Call to Action to Address Racism & Social Injustice Research Program

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Overview
There is a critical need for universities across our nation to prioritize research focused on systemic racial inequities and injustices that exist not only in our communities but in higher education itself. The Call to Action to Address Racism & Social Injustice Research Program will provide support for academic research and the expansion of community-based knowledge that advances the understanding of systemic racism and generationally embedded racial disparity, two of the greatest challenges facing our society.

The goal of the program is to enhance exceptional cross-disciplinary research strengths and expand collaborations to build cultures of research that address structures of racism and injustice.

We seek high quality, high integrity scholarship and creative activity that provides foundations to intervene in institutionalized racial disparities, structures of violence, and over-criminalization to fundamentally address the roots of these issues with generative ideas, imaginative strategies, and open, unexpected collaborations.

The successful project will approach this research with clarity about the complexities, fissures, barriers, and assumptions that structurally perpetuate racism and social injustice, as well as present a strong vision for how we might become a more just and equitable university, state, and nation where all can live in their full humanity. We welcome projects that have the potential to make a deeper connection with students and reciprocal partnerships with communities, in addition to those rooted in the realm of academic research and expertise of our university. Of foremost importance are accountability, transparency, and sustainability. A plan for how the work can be continued, improved, and shared beyond the funding year is an important component of the application. Please see Section 7 below for the key evaluation criteria.
Research Focus Areas
For 2021, the Call to Action to Address Racism & Social Injustice Research Program will focus on three critical research areas that are currently the most important and complex challenges facing local communities, states, and our nation:

- Systemic racism and social justice
- Law enforcement and criminal justice reform
- Disparities in health and health care

Projects may include but are not limited to:

- Research that can lead to the removal of barriers that inhibit access to education, opportunity, support, and resources.
- The interrogation of structural and institutionalize systems of disparity and disenfranchisement.
- Strategies for increasing perspective taking and understanding.
- Strategies for the reduction of violence and harm that can increase racial equity, well-being, safety, and belonging.

Proposals may focus on a single research area or apply an intersectional approach via examining the complex configurations of social determinants and how those social constructs interact to yield outcomes.

Funding Period
The funding period for the first year of the research program is September 1, 2021 through August 31, 2022.
In subsequent years, the funding period will be July 1st to June 30th for each year the program is active.

Funding Tracks
The solicitation includes three funding tracks, each with a maximum funding threshold:

- Community-Based Innovation $25,000
- Systemic Institutional Change $75,000
- Societal Impact $100,000
Community-Based Innovation
This category is for an applicant individual or team from Champaign County or the campus community, with an innovative idea that could contribute to the dismantling of systems of bias, marginalization, and disenfranchisement in the local community by disrupting the status quo with the creation of a complex research challenge.

An applicant may or may not have the expertise to transform the idea into an impactful proposal. This funding track will provide the resources for an applicant to collaborate with an expert to develop a research plan of action that explores the current situation, why it currently exists, and how to change it. To submit a qualifying application, an applicant not holding an appointment at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign (U of I) must partner with an individual with an appointment. The community applicant will serve as the lead collaborator and the U of I individual will serve as the Principal Investigator. The Principal Investigator must submit the proposal application.

The goal of the research challenge would be to positively impact the human experience and well-being in a diverse and changing world. Applicants funded through this solicitation may use the funding to organize workshops, conferences, meetings, and/or other reasonable expenses to gather information and other key resources to help crystallize the research proposal.

The funding would support the development and exploration of the innovative idea's potential impact.

Proposals may be funded up to $25,000.

Systemic Institutional Change
This category is for an individual or team, from the Urbana-Champaign campus with an innovative systemic change strategy that would better position faculty to address structural racism or bias.

This track’s goal is to increase synergies across campus and promote equity. This would foster increased connections among scholars to come together in new and productive ways. The outcome would be improved conditions for marginalized groups.

The funding would support the development, implementation, and evaluation of the change strategy's impact.

Proposals may be funded up to $75,000.

Societal Impact
This category is for an individual or team, from the Urbana-Champaign campus with an innovative solution that would address embedded systemic racism, social/criminal injustice, or health disparities external to the university.

The goal for this track is to broaden the cohort of investigators focusing their research on systemic inequities. These may include educational and achievement equity gaps, well-being and differential health outcomes, or improving societal identities and social injustice.

The funding would support the development, implementation, and evaluation of the proposed solution’s impact.

Proposals may be funded up to $100,000.
Eligibility
Principal Investigators (PIs) and Co-PIs must hold appointments at the University of Illinois at the Urbana-Champaign campus. Participants include, but are not limited, to tenure-stream and specialized faculty (instructors & lecturers) with appointments in any academic college or research unit. University members are encouraged to collaborate with community organizations or PreK-12 educational institutions. Community members are also encouraged to initiate collaborations with University members. Community collaborators may be from non-profit organizations, public agencies, school districts, etc. but cannot serve as PIs or Co-PIs.

Application Guidelines
The application process is comprised of two phases: the Pre-Proposal and the Full-Proposal. The purpose of the Pre-Proposal submission is to provide an overview of the research proposal for peer evaluators to determine if it aligns with the Call to Action and if it should advance to the Full-Proposal phase. Both submissions must be submitted electronically via the Special Programs Webtool (SPWT):
https://specialprograms.research.illinois.edu
The SPWT contains the required templates for the Pre-Proposal and Full-Proposal submissions.

Pre-Proposal Application Process
Pre-Proposal Applicants must submit the following documents:
• Project Pre-Proposal, a required template, that provides a succinct and accurate description of the proposed work and includes the broad long-term objectives, specific aims, and how the project contributes to the Call to Action goal and focus area(s). Read the original Call to Action Massmail
   https://massmail.illinois.edu/massmail/1982189843.html
• Two-page biographies for each member of the project team.

Pre-Proposal Deadline: April 26, 2021, 5pm Central Time
• Pre-Proposals may be submitted from March 29, 2021 through April 26, 2021, 5pm Central Time.
• No extensions or exceptions will be entertained.
• The selection committee will only consider complete applications.

Notification of proposal status to advance to Full-Proposal submission will occur the week of May 3, 2021.
**Full Proposal Application Process**

*Full-Proposal Applicants must submit the following documents:*

- Project Full-Proposal, a required template, that provides project summary, overview, objectives, alignment with the Call to Action, background, expertise, anticipated outcomes, impacts, and deliverables. (4 pages maximum, single space, 11-point font). Read the original Call to Action Massmail [https://massmail.illinois.edu/massmail/1982189843.html](https://massmail.illinois.edu/massmail/1982189843.html)
- Budget and Budget Justification required templates.
- Memorandum of Understanding, a required template, to acknowledge agreement that if a proposer’s project is awarded and accepted, the PI must participate in the Call to Action Annual Symposium, return unspent funds at project completion, and submit progress reports for the first six months and the full 12 months of the project.
- Two-page biographies for each member of the project team.
- Project timeline.

In addition to the above documents, please be prepared to enter in the SPWT the names, emails, and phone numbers of **two individuals who have agreed** to serve as subject matter expert evaluators on the proposal and are not affiliate with the U of I. As a token of appreciation for their time, they will each receive a $350 honorarium upon completing the evaluation and returning two documents required to process the honorarium. The submission period for evaluations will be from June 7, 2021 to June 18, 2021. Evaluations must be submitted via the SPWT.

**Full Proposal Deadline: June 4, 2021, 5pm Central Time**

- Full-Proposals may be submitted May 6, 2021 through June 4, 2021, 5pm Central Time.
- No extensions or exceptions will be entertained.
- The selection committee will only consider complete applications.

**Notification of proposal funding status will occur beginning July 1, 2021.**

If a project is funded and includes work with human subjects, Institutional Review Board Approval from the Urbana-Champaign Office for the Protection of Research Subjects will be required prior to beginning the research. More information is available at: [https://oprs.research.illinois.edu/about-oprs-irb](https://oprs.research.illinois.edu/about-oprs-irb)
Key Evaluation Criteria

Required Criteria below must be addressed in the proposal submission.

• **Local impact or relevance.** A challenge of significant scale and complexity selected with an eye to long-term vision and expectation of significant results. Underscores Illinois’ responsibility and commitment to produce knowledge benefiting the state and local communities.

• **Build on current strength and leadership.** Creates and leverages existing scholarly strengths and emerge from what faculty are already pursuing, especially if faculty have opportunities to strengthen connections with faculty/students from other areas.

• **Impact on the university and its reputation.** Advances Illinois’ scholarly leadership in the topic area, as well as its national and global status – looking broadly at the resources and strategic assets we would bring – faculty, staff, students, financial resources, collaborators and partners, and local assets or advantages.

• **Alignment with the mission of a land-grant research university.** Fundamentally draws on our institution’s research power and creative activity; foster open, shared advances in fundamental disciplines; and bring together research with education, outreach, and public engagement.

• **Faculty and staff diversity and development.** Broadens the opportunities and expands participation of groups, faculty, and staff who are underrepresented, which is essential to the health and vitality of Illinois’ community of scholars. The Office of the Chancellor is committed to this principle of diversity and deems it central to the programs, projects, and activities it considers and supports.

Preferred Criteria

Preferred Criteria below are not required to be addressed in the proposal submission. However, it would be beneficial if the proposal addressed one or more of them.

• **Interconnection with undergraduate and graduate education.** Engages students in innovative and groundbreaking ways. Should centrally involve graduate and professional students, integrate with curriculum, and provide experiential and intercultural learning opportunities for undergraduate students.

• **Engagement of external constituencies.** Capitalizes on Illinois’ vibrant research, knowledge infrastructures (centers, institutes, Illinois Innovation Network [IIN], Discovery Partners Institute [DPI,] etc.), our diverse state and on our extensive network of national and international partners.

• **Sustainability.** Has the capacity to be a sustained effort over time (via grants, foundations, support from industry, state funding, university development efforts, or other sources).

• **National impact or relevance.** Should be a challenge of significant scale and complexity selected with an eye to long-term vision and expectation of significant results benefiting the nation.

More Information

The Call to Action to Address Racism & Social Injustice Research Program is administratively supported by the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion. For questions, please contact Dr. Gioconda Guerra Pérez at C2ARFP@illinois.edu or call 217-300-9580.