

# UMass Amherst

## ADVANCEMENT

### **Review of RFP for Next W.M. Keck Foundation Research Program Funding Cycle**

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# Why Pursue Funding from Keck?

- Significant financial support over multiple years for projects that lack federal funding sources
- The opportunity to develop a project or area of research to a point that it becomes eligible for governmental support
- Visibility
- Prestige

# General Overview

Keck strives to fund endeavors that are **distinctive and novel in their approach**. It encourages projects that are **high-risk with the potential for transformative impact**. "High-risk" comprises a number of factors, including:

- Questions that push the edge of a field,
- Present unconventional approaches to intractable problems, or
- Challenge the prevailing paradigm

# Overview of Keck Research Program

Supporting pioneering discoveries in **science, engineering and medical research** has been Keck's mandate from the beginning. By funding the **high-risk/high-impact work** of leading researchers, Keck is laying the groundwork for new paradigms, technologies and discoveries that will save lives, provide innovative solutions, and add to our understanding of the world. **Senior, Mid and Early Career investigators are encouraged to apply.**

# Award Information

- **Funding Amount:** \$500,000 - \$5 million (typically, \$1 million)
  - a) ***Note: a 1:1 match is expected*** (See UMass' [Cost Sharing Guidelines](#) for more information)
- **Duration of grants:** 1-5 years (typically 3 years)
- **Number of applications/institution:** 1 per category (2 categories: 1] Science & Engineering Research, and 2] Medical Research)
- **Number of awards:** varies per year, but is typically between 10 and 12
- If a collaborative project, UMass Amherst must be the lead institution.

# Research Program Priorities

Funding is awarded to universities and institutions nationwide for projects in research that:

1. Focus on important and emerging areas of research
2. Have the potential to develop breakthrough technologies, instrumentation, or methodologies
3. Are innovative, distinctive, and interdisciplinary
4. Demonstrate a high level of risk due to unconventional approaches, or by challenging the prevailing paradigm
5. Have the potential for transformative impact, such as the founding of a new field of research, the enabling of observations not previously possible, or the altered perception of a previously intractable problem
6. Does not focus on clinical or translational research, treatment trials or research for the sole purpose of drug development
7. **Fall outside the mission of public funding agencies \***
8. **Demonstrate that private philanthropy generally, and the W. M. Keck Foundation in particular, is essential to the project's success \***

**Note:** Keck describes itself as "an agency of last resort" that only funds very high risk work that NSF or NIH have declined to support, but whose reviewers noted "science was good, but too risky," or something similar. Keck will ask for copies of the reviews from nominees if they recommend pursuit of a Phase 1 application.

# Timeline

- I. Pre-Application Counseling Period: **July 1 – August 15**
  - A. To review 1-page concept papers (up to 8 per institution – 4 in Science & Engineering and 4 in Medical Research) – **Due to Foundation Relations by June 29, 2020**
  - B. Keck counseling is offered during a single call made by appointment with the Office of Foundation Relations and the Limited Submissions Selection Committee. Those present will take notes during the call and share these with applicants.
  - C. (Note that principal investigators may not join the call. All contact with the Keck Foundation must take place via our campus's official Keck liaison.)
- II. Phase I applications (**1 in Science & Engineering Research** and **1 in Medical Research** selected by our Limited Submissions Committee) **due to Foundation Relations on June 29 at 9:00 a.m.**
- III. Keck Counseling Period: **July 1 – August 15**
- III. Phase I applications **due to Keck on November 1, 4:30pm (PT)**
- IV. Notification of Invitation to Submit Phase II Proposal: **January 15**
- V. Phase II applications (by invitation only) – **Keck Deadline: February 15**

# Elements of the Initial Concept Paper

- \* Note that your concept paper will be what the Limited Submissions Review Panel uses to determine which campus projects are selected for submission as Phase I applications (one in each of the research categories). It will also be what Keck staff reviews for feedback during the counseling period.

One-page concept papers for the Research Program should be in 12-point font with 1 inch margins and should include:

1. Identification of the category of research under which you are applying
2. Overview (including unique aspects and pilot studies, if any)
2. Methodologies
3. Key personnel
4. Brief justification for Keck support \*
5. Estimated budget broken down, if possible, by major areas, e.g., personnel, equipment, consumable supplies (budgets can be rough approximations at this stage)

- \* Please send concept papers to [foundation.relations@umass.edu](mailto:foundation.relations@umass.edu).



# Points Worthy of Emphasis

- Pithiness is not only a virtue but an absolute necessity.
  - A. Narrative must be clear and concise
- Don't make your justification for support an afterthought. It is a centrally important element of the application.
- Be clear about the potential practical implications of your research.
  - A. Remember that Keck was established “to provide far-reaching benefits for humanity”.
  - B. All of its grant-making programs “invest in people and programs that are making a difference in the quality of life, now and for the future”.
- A note about AI-related research: Keck has said in previous conversations that AI is a crowded field with many diverse funders. While submissions from those conducting research in this broad area are welcome, Keck asks that applicants make a special effort to justify their recourse to this particular funding opportunity.

# What Happens after You Submit Your Concept Papers?

- Foundation Relations will send them to the Keck Foundation and schedule a call to review each. During the call, Keck program officers provide feedback about the merits and weaknesses of each concept paper and discuss the degree to which they are aligned with the Foundation's programmatic priorities. Advice is also given about how to improve those proposals that are most promising.
- The Limited Submissions Selection Committee (composed of deans from applicants' respective schools and colleges and, if necessary, the Provost, Vice Chancellor for Research & Engagement, and/or faculty with relevant expertise) will then carefully review submissions and choose one from each of the two research categories (Science & Engineering Research and Medical Research) that will be nominated to proceed with a full Phase I application.
- Once both levels of review are complete, Foundation Relations will submit the full and final Phase I applications to Keck.

# Phase I Application (By Invitation Only)

## Elements of the Phase I Application

### 1. Project Summary (1 page maximum)

- A) **Abstract:** Provide an executive summary of the project, including overall goal, methodology and significance, for a well-educated lay audience.
- B) **Unique Aspects:** Describe unique or distinctive aspects of the project.
- C) **Key Personnel:** Name the key personnel and describe their expertise, role in this project, and any collaborations/partnerships.
- D) **Budget:** State the project's total cost, amount requested from the Keck Foundation, and the amount of institutional support. Describe how funds from the Keck Foundation will be allocated among capital, personnel, equipment, and other.
- E) **Justification for Keck Foundation support:** Explain why Keck support is essential for this project. If this or a related project has been declined, indicate sources approached and rationale for the decline. \*

### 2. Project Description (2 pages maximum)

- A) **Overview:** Provide an overview of this field and the need for this project.
- B) **Relevant Efforts:** Describe past and current efforts at your institution that are relevant to this project, including institutional resources that will support the work.
- C) **Peer Groups:** Name other groups that are pursuing comparable or related work and explain how this project differs from their work. If none, please explain.

## Elements of the Phase I Application (Cont.)

- D) **Goals and Methodology:** State the project's major goals and summarize the methodologies and timeframe to be used for achieving them.
- E) **Impact:** Describe the potential impacts of achieving these goals.
- F) **Fundraising:** Describe what amounts of funding have been committed to this project to date, including institutional funding. Cite pending proposals, amounts requested, sources, and expected notification dates. If no other external support will be sought for this project, please explain.

- Note: Both the project summary and project description must be **single-spaced on 8.5" x 11" paper with 1" margins**. Use at least **12 point type, Times New Roman font**. **Captions must be at least 9 point type**. **Citations must be contained within the text in the following format (Journal Vol: page, year)**. **No footnotes permitted**.
- Note: The applicant does not need to fill out or collect any documentation that is not directly related to her/his project. Foundation Relations will provide all institutional information (institutional priority of request, fundraising history, audited financial statements, IRS determination letter, list of governing board members, annual report).

# Phase I Project Budget Sheet

Research Program Phase I Application Project Budget									
Organization Name:									
Project Title:									
Category	Year 1		Year 2		Year 3		Cumulative		Totals
	WMKF	Other Sources*	WMKF	Other Sources*	WMKF	Other Sources*	WMKF^	Other Sources*	All Sources
<b>Personnel (Salary + Fringe Benefits)</b>									
Principal Investigators (Specify #)							\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Postdoctoral Fellows (Specify #)							\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Graduate Students (Specify #)							\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Other (Specify)							\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Personnel Subtotal	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
<b>Equipment</b>									
(List major pieces and/or categories)							\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
							\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
							\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
							\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
							\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
							\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Equipment Subtotal	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
<b>Operations</b>									
Consumable Supplies							\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Animal Costs							\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Travel/Symposiums							\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Contracted Services (Specify)							\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Renovations							\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Facilities/Overhead							\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Other (Specify)							\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
							\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
							\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Operations Subtotal	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Totals	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -

\* Other includes institutional and external forms of support

^ The total of this column must be a multiple of \$100,000

# And Then What?

- After submission of Phase I applications, Keck reviews them and invites a Phase II proposal.
- The final, Phase II proposal is due on **February 15**.

# Let Us Know How We Can Help

Email: [marco.monoc@umass.edu](mailto:marco.monoc@umass.edu) or [liz.smith@umass.edu](mailto:liz.smith@umass.edu)

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