

NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY (NOFO)
GRANTS FOR RESEARCH AND SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS (GRASP)
FROM THE OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT FOR RESEARCH AFFAIRS
2026

Purposes:

- To promote research collaborations between faculty members in different schools.
- To encourage faculty to become more involved in research.
- To develop grant preparation skills and generate preliminary data for subsequent extramural proposals.

Description:

- Maximum award: \$75,000
- Term of award: 24 months
- Number of awards: up to 3

New Applications:

- Letters of Intent must be submitted no later than Friday, November 7, 2025
- Application due date Friday, December 19, 2025
- Application pre-review date Friday, January 2, 2026
- Anticipated date of award announcement March 2026
- Earliest start date

Letters of Intent and Application Process: Intent to submit a GRASP application must be indicated by completing the [Letter of Intent form](#), *including the signatures of both PIs*, and submitting it to Research Affairs via email rapreaward@llu.edu. Your LOI will be used to create your LLeRA record for uploading your application documents. Questions should be directed to the Pre-Award team <https://researchaffairs.llu.edu/pre-award/contacts>. For questions regarding International GRASP, contact Wesley James (wjames@llu.edu).

GRASP PI eligibility:

- The project must be directed by two faculty co-Principal Investigators from different schools on the LLU campus.
- Both co-PIs must have LLU faculty appointments that meet the institution's [PI Eligibility](#) policy. An investigator's primary appointment will be used to determine eligibility. No more than two Principal Investigators may be named on an application.
- At least one co-PI must have received less than \$100,000 in direct costs for support of their research activities during the 12 months preceding the LOI due date. There are no financial restrictions for the other co-PI. **The PI with access to the lesser amount of research funding must be named the contact PI.**
- Only studies conducted at facilities on the Loma Linda campus will be considered.
- At least one of the co-PIs must have published at least one peer-reviewed article during the past year (to be included in the biosketch). This publication may be authored by either member of the team.
- Individuals who have received prior awards through a GRASP mechanism may reapply for GRASP support provided that *for each prior GRASP award*: the PIs have submitted one or more applications for extramural funding on which they are listed as PI or co-investigator. The grant application must have occurred after receiving the prior GRASP award. This requirement applies regardless of whether the proposed partnership is the same as previously or represents a new team.
- Teams that submitted unsuccessful GRASP applications may resubmit a revised application **by invitation only**. The revised application must include an "Introduction to the Revised Application," of up to one page that describes the changes made to the proposal.

- While individuals or teams may submit more than one application per cycle, no more than one award will be awarded to any investigator. Further, if an investigator submits two applications with two different co-PIs, only one would be eligible for an award. Individuals can serve as co-PI on only one active GRASP award at a time.

GRASP PI eligibility – MC & FMG

- The project must be directed by two co-Principal Investigators. One co-PI must be an LLU faculty member. The second co-PI must be an employee of LLUMC or FMG who is non-MD healthcare provider or specialist with an advanced degree.
- One co-PI must have LLU faculty appointment that meets the institution's PI Eligibility policy. The second co-PI need not have an LLU faculty appointment but must receive formal permission to serve as a co-PI through the PI exception process – this may take up to 60 days, plan accordingly. No more than two Principal Investigators may be named on an application.

(All other eligibility guidelines and instructions in this NOFO must be followed).

Eligibility for previous GRASP recipients: (one page for each previous GRASP awardee, to be submitted with LOI form): If one or both of the applicants are a previous GRASP recipient, provide the following for each previous GRASP award.

A. Extramural grant applications:

- LLeRA number
- Principal Investigator
- Title
- Sponsor name
- Date of submission
- Amount
- Current status (i.e., funded, pending, scored, not discussed, etc.)

B. Peer-reviewed and published papers:

- Citations for one or more articles that were published or accepted subsequent to the previous GRASP award and that acknowledge GRASP funding support from LLU.
- PDF of or hyperlink to the article(s).

Application pre-review:

To ensure that a quality application has been submitted, an administrative/scientific merit review will be conducted by Research Affairs. Administrators will decide which application(s) should move forward for reviewer assignment and consideration for funding. This review will include a rigorous evaluation of the formatting and science to determine if NIH standards are met. Administrators will decide and communicate directly with PIs if edits will be allowed or if the application will be withdrawn.

Criteria for Evaluation: Awards will be based primarily on scientific merit, including significance, innovation, approach, and investigator. The strength of the basic/clinical collaboration, the PI leadership plan, alignment with institutional interests and goals, and the adequacy of the budget, with justification, will also be considered. Inclusion of preliminary data supporting the proposed study is highly recommended. In the absence of preliminary data, strong literature support for the planned study is required. The focus will be on funding high impact, paradigm shifting, innovative projects, and preference will be given to projects anticipated to provide long-term benefits to both the LLU investigator and LLUH entities. Consequently, the application must clearly describe the potential impact of the project on the field and highlight its innovative elements. Applications are expected to appropriately address issues of [rigor and reproducibility](#). Proposals will be reviewed by a panel of investigators, selected to include those with a record of extramural funding and a preference for those who

currently serve or have recently served on federal grant review panels. To the extent possible, applications will be kept confidential, but the abstracts of funded projects may be published.

Application Format: Text must be 11 point or larger with six lines per inch and margins of at least one-half inch. Headers and footers should not be used. The sections identified below may not exceed their indicated page limits, and appendices are not allowed. The following headings are expected.

Title Page (one page): Include the title of the project, names of both principle investigators, their contact information (including (as applicable) institutional e-mail, phone numbers, WhatsApp ID, Skype ID, Zoom ID, ORCID ID, name of department and/or center and any collaborating institution(s)), a list of all key personnel involved in the project, and total dollars requested.

Abstract and Key Words (up to 30 lines of text): The project summary/abstract is a succinct and accurate description of the proposed work and should be able to stand on its own (separate from the application). This section should be informative to other persons working in the same or related fields and understandable to a scientifically literate reader. Please be concise. State the application's broad, long-term objectives and specific aims, making reference to the health relatedness of the project. Describe the research design and methods for achieving the stated goals. Be sure that the project summary reflects the key focus of the proposed project. Four to six keywords are required to identify the general area of research and the principal elements of the study.

Biographical Sketches (up to five pages per investigator): Provide NIH style biosketches for the co-PIs and key personnel (Other Significant Contributors) in the format provided in link <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/forms/biosketch.htm>.

Budget: Design a complete budget for up to 24 months of support. Identify amounts for each co-PI, expenditures for salaries (non-PI), supplies, and miscellaneous costs. GRASP awards may not be used for equipment costing \$5,000 or more, travel expenses, conference fees, or indirect costs. The total budget may not exceed \$75,000 with neither co-PI allocated more than \$45,000. **Only non-faculty salaries and wages** are permitted; however, co-PIs are expected to commit a minimum of 10% effort to the project. All other Key-Personnel should be listed as “**Other Significant Contributors,**” (OSC) no internal consultants or co-investigators should be listed on the application. OSCs are individuals who have committed to contributing to the scientific development or execution of the project, but are not committing any specified measurable effort (i.e., person months) to the project and will not receive a salary. LLU core facilities must be utilized – In the event that LLU does not have the resource on campus, contact your Pre Award team member to discuss an alternative. Consult with a Pre Award team member (ext. 55160).

Budget Justification (one page): Indicate the purpose of supplies, support personnel, and other costs, including a breakdown of costs for each co-PI; thus, each co-PI should have allocated costs represented on the justification. State how the research funds are to be allocated. For example, a team may wish to divide up the funds into two accounts covering different types of expenses, with one PI responsible for each account, or they may wish to consolidate funds into one account with one PI serving as the point of contact for all financial matters.

Resources and Environment: Describe facilities and other resources available to complete your project, both at LLU. Also, state how the scientific environment in which the research will be done contributes to the probability of success. Note major items of equipment already available for your project, including those available in core facilities.

Research Plan: Much of the text below is taken from NIH instructions to facilitate conversion to an R03, R21, etc. application. <https://grants.nih.gov/funding/activity-codes/r21>

A. Introduction to Revised Application (one page, required only for revised applications): Summarize the substantial additions, deletions, and changes to your application. In addition, concisely address each of the concerns raised by the previous reviews.

B. Specific Aims (one page): State concisely the goals of the proposed research and summarize the expected outcome(s), including the impact that the results of the proposed research will exert on the research field(s) involved. List succinctly the specific objectives of the research proposed (e.g., to test a stated hypothesis, create a novel design, solve a specific problem, challenge an existing paradigm or clinical practice, address a critical barrier to progress in the field, or develop new technology).

C. Research Strategy (limited to 6 pages): Six pages are allowed for the subsections of Significance, Innovation, and Approach. Suggested allocations of this space for those three subsections are noted below.

- **Significance** (suggested length of ½ page): Explain the importance of the problem or critical barrier to progress that the proposed project addresses. I Describe the strengths and weaknesses in the rigor of the prior research (both published and unpublished) that serves as the key support for the proposed project. I Explain how the proposed project will improve scientific knowledge, technical capability, and/or clinical practice in one or more broad fields.
- **Innovation** (suggested length of ½ page): Explain how the application challenges and seeks to shift current research or clinical practice paradigms. I Describe any novel theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions to be developed or used, and any advantage over existing methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions. I Explain any refinements, improvements, or new applications of theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions.
- **Approach** (suggested length of 5 pages): Explain how the application challenges and seeks to shift current research or clinical practice paradigms. Describe any novel theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions to be developed or used, and any advantage over existing methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions. I Explain any refinements, improvements, or new applications of theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions.

Discuss potential problems, alternative strategies, and benchmarks for success anticipated to achieve the aims. If the project is in the early stages of development, describe any strategy to establish feasibility and address the management of any high-risk aspects of the proposed work.

If the project involves human subjects and/or NIH-defined clinical research, describe the plans to address 1) the protection of human subjects from research risks, and 2) justify inclusion/exclusion in terms of the scientific goals and research strategy proposed.

Future Directions (1/2 - one page): Briefly describe the future directions to be taken with this project, assuming that this initial phase is successful. For example, describe grants or industry funding to be applied for and how the preliminary data obtained in this first phase will enhance those applications. Also, if this pilot data will allow design of a larger study, describe briefly the anticipated study design for this larger study.

Leadership Plan, Conflict Resolution and Succession (1/2 – one page): Both PIs must make major contributions to the project. Indicate the individual research assignments of the PIs. State how the PIs will coordinate their activities, resolve problems, and allocate responsibilities for management and reporting. Briefly describe the steps to be taken to resolve conflicts that may arise. Also describe plans for succession, should one or both investigators become unavailable to continue the proposed work (i.e., an investigator leaves his/her institution, death or disability, or a conflict that cannot be resolved).

D. References: Include references that demonstrate the need for this research, establish feasibility for hypotheses and procedures, and provide support for the approach. Include titles and authors.

Letters of Support (Others): Letters of support from department heads, key personnel and consultants are encouraged.

Compliance: When the proposal involves human embryonic stem cells, ionizing radiation, laboratory animals, human subjects, or other elements that require approval by an oversight committee, integrate the descriptions into the Research Strategy section. If the proposal is awarded, separate applications must be made to the appropriate committee **before** the work can begin, e.g., Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC), Institutional Review Board (IRB), Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC), and/or the Stem Cell Research Oversight Committee (SCRO).

No Cost Extensions (NCE):

- **First NCE:** 18 months with VPRA approval, based on an application confirming project activity.
- **Second NCE:** 12 months with VPRA and Dean(s) or designee approval, requiring a detailed progress report.
- **Additional NCE:** Competitive review by study section with scores indicating fundability.

Final Report: Extensions of the project period may be requested and if granted, will follow NIH guidelines. Within 60 days of the end of the project period, a final report is due. It should include accomplishments, significant results, manuscripts prepared for publication, and plans for extramural grant applications. Send reports to rapostaward@llu.edu.

Contacts:

For General Information, Technical and Application Guidance: <https://researchaffairs.llu.edu/pre-post-award/contacts>.

For Pre-Award information or eligibility questions: rapreaward@llu.edu.