UW ROYALTY RESEARCH FUND (RRF) INFO SESSION

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Proposal Development Consultant
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24. August 2023
ROADMAP

- RRF objectives and eligibility
- Review process and review criteria
- Preparing the proposal
- Submitting the proposal
- Decisions
- Insider tips for a successful proposal
THE BASICS

Mission

https://www.washington.edu/research/or/royalty-research-fund-rrf/
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“...to advance new directions in research, particularly:

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“...to **advance new directions in research**, particularly:

(1) ...in disciplines for which **external funding opportunities are minimal**

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“...to advance new directions in research, particularly:

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and/or (2) for faculty who are junior in rank

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THE BASICS

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“...to advance new directions in research, particularly:

(1) ...in disciplines for which external funding opportunities are minimal

and/or (2) for faculty who are junior in rank

and/or (3) for in cases where funding may increase applicants’ competitiveness for subsequent funding

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THE BASICS

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• Support grad student/postdoc independent research
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- Support ongoing funded research
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- As matching funds for another grant
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- Supplement start-up funds
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• As matching funds for another grant

• Supplement start-up funds

• Bridge funding for lapses between external funds
  (Bridge Funding program services this purpose)
THE BASICS

**Not intended to...**

- Support grad student/postdoc *independent* research
- Support *ongoing* funded research
- As *matching* funds for another grant
- Supplement *start-up* funds
- **Bridge** funding for lapses between external funds (Bridge Funding program services this purpose)
- Support *pedagogical innovations* with limited impact
  - Must advance knowledge, connect to body of literature
THE BASICS

Budget
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- ~$1 million per cycle (UW royalty and licensing fees)*
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• Up to $40,000
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Scholar vs. Standard RRF

• **Standard**: Up to 2 months summer salary **total**
• **Scholar**: One quarter teaching release
Eligibility
THE BASICS

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• Full- or part-time faculty and professional staff with regular or fixed-term appointments
  • Must have PI status as determined by their Dean
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- May be PI/co-PI on (1) proposal per round; Can only be funded on (1) project in the same period
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• **Up to (2) resubmissions** of same proposal (3 submissions total)
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• Past recipients eligible 2 years after formal termination of previous award and receipt of final report
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Deadlines

• Solicited twice a year

• Due by 5pm on:
  • The last Monday in September (Monday, Sept 25, 2023)
  • The first Monday in March (Monday, March 4, 2024)

• Awards announced by June/January
THE BASICS

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• Awards announced by June/January

• Begin the process early – optimally 1-2 months in advance
  • Work with Office of Research!
  • Discuss with Dean/Director well in advance, particularly if requesting teaching release
  • Aim for completed proposal (3-5) business days in advance
THE BASICS

Proposal components

https://www.washington.edu/research/or/royalty-research-fund-rrf/rrf-for-applicants/instructions-for-preparing-an-rrf-proposal/#research
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Proposal components

• Cover page

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• Resubmissions: Response to previous reviews (1 page)

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• **Suggested Reviewer Memo** (attached as separate document)

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Broad Funding Patterns

• Average tri-campus award rate = 25%  [range = 23-28%]

• Tacoma average (last 10 rounds): 33%

[Bar chart showing funding rates for different months from September 2018 to March 2023.]
REVIEW PROCESS

Step 1: Proposal assigned to one of 4 review committees

Physical Sciences & Engineering
Basic Biological & Biomedical Sciences
Arts & Humanities
Social & Behavioral Sciences

RRF Program Committee Chair
Professor Patricia A. Kramer, UW Anthropology
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RRF Program Committee Chair
Professor Patricia A. Kramer, UW Anthropology
REVIEW PROCESS

Each staffed with 6-16 UW faculty from relevant disciplines (as of Jun 2023):

**Physical Sciences & Engineering**
- Chemistry
- Civil & Environmental Engineering
- Engineering & Mathematics*
- Mechanical Engineering
- Physics

**Basic Biological & Biomedical Sciences**
- Biochemistry
- Bioengineering
- Biological Sciences*
- Earth & Space Sciences
- Immunology
- Laboratory Medicine
- Microbiology
- Pediatric Surgery
- Pharmacy & Pharmacology
- Physiology & Biophysics

**Arts, Humanities & Social Science**
- American Indian Studies*
- Cinema & Media Studies
- Communication**
- Dance
- Drama
- Education
- Geography
- History Human-Centered Design
- Linguistics
- Psychology
- Real Estate
- Scandinavian Studies
- Sociology*

*UW Tacoma Member
**UW Bothell Member
REVIEW PROCESS

**Step 2:** Committee identifies one member as "**lead reviewer**" for each proposal
REVIEW PROCESS

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- Assigned based on self-selection, expertise/discipline
- Conflicts of interest avoided
- Important figure – can champion, mediate outlier reviewers
- Likely to come from different field, lens – plan accordingly
PREPARING THE PROPOSAL

RRF Website: Past RRF Committee Members

- Betsy E. Evans
  Linguistics
- Angel Fettig
  Education
- Jeffrey Fracé
  Drama
- Olivia N. Gunn
  Scandinavian Studies
- Susan Harewood
  Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences – Bothell
- B. Mako Hill
  Communication / Information School
- Natalie Jolly
  Sociology / Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences – Tacoma
- Moon-Ho Jung
  History / American Ethnic Studies
- Cynthia Levine
  Psychology
- Rachael Lincoln
  Dance / Art, Art History, and Design
- Danica Miller
  American Indian Studies / Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences – Tacoma

RRF FOR AWARDEES

- List of Past RRF Awardees
- Guidelines for RRF Grants
- Scholar Replacement Salary Budget Instructions
- Sample Scholar Replacement Salary Budget and Workday Implementation Instructions

RRF FOR COMMITTEE MEMBERS

- Committee Member Lists
- Application Review Process (*restricted)

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REVIEW PROCESS

Step 3: Lead committee member/reviewer recruits (2) additional UW reviewers
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- PI identifies 2-4 possible UW faculty reviewers
  - At least 1 of these probably used – think strategically!
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- Lead reviewer/committee works to identify other reviewers – may (not) come from your field
REVIEW PROCESS

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- A second committee member reviews, but does not score (serves as a ‘tie breaker’)
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- Reviewers remain anonymous (PI does not)
Step 4: Proposals ranked quantitatively by average score
REVIEW PROCESS

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Step 5: Top scored proposals (and possibly a few others) discussed in committee
REVIEW PROCESS

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Step 5: Top scored proposals (and possibly a few others) discussed in committee

Step 6: Committee selects proposals and allocates awards
REVIEW CRITERIA

Primary Criterion: Merit

• Scored on (4) criteria – scale of 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent)
  
  • #1: “Research performance competence”
  • #2: “Intrinsic merit of the research”
  • #3: “Utility or relevance of the research”
  • #4: “Effect of the research on the university infrastructure”
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  - #4: “Effect of the research on the university infrastructure”

- Budget not considered as part of the review
REVIEW CRITERIA

#1: Research performance competence
REVIEW CRITERIA

#1: Research performance competence

- “Capability of investigator(s)
- “Technical soundness of the approach
- Adequacy of institutional resources available
#2: Intrinsic merit of the research
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- Likelihood that the research will lead to new discoveries or fundamental advances in the field(s)
#2: **Intrinsic merit of the research**

- Likelihood that the research will lead to new discoveries or **fundamental advances** in the field(s)

- Potential for substantial **impact on progress** in that field
#3: Utility or relevance of the research

- Likelihood that the research will contribute to achieving a **goal that is extrinsic or in addition to** that of the field
  - e.g. supporting new technology or solutions to societal problems, enhance teaching
REVIEW CRITERIA

#3: **Utility or relevance of the research**

- Likelihood that the research will contribute to achieving a goal that is **extrinsic or in addition to** that of the field
  - e.g. supporting new technology or solutions to societal problems, enhance teaching

- Potential for **broader impacts** such as:
  - Increasing diversity and inclusion in the field
  - Supporting and mentoring BIPOC students, post-docs, and/or early career colleagues
  - Conducting research that benefits underrepresented or underserved communities
REVIEW CRITERIA

#4: Effect of the research on university infrastructure
#4: Effect of the research on university infrastructure

- Potential to improve the quality, distribution, or effectiveness of university’s research and education activities
- Somewhat secondary: Not intended to ‘make or break’ a proposal
REVIEW CRITERIA

Secondary Criteria:
REVIEW CRITERIA

Secondary Criteria:
  Rank
REVIEW CRITERIA

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Rank

• Among comparable proposals, preference for junior faculty
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• Among comparable proposals, preference for junior faculty
• Senior faculty funded only when the proposal...
  a) “...supports a genuinely new direction"
REVIEW CRITERIA

Secondary Criteria:

Rank

- Among comparable proposals, preference for junior faculty
- Senior faculty funded only when the proposal...
  a) “...supports a genuinely new direction
  b) “...provides a unique opportunity to compete for subsequent one-time/infrequent funding
REVIEW CRITERIA

Secondary Criteria:

Rank

• Among comparable proposals, preference for junior faculty
• Senior faculty funded only when the proposal...
  a) “...supports a genuinely new direction
  b) “...provides a unique opportunity to compete for subsequent one-time/infrequent funding
  c) “...originates in disciplines with minimal funding opportunities”
REVIEW CRITERIA

Secondary Criteria:

Rank

- Among comparable proposals, preference for junior faculty
- **Senior faculty** funded only when the proposal...
  a) “...supports a genuinely **new direction**
  b) “...provides a unique opportunity to compete for **subsequent one-time/infrequent funding**
  c) “...originates in disciplines with **minimal funding opportunities**”

**Availability/timeliness for obtaining future funding**
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Proposal components

• Cover page

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• CV(s), for each PI(s) (2 pages each)

• Other research support (even you have none)

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PREPARING THE PROPOSAL

Description of proposed research (6 pages)

A. Introduction and Rationale
B. Broader Impacts
C. Objectives
D. Procedure
E. Time Schedule
F. Need for RRF

Section headings MUST appear exactly as above, in order;
Do not include any other heading

https://www.washington.edu/research/or/royalty-research-fund-rrf/rrf-for-applicants/instructions-for-preparing-an-rrf-proposal/#research
PREPARING THE PROPOSAL

Conceptualizing your project
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• Scope: 1-year
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• Discrete project...
  • ...but clearly connected to long-term research agenda
PREPARING THE PROPOSAL

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- Discrete project...
  - ...but clearly connected to long-term research agenda

- Focused on increasing competitiveness for future funding
  - ...and/or your development as a scholar
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PREPARING THE PROPOSAL

Think of the proposal’s narrative arc...
A. Introduction/Rationale:

- Describe the **fundamental “problem”**
- Theoretical **background/justification**
- **Significance** & Potential **impact**
A. Introduction/Rationale:

- Critical literature review
- Preliminary work, if any, including publications
- Identify a critical gap in knowledge / practice
B. Broader Impacts

How does the project demonstrate engagement with broader impacts such as:

• Activities aimed at increasing diversity and inclusion in the field

• Supporting and/or mentoring BIPOC members of UW community – students, post-docs, and/or early career colleagues

• Benefitting underrepresented and/or underserved communities
**Objectives:**

- How do you **propose to address** The Critical Gap and achieve Broader Impacts?
- What **objectives** will the project accomplish towards that end?
- **Specific, measurable aims**
Procedure:

• What is your **plan** for achieving the objectives?

• What **methods/tools** will be used?

• What **capacities** do you have to successfully execute?

• If access to a particular location/lab is required, indicate **whether permission is secured**
**Procedure:**

- What is your **plan** for achieving the objectives?
- What **methods/tools** will be used?
- What **capacities** do you have to successfully execute?
- If access to a particular location/lab is required, indicate whether permission is secured

**Time Schedule:**

- How will proposed work be **completed within 1-year**?
- Consider including a table outlining key milestones
Need for RRF:

• How will the award *advance your overall research agenda* and career trajectory?
• How will award *increase competitiveness* for subsequent funding?
• Briefly: *Anticipated contribution* to the field and practice/society
• Document *teaching load* (if requesting release, i.e. submitting as “RRF Scholar”)
If senior faculty – Describe in detail how the project meets at least one of the following criteria:

a) Supports a genuinely new direction in your research and/or career

b) Constitutes a unique, time-sensitive opportunity, e.g. generating preliminary findings for infrequently-offered external funding, undertaking time-critical/limited work

c) Originates in a discipline for which external funding opportunities are minimal
PREPARING THE PROPOSAL

Your target audience:
PREPARING THE PROPOSAL

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- Scientifically-literate, but **likely NOT specialist** in your field
  - “major features should be accessible to non-specialists”
  - Ask non-specialist colleagues to review
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  → Be explicit and clear – connect the dots for them
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  → Past committee members listed on RRF website
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- Request awarded proposals to **understand “sweet spot”**
PREPARING THE PROPOSAL

RRF Website: Past RRF Awardees

June 2023 Awardees

- Abitua, Philip (Genome Sciences)
  A189629
  The evolution of a novel vertebrate innate immune system
  $40,000
- Alaei, Sarah (UWT Sciences and Mathematics)
  Co-PI Gardell, Alison (UWT Sciences and Mathematics)
  Co-PI Gawel, James (UWT Environmental Chemistry and Engineering)
  A189756
  Characterizing the Impacts of Arsenic Contamination on Freshwater Lake Microbiomes
  $39,944
- Arce-McShane, Fritzie (Oral Health Sciences)
  Co-PI Popowics, Tracy (Oral Health Sciences)
  A188009
  Encoding of periodontal ligament deformation in the primate orofacial sensorimotor cortex
  $39,932
- Bayer, Ellen (UWT Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences)
  A1898822
  Life Near the Bone: A Journey of Discovery in the Wild
  $24,544

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RRF FOR COMMITTEE MEMBERS

- Committee Member Lists
- Application Review Process (*restricted)

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BUDGET

Budget

• Up to $40,000

• Budget reductions sometimes occur
  • Request only what you really need
BUDGET

Allowable budget categories

- Faculty salary
  - 2 months summer ("standard") or release costs for 1 quarter ("scholar")
  - Summer salary and teaching release rare – justify, identify priority
  - Faculty salary may only be requested for PI/co-PI(s)
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• Other staff
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• Retirement and Benefits
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• Retirement and Benefits

• Student aid/tuition, if applicable – Discuss with Lisa
SUBMITTING THE PROPOSAL

Process
SUBMITTING THE PROPOSAL

Process

1) eGC1 created in SAGE [Systems to Administer Grants Electronically]
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2) Proposal documents attached to eGC1 as single PDF
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3) Suggested Reviewers Memo attached separately in the Documents to be Submitted to Sponsor section
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2) Proposal documents attached to eGC1 as **single PDF**

3) Suggested Reviewers Memo attached separately in the *Documents to be Submitted to Sponsor* section

4) **Approvals via SAGE:** Dean/Director → Finance/Administration and UWT Office of Research → Seattle
   
   • Plan time for approvals!
   
   • Discuss teaching release with Dean/Director **well in advance**
SUBMITTING THE PROPOSAL

Identify appropriate “Research Area” in SAGE
SUBMITTING THE PROPOSAL

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Additional Information for RRF Application

Research Area:
- Choose One
- Choose One
- Arts or Humanities
- Social or Behavioral Sciences
- Physical Sciences
- Engineering
- Basic Biological or Biomedical Sciences
- Clinical Biomedical Science

Continue
SUBMITTING THE PROPOSAL

Identify appropriate “Research Area” in SAGE

Be strategic! Use past committee member list as guide
SUBMITTING THE PROPOSAL

Suggested Reviewer Memo
SUBMITTING THE PROPOSAL

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• Identify 2 to 4 **UW faculty** (any campus) who can provide a “thorough and objective review”
  • Cannot have written or taught with in **past 5 years**
  • Cannot be applying to RRF in the same round
  • Can be from your own department(s) as long as above two criteria met
  • Include contact details (phone / email)
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• Consider carefully: **At least 1 (maybe 2) will likely review**
  • Particularly important if working in a ‘niche’ field
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• Also identify UW faculty who should not review the proposal due to a conflict of interest (e.g. supervisors, previous collaborators)
DECISIONS

Decision letter

• Roughly equal chance of getting funded across committees
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• Scores not released, but decisions letters offer clue:
  • “...competitive...”  
    → In top 25-30% of unfunded proposals
  • “...would probably require significant revisions”  
    → Not in top 25-30%
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• Regardless, resubmit!
  • 60% of successful UWT proposals were resubmissions
INSIDER TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL PROPOSAL
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1) How is what you are proposing different than what you have done before?

• Clearly distinguish between past and proposed activities
• How will proposed work build on previous work
• What outcome will RRF be able to point to as a result of the funding?
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2) Be realistic about your scope with well-thought out plan of action
   • Overly ambitious scope reads as though you don’t know what you’re doing
   • Demonstrating that you can do that you have thought through details signals to reviewers that you are able to execute
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3) Be explicit about how you will achieve your objectives
   - RRF does not fund things that say “trust me”
   - Don’t be in the “great idea, no idea of how they will do them” group
INSIDER TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL PROPOSAL

5) Write (not adapt) for RRF, show how RRF will launch (not maintain)
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8) For resubmissions: Demonstrate responsiveness
   • Committee members get to know proposal and may advocate for it
   • And even if reviewers not the same, institutional memory persists
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9) Select reviewers strategically!
   • Can be difficult to recruit – Make your reviewer’s job as easy as possible
   • Recruit a **likely champion**, not a detractor
(MORE) TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL PROPOSAL

• When possible, **specific** detail about **future funding** opportunities
  • Not just “I will apply for NSF funding”...
  • ...but a specific program (“Geography”), solicitation (“CAREER grant”) and timeline (“in January 2023”).
(MORE) TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL PROPOSAL

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• Use “Need for RRF” to describe the **career trajectory**
  • How administrative/teaching loads have impacted research (as applicable)
  • Good place to emphasize commitment to undergraduate research and/or community-engaged scholarship (as applicable)
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• Explicit about how the project fits within long-term research agenda
  • The RRF is investing in YOU, and your long-term contributions to the UW’s intellectual capital
(MORE) TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL PROPOSAL

Community-engaged/“applied” work –
Particularly important to:

• Clearly detail procedures and operationalization so that nothing about plan appears “fuzzy”

• Emphasize theoretical contributions beyond particular site(s)

• Describe how partnerships will set you up for future work/funding
(MORE) TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL PROPOSAL

Framing UW Tacoma context:

• Remind reviewers/committee (likely in “Need for RRF”) of:
(MORE) TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL PROPOSAL

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(MORE) TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL PROPOSAL

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• Remind reviewers/committee (likely in “Need for RRF”) of:

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  • Diverse student population
    Check for current: [https://www.tacoma.uw.edu/home/about-university-washington-tacoma](https://www.tacoma.uw.edu/home/about-university-washington-tacoma)
    • Over 50% of undergrads First to College of First to Degree
    • Over 60% of undergrads are students of color
    • 16% military-affiliated students
    • Anchor for South Sound rural communities
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• Emphasize undergraduate involvement (if applicable)
  • ...but realize that RRF is not intended as undergrad support grant
  • Focus remains on the **researcher** and their long-term trajectory
WORKING WITH US

The Office of Research is here to help!
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• Proposal development and editing
WORKING WITH US

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- Proposal development and editing
- Budget development
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- Proposal development and editing
- Budget development
- Interested in serving on RRF committee? – Talk to us!
  - History of external funding
  - Associate/Full preferred
Thank you! Questions?

Kara Luckey, Proposal Development Consultant  
kara.luckey@gmail.com

Lisa Isozaki, Director, Office of Research  
lisozaki@uw.edu
PREPARING THE PROPOSAL

RRF Website: Past RRF Committee Members and Awardees

https://www.washington.edu/research/or/royalty-research-fund-rrf

Proposals must demonstrate a high probability of generating important new creative activities or scholarly understandings, new scholarly materials or resources, significant data or information, or essential instrumentation resources that are likely to significantly advance the reputation of the university, lead to external funding, or lead to developing a new technology. (Note: RRF proposals must support faculty development; this fund is not intended to support independent research projects undertaken by graduate students and/or post-doctorates.)

Over the past three years, the success rate for RRF proposals has ranged from 24% to 28%, with an average of 26%.

History

This program is funded from royalty and licensing fee income generated by the University’s technology transfer program. The RRF has been offered twice a year since the Spring of 1992. In 1994, the Royalty Research Fund Scholar program was initiated to provide one quarter of release time for faculty with full teaching loads to engage in concentrated scholarly activities. The RRF welcomes proposals with budgets up to $40,000.

RRF FOR Awardees

- List of Past RRF Awardees
- Guidelines for RRF Grants
- Scholar Replacement Salary Budget Instructions
- Sample Scholar Replacement Salary Budget and Workday Implementation Instructions

RRF FOR COMMITTEE MEMBERS

- Committee Member Lists
- Application Review Process (*restricted)