

Bridging Grant Program for Assistant Professors

Among the consequences of the reduction, including, in many instances, shutdown, of research activity due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many Assistant Professors ended up losing the benefits of some of their research startup funds (*e.g.*, because animal colonies were lost, funding went to pay the salaries of personnel unable to work productively, field research was abruptly canceled, etc.). To help ameliorate such situations, the campus has set aside \$2 million in funding to provide some relief. The terms of the program are as follows.

1. **Intended purpose:** to partially replenish and makeup for startup funding that was unproductively used due to the reduction in/shutdown of research due to shelter-in-place and other COVID-19-related restrictions.
2. **Eligibility:** all Assistant Professors whose start date preceded July 1, 2020, who are not up for their final appraisal (tenure review) in fall 2020, and who have not been given a terminal appointment are eligible to apply.
3. **Allowable use of funds:** keeping in mind their intent, grants can be used for all legitimate research purposes permitted under University of California policy, except that they cannot be used to pay the grantee summer salary or in any other way used to provide income to the grantee nor can they be used to buyout teaching.
4. **Process for applying:** applicants should submit a short letter (ideally no more than one page):
 - a. Stating the amount requested.
 - b. Stating the purpose or purposes to which the requested funds will be put.
 - c. Because the intent of this program is to make up for “wasted expenditures” caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, applicants should indicate how the requested funds make up for wasted expenditures (*e.g.*, replace reagents and lab animals, payments to “idle” GSRs, research trips cut short, etc.). Funding for new (non-replacement) equipment, funds for never-initiated trips, etc., will not be approved. In some instances, applicants may have reallocated existing funds (*e.g.*, used money for a planned trip to preserve funding for a GSR); in those instances, funding under this program may be warranted.
 - d. Listing **all** existing funding resources available to them, including unspent startup funding provided by the University, as well as BEAR funding and extramural funding (*e.g.*, federal grants). Note, as explained below, priority will be given to those faculty without significant extramural funding.

Requests must be submitted via the online form

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSd_3ErdGvk3oPHv4XWV0d0WIfL0Jk1uoj6kxePRL39XVbos4A/viewform no later than close of business on **July 27, 2020**.

Emergency requests: those applicants who need funding immediately can submit an emergency request. The process is as outlined above, but (i) requests cannot exceed **\$15,000** and (ii) applicants must spell out why

the funds are needed immediately. Requests labeled emergency will be reviewed as quickly as possible; if a request is deemed not to be an emergency, its review will be rolled over to be part of the overall review.

5. **Allocation priorities:** assuming that the sum of funding requests exceeds \$2 million, grants will be allocated so to prioritize:
 - a. Requests not exceeding \$20,000.
 - b. Requests where it is clear and compelling the funding replaces “wasted” startup funds.
 - c. Requests that help to support junior researchers (*i.e.*, student researchers and postdocs).
 - d. To grantees who lack or who have minimal amounts of other funding.

Awards may be less than requested if the sum of requests exceeds the allocated \$2 million; if requests seek funds at odds with the program’s intent (provision #1) or restrictions (provision #3); and/or if items to be funded are deemed not “replacement” or are otherwise not consistent with provision #4c.

The Vice Provost for the Faculty (and/or designees) will make the determination of awards. Emergency requests will be reviewed as received. Non-emergency requests will be reviewed after July 27, 2020.

6. **Time to use funds granted:** all funds awarded must be spent or encumbered in the fiscal year ending June 30, 2021 (*i.e.*, fiscal year 2021, roughly the 2020–21 academic year). Unspent or unencumbered funds will be swept and returned to the campus.

Unspent/unencumbered funds cannot be transferred to another researcher, to a department, school, division, or college. The funds granted can be used only by the Assistant Professor to whom they have been granted and unspent/unencumbered need to be returned to the campus.

7. **Post-grant reporting:** no later than close of business on September 10, 2021, each grantee must submit a one-page report summarizing the use of the funds received under this program. (Details on how to submit this report will be forthcoming.)

In addition to the provisions set forth above, would-be applicants are advised to read the following FAQs.

FAQs

- Q. Can I apply both for emergency funds up to \$15,000 and also request funds beyond \$15,000 through the normal process?
- A. No, because these are scarce dollars and we want to be fair, our preference is to review all requests at the same time. The emergency provision is simply to address truly urgent needs.

Q. My final appraisal (tenure review) *was* scheduled for fall 2020, but I have asked to have my clock stopped so the review will take place later than that. Am I eligible to apply?

A. Yes.

Q. I didn't burn through any startup funds in an unproductive way, but additional funding would help accelerate a research program that was slowed by COVID-19. Can I obtain funds to make up for the lost *time*?

A. No. Although we are sympathetic to the time you lost, addressing lost time is not the purpose of this program. Individuals who feel they need more time due to the COVID-19 pandemic should, instead, consider stopping their tenure clocks (see <https://apo.berkeley.edu/quick-links/covid-19-and-ap-issues>).

Q. Do I need to show the funds I spent unproductively in spring 2020 were funds from my startup package?

A. No. You need only list/describe unproductive expenses incurred. That noted, since the intent is to make up, partially, for wasted startup funds, your application will be stronger the more you are able to tie unproductive expenses to your startup funds.

Q. The GSRs, postdocs, etc., I fund were able to work, but I know they were less productive than they would have been due to childcare, etc., problems caused by the pandemic. Can I request funds under this program to make up for a less-than-ideally-productive research team (*i.e.*, can I consider some or all of their compensation "wasted")?

A. Yes, you can request funds. It would support your application to explain in what ways the work of your team was diminished.

Q. I have tenure, but also "wasted" startup or retention funds during spring 2020, why am I not eligible for this funding?

A. Although we are sympathetic to your situation, the University's resources are limited, especially in light of the tough budgetary situation caused by COVID-19. We cannot fund all worthy endeavors. We anticipate that our junior colleagues have the least access to alternative sources of funding and the most pressing need, in terms of time, to relaunch their research.

Q. If my funding request under this program is denied, in part or fully, what avenues of appeal do I have?

A. While we regret your disappointment, we don't have the resources to entertain appeals.