

# 2020 SYNERGY AWARDS



EMORY

WOODRUFF  
HEALTH  
SCIENCES  
CENTER

## REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

March 19, 2020

Dear Woodruff Health Sciences Center Colleagues:

The Woodruff Health Sciences Center (WHSC) announces the next cycle of the **WHSC Synergy Awards** to support **new** collaborative projects between the schools, centers, and faculty of the WHSC. The Synergy awards support the WHSC Strategic Plan by bringing researchers together across organizational boundaries in order to catalyze innovation and discovery.

This announcement seeks proposals for novel research projects led by faculty of the Woodruff Health Sciences Center schools and centers. These awards are meant to spark new, synergistic interactions between investigators and potentiate scientific achievements of the highest quality and impact and that are **focused on the current COVID-19/SARS-CoV-2 crisis**.

Collaborations across all WHSC entities are eligible for consideration, and proposals must include faculty members (with a **primary appointment**) from at least two schools (SOM, SON or SPH) as co-principal investigators. The collaboration should represent a substantive contribution by each of the partners at the two (or more) schools. Applications are solicited from faculty of all disciplines at the schools of medicine, nursing, public health, Yerkes Primate Center, the Winship Cancer Institute and other units, from basic to clinical, and from all levels of academic rank.

These awards are not intended to support already established projects or minimal extensions of ongoing research programs. Collaborators who have worked and published together in the past are not excluded, but the project itself must be new, highly innovative, and as yet unfunded and unpublished.

Synergy Awards will consist of **up to \$100,000** with an award term of one year. Applicants must present a credible plan describing how they will make substantial progress with one year of funding. Carryover of funds to a second year will be considered with justification under special circumstances.

**The application deadline is April 30, 2020.** Funding is anticipated to begin on or before August 1, 2020 and 7-10 Synergy Awards are anticipated.

In this round, the Synergy Awards seeks to emphasize research projects that focus on **COVID-19/SARS-CoV-2**, including research leading to understanding of the virus or other projects that will lead to the discovery and development of new COVID-19-related therapies, prevention strategies, diagnostics and devices, and, in addition, research projects seeking to understand the impact of COVID-19 on providers, nursing and laboratory staff, and clinical delivery, as well as research seeking to effectively link health care systems and public health in pandemics.

## ELIGIBILITY

A principal investigator may only participate in one Synergy Award application in each round. The proposal cannot be duplicative with other funding at the time of the award.

## APPLICATION

Applications will consist of:

- 1) A **cover sheet** indicating the title of the project, faculty and schools involved and contact information.
- 2) The **research proposal** should include four sections that succinctly describe the following:
  - Innovative hypothesis to be tested or goal to be achieved; why is the problem important; how are the proposed studies novel and not merely an extension of previously funded or published work; how does the work advance the goals of the Woodruff Health Sciences Center Strategic Plan?
  - Nature of the collaboration that enables the proposed work; is this a new collaboration (encouraged); if not, applicants must clearly describe how the project represents a new direction. The description should outline a substantive contribution from each of the c o - P I collaborators.
  - Approach to be pursued during the year of funding
  - Expected impact of the proposed studies beyond the initial funded phase, including what future work would be enabled

The research proposal section can be **no more than three pages**. References are not included in the three-page limit. Shorter applications are encouraged. Since Synergy Awards are intended for new innovative collaborative projects, no preliminary data are required.

- 3) A minimal, **one-page budget** that describes how the funding will be allocated to each investigator in the collaboration and how it will be apportioned for any personnel, supplies and equipment. Any budget amount up to \$100,000 can be proposed. Faculty salary and equipment costs can be included as desired. No indirect costs should be included in the budget.
- 4) A **National Institutes of Health-style biosketch** for each principal investigator that includes all current and pending support from all sponsored and non-sponsored sources. Each biosketch is **limited to five pages**.

Each proposal must be submitted with the above four items compiled into a single PDF. The PDF file name format must be: Last name of Corresponding PI (dot) First Name of Corresponding PI (dot) pdf. (Example: Stephens.David.pdf).

The proposals will be reviewed using an NIH scoring system.

Score	Descriptor	Additional Guidance on Strengths/Weaknesses
1	Exceptional	Exceptionally strong with essentially no weaknesses
2	Outstanding	Extremely strong with negligible weaknesses
3	Excellent	Very strong with only some minor weaknesses
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
7	Fair	Some strengths but with at 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

For consideration, all proposals must be received by **April 30, 2020**. Please click on the links below (or send via email) to submit proposals or questions.

Please submit proposals to: | [angie.daniels@emory.edu](mailto:angie.daniels@emory.edu)

Direct all inquiries to: | Barbara Walsh  
(404) 727-4251  
[barbara.walsh@emory.edu](mailto:barbara.walsh@emory.edu)

Gayathri Srinivasan  
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I look forward to seeing your innovative and collaborative ideas.

Best,



Jonathan S. Lewin, MD, FACR  
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Executive Director, Robert W. Woodruff Health Sciences Center  
President, CEO, and Chairman of the Board, Emory Healthcare