



POLICIES

Effective Date: 1 October 2010

Retired:

Revised: 20 November 2014

Approved by: A. Cherrie Epps, Ph.D., President and CEO

Subject: Research Bridge Funding Program

PURPOSE: The purpose of the Meharry Medical College Research Bridge Funding Program is to establish an orderly and structured process to allocate research bridge funding. These funds are meant to sustain a productive research program, as evidenced by peer-reviewed publications and competitive grant submissions, when a lapse in grant funding threatens the staffing and continued research progress. The primary objectives are to retain highly experienced research staff at Meharry Medical College as well as to provide temporary supplies to maintain the research in a temporary manner.

POLICY STATEMENT: Research bridge funding will be allocated on a competitive basis to full-time faculty investigators who face a lapse in independent extramural research funding. Funds will be awarded up to \$50,000 only if there is documented evidence in the form of a recent (12 months or less) extramural funding agency's peer review suggesting that extramural funding is likely to be granted in the near future (6 months-1 year).

Only one bridge funding grant will be given per PI per year. Under exceptional circumstances, a PI may be granted a second year of bridge funding per application. Bridge funds may be used only in compliance with the submitted budget. If extramural funding is obtained, the residual funds must be returned to the appropriate designated fund.

Priority will be given to investigators with long-term or very experienced staff members where graduate students also are present. Faculty members seeking bridge funding must provide a written request/justification accompanied by a written endorsement from their primary department chairperson (or the school dean if the department chair is the applicant).

Supplementation from departmental resources is encouraged as is active pursuit of other intramural and extramural funding sources.

The bridge funding pool will be developed from various institutional resources. Funds will be awarded on a competitive basis by the Office for Research following reviews of requests and recommendations made by the Bridge Funding Review Committee with approval by the appropriate deans.

Subject: Research Bridge Funding Program

Awards will be for one year with the maximal award amount being set each year. Allowable costs include may include support personnel, excluding all faculty on the grant (not to exceed the equivalent of one FTE staff) and research supplies.

To establish a MMC grants control number, intramural research grant applications must be first routed to the Grants Management Office after receiving the chairperson's or dean's signature (as appropriate). This control number is the unique identifier for this application for all pre-award and regulatory transactions. This policy applies as well to all extramural research applications regardless of sponsor (federal, state, city, private) and to all intramural (MMC pilot, VUMC pilot, and Bridge) applications.

DEFINITIONS:

Bridge Funding Review Committee: The committee charged with competitively reviewing requests under the Research Bridge Funding Program.

Independent Extramural Research Funding: Funding where the faculty member requesting bridge funding has independently received an extramural research award, such as an NIH "R" type, "K", "SC", "U", or grants from other agencies or foundations that allow resubmission such as Department of Defense (DOD), National Science Foundation (NSF), American Cancer Society (ACS), American Heart Association (AHA) etc. This excludes extramural internal pilot funding received through institutional center or program awards such as the Cancer Partnership, RCMi or MeTRC, CMPC, VICTR and fellowships.

PROCEDURE:**Bridge Funding Review Committee**

The Bridge Funding Review Committee will serve on behalf of the deans. The committee will consist of eight members appointed by the deans. Each dean may anticipate representation on the committee based on the proportion of Meharry Medical College's full time faculty members who have their primary appointment in their particular school. Appointment terms will be one to three years to allow for rotation of at least two of the voting committee membership every year. Voting members must rotate off of the committee for at least one year before being eligible for reappointment.

Five of the voting committee members will be faculty investigators from five different departments. At least three of those will be current faculty investigators

Subject: Research Bridge Funding Program

who have stable extramural funding beyond their term to avoid conflict of interest issues. The Associate Dean for Research will be a nonvoting *ex officio* member of the committee. Department Chairs, Deans and Center Directors are ineligible to serve as members of the committee.

At least 50% of the voting committee members must be present to hold valid meetings and at least 50% of the committee members eligible to vote must vote (abstention does not count as a vote even if the member is present) when making recommendations and decisions.

Committee members must recuse themselves from the room for discussions and voting on requests where there is a real or perceived conflict of interest. Conflicts of interest include, but are not limited to, the following:

- being a family member of the applicant
- being in the same department as the applicant
- having published with, or served as a co-investigator with the applicant
- being a close personal friend of the applicant
- having had significant conflicts with the applicant

The Bridge Funding Review Committee will meet twice a year (January and July) or as needed and present its recommendations for funding to the appropriate dean(s) who shall make the final decision(s) about applicants from their school. Should the deans involved have a real or perceived conflict of interest with an applicant, the President shall make the final decision. The actual funds will be administered through the Office of Research.

The review criterion will include:

- Probability of adequate extramural research funding being received in the near future to support the applicant's research program
- Length and amount of previous extramural funding
- Recent grants submitted and outcomes
- Five-year peer-reviewed publication record
- Student training record
- Research expertise of staffing being requested

Requests may be submitted at any time, but with a minimum of three months before funding lapse is anticipated.

An Intramural Bridge Funding application (with instructions) will be made available on the website of the Office of Research.



POLICIES

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Subject: Research Bridge Funding Program

The complete application is to be submitted to the Grants Management Office who will review the proposals for eligibility and completeness, and assign a grants control number.

If an award is made, the applicant will be notified by the Office of Research and a fund will be established in their name by the Office of Grants and Contracts.

A progress report will be required at the end of the project period to assist in documenting the effectiveness of the bridge funding program and justifying its continued support. Failure to submit the progress report will be grounds for ineligibility for future intramural research funding, including bridge and pilot funding.

EXHIBITS: None