

## UNMC BRIDGE FUNDING PROGRAM

**PURPOSE:** Bridge Funding is intended to provide critical support to established investigators threatened by an imminent lapse in research funding.

**AMOUNT:** Requests for up to \$100,000 will be considered.

### ELIGIBILITY

- Must be a full time UNMC faculty.
- The Principal Investigator must have a track record as an independent scientist as defined by rank of assistant professor or above; evidence of committed institutional support (e.g., space and salary; track record of first-authored or senior-authored publications); recent history (within 3 years) of significant federal (or similar) funding (e.g. R01)
- The investigator shows evidence of recent review of a grant proposal, with plans for either resubmission or submission of new proposal

### PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

This program provides a mechanism to maintain productive researchers in immediate danger of having to close down their laboratories due to exhaustion of all resources. All applicants must provide compelling evidence of need for bridge funding and how the funding will likely result in future large-scale or national funding. Two types of Bridge Funding are proposed.

- *Traditional Bridge Funding.* Funding needed to support a program to obtain needed interval studies or support key personnel for grant resubmission.
- *Retooling Funding.* UNMC recognizes that many mid-career and senior investigators need to retool their research to preserve their laboratories. This program will provide funds to reestablish funding in a new area. The investigator must outline a clear plan for how the proposed funding will provide the data necessary to support new applications. A very specific plan for potential new funding sources, such as potential new RFAs, will be required.

### PROGRAM APPLICATION PROCEDURES

- Please assemble the application package as described on the next page.
- The application is a two-step process. Note that approval by your college/institute is required before the application will be considered by the Vice-Chancellor for Research's review process. As part of this approval, description of departmental and/or college/institute financial commitment to the bridge funding should be explicitly stated.

The application package consists of the following:

**1. One page cover letter**, describing:

- A. The nature of the funding gap and the need for bridge funding
- B. Efforts made to secure funding
- C. Explicit statement of how bridge funds will contribute to reacquisition of funding—  
which experiments are critical?

**2. Funding**

- A. Describe the current status of your funding, including no-cost extensions, and when all funds end
- B. List of all grant submissions you have made in the last three years (including those still pending review) and their disposition (scores and percentiles if available as well as written comments where available)
- C. Abstract and Specific Aims from the most recent grant application
- D. Timetable for planned re-submission / new submissions

**3. Specific Aims and Research Plan** for bridge funding with future directions for research to be supported by upcoming applications (no more than 6 pages). Applications should be specifically written to describe what experiments are planned. Proposals should include details about how the minimal necessary experiments that will advance the science to a fundable level.

**4. Budget and Justification**

- A. Investigator's salary, indirect costs, travel expenses, capital expenses, and secretarial support not allowed
- B. Essential laboratory personnel salaries will be considered. Graduate student stipends/salaries will not be covered by this program.
- C. Budget justification should include how the expenses will be necessary to secure new extramural funding.

**5. NIH-style biosketch** of the PI only. The biosketch should be in the new NIH format (including personal statement and publication limit of 15).

**6. Please attach all previous relevant reviewer comments/reviews** for the last review of the grant which is ending and needs bridging for resubmission / new submission (e.g. NIH summary statements or other formal reviews – do not include meeting rosters) and abstracts/budgets for pending grants.

**7. Letter of support** from your department or division chair, or Dean/Institute head or their appointed Research lead, acknowledging approval of your bridge funding application and describing institutional or departmental contribution to bridge funding. Lack of evidence of such financial commitment will limit consideration for this program.

## REVIEW CRITERIA

Review criteria that will be used to prioritize applications:

1. Scientific merit based on assessment of the previous grant application and review comments, and plans to respond to that review.
2. Evidence of likely success based on past grant success (within last 3 years), publication record, and bridge grant application
3. Grant applications to funding agencies that will generate indirect costs will be given preference.
4. Evidence that the applicant has attempted grant renewal and can respond to the critique will be an advantage, as will initial scores that are near the payline.
5. While successful applicants can re-apply for additional funding, priority may be given to those who have not already received recent bridge funding.
6. Those that have urgent financial need: those without other funding sources, including faculty-specific, departmental, college, or unit resources, will be prioritized.
7. Attempts to link to other faculty with similar interests to consider new funding and research directions will also be looked upon favorably.

## POST APPROVAL REQUIREMENTS

Requirements for those whose applications are approved:

1. Must submit proof of appropriate regulatory approval (IRB/IACUC/IBC) before any funding is distributed.
2. Once notice of funding award received, any unused bridge funding will be returned to the program for other investigators.
3. A progress report is required annually from time of grant award with outcomes achieved with respect to funding success.