

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for the OVPR Research Continuity Fund Process

1. Does this process replace the OVPR Quarterly Investment Program?

The short answer is “yes”! For FY21, the OVPR has replaced the quarterly investment program with the Research Continuity Fund to address gaps, deficiencies, or opportunities in CSU’s research and scholarship community that have been identified as resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.

2. Does this process replace funding mechanisms for cost share, start-ups/retention offers, Core/Specialized Services, Programs of Research and Scholarly Excellence (PRSEs) or renovation facilitated through the Research Building Revolving Fund (RBRF)?

The OVPR Research Continuity Fund does not replace these funding activities. Requests for mandatory cost share, start-up and retention offers, Core/Specialized Facilities, PRSEs, and the RBRF processes will continue to be handled separately.

3. Are there limits on the amount of funding that can be requested?

The minimum funding amount that will be considered for this process is \$10,000 from all combined sources. No cost share is required, although it is encouraged. Requests for needs below \$10,000 should be directed to appropriate College/Departmental channels. If only a small amount of funding (i.e. \$2,500 level) is required, applicants with similar needs may aggregate these requests into one proposal that meets the minimum request amount. Although there is no maximum on the amount that can be requested, the research continuity fund has a limited amount of funds available. As such, funding very large requests (e.g. >\$50K) through this mechanism may be challenging. We encourage proposers seeking such contributions from the OVPR to initiate a discussion prior to submission by sending an email to Ellen Fisher (Ellen.Fisher@colostate.edu).

4. What is the review process? What funding criteria are being used?

All proposals will be reviewed by members of the VPR Executive Committee and an internal review committee that may include members of advisory groups such as VPAC and CRAD or former recipients of quarterly investment funds as needed. The final allocation decisions will be made by the OVPR. Proposals will be evaluated based on the merits of the request, considering the information provided and the review criteria given in the RFP. Feedback will be provided on all requests in each funding cycle and unfunded requests may be submitted in a subsequent cycle. We encourage PIs to discuss the feedback they received prior to a resubmission. The amount of funding requested is only a determinant relative to the total funding available. Special consideration will be given to activities that are broad-reaching, collaborative, and/or that increase/support diversity, equity, and inclusion or seek to remove disparities in research continuity. Likewise, collaborative cost share funding from PIs, colleges, departments, and other sources is strongly encouraged and will be viewed positively in the review process.

5. How long will it take to make funding decisions?

Funding decisions for proposals submitted under this process will be made within 6 weeks after the submission deadline.

6. What if there is a critical funding need that falls outside the submission period?

The OVPR will continue to accept funding requests that are of a critical (emergency) nature or that represent unanticipated college and department needs. Examples could include catastrophic instrument failures or other unforeseen circumstances. For these circumstances, please initiate a discussion with the OVPR by sending an email to Ellen Fisher (Ellen.Fisher@colostate.edu).

7. I submitted a proposal and was provided funding in a prior period. Can I submit another funding proposal in the future?

Given the limited funding available, the OVPR seeks to make funds available as broadly as possible across the entire campus. Nevertheless, the OVPR will accept multiple funding requests from the same individual, but not in the same cycle and not for the same project. Funding decisions are based on the merits of the proposals received within a given funding period.

8. Will requests for bridge funds to retain faculty/staff/other personnel or to fill a gap in research project funding be allowed?

Traditional bridge funding requests to support temporary funding gaps in ongoing research programs that have lost funding will not be supported. The research continuity fund is intended to address gaps, deficiencies or opportunities resulting directly from the COVID-19 pandemic; therefore, a case must be made within the proposal as to how these funds will address such issues, including long-term sustainability. Notably, a limited amount of funding is available through this mechanism and the needs across campus are great. If faculty retention issues arise, these should be brought directly to the VPR and should not go through this process.

9. Can I request funding for daily PPE needs (e.g. masks/hand sanitizer, etc.) through this process?

The quick answer is “no”. Consult your department for mechanisms to acquire these items, which should be available through departmental channels. The research continuity fund will, however, entertain requests for specialized PPE (e.g. PPE required for a new research direction). In addition, we welcome proposals that will enhance/create a positive, proactive research safety culture.

10. Can I request renovation funds through this process?

One of the eligible costs categories is research infrastructure, including facility/space repurposing or renovation. A request in this category, however, should be focused on “repurposing” space in response to post-pandemic needs or opportunities (e.g. new research directions that require alteration to the physical space), rather than renovations associated with general project needs or aesthetics.

11. What types of projects have been funded through the Research Continuity Fund?

In the first cycle of FY21, successful proposals focused on research continuity needs and also had some measure of breadth to the impact of the proposed funding. Single PI proposals, seed projects, and projects that did not appear to be truly focused on continuity issues were not as successful. Here are some examples of types of proposals that were funded in the first cycle:

- Catastrophic instrument failure resulting from COVID-19 shutdown/restart of research activity
- Pivoting of research to new directions requiring access to different types of projects (e.g. moving more remote/on-line)
- Support for broad-based initiatives that could impact faculty/graduate students across the institution.