support principal investigators, departments, and colleges in preparing highly competitive proposals for which there has been preliminary work and previous awards at a smaller scale.

The funding levels anticipated by successful extramural funding proposals will vary by discipline or multidisciplines. Normally, extramural grants in the humanities, the arts, social sciences, and related fields should involve major awards of $750,000 or more; extramural grants in science, engineering, biomedical research, and related fields should involve major awards of $3 million or more. These figures are “ballpark” figures and are not minimum amounts; instead, they are intended to demonstrate that the planning grant program’s aim is to support the pursuit of truly major projects that usually involve the highest award levels by extramural funding agencies.

These planning grants are to be for one-time funding only and will involve commitments from the vice president for research (VPR), departments, colleges and/or other Texas A&M University units. The award of these grants will involve consultation across affected units and with proposed PIs.

Since many major awards require multiple submissions, the expectation is that receipt of a planning grant carries a commitment by the PIs to submit and, if necessary, resubmit proposals up to three times. Additional support to enhance the competitiveness of a resubmission can be discussed after analysis of the reviews and discussion with the PIs. Additionally, since these grants will be funded by indirect costs (IDC) retained by the Division of Research, PIs will be required to submit the proposal through Texas A&M University.
Applications for a planning grant may be made at any time, but generally should be made 12 to 24 months before anticipated submission of the extramural grant proposal. An application in the form of a memorandum to the VPR through the dean(s) and department head(s) of the PI(s) must contain the following information:

1. PI(s) and contact information
2. Endorsement by the PI(s)’s department head(s) and college dean(s)
3. Summary and evaluation of the extramural funding program for which the proposal is being prepared
4. Statement, approximately two pages in length, summarizing the nature of the proposal to be developed utilizing the planning grant, including how the proposed project relates to department, college, and University priorities, and an estimated total budget (direct and indirect costs)
5. Listing of previous and current awards in related areas and discussion of prior and current investments by department(s), college(s), University, or agency(s) related to the development of a competitive proposal
6. Discussion of contacts and conversations with funding agency officials with whom the PIs have had exchanges about the proposal
7. Assessment of why PIs and Texas A&M are well positioned to submit a competitive proposal to the funding agency
8. Planning grant budget showing categories for expenditures, committed funding by the department(s) and college(s), and the proposed funding by the Division of Research
9. Estimated timeline for development of the proposal and proposed involvement by the Division of Research’s Office of Research Development

Development and submission of an application for a planning grant must be preceded by an informal discussion with the VPR by the dean or deans of the colleges involved in the proposal.

Contact
Dr. Jeffrey R. Seemann, Vice President for Research (jseemann@tamu.edu)
Dr. Charles A. Johnson, Senior Associate Vice President for Research (cjohnson@tamu.edu)
Major Categories for Planning Grant Awards

A. Major Extramural Funding Development Grant for Individual Investigators to support the development of major extramural grants for individual awards.
   • Normally, co-funding levels will be determined based on need with the maximum VPR funding normally not to exceed $25,000 in a 1-for-2 co-funding ratio with sponsoring college(s)/department(s) (i.e., VPR provides $25,000 and college/department provides $50,000).
     i. PIs and sponsoring college(s)/department(s) commit to submit and/or resubmit through Texas A&M University up to three applications that relate to the proposed facilities or equipment purchase.

B. Multi-investigator Facilities and Equipment to enhance the competitiveness of individual researchers or faculty research teams for extramural funding
   • Funding and matching ratio to be determined based on program need.
     i. PIs and sponsoring college(s)/department(s) commit to submit and/or resubmit through Texas A&M University up to three applications that relate to the proposed facilities or equipment purchase.
     ii. Post award budgetary commitments from agency/college(s)/department(s) will be expected to cover the administrative costs associated with the facility or equipment.

C. IGERTs, training grants, and similar programs to extramural funding to elevate research/graduate education
   • Normally, the co-funding will involve 1-to-1 dollar support not to exceed $50,000 for the match from the VPR and $50,000 from the college(s)/department(s) sponsoring the proposal (could be in the form of faculty/staff release time to prepare proposal).
     i. Office of Research Development will support the proposal development team.
     ii. PIs and sponsoring college(s)/department(s) commit to submit and/or resubmit through Texas A&M University up to three applications.
     iii. PIs, department, college, the VPR, and other units as appropriate will develop a funding plan prior to a grant proposal submission for operating and sustaining the initiative in the event that the proposal is funded.
D. Interdisciplinary NIH Program Project Grant, Linked RO1s, or similar programs to encourage focused extramurally funded research groups

- Normally, the co-funding will involve 1-to-1 dollar support not to exceed $50,000 from the VPR and $50,000 from the college(s)/department(s) proposing the proposal (could be in the form of faculty/staff release time to prepare proposal).
  
  i. Office of Research Development staff will support the proposal development team.
  
  ii. PIs and sponsoring college(s)/department(s) commit to submit and/or resubmit through Texas A&M University up to three applications.
  
  iii. PIs, department(s), college(s), the VPR, and other units as appropriate will develop a funding plan prior to a grant proposal submission for operating and sustaining the initiative in the event that the proposal is funded.

E. Interdisciplinary Research Center Grant or similar programs to encourage consolidation of existing extramurally funded research programs to a federally funded research center

- Normally, the co-funding will involve 2-to-1 dollar support not to exceed $100,000 from the VPR and $50,000 from the college(s)/department(s) sponsoring the proposal (could be in the form of faculty/staff release time to prepare proposal).
  
  i. Office of Research Development staff will support the proposal development team
  
  ii. PIs and sponsoring college(s)/department(s) commit to submit and/or resubmit through Texas A&M University up to three applications.
  
  iii. VPR staff will route requests for creation of funded center.
  
  iv. PIs, department(s), college(s), the VPR, and other units as appropriate will develop a funding plan prior to a grant proposal submission for operating and sustaining the initiative in the event that the proposal is funded.