Research Catalyst Award

Purpose

In the interest of providing interim support to researchers on faculty at Rush University Medical Center, the institution has committed resources for bridge funding of our most promising investigators. **The period of support is for one year.** Applications are accepted from researchers who have recently received strong, competitive scores on R- or P-type grants (or equivalents) from federal granting agencies (e.g. NIH, DOD, NSF, NAS), yet just missed the pay lines. Innovative translational, basic science, clinical, population-based or health services research will all be supported with this program. The intent of this program is to support talented investigators who are likely to develop sustainable and impactful research programs by providing resources to bridge intervals in which the investigator does not have federal funding. This program will be periodically evaluated to determine its effectiveness.

Submission Process & Review Timeline

Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis and will be reviewed by the Executive Committee of the Scientific Leadership Council (SLC) which will make the awards within three weeks of submission. The following should be submitted to the Vice Provost for Research office (Norma Sandoval via this [link](#)):

- NIH bio sketch of the principal investigator
- Scored grant
- Summary statement (pink sheet)
- Priority score
- Two-page plan describing how the investigator will respond to the critiques and what experiments or additional research the investigator wishes to be funded in order to strengthen their resubmission application
- Budget (PHS 398, pages 4 and 5)

Funds Available

The SLC will fund up to 4 awards up to $50,000 each for one year, subject to available funding. Applicants may receive only one year of bridge funding for a particular proposal and are eligible for only one award every three years. If they are successful in receiving the grant within the year, unused funds will be returned.

Eligible Investigators

Applicants must be the Principal Investigator (PI) on recently scored federal grant in the 20th percentile or better that did not receive funding. The applicant must be an active faculty member of Rush University at the Assistant Professor level or above. Instructors are eligible to apply if their departmental chairman provides a letter
indicating that they will be promoted to Assistant Professor by the time of the award date. Applicants who are the PI on other active federal R- or P-type grants (or their equivalents) are not eligible unless the area of science of the nearly-funded proposal is a major departure from their federally-funded area of research. The research proposed must be relevant to the mission of Rush with high potential for federal funding. Awardees are required to commit at least 10% of their research effort to the proposed research; and, PIs may request salary coverage for this effort. Early investigators, women and members of groups underrepresented in biomedical or behavioral research are encouraged to apply. Inter-institutional or inter-disciplinary proposals will be of particular interest if they help build new programs at Rush and the Institute for Translational Medicine (ITM). There are no citizenship or residency requirements, other than the typical employment requirements of individuals having to satisfy their eligibility to work in the United States.

Review Criteria

The SLC Executive Committee consists of members who are experienced in their field who have served on NIH Study Sections and/or high-level Review Panels. The committee will make selections based on the submitted plan and the priority score considering the science and the feasibility within the Rush research environment of mounting an adequate response to the reviewer’s critiques in one year.

Requirements

Applicants are expected to resubmit the nearly-funded proposal to a federal funding agency within one year of the of bridge fund award. In addition, applicants are expected to serve on internal grant review committees during the period of this award. A progress report is required six-months and one year after the receipt of the catalyst fund award.