



Illinois Innovation Network
Supplemental Seed Funding Guidelines
Social Innovation and Impact
Spring 2024
April 15, 2024

Program Timing

Event	Date
NOFO Release	April 15, 2024
Proposal Deadline	May 31, 2024
Funding Decisions	July 1, 2024
Project Start Date Range	August 1 – September 1, 2024

Program Background

The University of Illinois System’s Office of the Vice President for Economic Development and Innovation (OVPEDI) is committed to advancing the Illinois Innovation Network (IIN) by providing supplemental (operational) funding for several projects. IIN members are guided by the following principles:

- i. Drive inclusive innovation, equitable workforce development and sustainable economic growth throughout the state of Illinois;
- ii. Assess and meet regional needs through a combination of collaborative research, public-private partnerships, and entrepreneurship and training programs;
- iii. Collaborate with hubs across the state and share best practices; and
- iv. Advocate for the value of higher education at the state and national levels.

Social Innovation and Impact has multiple meanings, including developing and deploying effective solutions to challenging and often systemic social and environmental issues, and designing and implementing new solutions that aim to improve the welfare and wellbeing of individuals and communities. The purpose of this funding program is to provide seed funding for social innovation projects that translate research into activities that directly affect lives, address complex social problems, build trusted partnerships in the community, demonstrate longer-term engagement or depth of engagement, and are scalable or replicable.

Social Innovation and Impact themes may involve problem-solving around the type of example issues identified below. These are intended as examples and not an exhaustive list.

- a. Environmental justice and sustainability: applying a social innovation lens to the transition to and use of clean energy technologies, mitigating environmental social impacts on communities, or otherwise addressing socio-environmental challenges to livable and healthy communities;

- b. Arts and Humanities: creating community arts or historical projects that orchestrate social action such as documentaries, built environmental beautification, preservation of landscape, mural projects, and similar projects to celebrate the health and cultural wealth of communities and create change through the arts;
- c. Social Justice: fostering racial justice, compassionate immigration, community policing, reduction of recidivism, access to critical services, transformational community initiatives, etc.; and
- d. Other: could be a combination of themes or an area of focus within social innovation and impact not listed above.

A *Social Innovation and Impact* collaboration is transformational rather than transactional. A transformational project is one of deep and sustainable commitments while a transactional project is one designed to accomplish a or multiple short-term tasks. Additional information about this distinction is below¹:

- **Transformational:** Persons come together in more open-ended processes of indefinite but longer-term duration and bring a receptiveness—if not an overt intention—to explore emergent possibilities, revisit and revise their own goals and identities, and develop systems they work within beyond the status quo.
- **Transactional:** Persons come together based on an exchange, each offering something that the other desires. Both benefit from the exchange, and no long-term change is expected.

Projects funded under this program may include capacity building, applied research, use-inspired research ², evaluation, community-based participatory research, coalition building, social entrepreneurship, utilization of research and transfer, scholarship to practice, and/or technical assistance.

Eligibility

1. The Lead PI must be from an IIN hub. Students are not eligible to serve as Lead PI, although they may participate as a co-PI.
2. At least two IIN hubs must be involved significantly in the project with at least one Co-PI from a second IIN hub. Both IIN hubs must be identified and committed to the project at the time of proposal submission. Note that the University of Illinois hubs are considered one hub for this program and must partner with a non-University of Illinois hub. SUIE and SIUC are considered separate hubs and may partner under this program.
- Projects should include a collaboration with an Illinois community-based organization, local public agency serving as a community anchor institution, or formal partnership as Co-PI or collaborator. A community partnership includes a coalition or a non-profit organization whose goal is to benefit the community or a specific population. University-funded or -operated centers or facilities – such as health clinics, regardless of location – do not qualify on their own as community partnerships under this NOFO because they are funded, directed, or managed by an IIN hub’s parent organization. For profit entities may serve as collaborators but not as Lead PI or Co-PI.

¹ “Differentiating and Assessing Relationships in Service-Learning and Civic Engagement: Exploitative, Transactional, or Transformational”, by Patti H. Clayton, Robert G. Bringle, Bryanne Senor, Jenny Huq, and Mary Morrison, as published in the [Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning, Spring 2010](#).

² The National Science Foundation (NSF) defines use-inspired research as research that is motivated based on challenges seen in human society. See this [RFI](#) from NSF’s TIPC directorate.

3. While there is no limit on the number of proposals a hub may submit, an individual may only be designated as PI or co-PI on one proposal.
4. Project must represent a “seed” concept not previously funded by this or the IIN Sustaining Illinois program or in later stages of project development, regardless of “seed” funding source.
5. The project must be completed within one year of funding.
6. The proposed start date is anticipated to be as early as **August 1, 2024**, and no later than **September 1, 2024**.
7. All proposals should be approved by the applicants’ sponsored program office(s) and IRB processes, as applicable.
8. The project is performed in the state of Illinois and/or to benefit the state of Illinois exclusively.
9. Previously submitted but unfunded projects to this program or the IIN Sustaining Illinois Seed Grant program may be submitted a maximum of three (3) times in a three-year period to all IIN Sustaining Illinois Seed Grant programs.

Program Funding

IIN anticipates funding 1-3 projects through this funding opportunity. The maximum award amount for a funded project is \$30,000.

Project Deliverables

1. A written report must be submitted electronically to the University of Illinois System OVPEDI six (6) months after the project starts and upon completion of the project.
2. Interim reports and information must be submitted upon request.
3. Lead PI and Co-PIs commit to present their project to the IIN and to participate in related IIN events, such as the Social Innovation and Impact Showcase/Symposium, and other events as requested.
4. Lead PI and Co-PIs commit to acknowledge IIN in outcomes and reports with the following statement or something similar: “This material is based upon work supported by the Illinois Innovation Network.”
5. Lead PI and Co-PIs commit to notify the IIN of publications and follow-on funding achieved resulting from this grant, even after its expiration. We encourage continued reporting on outcomes, metrics, follow-on funding, and opportunities for future engagement/promotion activities.
6. Lead PI and Co-PIs commit to complete any funding documentation within the timelines set forth by the IIN and the University of Illinois System.

Application Outline

The proposal must contain all components listed in the outline below and described in Proposal Components.

Component	Page Limit (Single-spaced, 12-point font)
Cover Page	1 page
Abstract	250 words or less
Project Description, including a timeline	2 pages
Scope of Work	1 page
Information about previous award, if applicable	1 page
Sustainability Plan	1 page
Team Member Bios	0.5 page per team member
Budget & Budget Summary	2 pages* ^T

Please note that text or visual context exceeding the page limits will not be considered.

Application Components

Cover Page

The cover page is limited to one page. It must contain the following information:

1. Project title
2. Requested period of performance (*project duration of one year*)
3. PI Name, IIN hub represented, and contact information
4. Co-Principal Investigator Name, IIN hub represented, and contact information
5. If applicable, Co-Principal Investigator Name(s), Organization Name(s), and contact information

Abstract

The abstract is limited to 250 words or less. It must describe the nature of the project in layperson terms.

Project Description

The Project Description is limited to two pages, including charts and figures.

Social Innovation and Impact must be the dominant theme, and projects addressing multiple Social Innovation and Impact elements are preferred.

- Complex social problems generally involve interdisciplinary groups and multiple sectors, and the focus of these project solutions should be on engagements that are participatory, systemic, or multi-disciplinary, and present a path for continuity and sustainability.
- Projects should translate research into activities that directly affect lives, address complex critical social problems, build trusted partnerships in the community, demonstrate longer-term engagements or depth of engagement, and are scalable or replicable.
- Projects that are dependent on the existence of a community's complex social problem(s) for the project's transformational social impact are preferred.
- Interdisciplinary and multi-sector projects are preferred.

The Project Description must include the following:

1. Partnerships: All partnerships and collaborations must be identified and explained. Specifically, the significance and role of each organization or community partnership must be identified in the project description and reflected in the project budget.
2. DEIAB+: A description for how the project will address equity, diversity, inclusion, accessibility, belonging and other dimensions of diversity. Specifically, key issues facing underserved, under-represented, and under-resourced groups should be identified and addressed, and the target populations or representative group(s) must be specifically identified. Under-represented, underserved, and under-resourced groups include, but not are not limited to, the following, including the intersectionality of these groups:
 - Women
 - Rural Residents
 - People of Color
 - Individuals with Disabilities - both cognitive and physical
 - Veterans
 - Justice-impacted Populations
 - Immigrant Populations
 - LGBTQ Community
 - Homeless and Homeless Youth
 - Low-Income and Lower-Income Individuals
 - Foster Care Youth and Alumni
 - Migrant and Seasonal Workers
 - Recipients of public assistance
 - Individuals who are basic skills deficient
3. Timeline: A timeline of the activities to be accomplished in the period of performance of one year.

Scope of Work

The Scope of Work is limited to one page, including charts and figures. The Scope of Work should outline the work that will be performed in the project. In addition, it should include goals for the project with an explanation for how the goals will be met.

Information about previous award

Information about previous award is limited to one page. Information about a previous award should be completed only if one or more of the PIs (PI and Co-PIs) have previously received funding from an IIN seed grant program.

For each IIN seed grant received, describe the accomplishments from that project, provide an estimate of the project's completion including which milestones have been achieved, and an estimate of when you expect to finish the work.

Sustainability Plan

The Sustainability Plan is limited to one page. The plan must address the potential for future work and follow-on funding for the project beyond the seed grant stage.

Team Member Bios

A bio is limited to 0.5 pages. A bio is required for each PI, Co-PI, and senior person on the project.

Budget & Budget Summary

The Budget & Budget Summary is limited to 2 pages. Three pages are allowed if the project will utilize federal funding.

1. Budget: The budget template below must be used, and other templates will not be considered.
 - All requested costs should be itemized within each category. For example, the role, name, and requested amount for each person receiving personal compensation should be listed within the Personnel category.
 - The requested budget must not exceed \$30,000.
 - Funding for these projects does not allow for the following:
 - Indirect costs.
 - Funding for full-time researchers'/professors' salaries and benefits that exceeds 30% of the requested funding.
 - Equipment (i.e., acquisition cost of \$5,000 or more and useful life of over a year); however, the purchase of digital devices may be considered an eligible expense with a detailed explanation of need and authorized use and disposition after the completion of the grant.
 - For-profit activities conducted or funded by a for-profit co-PI or participant are not allowed, including salaries and expenses (use of space, incidentals, materials, etc.) of the for-profit entity, even if the for-profit entity is engaged in the project. While consultants may be funded under this program, it is the intent to fund public and non-profit engagements.

Category	IIN Hub 1	IIN Hub 2*
A. Personnel		
B. Fringe Benefits		
C. Travel		
D. Equipment		
E. Supplies		
F. Other		
G. Total		

* Add columns for additional funding recipients and/or other funding sources

2. Budget Summary: The Budget Summary should include an explanation for how the costs were estimated and how they benefit or will be used for the project.

Application Submission

Proposals will be accepted at <https://go.uillinois.edu/SII> no later than 11:59 P.M. Central Time on **May 31, 2024**. Any questions should be submitted to iincontact@uillinois.edu prior to the deadline.

Application Review

1. Recipients of the awards will be notified on or around **July 1, 2024**. Awardees will be issued an agreement on a fixed price payment basis.

2. A review committee consisting of members of the IIN, including its Council, Committees, and OVPEDI or IIN staff, as needed, will evaluate all proposals received and will make recommendations to the University of Illinois Vice President of Economic Development and Innovation for funding. No IIN member will review submissions or make recommendations on proposals from its own hub.
3. Each proposal will be scored according to the matrix below:

Proposal Section	Evaluation Points	Weight	Total Score
A. The project description addresses Social Innovation and Impact theme(s)		30%	Points x Weight
B. Collaboration component with other hubs, community partnership(s), and/areas throughout Illinois		25%	Points x Weight
C. Demonstrates potential for further work		20%	Points x Weight
D. Scope of work		15%	Points x Weight
E. Budget/Matching Funds		10%	Points x Weight

END OF NOFO

[You're invited to the IGPA/CSPL Policy Summit & the IIN Social Innovation Workshop! \(uillinois.edu\)](https://uillinois.edu)
 April 23-24, 2024, Springfield, IL