PRESIDENT'S RESEARCH FUND (PRF)

APPLICATION GUIDELINES
for the School of Medicine

to be submitted through eRS using the SOM Cycle 15 PRF Application Package

Deadline: 5 pm, Tuesday, January 16, 2018

The President's Research Fund (PRF) supports promising projects that have strong potential to attract external funding. These funds have been made available since 2009 to support research and scholarly activity. PRF awards are aimed at supporting the collection of data or other pilot activities that the awardee will use as the basis for extramural grant or contract applications.

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At the sole discretion of the PRF Compliance Review Committee, applications received for consideration which deviate from these guidelines may not be reviewed.

AWARD AMOUNT

- PRF01 - Single PI application describing a NEW project with high likelihood of extramural funding, preferably through the R01 or U01 mechanisms. Up to $50,000 may be requested for this award.

- PRF02 - Multi-PI application describing a NEW project with high likelihood of extramural funding, preferably through the P01 mechanism. Up to $100,000 may be requested for this award.

- PRF03 - Existing R01 or U01 application, NEW or RENEWAL, which was scored but not funded by the NIH during 2017. Up to $50,000 may be requested for this award.

AWARD TERM/PROJECT PERIOD

The maximum term of support for all awards is 12 months. For the January 2018 (Cycle 15) competition, the start date is April 2, 2018.

APPLICATION DEADLINES

The application deadline is January 16, 2018. *Late applications will not be considered. Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit their applications early.*

To be considered on-time, applications must be…
1. **submitted by the Principal Investigator (PI) in SLU's Electronic Research Services** (eRS) system using the <u>Internal</u> **Proposals function,** *and*
2. **electronically signed in eRS by the PI's department-appointed approver by 5pm CST.**

ELIGIBILITY

Principal Investigators (PIs) and Co-Principal Investigators (Co-PIs)

- All full-time faculty members (tenure and non-tenure track) appointed in any school, college, or degree-granting center at Saint Louis University are eligible to be a PI or Co-PI on an application to the President's Research Fund, provided they are appointed by the PRF application deadline.
- Researchers in postdoctoral positions are not eligible for a PI or Co-PI role.
- PIs and Co-PIs may submit only one application per application cycle.
- PIs and Co-PIs can apply for a new award in any application cycle only after a previously funded project has been completed and a Progress Report has been submitted and accepted.

Cross-School/College Collaborations

- For the Cycle 15 competition, the PRF will continue in the spirit of developing multidisciplinary collaborations across the Saint Louis University campus. Projects that are cross-disciplinary in nature may be selected for funding under the PRF02 mechanism.

Resubmissions

- PIs and Co-PIs may resubmit a previously unfunded PRF01 or PRF02 application. Revised applications must include a one page description of how criticisms raised in previous review cycles have been addressed.

ALLOWABLE EXPENSES

All purchases made by the President's Research Fund must utilize the lowest academic discounted price from a University-approved vendor. This includes minor equipment, supplies, software, databases, and all other

items normally discounted for academic use and as required by [Business and Finance](#) and the [Office of Sponsored Programs Administration](#).

Proposed payments to Subcontractors, Service Providers, and Consultants must include a PRF Subaward Form and also adhere to the PRF Outside Payment Cap as described on pages 4-5 of these guidelines.

Research Expenses

Expenses that are essential to the proposed project are allowed. Materials, supplies, and other expenses requested from the President's Research Fund must directly relate to the proposed project.   Research expenses may include:

- materials and supplies necessary for the specific project
- software not normally provided by the department/University
- transcription expenses
- travel expenses for field work or research (requires prior approval by the Director of Research Services)
- minor equipment (e.g., tape recorders for interviews)
- No expenses will be approved for items normally considered to be departmental expenses. For example, local telephone charges, normal photocopying expenses, office supplies, administrative or secretarial assistance, and standard University computers or software, etc. are not eligible expenses.
- Expenses associated with international collaborations are eligible for approval, but they must be approved by the Director of Research Services prior to the submission of the application.

Minor Equipment

- All equipment items or related services must be purchased according to standard University policies and procedures, and must have prior approval from the Director of Research Services. If you have questions regarding this requirement, please call 977-7742 for assistance.
- The University threshold for capital (major) equipment is $5,000; such equipment cannot be purchased through the President's Research Fund.
- Minor equipment purchases may be allowable, but will not be approved if they are considered to be expenses normally covered in departmental budgets (i.e., general use computers or software).
- Charges for maintenance and/or repair of any equipment are not eligible expenses and should not be requested from the Fund.

Salary and Fringe Benefits for SLU Faculty and Staff

- **PRF Salary Cap:** The total amount of salary and fringe benefits is capped at $10,000/year per PRF application. *This cap does not include student labor.*
- Salary is allowed only for non-key personnel, with the following exception: Summer salary is allowed for senior/key personnel on 9-month contracts.[1]
- Fringe benefits applied to summer salary should be calculated at the rate of **15.75%.**

Student Labor

- Student labor is not considered part of the $10,000 PRF Salary Cap.
- If student labor is requested, the activities of the student and educational benefits to the student must be described clearly in the budget justification.
- The Director of Research Services must approve the hiring of all students prior to their beginning work on the project.
- Student labor may be performed by either undergraduate or graduate students.
- A student (undergraduate or graduate) is eligible to work on a PRF-sponsored project only if ALL of the following criteria are met:

  o enrolled full-time for the duration of his/her work on the project

- o in good academic standing
- o does not hold any another paid position at the University at the time he/she works on a President's Research Fund project (staff, adjunct faculty, etc.).

Undergraduate Students

- o Salaried or stipend positions for undergraduate students are not allowed.
- o Hourly student labor directly associated with the proposed project is allowed, at a recommended hourly wage of $8-10.

Graduate and Professional Students

- o Salaried positions for graduate students are not allowed.
- o Hourly student labor directly associated with the proposed project is allowed, at a recommended hourly wage of $10-12.
- o In lieu of an hourly wage, graduate students may be paid a stipend of no more than $3,000 per student.

Travel

Travel is allowed only for the following scenarios:
- required for the conduct of the research (e.g., visiting a library or archive, collection of samples, fieldwork). Travel to conduct research requires approval by the Director of Research Services prior to the PRF application deadline.
- presentation of PRF study results. Funds are in this case capped at $1,500/year per PRF award.

Payees outside the University - Subcontractors, Service Providers, and Consultants
- **Outside Payment Cap:** With the exception of standard vendor payments, use of PRF funds to pay any individual or organization outside SLU is capped at $3,000 total.
- Applicants must itemize all proposed Subcontractors, Service Providers, and Consultants as separate line items in the budget, and provide a convincing justification for their inclusion on the project, explaining clearly and thoroughly why the proposed work cannot be done at SLU.
- For each proposed Subcontractor, Service Provider, or Consultant, applicants must provide a complete, signed PRF Subaward Form signed by the appropriate authorized individual by the application deadline and included in the single, continuous PDF application. *Applications submitted without required form(s) will not be reviewed.*
- Payment to any non-U.S. Consultant requires approval from the Director of Research Services prior to the application deadline.
- In well-justified circumstances, the Director of Research Services may approve payments that exceed the Outside Payment Cap. Such approval must be obtained ***prior to the application deadline***.

Peer reviewers are asked to give their opinion of costs as proposed in the application. PIs are therefore advised to provide sufficient detail in their budget justification such that this determination can be made.

UNALLOWABLE EXPENSES

The following are ineligible for support from the PRF and should not be included in proposals to the Fund:

- Any alcohol or entertainment expenses
- Capital (major) equipment
- Professional dues or membership fees

- Dissertation or thesis research, vs. studies on the PI's own research agenda
- Expenses typically considered to be departmental responsibilities

- Facilities & Administrative Costs (indirect costs/F&A)
- Honoraria
- Maintenance contracts or agreements of any kind
- Ordinary maintenance of equipment
- Periodicals or subscriptions
- Pre-award costs, i.e., any expenses incurred prior to the official start date of the PRF award
- Publication fees
- Rental of facilities, furniture, or equipment
- Salaries to anyone outside of the University, unless approved prior to the application deadline by the Director of Research Services.
- Salary for principal investigator or other senior/key personnel not on 9 month contracts
- Support for students other than hourly wages or graduate student stipend
- Travel solely for the purpose of attending a conference or professional meeting (unless presenting results related to the awarded project)
- Tuition or fees

GUIDELINE EXCEPTIONS

In well-justified circumstances, the SOM Research Planning Committee may approve deviations to these guidelines. **Requests for exceptions must be made in advance of the application deadline** via email to the Office of Research Services.

PREPARING AN APPLICATION

Download the [Application Package](). **Only applications submitted using the Cycle 15 version of the Application Package will be accepted for review.**

Applicants must use the pre-formatted Application Package, which allows a single-spaced, 11-point Arial font with ½ inch margins. Captions for figures/graphs may use a reduced font, but must remain legible when scanned at 200 dots per inch (dpi).

The Application Package consists of the following sections:

PRF01 and PRF02 applications
PRF01 and 02 proposals are meant to eventually generate NEW extramural funding and a plan to achieve that milestone through PRF funding should be clearly articulated in the cover letter. Proposals that overlap with existing funded research projects will not be reviewed. Examples of PRF01 and 02 proposals include: pilot data to support hypothesis for a larger project, experiments that demonstrate feasibility of a method, field work to demonstrate ability to recruit and obtain data from a target population, proof of concept studies to generate evidence to support a hypothesis or aim.

- **Lay Abstract (350 word limit, written for a general audience)**

- Cover letter that justifies submission of the PRF01 or PRF02 as a NEW research project in the context of existing research support, if available, and describes a path to extramural funding for the proposed project. For PRF02 submissions, the cover letter must also indicate why the proposed work requires interaction among multiple PIs and how efforts from multiple PIs will be coordinated. **Proposals that fail to justify the project as a NEW research project, or overlap in specific aims and scopes with existing funded research or deemed unlikely to compete successfully for extramural funding will be triaged by the Internal Study Section.**

- **Introduction/Response to Reviewers (allowed and required for Resubmissions only)** - Summarize the substantial additions, deletions, and changes to the application. The Introduction must also include a response to the issues and criticism raised in the reviewers' comments **(1-page limit). Previous PRF reviews may NOT be included in the application and will be suppressed if they are included.**

- **Budget and Budget Justification** – Include total funds requested in each budget category provided in the Application Package. Itemize individual expenses for each category and include the appropriate Banner Account Code for each. Provide a clear, narrative description of how funds in each category were calculated **(1-page limit)**. The following Banner Account Codes are commonly used:

Code	Account		Code	Account
613500	Full-time Faculty Summer Session		739100	Domestic Travel
690000	Fringe Benefit Allocation		739150	Foreign Travel
647000	Full-time Staff Salary		741010	Subject Payments
641000	Full-time Staff Hourly		752000	Teaching & Research Supplies
657000	Part-time Staff Salary		756000	Other Supplies
651000	Part-time Staff Hourly		757300	Minor Research Equipment
671000	Graduate Stipends		757500	Minor Computer Software
675000	Graduate Student Hourly		771082	Comparative Medicine
661000	Student Labor (Undergraduate)		771089	Microbiology Services
741000	Professional Services		722000	Books (not subscriptions)
741003	Consultants			**Other Codes**

- **Research Proposal** - Please use sub-headings to delineate sections **(3-page limit)**.
  - Specific Aims
  - Research Plan
  - Significance and Impact of Research
  - Up to 5 graphs/figures, included in 3-page limit

- **Reference Citations List - (no page limit)**

  Biographical Information – Biographical information submitted as a biosketch in the new NIH format is required for all Key Personnel[2] as follows:

Role	Biosketch
Principal Investigator (PI)	Required
Co-Principal Investigator (Co-PI)	Required
Co-Investigator (Co-I) or any other Key Role	not required will be suppressed

PRF03 applications

PRF 03 proposals should be the same depth as the PRF01 and 02's, but focused tightly on how the applicant plans to use the PRF money to push their grant over the finish line to get funded.

- Cover letter that justifies submission of the PRF03 and describes a path to extramural funding for the proposed project.

- Copy of the original R01 or U01 grant proposal reviewed by the NIH during 2017

- Copy of the Summary Statement with scores and reviews received by the NIH Study Section

- Description (3-page limit, including Tables, Figures and References) of how criticisms raised by the NIH Study Section will be addressed in a revised application.

- Budget and Budget Justification – See instructions for PRF01 and PRF02 applications.

- Biographical Information – See instructions for PRF01 and PRF02 applications.

SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION
Applications not submitted in the following format may be returned without review.

1. Assemble the completed Application Package into a single PDF file, with required Biosketch(es), Letter(s) of Support, PRF Subaward Form(s), and external reviews as allowed in the PRF guidelines. Extraneous components not specifically requested will be suppressed from peer review.
2. Name the PDF file as follows:
3. PI_LastName_PIFirstName_mmmyyyy (*EXAMPLE: Siler_William_Cycle15*)
4. Log into eRS and Create a New Internal Proposal. Upload the completed Application Package to the Internal Proposal Transmittal Form.
5. Sign and submit for approval by department head.
6. **Confirm Department approval in eRS.**
If multiple versions of an application are uploaded, the most recent version will be reviewed.

REVIEW PROCESS

All applications (PRF01s, PRF02s and PRF03s) will be reviewed by an Internal Study Section appointed by the Research Planning Committee (RPC) and chaired by the current chair of the RPC. Recommendations about funding and amounts to be awarded rest entirely with the Internal Study Section and will be based on scientific merit and likelihood of extramural funding. These recommendations will be forwarded to the Vice President of Research for final approval. Scoring of all applications follows NIH guidelines (see below), using a range from 1 (exceptional) to 9 (poor). Applications that fail to meet the criteria of novelty (PRF01s and PRF02s) or high likelihood of funding (PRF01s, PRF02s and PRF03s) will be triaged.

Scoring System

Impact Score	Rating	Guidance on Strengths/Weaknesses
High		
1	Exceptional	Exceptionally strong with essentially no weaknesses
2	Outstanding	Extremely strong with negligible weaknesses
3	Excellent	Very strong with only some minor weaknesses
Medium		
4	Very Good	Strong but with numerous minor weaknesses
5	Good	Strong but with at least one moderate weakness
6	Satisfactory	Some strengths but also some moderate weaknesses
Low		
7	Fair	Some strengths but with a least one major weakness
8	Marginal	A few strengths and a few major weaknesses
9	Poor	Very few strengths and numerous major weaknesses

Minor Weakness: an easily addressable weakness that does not substantially lessen impact
Moderate Weakness: a weakness that lessens impact
Major Weakness: a weakness that severely limits impact

POST-AWARD TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Post-award Administration. Each award will be placed in a designated fund in the PI's name. No over-expenditures are allowed. The PI's department will be responsible for any over-expenditures that do occur. PIs are required to oversee and approve all expenditures according to the approved PRF budget. If the PI has questions about whether selected costs are allowable, those questions should be directed to the Office of Sponsored Programs Administration.

Post-award Revisions. PRF awardees are expected to use funds according to the budgets submitted with their original proposals. All budget revisions require approval from the Director of Research Services. All budget revisions must be processed through the Office of Sponsored Programs. Funds that are not expended by the end of the project year must be returned to the Division of Research Administration, unless an extension for the project has been granted by the Director of Research Services. Requests for revisions or exceptions to PRF guidelines after an award is issued must be made via email to Sharmi Ray using the PRF Budget Revision Request Form.

Post-award Progress Reports. At the end of one year, a 1-page technical report and a summary of expenditures must be delivered to the Office of Sponsored Programs Administration via eRS. In addition, recipients of PRF support are required to complete annual reports that document any external funding, publications, or presentations directly related to this support for three (3) years following the project's end date.

Post-award No-Cost Extensions. Extensions of funding into a second year of funding are possible in exceptional cases. Extensions rarely will exceed six (6) months from the original end date. Criteria for an extension should include evidence of productivity as well as data that support the likelihood of extramural

funding once the project is brought to completion. Requests for no-cost extensions must be made in writing to the Director of Research Services and include a Progress Report.

Awardee Peer Review Service Requirement

All awardees of PRF funds must agree to serve as a peer reviewer for the PRF awards for the next three years.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. I currently am PI or Co-PI on an ongoing President's Research Fund award. Can I apply for a second PRF award before the current project is completed?

No. Except in very rare circumstances and with prior approval from the Director of Research, you can apply for a second award only after the project has been completed and a progress report on the completed project has been submitted and accepted.

2. If I am PI/Co-PI on an application, can I submit more than one application as a PI/Co-PI?

No. You may submit only one application as a PI or Co-PI per submission period.

3. If I am a co-investigator on another PRF application. May I also submit an application as PI?

Yes, but it must be for a completely different project, i.e., with different aims, goals, and objectives.

4. I am looking for funding for a student's dissertation research. Is the PRF an appropriate source?

No. The PRF is intended to fund faculty-led projects as part of the PI's member's own, long-term research agenda. It is also expected that funding from SLU internal award programs will stimulate external funding opportunities for the PI and collaborators for at least three years following receipt of an award.

5. Are no-cost extensions allowable?

Yes, but only with appropriate justification. Requests for no-cost extensions must be made in writing to the Office of Research Services.

6. If I am not funded, how many times may I resubmit the same application for consideration?

Applicants may resubmit an application an unlimited number of times.

ENDNOTES

[1] Key Personnel are defined as "individuals who contribute to the scientific or scholarly development or execution of a project in a substantive, measurable way, whether or not they receive salaries or compensation. Typically, these individuals have doctoral or other professional degrees, although individuals at the masters or baccalaureate level may be considered senior/key personnel if their involvement meets this definition." - adapted from the NIH definition.