

**UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA
OFFICE OF RESEARCH AND GRADUATE EDUCATION**

**Advanced Support Program for Integration of Research Excellence-II
(ASPIRE-II)
Request for Proposals**

Announcement Release Date:	October 19, 2011
Application Receipt Date:	February 15, 2012
Award Announcement Date:	April 6, 2012

Purpose: ASPIRE-II funding is provided by the Office of the Vice President for Research to support research involving *at least two or more Colleges/Schools*. This call is aimed to promote interdisciplinary collaborations between *at least 3 or more faculty members* to develop preliminary data to apply for targeted Program Projects, Centers of Excellence Grants, or similar mechanisms of extramural funding. The goal of this internal grant program is to seed new projects or to support existing collaborative interdisciplinary research that is nationally and internationally competitive and has a strong potential to be supported and sustained by external funding agencies.

Eligibility: Eligible applicants include all tenured, tenure-track, and non-tenure-track faculty who have independent research programs on the USC Columbia Campus and USC Senior/Regional Campuses.

Faculty who have a current PIRA award or who are awarded a Provost's Internal Grant are not eligible for ASPIRE funding. Faculty serving on the ASPIRE review committee are not eligible to apply for funds during the funding cycle in which they serve.

Funds Available: ASPIRE-II grants may be funded up to **\$100,000**. An applicant may request a project period of 15 months beginning May 16, 2012 and ending August 15, 2013. Under certain conditions, exceptions to these dates may be requested. Proposals may be submitted by more than one investigator, *but only one investigator can be designated the project lead*. The number of proposals granted will depend on the innovative character and academic quality as well as the demonstrated funding potential of the proposed interdisciplinary research.

Budget Information: Budgets will need to be presented in general categories and require detailed explanation. Although the ASPIRE Review Committee intends to fund projects as closely as possible to the requested amount, it reserves the right to alter the amount depending on the number of proposals received and funds available. Cost share is not encouraged.

Allowable Costs

- Salary and fringe benefits of research personnel including undergraduate students, graduate students, post-doctoral fellows and technicians directly involved in providing data for the project.
- In certain cases up to one month of summer salary may be included for a PI if used directly to work on this project. However, a strong justification for this needs to be provided.

- Equipment (The formal definition of “capital equipment” is any article of non-expendable, tangible property having a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition, or valuation cost of at least \$5,000). For more expensive equipment support please refer to ASPIRE-III.
- Project supplies
- Animal maintenance
- Travel *essential* to conduct the project. Justification needs to be provided.

Unallowable Costs

- Costs in connection with faculty degree requirements
- Travel to professional and not project-related meetings
- Tuition
- Salary and fringe for Co-PI's

Application Procedure

1. Develop a five page proposal narrative that provides:
 - a. A brief discussion of the background and significance of the proposed interdisciplinary research, including its relation to the present state of knowledge in the field and its anticipated future impact.
 - b. A detailed narrative of the project that includes the objectives, significance of the research, the research task and expected accomplishments during the course of the project, the specific outcome of the project, and a discussion of securing potential external funding sources.
 - c. A maximum of one page should be devoted to discussing how the proposed research/scholarship/creative activity will grow and be sustained in the future without internal funding.
 - d. Proposal should be single-spaced with margins not less than one-half inch and using a font size not less than 11 pt.
2. Attach the following supporting documentation to the end of the proposal narrative:
 - a. Bibliography (should be included as appropriate, but will not be counted in the narrative page limitation).
 - b. Two-page biographical sketch of the principal investigator and each of the co-investigator(s) that includes:
 1. Education
 2. Professional experience
 3. Evidence of scholarship: most significant refereed journal articles, books, and book chapters, etc.
 4. Significant accomplishments and contributions
 5. Other information as appropriate
 - c. Current and pending support. Include current grant funding and pending grant funding using the form provided on the ASPIRE Program web site.
 - d. If you have received support from the Vice President's Office for Research in the past, include a short paragraph on each award which includes the funding amount and the benefits of the funds to your research/creative activity program.
 - e. A detailed budget on the form provided on the ASPIRE Program web site and budget justification for total project costs consistent with the list of allowable costs

shown above. Please see the information regarding the budget justification provided on the ASPIRE Program web site.

3. Submit the completed proposal packet:
 - a. Through USCeRA (<https://sam.research.sc.edu/uscera/>) and APPROVED by your chair, dean and/or chancellor before 5:00 pm on deadline date.
 - b. Application Receipt Date: Wednesday, February 15, 2012.**
 - c. Select "Internal Request VP for Research" and choose the category type (ASPIRE II) from the USCeRA drop down menu to ensure proper proposal routing. Failure to check the box will result in your proposal NOT being reviewed.
 - d. The Internal Commit Form should be used to list the amount that you are requesting from the VPR. Do not enter an amount in the Start-Up box. Enter in the amount that you are requesting for each year in the corresponding box. The total will calculate automatically for you. Do NOT use the Internal Commit Form to enter cost share. Use the Cost Share form to enter cost share. For more detailed instructions, please see the instructions on the ASPIRE Program web site.
 - e. Upload your proposal as ONE file using Adobe PDF or MSWord formats.
 - f. Questions about submission? Contact: Beth Herron, Office of Research Development, bherron@mailbox.sc.edu, 777-2885 and Dr. Tom Vogt, tvogt@mailbox.sc.edu

Review Process: Applications that are complete and responsive to this announcement will be evaluated by a Peer Review Committee. The Committee will provide a prioritized list of recommendations for funding to the VPR based on the quality of the proposals per the review criteria (see below). The VPR will make awards based on the Committee's recommendations and available funds.

Research Merit:

- Does the proposal provide a compelling argument for interdisciplinary research?
- Does the proposed project represent a significant advance to the investigators' fields of study? If so, how?

Nature of Proposal:

- Does the proposal provide a clear statement of the overall project objectives?
- Are the proposed methodologies appropriate and accurate?
- Does the proposal provide a sound justification with clear and specific budget information? Is the timeline realistic?
- Is the text of the proposal well-written?

Leverage:

- Will the project lead to the development of preliminary data to apply for specific Program Projects, Centers of Excellence Grants or other mechanisms of extramural funding?
- Does it significantly improve chances for funding from existing sources?
- Does the project offer significant opportunities for funding from new sources?
- Does the project help build interdisciplinary research networks within the university?

Reporting:

- If the investigator(s) has received previous funding from the Vice President's Office for Research, have all required reports been appropriately completed?

For more Information: Please contact Beth Herron, Research Development, bherron@mailbox.sc.edu/803-777-2885 and/or Dr. Tom Vogt, tvogt@mailbox.sc.edu.