

Keck School of Medicine of USC

Carolyn Meltzer, M.D.
Dean
Keck School of Medicine
University of Southern California

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Dean's Pilot Funding Program
Fiscal Year 2023-2024

The Office of the Dean will once again collaborate with KSOM departments and institutes to provide faculty members with funding for initial exploration of new research areas. ***Priority will be given to projects that demonstrate innovation as well as likelihood of follow-on funding in a particular field.*** The primary target audiences include junior investigators starting a research program and established investigators moving to a new area of research that is clearly distinct from their prior research. The eligibility requirements, terms, and application process are outlined below:

Eligibility Requirements (all required)

- Full-time faculty members at KSOM, including CHLA, as of July 1, 2022
- Single or multiple principal investigators are allowed
- Co-investigators from other USC schools are allowed, see below for budgetary restrictions
- Applicants cannot be in possession of startup or discretionary funds exceeding \$150,000 at the time of application to the program

Previous Awardee Eligibility Requirements (all required)

- Applicants who have received a Dean's pilot award in the previous year are eligible to apply for support for a new and separate project only if:
 - The previous award has been completed, including the timely and complete expenditure of funds by the current application deadline (prior award cannot be in no-cost extension); and
 - Productivity from the prior award is demonstrated in a final progress report in the form of published or accepted manuscripts and/or grant applications submitted or funded.
 - Past recipients of Dean's pilot award(s) must include an additional 250-word summary of the prior award outcomes to address these points, which will be considered during the review process of a new proposal.

Terms of Award

- Up to \$75,000 for one year composed of a 2:1 ratio of funds from the Dean's office and investigators' home department(s) or Institute(s). For example, the maximum award would be \$50,000 from the KSOM Dean and cost share of \$25,000 split in any ratio between the home department(s)/institute(s) of single or multiple investigators.
- Applications must include a letter of commitment specifying the amount and source(s) of the cost share.

- A no-cost extension of up to one year may be granted upon review of a written request to the Vice Dean for Research of the Keck School
- Faculty salaries are not allowed in the budget request
- The Keck School anticipates making up to five awards in FY23, utilizing funds from the Christiansen Estate Endowed Fund for the Dean's portion of the awards.

How to Apply

- Full proposal must be submitted [here](#) by 5 p.m. (PDT) on **Friday, October 7, 2022 (portal will open September 7, 2022)**
- Proposal must include the following in this order:
 - Cover page
 - ½-page abstract
 - Focused (≤ 5 pages) research plan
 - <1-page bibliography
 - Biosketches of all investigators
 - For applicants with rank of assistant professor or below, a letter from the mentor or mentoring team describing the mentoring plan in support for the applicant and project.
 - For applicants who are proposing a major change in research direction, a letter from collaborators with relevant expertise is encouraged, but not required.
 - Cost share letter signed by individuals committing to the cost share including department chairs, institute directors, or individual faculty; this letter should include confirmation that the applicant(s) meets eligibility criteria including lack of availability of startup or discretionary funding exceeding \$150,000
 - Budget and budget justification
 - Up to 1 page plan for securing extramural funding focusing on three areas:
 - Specific justification regarding the nature of the data to be collected and how it will be used to strengthen one or more follow-on grant applications;
 - Milestones for collection of the data and timeline for submission of extramural application(s)
 - Specific funding mechanisms or opportunities that would be targeted for extramural funding applications

Applications will be considered incomplete and, therefore, not reviewed until all materials are submitted.

Review and Award

Applications will be peer-reviewed internally at USC using the following review criteria:

- Innovation of the research and novelty of the area of research to the PI(s)
 - Does the application challenge and seek to shift current research or clinical practice paradigms by utilizing novel theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions? Is refinement, improvement, or new application of

theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions proposed?

- Feasibility of the primary hypothesis and/or importance of the stated purpose of the research
- Approach: Quality and appropriateness of the study design, methodology, data acquisition and analysis
- Investigators: Qualifications to conduct the proposed research. For applicants with rank of assistant professor or below, strength of mentoring team and mentoring plan. For applicants with rank of associate professor or higher, expertise of collaborators in the new area of research they are entering to qualify for a Dean's Pilot grant.
- Resources and Environment: Quality and availability of resources needed to conduct the research

Recommendations for funding will be made by a committee appointed by the Dean of the Keck School, while final approval will be by the Dean.

Follow-up

- Awardees must submit an interim progress report six months after notification of award so that any delays in progress can be addressed
- A final progress report will be due February 1, 2024 for projects that do not receive a no-cost extension, or within one month after such extension ends if one is granted.
- By accepting an award, awardees will agree to provide information on publications and follow-on funding at least annually for five years after completion of the award.

FY22 Review Timeline

- Application Deadline: 5 p.m. PDT on October 7, 2022
- Funding Decision: December 7, 2022
- Funding Initiation: January 3, 2023
 - Note: all research compliance submissions must be completed prior to funding