

# *New Initiatives Fund*

Office of Research and Sponsored Programs

Western Washington University

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**Program Description.** The New Initiatives Fund (NIF) aims to grow Western's extramural funding base in order to diversify and expand our overall capacity for research, scholarship and creative expression. To do so, the NIF seeds new programs in high-risk, high-reward directions with convincing potential for widespread impact and to return or exceed the Fund's initial investment.

**Activities Supported.** The NIF provides up to \$25,000 to help stimulate initiatives with promise to advance the long-term scholarly and creative mission of the University by attracting significant new extramural funding. Funds may be used for supplies, equipment, project-related travel, salaries (including student salaries), as well as other necessary expenses. Examples of the kinds of activities expected to be supported by the program include, but are not limited to:

- Building new partnerships or consortia in pursuit of specific major extramural funding opportunities
- The creation of multidisciplinary teams to compete for center-scale grants
- The preparation of extramural proposals for major infrastructure, interdisciplinary research or training grants

**Program Limitations.** NIF does not support work leading to conventional single- or few-investigator grants (e.g. NSF-RUI, CAREER, REU, or NIH-R15 programs), traditional equipment grants (e.g. proposals to the NSF-MRI program), or similar small- to mid-scale opportunities with anticipated returns under \$500k. For those programs, Principal Investigators (PIs) may consider applying for a Mini Grant or Pilot Project Grant.

**Application Deadlines.** Proposals are accepted at any time during the academic year.

## **Eligibility**

- The program is open to all non-student employees with formal appointments to the university. This includes staff, research associates, tenured, tenure-track, and non-tenure track faculty.
- Recipients may hold only one NIF at a time.
- Recipients may not have held a NIF in the previous 12-month period.
- Proposals are accepted from individuals and teams; for team proposals one member serves as the PI and the eligibility criteria are applied only to that individual.

**Evaluation of Proposals:** Proposals will be reviewed by the RCA Council whose recommendations are provided to the Vice Provost for Research. Proposers may be invited to meet with the panel to discuss their project and answer questions. The selection process is expected to be very competitive. Proposals are evaluated based on:

- Potential impact on the University's capacity for research, scholarship or creative expression

- For proposals targeting extramural funding opportunities, award size and generated indirect cost recovery
- Alignment with WWU's strategic plan
- Completeness, and strength of statement of need/problem/creative activity and expected impacts
- Suitability/feasibility of methods, resources, staffing and timeline
- Qualifications and previous track record of the PI/team members
- Clarity and feasibility of endpoints

### **Application Checklist:**

Pre-proposals. Prospective applicants are encouraged but not required to submit a brief pre-proposal for initial feedback. Pre-proposals should succinctly summarize the opportunity, plan of action, anticipated outcomes, and participants. Pre-proposals may be submitted directly to [rspinternalgrants@wwu.edu](mailto:rspinternalgrants@wwu.edu).

Full proposals. The proposal consists of a narrative describing the opportunity, plan of action, anticipated outcomes, timeline, participants, and proposed budget, as well as two-page curricula vitae for the principal participants. There is no page limit, but proposals should be kept as concise as possible. Ancillary documents such as letters of commitment from collaborators or partners may also be included, bundled with the project narrative as a single PDF file and submitted using the esign form described below.

**Award management:** Grants are made for a fixed term of 12 months. Awarded grant funds will be available for use until the completion of the project or for one year after the award is made, whichever comes first. Any significant changes to project scope or budget must be pre-approved by RSP. Any unexpended funds remaining at the end of the grant period will be returned to the fund.

**Deliverables:** When an award is made, the award agreement may include conditions or milestones elucidated during the review process deemed appropriate by the Vice Provost in order to help ensure project success. Such conditions may take a variety of forms (e.g. a requirement for the PI(s) to work with a mentoring team, or achieve intermediate deliverables). In addition, a final report is required at the end of the grant period summarizing activities undertaken, outcomes, participants, and a description of how funds were expended. Submission of an external proposal is also normally a requirement. The final report is due 90 days after the close of the grant.

### **Submission Procedure:**

1. Fill out the NIF esign form and attach the single pdf file containing the project narrative, budget, curricula vitae and other supplementary materials.
2. Submit the esign form to your department chair.
3. Department chairs will review the application, complete the comment section, and if approved, forward the application onto their Dean.
4. Deans will review the application and if approved, forward on to RSP at [rspinternalgrants@wwu.edu](mailto:rspinternalgrants@wwu.edu).