

November 19, 2025

TO: Medical School Faculty

FROM: Blossom Damania, PhD,
Vice Dean for Research

RE: New Round of Bridge Funding

The School of Medicine is opening the second round of applications for Bridge Funding for this fiscal year. Bridge Funding provides ***continued support for successful research projects that suffer a lapse in funding***. Investigators eligible for funding in this round should have had a competing renewal application for an R01 or equivalent grant reviewed in the most recent review cycle.

Bridge funding is a critical resource for SOM faculty, and a high proportion of bridge funding recipients have been successful in renewing their NIH support. Thus, a competitive bridge funding application must demonstrate a high likelihood of receiving NIH funding upon resubmission.

The deadline for the current round of application submissions is **5 P.M. Friday, January 30, 2026**.

Eligibility criteria:

1. Support is requested for the renewal of a funded R01 (or equivalent)
2. The application has been reviewed and received a written critique. If the grant's NIH number identifies the grant as a 'new' grant, it could still be eligible for bridge funding if:
 - a. The reviewed application is directly linked to an ongoing project that the PI has elected not to submit through the competitive renewal mechanism.
 - b. Support is requested to bridge from an A1 to a "new" proposal per the new NIH guidelines. In this case, the latest submission needs to be scored in order to be eligible for bridge funding.

Bridge funding is not meant to serve as "pilot" funds for new projects. In both cases, the cover letter should explicitly indicate the relationship between the "new" grant and the previously funded R01 (or equivalent).

3. The PI has no more than 2 active R01s or the equivalent level of funding. *
4. The PI does not have more than \$50K of additional sources of lab support, e.g. trust fund, startup, retention, royalties. *
5. The grant under consideration must be administered in an SOM unit.
6. The department agrees to match the funding from the Dean's Office.
7. If the PI received bridge funding in the prior fiscal year, they are not eligible to receive bridge funding in the current fiscal year.

*** For multiple PI applications, this criteria must be met for all PIs.**

Bridge funding will not be provided for faculty submitting a first-time R01 based on research from a K grant. Only one bridge funding application per PI will be reviewed each round.

To apply for this program, please submit the following documents in the order below as a single pdf file:

1. Cover Letter

If the grant's NIH number identifies the grant as a 'new' grant, the cover letter must include an explanation of how the new grant is a repackaged version of previously funded research

2. Letter of support from Department Chair

Include a letter from your chair or center director that pledges a dollar-for-dollar matching commitment. Generally, this support is provided in the form of salary support for the applicant.

3. Summary Statement/Critiques

If this is the second revised application, please provide the A0 as well as the A1 score and critiques.

4. Response to critiques

Include a formal response (1 page) for the application for which the funding is requested. Even though "new" NIH grants following an unsuccessful A1 submission do not require a rebuttal letter, you must provide a response to the reviews of the previous application. This should be the same letter that will be submitted as part of your resubmission to the NIH.

5. Publications

Include a list of publications from the past grant period (past 4-5 years) and indicate any related manuscripts in process or under review.

6. Specific Aims and Research Strategy

From the original submission

7. NIH Biosketch

8. Other Support

Include a copy of your current Other Support document.

9. Budget for Bridge Funding

The maximum amount of the award from the Dean's Office is \$50,000 and cannot include faculty salary. The budget should not exceed this amount. Please include and clearly indicate what the department match funding and the Dean's office funding will support. Please list any additional sources of funding available (startup, retention, trust, royalties, professorship).

The deadline for submission of applications is **5 P.M. Friday, January 30, 2026.**

Please submit all applications and questions to Janelle Cross at OoR_Submissions@med.unc.edu.