



TO: School of Medicine Faculty

FROM: Blossom Damania, PhD, Vice Dean for Research, School of Medicine

RE: Parachute Fund (PF)

Purpose:

The School of Medicine is committed to supporting SOM labs that have been impacted by recent delays in the NIH grant pipeline. To assist with this temporary need, the SOM will administer the **Parachute Fund (PF)**. The fund is targeted for R01/R35, U, and P competitive renewals which received highly fundable scores in study section (within institute paylines) but have not yet received a Notice of Award (NOA) due to the current delay in council meetings. In keeping with the principle of putting people first, the PF program will help support lab personnel as research labs await an NOA.

Proposals for up to \$75,000 and up to a two-month period can be requested to support lab personnel costs, including salaries and associated fringe benefits, for staff and faculty directly impacted by the funding lapse. Under no circumstances shall the funds be used for any other expenses, including but not limited to equipment, supplies, travel, or operational costs. The PF funding will be transferred to the unit that will be responsible for administering and monitoring the expenditure of the funds. At the end of the funding period, the unit must provide a brief financial report with the NOA, if it has been received. If the NOA allows for an earlier start date, allows for pre-award charges, or NCE funds become available that offset the lapsed costs, the unit agrees to refund the unused funds to the Dean's Office.

The PF is time-limited. Hence, PIs should be seeking alternative sources of funding, in addition to the PF, to right-size their labs. The PF is targeted to those proposals that have the very highest likelihood of funding and have only been delayed due to the current situation regarding NIH council meetings. Proposals that do not meet this criteria are better suited for our regular [SOM Bridge Funding](#) mechanism.

Applications will currently be accepted on a rolling basis.

Eligibility and review criteria:

1. Support is requested for the renewal of a funded R01, R35, U or P grant.
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 both cases, the cover letter should explicitly indicate the relationship between the “new” grant and the previously funded grant.

3. The proposal must have been reviewed in the most recent study section and awaiting council decision.
4. The proposal must have an impact score or percentile that indicates a very high likelihood of funding.
5. The PI has no more than 2 active R01s or the equivalent level of funding.*
6. The PI does not have more than \$50K of additional sources of lab support, e.g. trust fund, startup, retention, royalties. *
7. The grant under consideration must be administered in an SOM unit.

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

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. The proposed start date should be indicated and when the council was intended to meet. Reference any communications with program officer indicating likelihood of funding.

2. Letter of support from Department Chair

Include a letter from your chair or center director that indicates any support that the unit is providing in support of the lab/PI for this project.

3. Email communications from Program Officer (if applicable)

4. Summary Statement

5. Specific Aims and Research Strategy

6. NIH Biosketch

7. Other Support

Include a copy of your current Other Support document.

8. Budget Justification from the Submitted Grant

9. Budget for Bridge Funding

The maximum amount of the PF award from the Dean’s Office is \$75,000 for up to a two-month period. The budget should not exceed this amount. The budget should only request funds to support personnel costs (including salaries and associated fringe benefits) for faculty and staff supported by this grant (listed in #8). Please list any additional sources of funding available (startup, retention, trust, royalties, professorship).

If additional support is required for a grant with a larger budget and personnel burden, please reach out to the [Office of Research](#) directly before submission.

Please also note that we will be closely monitoring the current situation to assess if providing a two-month bridge is adequate.

Submission Deadline:

Applications are accepted on a rolling basis to OoR_submissions@med.unc.edu

If you have any questions, please contact Janelle Cross at OoR_Submissions@med.unc.edu