



Office of the Vice President for Research Quarterly Strategic Investment FY26 – Cycle 2 – Request for Proposals

BACKGROUND

Colorado State University is committed to supporting a wide range of activities across research, scholarship, and creative activity. The Office of the Vice President for Research (OVPR) will utilize the Quarterly Strategic Investment process for managing funding requests from colleges, departments, and other units. A major advantage of this process is the allocation of available funds across the fiscal year to ensure that support for needs can be consistently made in a structured manner.

DESCRIPTION

The OVPR Quarterly Strategic Investment process provides funding broadly across the institution to strategically maximize research momentum and drive our research enterprise forward by addressing gaps, deficiencies, or opportunities. This funding request process will be utilized to ensure continued research excellence and to accelerate CSU's ability to successfully pursue new opportunities in an evolving funding landscape. We envision that this mechanism will foster a heightened ability to thrive and pivot by supporting activities that increase capacity, increase collaboration, seed new pathways, and maintain a strong foundation of extramural funding, including for those who have experienced or expect a change in funding and need support to transition to new funding streams. Applications for this mechanism will need to be explicit about why funds are needed, with a clear link to growth or opportunity.

This process is intended to synchronize the submission of requests to the OVPR, establish a common set of funding criteria, provide a means to strategically assess funding needs across a larger pool of proposals, and ensure that investments can be made for identified needs over the remainder of the fiscal year. This program is not intended to sustain individual research projects, replace the start-up/retention funding process, replace funding under the Core/Specialized Facilities RFP, or manage requests for extramural proposal mandatory cost share (see *Mandatory Cost Share* below).

Of Note

- This fiscal year 2026 (FY26) Quarterly Strategic Investment RFP includes revisions from previous cycles. Please read this call carefully.
 - The FY26 "Cycle 2" criteria described herein is for the May 5, 2026 submission deadline only.
 - This program may change in subsequent cycles, including potential shifts in eligible requests, prioritized activities, timeline, and funding availability.
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GENERAL INFORMATION



Funding

For FY26, the OVPR will consider requests that range from **\$5,000 to \$50,000 (or more)** per proposal, with thresholds for requests that do and don't have cost share match. Requests over \$50,000 may be challenging, therefore, we encourage proposers seeking these larger contributions from the OVPR to initiate a discussion prior to submission. Funding requests are for one-time funds only, therefore, requests for recurring needs will not be considered. Funds **can be spent over a 1-year** maximum timeframe from receipt.

Funds in any given cycle are limited and the number of proposals received in each cycle can vary dramatically. Awards made in any given funding cycle do not imply approval for a similar request made in a future funding cycle. For example, requests for support for recurring events (e.g. annual workshops or conferences) may not continue to be funded for multiple occurrences. Additional consideration will be given to proposals that are broad-reaching and/or cross-disciplinary in nature.

Cost Share/Matching Funds

Generally, proposals that have financial support from local units are viewed as indicative of higher prioritization within those units, therefore, cost share may be included at all funding levels but is not required for requests under \$10,000. All requests **over \$10,000 must demonstrate shared funding participation** (cost share/match) from non-OVPR sources, including any combination of PI, Department, College, or other internal/external sources. In general, the **OVPR contribution should be no more than 33-50% of the total budget**, however, the OVPR may contribute a larger fraction of the total cost in some instances. By practice, funded proposals typically demonstrate a strong contribution from non-OVPR sources. CSU personnel time contributions (faculty, staff, or student) may **NOT** be utilized as match.

Urgent Requests

Urgent requests (e.g., catastrophic failures) with significant time constraints outside the open window for this process should be brought directly to the attention of the OVPR by the Research Associate Dean for the college making the request. See contact information below for urgent requests.

Extramural Proposal Submissions - Mandatory Cost Share Requests

Do not submit mandatory cost share requests through the Quarterly Strategic Investment process. The OVPR accepts requests for mandatory cost share support at any time, through CSU's InfoReady Review system. See contact below if you have questions about making these requests.

ELIGIBILITY

Who can Apply

Applications may only be submitted by: Tenure-track (TT) or contract and continuing (CC) faculty; research scientists/scholars; center or institute directors; associate deans and deans; and



department heads. Adjunct faculty, post docs, and students may not apply to this mechanism. Applicants who have been funded for a request in the immediate previous cycle are discouraged from submitting another request.

Eligible Costs

Requests for funding will be accepted for a broad range of activities that address gaps, deficiencies or strategic opportunities within the research, scholarship, and creative activity enterprise. Funds are intended to strengthen our ecosystem, infrastructure, visibility, and/or enhance the likelihood of success for pursuit of funding opportunities, particularly those in response to the changing federal landscape. ***In general, and particularly for infrastructure, the OVPR encourages requests for shared resources in “pods” or in a building, focused on creating collaboration rather than focused on a single PI lab, and demonstrating alignment to our broader strategic plan.***

Allowable expenses associated with supported activities include but are not limited to:

- Center/Program/Research Programs
 - Refocused/new directions for research or scholarly projects due to changing federal landscape (gap-filling, preliminary data, or proof-of-concept generation), including supplies and personnel effort.
 - Interdisciplinary teams preferred; individual or single-disciplinary team requests may be considered, but these requests should be discussed with OVPR staff prior to submission.
 - Access to external research facilities or services
- Research Infrastructure
 - New equipment/instrumentation (significant multi-use, cross-institution user base)
 - Repair of equipment/instrumentation (due to catastrophic instrument failure)
 - Construction/alteration/renovation of research space (for repurposing, pivoting)
- Conferences/Workshops/Special Events
 - Sponsorship of hosted events at CSU with significant external participation/visibility
- Activities/Services to Strengthen Faculty Success and Competitiveness for External Funding
 - Team and network building activities to fill gaps
 - External review or facilitation services for proposal preparation, writing workshops, etc.
 - Generation of products and presentations, whitepapers, review articles, or other materials to position for a new opportunity/field/area
 - Landscaping and competitive intelligence activities
 - Travel to establish partnerships or meet with program officers
- Other

Ineligible Costs

The OVPR will not accept requests for:

- Curriculum development or other instructional needs
- Professional development



- Bridge funding
- Small seed projects or other projects that can be funded extramurally (these should be submitted to external sponsors under their mechanisms).
- Student-led projects (initiated or submitted by graduate/undergraduate students)
- Support for external partners
- Travel or fees to attend conferences or workshops.
- Requests for mandatory cost share for extramural proposal submissions (see below)

SUBMISSION DEADLINES

During FY26, the OVPR Quarterly Strategic Investment process will have two cycles, scheduled to allow for maximum flexibility and agility in responding to identified needs throughout the remainder of the fiscal year. Funding requests will be accepted until the submission deadline (**by 5:00 pm MT**). Requests received after the deadline will not be considered in that funding cycle and must be submitted to the next funding cycle. New cycles will be announced approximately four weeks prior to the submission deadline.

The submission deadline date for FY26 Cycle 2 is:

CYCLE	SUBMISSION DEADLINE DATE
Cycle 2	May 8, 2026

PROPOSAL PROCEDURE

Submit your proposal as a combination of fillable fields and a PDF document, using **CSU's InfoReady Review system**, described below. Proposal title, applicant/co-applicant information, and total budget amount requested/matched will be submitted within fillable fields in the system. All other proposal components (**2 pages max, with additional budget form, quotes, and match commitments as appendices**) must be uploaded into the system as one combined PDF document. These uploaded components should include a detailed description and justification of the request, with the following required elements in this order:

- **Need.** Description of how OVPR funds will be used, including a justification for how funds will address gaps, deficiencies or opportunities, or assist with research and scholarly continuity/recovery, as well as how a met request will more broadly benefit CSU, the college, and/or the department. Be explicit about why funds are needed. If the request is related to the changing federal landscape, describe a clear link to an impacted area.
- **Outcomes and Impact.** The expected outcomes and impacts of the project or activity.
- **Sustainability.** A follow-on plan for sustainability (e.g., proposal submission for additional



- funding; grad student recruitment plan; etc.).
- **Timeline.** Date funds are needed and when activities will take place.
- **Budget.** A completed **Budget Form** summarizing major elements, cash/in-kind types, and contributor sources (see **Budget Form**, attached or downloadable in the InfoReady system). Save as a PDF and incorporate into the document.
 - *Not included in page limitation*
- **Quotes.** Include quotes for all requested capital equipment (greater than \$10,000) or renovations for repurposing requests, if applicable.
 - *Not included in page limitation*
- **Match/Cost Share.** If cost sharing is included in this proposal, evidence of matching funds with appropriate sign-off from department/college authorities (e.g., letter from department head or research associate dean indicating availability and commitment of funds, if awarded).
 - *Not included in page limitation*

SUBMISSION PROCESS

Applications are **due by 5:00 pm on the submission deadline date (see submission deadline table)** through the CSU InfoReady Review system. The system will not accept applications after 5:00 pm MT.

Accessing the CSU InfoReady Review system to submit:

1. From the opportunities list found at <https://colostate.infoready4.com/>, locate “**CSU – OVPR Quarterly Strategic Investment – FY26 – Cycle 2**” and click on the title to open the opportunity page.
2. From the opportunity page, click “Apply”.
3. Use your CSU NetID and password to log into InfoReady Review.
4. Complete and upload all required components. You can save your application as a draft prior to submission.
5. Be sure to submit your application. Applications left as “draft” will not be reviewed.

NOTE: Colleges and other units may have separate internal processes for screening and submission. Applicants should confer with their department head and/or research associate dean prior to preparing an application for advisement on any additional processes.

REVIEW CRITERIA

In general, the review committee will evaluate proposals based on the perceived need and return on investment. Thus, the following elements are considered:

- Need and degree to which funds will assist with research and scholarly activities, including addressing gaps, deficiencies, opportunities, or other research continuity needs
- Scholarly impact and broader institutional impact (beyond one investigator or department)
- Long-term sustainability (will this truly fill a gap or will the need persist)



- Student engagement in research and scholarly activities
- Promotion of a proactive, positive, safe and ethical research culture
- Leveraging of resources
- Alignment with university, college and/or department strategic initiatives, goals and priorities
- Programmatic investment across colleges

For additional clarification, please refer to the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for the OVPR Quarterly Strategic Investment.

CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have questions or need additional information about this process, please contact:

Dinaida Egan

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