SEEDS: The OARDC Research Enhancement Competitive Grants Program

Fiscal Year 2017

Request for Proposals
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Request for Submission of Research Proposals

This is an invitation to submit research proposals to SEEDS: The OARDC Research Enhancement Competitive Grants Program for fiscal year 2017.

As the research arm of The Ohio State University’s College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences (CFAES), OARDC employs nearly 650 scientists and staff members throughout the state — conducting research that benefits all Ohioans. OARDC’s Wooster campus is the largest agbioscience research facility in the United States. Although the majority of OARDC scientists are affiliated with CFAES, several are also located in Ohio State’s Colleges of Education and Human Ecology, Veterinary Medicine, and Arts and Sciences. Research support is provided in three signature areas:

- Advanced Bioenergy and Biobased Products
- Environmental Quality and Sustainability
- Food Security, Production and Human Health

SEEDS funds are to be used to explore creative ideas and to initiate novel research programs that are attractive to external sponsors and that are consistent with the mission of OARDC. By providing SEEDS money to develop the necessary preliminary data for a strong extramural grant application or by matching funds to leverage additional external funding, SEEDS has proved to be a valuable program for CFAES scientists.

SEEDS awards are intended to accomplish the following objectives:

- Enhance and encourage creative and innovative research
- Increase the competitiveness of scientists in extramural grant programs
- Encourage partnerships with industry and other stakeholders
- Encourage the development of interdisciplinary teams
- Encourage international collaborations

Current OARDC Research Committee Members

Gary Gao, The Ohio State University Extension, Chair
Larry Antosch, Ohio Farm Bureau Federation
John Cardina, Horticulture and Crop Science
Matthew Davies, School of Environment and Natural Resources
Mary Gardiner, Entomology
TBD, Ohio Department of Agriculture
Farnaz Maleky, Food Science and Technology
Gireesh Rajashekara, Food Animal Health Research Program
Matthew Roberts, Food, Agricultural and Biological Engineering
Mary Rodriguez, Agricultural Communication, Education and Leadership
Sudhir Sastry, Agricultural, Environmental and Developmental Economics
Robert Scharff, College of Education and Human Ecology
Macdonald Wick, Animal Sciences
Jonathan Witter, Ohio State Agricultural Technical Institute
Ye Xia, Plant Pathology
Jerry Bigham, Interim Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Education, College of Food, Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, Ex-Officio
Lori Kaser, Grants and Contracts Administrator, College of Food, Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, Ex-Officio

All questions regarding SEEDS funding should be directed to:
Sarah Elvey
Grants Coordinator
SEEDS Program Coordinator
1680 Madison Avenue
Wooster, OH 44691-4096
330-263-3637
seeds@osu.edu
oardc.osu.edu/seeds
Section 1: Grant Competition Categories

1.1 Seed Grant Competition

Investigators choosing to submit a proposal to the Seed Competition must select one of the following tracks: *Early Career Investigator* or *Team Science*.

Investigators (PIs and Co-PIs) are only eligible to be on one active Seed project at any given time, regardless of the track.

This competition rewards proposals that develop new methods or that explore new, substantive areas of research. It is not intended to bridge funding for work in progress or to supplement existing grants.

**A. Early Career Investigator (maximum of $50,000 per award)**

**Objective:** Fund new, innovative research and generate the preliminary data needed for early career investigators to prepare competitive extramural proposals.

**Eligibility:**
- Principal Investigators (PIs) must be untenured, regular faculty or hold appointments as research faculty, professional practice faculty, research scientists, or postdoctoral researchers in an academic unit or program within FAES. PIs must also have been employed for less than 6 years and retain PI status by approval from the Office of Research (http://research.osu.edu/researchers/policies/pistatus/).
- Regular faculty (tenure-track, research-track, professional practice-track) or research scientists who have been employed for more than six years are not eligible to be the lead Investigator for Early Career Investigator Awards but may serve as a Co-PI. Adjunct faculty are not eligible.

**B. Team Science (maximum of $80,000 per award)**

**Objective:** Generate new, innovative research in emerging areas central to the CFAES mission. It is expected that this competition will encourage the development of new scholarly teams among faculty from diverse disciplines.

**Eligibility:** All CFAES researchers with Principal Investigator status are eligible to submit a proposal (except adjunct faculty).
- Investigators must demonstrate that the proposed work represents a substantial shift in research focus and/or development of new methods of research.
- The research team must be composed of a minimum of 2 investigators.
- Investigators may be from the same academic unit but not the same lab.
- Increased weight will be given to intercollegiate teams; to teams that integrate the social, biological and physical sciences; and to mentoring partnerships that provide significant opportunities for junior investigators to combine their unique expertise with the program of senior investigators.
- Teams of untenured faculty in one or more academic units are encouraged to submit proposals.

1.2 Partnership Grant Competition (maximum of $25,000 per award)

Proposals submitted to the Partnership Grant Competition require matching funds and documented support from the collaborating partner.

Investigators (PIs and Co-PIs) are only eligible to be on one active Partnership project at any given time.

This competition rewards proposals that demonstrate a strong commitment from the partner and a documented strategy for future funding. Each proposal should clearly state how its successful completion will move the project towards product development, commercialization, and sustained partnerships. It is not intended to bridge funding for work in progress or to supplement existing grants.
Objective: Initiate projects in collaboration with industry and nonprofit foundations or other nontraditional sources of funding. Projects require a 1:1 financial match.

Eligibility: All CFAES researchers with Principal Investigator status are eligible to submit a proposal (except adjunct faculty).

1.3 Agency External Competitive Grant Match (maximum of $15,000)
The purpose of the Agency External Competitive Grant Competition is to provide matching funds to approved competitive grants programs that require a match. A request for matching funds may be submitted at any time throughout the year. Approval will be on a case-by-case basis for as long as funds are available.

There is no limit to the number of requests that can be made in this category.

Objective: Provide matching funds to approved competitive grants programs that require a match.

Eligibility: All CFAES researchers with Principal Investigator status are eligible to submit a proposal (except adjunct faculty).

To apply for an Agency External Competitive Grant Match, the items listed here must be submitted to the SEEDS program coordinator at least one week prior to the submission deadline established by the external agency:

- A copy of the request for proposals indicating that a match is required
- A copy of the proposal cover page (this can be a draft)
- An abstract of the project
- A copy of the entire project budget (including matching funds)

If the request is approved, OARDC will provide a letter of support for inclusion in the proposal. Matching funds will be provided only if the proposal receives external funding. In order to receive the SEEDS match, the investigator must provide to the SEEDS program coordinator a project number from Ohio State’s Office of Sponsored Programs within 90 days of award.

1.4 Graduate and Director’s Undergraduate Research Programs
SEEDS funding is available to the Graduate Research Program and the Director’s Undergraduate Research Program. For additional information on these programs, consult the SEEDS website (oardc.osu.edu/seeds).

1.5 International Collaboration
While there is no specific competition for international collaborations, such collaborations often strengthen proposals and are encouraged. Proposals with an international component will be strengthened if they contain a letter of intent from the collaborating country or countries indicating its/their support in the section on Collaborative Arrangements and/or Matching Funding Plan and Strategy for Acquiring Future Funding. Proposals must also relate to the SEEDS program objectives.
Section 2: Eligibility, Submission Requirements and Rules of Submission

2.1 Eligibility and Service as an Investigator
See individual competition categories for specific eligibility requirements.

All CFAES researchers with Principal Investigator status are eligible to submit a proposal. Adjunct faculty members are not eligible.

Faculty in the Colleges of Education and Human Ecology, Biological Sciences, Veterinary Medicine and in all other Ohio State academic units may also receive SEEDS funding provided the investigator initiating the proposal (contact investigator) has an appointment with CFAES or OARDC. The contact investigator will have overall responsibility for the project.

Graduate students, those without PI status, and persons outside The Ohio State University should be designated as collaborators on projects and should not be listed as investigators, unless they include a letter of exception from the Office of Research (http://research.osu.edu/researchers/policies/pistatus/). Collaborators may be listed on an unlimited number of proposals.

On how many grants can one investigator serve?
- (1) Seed Grant Competition: Investigators (PIs and Co-PIs) are only eligible to be on one active Seed project at any given time, regardless of the track.
- (1) Partnership Grant Competition: Investigators (PIs and Co-PIs) are only eligible to be on one active Partnership project at any given time.

Any project for which SEEDS has not received a final report is considered to be active. Proposals may be submitted if an active project has an end date before the end of the fiscal year of the current competition (i.e., June 30, 2017). If reporting obligations are not met on time, new awards may be forfeited.

2.2 Application Types
Applications to SEEDS may be new or resubmissions of previous proposals. The following restrictions apply to each.

- New application: This is a project application that has not been previously submitted to SEEDS. For consideration and review, it must meet the requirements of the category to which it is submitted, and it must follow the format requirements as outlined on pages 5–11 of this RFP.
- Resubmitted application: This is an application that has previously been submitted to any SEEDS competition but has not been funded. Applications with substantive similarities to a prior, unsuccessful application should be presented as a resubmission. In addition to the requirements stated for new applications, the principal investigator must respond to the previous review panel summary for consideration of funding. The resubmission response is limited to 2 pages and should be placed after the cover page.

2.3 Deadlines
Deadlines and other scheduled activities for fiscal year 2017 (July 1, 2016–June 30, 2017) are listed in the following table.

Proposals not submitted by the deadline will be automatically eliminated from consideration.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>October 12, 2016</td>
<td>Round 1: Seed and Partnership Grants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 8, 2017</td>
<td>Round 2: Partnership Grants proposals only</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.4 Submission Process
All proposals are to be submitted online through the SEEDS website (oardc.osu.edu/seeds). The online submission process automatically closes at 5 p.m. on the deadline date. **Proposals submitted after 5 p.m. will be rejected**. Portions of a proposal will not be accepted after the stated deadline. Faxied or emailed submissions are unacceptable and will be automatically disqualified.

Give yourself ample time to submit, as you will need to complete the initial registration screens before uploading and submitting the proposal.

**Online submission requires that you prepare your proposal as a single PDF file.** Once your proposal is prepared as a PDF, simply go to oardc.osu.edu/seeds, click on “submit a proposal” and follow the instructions. We strongly recommend that you check your work prior to submitting your proposal.

The screen that appears after you click on the submit button is your receipt. The receipt will provide you with the number of your proposal (e.g., 2017-###) and the date and time of receipt. The submitting investigator will also receive an email receipt. We encourage you to save your receipt. If you experience any problems or have any questions, please contact the SEEDS program coordinator and use the provided proposal number.

2.5 Proposal Format and Required Content
All proposals should be set to print on standard 8.5-inch by 11-inch paper. All margins must be at least 1 inch. Type size must be 12 point or larger with no more than 6 lines per inch, single-spaced. All pages except the cover page should be numbered at the bottom center of the page; this includes pages that are not part of the page limitations.

**Note: Margins and 12-point type size must be consistent throughout each required section of the proposal. This includes figure and table captions. Proposals not meeting the formatting guidelines will be dismissed from the competition without review.**

A sample cover page as well as forms for budgets, current and pending support, and conflict of interest are available at oardc.osu.edu/seeds. Alternatively, you may use the current and pending support and conflict of interest forms used by the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA).

Page limits apply to the project narrative (see page 6, section D of this RFP). Tables and figures are to be included within the page limitations. **Tables and figures should be at least 12-point type size.**

**Proposals not received by the submission deadline or proposals that exceed the page limits will be automatically eliminated from consideration.**

A. Cover Page (Limit to 1 page)
A sample cover page can be found on the SEEDS website. Include, limited to 1 page, the following items:
- Name of the grant category/competition to which you are applying.
- Indication of whether the proposal is new or a resubmission.
- Title of the project.
- Investigator details, including a complete campus address, telephone number and email address for each investigator. A contact investigator must be identified. The contact investigator will have overall responsibility for the project, including submission of reports.
- Names, titles and affiliations of any collaborators.
- Anticipated start date and duration of the project. (The project start date should be March 1 or later)
- The amount of SEEDS funding being requested.
- Brief lay summary — consisting of 250 words or less — explaining the purpose, relevance and expected outcome of the proposed study. In the summary, highlight the potential impact or benefits of the research, and write the summary so that it is understandable to the average reader. **Note: Proposals that contain a lay summary of more than 250 words will be dismissed from the competition.**
B. Resubmission Response (If applicable, limit to 2 pages)
If the proposal is a resubmission, indicate that clearly on the cover page. A submission to a new category is considered a resubmission. For example, if a proposal was submitted to the seed grant competition last year and the same proposal is being submitted to the partnership grant competition this year, the proposal is considered a resubmission. All reviews are kept on file and may be referred to by members of the OARDC Research committee or review panel.

If the proposal is a resubmission, include a resubmission response, limited to 2 pages, directly following the cover page. Clearly address previous reviewer comments and what changes have been made to the proposal.

C. Table of Contents
Each proposal must contain a table of contents. Number all pages (including those outside the page limitations) of the proposal and provide the page numbers for each section.

D. Project Narrative
Include in each project narrative 1) an introduction, 2) a rationale and significance and 3) an approach.

1. INTRODUCTION
Include a clear statement of the long-term goal(s) and supporting objectives of the proposed project. Summarize the body of knowledge or past activities that substantiate the need for the proposed project. Summarize the current status of research and the most significant published work in this field. Describe ongoing or recently completed activities significant to the proposed project, including the work of key project personnel. Include preliminary data/information pertinent to the proposed project. Reference all works cited.

2. RATIONALE AND SIGNIFICANCE
Concisely present the rationale behind the proposed research.

State the agricultural, food or environmental issues — such as production efficiency, economic viability, social impacts and/or environmental quality — addressed by the research.

Describe the study’s probable end products and their significance.

Describe any innovative features or unique combinations of expertise of the investigators involved in the proposed project, particularly for team science projects. Explain carefully the relationship of this research to the program or programs of the investigator(s) and how it differs from current or pending projects.

3. APPROACH
Plainly state the activities proposed or problems being addressed, and describe clearly the approaches applied.

Include in this section a description of each of the following:
• Activities proposed and the sequence in which the activities will be performed
• Methods that will be used — including the feasibility of the methods — in carrying out the proposed project
• Expected outcomes
• Means by which results will be analyzed, assessed or interpreted
• Ways in which the results or products will be used
• Pitfalls that may be encountered
• Limitations to proposed procedures
• Means of applying results or accomplishing technology transfer, where appropriate
• A timeline for attainment of objectives and for production of deliverables, including annual milestones with
• Specific, measurable outcomes
• Roles and responsibilities of each person named as an investigator or key person, including the amount of time each investigator or key person will be contributing to the project. Team Science submissions, in particular, must contain detailed information concerning the diversity of the team and provide detailed mentoring information, if applicable.

E. References
In this section, reference all works cited in the text. All references must be complete (i.e., must include titles and all co-author names) and must conform to an acceptable journal format. There is no page limit to the references section.

F. Budget
Use the form provided on the SEEDS website (oardc.osu.edu/seeds). Submit a separate budget form for each individual unit/department that will receive SEEDS funds. This is particularly important for team research proposals, as it reflects the interdisciplinary nature of the project. Collaborators may not receive direct funding.

Tuition and fees do not need to be included for students enrolled in CFAES, as they will be paid from separate funds and allocated to the department; however, you must indicate in the budget narrative the number of semesters of tuition and fees for which you are requesting.

Proposals requiring a match require a separate budget column showing anticipated matching funds and how they will be spent.

Projects should be completed within two years.

Those with principal investigator status cannot charge their wages or fringe benefits to the SEEDS program.

The purchase of capital equipment only is not an appropriate request to the SEEDS program. Send these requests through the OARDC Equipment Grant Program.

G. Budget Narrative
Provide a detailed summary describing the type of personnel (graduate students, post-doctoral trainees, technicians, etc.) needed, as well as the role of these personnel. Include salaries and wages, fringe benefits, materials and supplies, travel, publication costs, rental fees, etc.

If graduate students are requested, clearly indicate the number of semesters the students will be working. Again, tuition and fees do not need to be included for students enrolled in CFAES, but the number of semesters needed must be indicated in the narrative as well as on the budget form.

Students outside of CFAES may be part of a project, but tuition and fees need to be budgeted or paid from another source.

Explain other expenditures that will be supported by the requested funds.

If international travel is requested, please explain major expenditures, airfare, auto rental, etc.
Your budget sheet and budget justification should add up to the same amount. For Partnership Grants, the budget narrative should address the matching funds with the same level of detail as the requested SEEDS funds.

The SEEDS program does not pay indirect costs on projects.

**H. Matching Funds (Partnership Grants only)**

For those projects requiring matching funds, provide details regarding how and when the matching funds will be acquired. Signed letters of commitment from matching partners that are germane to the project are **required**. Include a matching budget and budget narrative. Clearly state in the proposal and note in the budget narrative the nature of the match.

Funded are required to obtain a dollar-for-dollar match.

Funds from competitive grant programs of government agencies are not eligible matches. In-kind matches are limited to 10% of the total match. In-kind matches of time will not be considered. However, equipment, supplies and laboratory analyses will be considered on a case-by-case basis with appropriate documentation. No SEEDS dollars will be released without proof of a match: a shipping invoice in the case of in-kind matches or a copy of a check or a project number from Ohio State’s Office of Sponsored Programs ([osp.osu.edu](http://osp.osu.edu)).

Matching funds must come from an external partner (such as an industry collaborator or a nonprofit organization). No Ohio State dollars may be used as matching funds. Faculty salaries and employees of Ohio State cannot be used to meet the matching requirements. Tuition and fees cannot be used to meet the matching requirement.

External matching funds must be obtained within four months of the OARDC award date. External funds received prior to July 1, 2016, are not eligible to be used as a match.

**I. Collaborative Arrangements (Limit to 1 page, excluding letters)**

Identify and explain any collaboration or contractual arrangement with other organizations or with personnel associated with other organizations. Letters of intent from potential sponsors or collaborating institutes are **required**. Collaborative arrangements should be germane to the proposed work; excessive letters of support will be disregarded. Additional paperwork such as curriculum vitae and current and pending, and conflict of interest forms are neither required nor requested.

**J. Strategy for Acquiring Future Funding**

A detailed strategy for acquiring extramural funding related to work outlined in the proposal is **required** for all competitions. Identify specific funding opportunities and detail how the SEEDS project will contribute to these submissions.

**K. Signature Areas (Limit to 1 page)**

OARDC/CFAES has identified three signature areas that align Ohio’s highest needs with OARDC’s greatest strengths.

By focusing on areas of research excellence and strategic importance, OARDC has directed its resources to advance knowledge and to generate economic development opportunities for the people of Ohio and beyond. Explain, in 1 page or less, how the project aligns with one or more of the following three signature areas:

- **Advanced Bioenergy and Biobased Products:** Developing biomass-based advanced energy technologies and value-added biobased products such as fuels, specialty chemicals and fiber products.
- **Environmental Quality and Sustainability:** Working to understand, protect and remediate the environment and ecosystems to ensure long-term sustainability.
• **Food Security, Production and Human Health:** Focused on improving agricultural production; enhancing the quality of food and feed; ensuring an adequate, affordable and safe food supply; and maintaining agrosecurity to ensure food security and the basics of nutritional health for a growing global population.

**L. Discovery Themes at The Ohio State University (Limit to 1 page)**
Ohio State has identified three discovery themes ([discovery.osu.edu](http://discovery.osu.edu)) based on special expertise across the university.

Through these, Ohio State will focus its resources and activities on finding durable solutions to issues of global and regional importance. These themes are essential elements of Ohio State’s strategic planning and will shape much of the daily work carried out in the university’s four core goal areas of high-value teaching and learning, research and innovation, outreach and engagement and resource stewardship. Explain, in 1 page or less, how your project aligns with one or more of the following three discovery themes:

- Energy and Environment
- Food Production and Security
- Health and Wellness

**M. Previous SEEDS Funding (Limit to 1 page per award)**
Each investigator and co-investigator on a proposal who has received SEEDS support and has completed SEEDS projects within the past five years is **required** to supply information on the results from that prior funding. This information will be used in the review of the proposal and is limited to a **maximum length of 1 page per award**.

For each award, list the SEEDS category, period of support, title of the project, and any publications, patents, or additional funding received as a result of the project. Provide only the requested information - **Do not provide a summary of your results**.

**N. Curriculum Vitae for Each Investigator (Limit to 3 pages for each investigator)**
Provide curriculum vitae (CV) for all investigators. CVs for collaborators are not needed nor requested. Each CV should be no longer than 3 pages, inclusive of publications. Include the information listed here:

- Education
- Employment and professional history
- Honors and awards
- Selected recent or most relevant publications

**O. Current and Pending Support Form(s)**
Include an updated current and pending research support form for each investigator. Include public or private support as well as the proposed project. A form is available on the SEEDS website ([oardc.osu.edu/seeds](http://oardc.osu.edu/seeds)) or you can use NIFA forms. The current and pending form should be recent and should include this SEEDS proposal as pending.

**P. Conflict of Interest Form(s)**
Submit a conflict of interest form for each investigator.

Lists alphabetically, with last name first, the full names of the following individuals, making sure to clearly indicate each individual’s relationship (advisee/advisor, co-author, collaborator, etc.) to the investigator:

- All thesis or post-doctoral advisees/advisors
- All co-authors on publications within the past three years, including pending publications and submissions
- All collaborators on projects within the past three years, including current and planned collaborations
- All persons in your field with whom you have had a consulting or financial arrangement or other conflict-of-interest in the past three years, including receiving compensation of any type (e.g., money, goods or services)

We suggest using the NIFA conflict of interest form, as it lists the above categories in table form and is, therefore, quite user-friendly.

Q. List of Potential Reviewers
To assist the OARDC Research Committee in ensuring the equitable review of all proposals, please list the names, affiliations and email addresses of four (4) reviewers who, in your opinion, are qualified to review your proposal. These reviewers should not have a significant conflict of interest. For example, reviewers should not be investigators or authors with any investigators named on this project within the past three years, nor should they be people applying to the same SEEDS category. Reviewers are contacted via email and asked to submit their comments online through the SEEDS website (oardc.osu.edu/seeds).

No member of the OARDC Research Committee or of your academic unit may be listed as a reviewer. At least two of the suggested reviewers must be from outside the Ohio State community.

Note: The submission of the names of 4 reviewers is required. Contact your reviewers prior to submitting your proposal to ensure that they are available, have the time, do not have a conflict and are willing to provide a review within a fairly short period of time. A lack of reviews may adversely influence the rating of your proposal by the panel.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Page Limit</th>
<th>Special Instructions</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A Cover Page</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>See SEEDS website for format.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B Resubmission Response</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Only if applicable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C Table of Contents</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>D Project Narrative</td>
<td>Seed (10), Partnership (8)</td>
<td>Include in the project narrative 1) an introduction, 2) a rational and significance and 3) an approach.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E References</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F Budget</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Provide a separate budget for each individual unit/department. Include matching funds in separate columns, if applicable. See SEEDS website for required format.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G Budget Narrative</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Justify all expenses, including matching funds if applicable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H Matching Funds</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Partnership Grants only: provide details regarding how the matching funds will be acquired. Include letters from matching partner(s).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I Collaborative Arrangements</td>
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<td>Include any letters of intent from potential sponsors or collaborating partners. Letters do not count towards page limit</td>
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<td>K Signature Areas</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Identify area and provide explanation.</td>
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<td>N Curriculum Vitae</td>
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<td>Provide a CV for each investigator. Page limit is inclusive of publications.</td>
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<td>O Current &amp; Pending Support</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Include an updated current and pending research support form for each investigator.</td>
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<td>P Conflict of Interest</td>
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<td>Q List of Reviewers</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Include the names, affiliations and email addresses of four potential reviewers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Section 3: Review, Grant Awards and Post-Award Administration

3.1 Application Review Requirements
Each application will be evaluated in a three-step process. First, each application will be screened to ensure that it meets the administrative requirements as set forth in this RFP. **Ineligible, late or incomplete applications will not be reviewed.**

Second, a request for feedback will be sent to each of the external reviewers provided (see “List of Potential Reviewers” on page 10 of this RFP). Reviewers will have the opportunity to read the proposal and provide comments concerning the strengths and weaknesses, feasibility and importance of the research. These comments will be provided to the OARDC Research Committee for use in the final step of making funding recommendations.

Finally, a review panel comprised of members of the OARDC Research Committee will evaluate all properly prepared proposals. Because of the interdisciplinary nature of the OARDC Research Committee, it is unlikely that any single panel member is an expert in the field of any given proposal. It is the responsibility of the investigator to write the proposal so that it is understandable even if the research is outside the panel's areas of expertise; therefore, it is recommended that the author limit the use of jargon and acronyms. The review panel will make recommendations for funding to the OARDC Research Committee, which will make final recommendations to the OARDC Director’s Office.

Ad-hoc internal and external reviewers will be appointed as needed at the discretion of the OARDC Director’s Office.

Proposals will be evaluated based on innovation, interdisciplinary integration in the project objectives, scientific merit, external reviewer evaluations, and the OARDC Research Committee’s own reviews and discussions.

3.2 Evaluation Criteria
To facilitate and enhance the likelihood of successful funding from external sources, external reviewers are asked to provide evaluations that will be useful to both the review panel and the project investigators. Specifically, focus will be placed on several key areas of the proposal: abstract, resubmission response (if applicable), project narrative, budget, budget narrative and the strategy for acquiring future funding. Special attention will be paid to how well a proposal meets the requirements and goals of the competition to which it is submitted.

In addition, reviewers will be requested to list the proposal’s strengths and weaknesses and to provide an overall assessment of the project. A copy of the evaluation tool is available on the SEEDS website (oardc.osu.edu/seeds).

3.3 Grant Awards
Within the limits of available funds, awards will be made to applicants whose proposals are judged most meritorious under the evaluation criteria and procedures defined by the SEEDS program. The OARDC Research Committee will recommend to the OARDC Director’s Office the distribution of funds among the funding categories, which proposals should be funded and any conditions that might pertain to the award of funds to each of the selected projects.

SEEDS funds will be made available within three to six weeks of the date on the award notification. It is expected that projects will be initiated within three months of the award notification.

Although investigators may apply for new grants while one or more other grants are active, the active grant(s) must be completed by the end of the fiscal year prior to new funds being released. If one or more of the other grants requires an extension of time or is not completed and a final report is not received by the time specified, the new award will be forfeited.

Funds for projects in the Partnership Grant category will be made available within three to six weeks after the SEEDS program coordinator has received documentation of an acceptable match from the investigator. Checks provided by industry or private partners for matches should be given to the departmental fiscal officer to deposit into an appropriate account (i.e., Ohio State’s Office of Sponsored Programs, the CFAES Office of Development, the appropriate CFAES
department, etc.). It is preferable to work with Ohio State’s Office of Sponsored Programs (osp.osu.edu) when obtaining industry funding. A copy of the check with a notation indicating the institutional account number into which the check was deposited, the name of the contact investigator and the proposal identification number will be sufficient for verification and should be emailed as a PDF to the SEEDS program coordinator.

It is the investigator’s responsibility to comply with all existing Ohio State policies and guidelines regarding the use of human subjects, animal welfare, conflicts of interest, hazardous materials, etc. In addition, it is the investigator’s responsibility to work with Ohio State’s Technology Commercialization Office (tco.osu.edu) on matters pertaining to intellectual property (see “Intellectual Property” below).

3.4 Post-Award Administration
Grantees will be required to ensure that all funds are expended according to the approved overall budget, but with flexibility within budget categories. Authorization to make changes in approved project plans, budgets or periods of support can be granted only by the OARDC Director’s Office through the SEEDS program coordinator.

For projects spanning two years, an annual report of progress and accomplishments are required and are due one year following the initiation of the grant project. **Year-two funds will not be released until an annual report is received. A final project report is due 30 days after the end date of the project. A 90-day period to bring accounts to a zero balance is allowed.**

Reminders will be sent to investigators along with instructions as to when reports are due. Reports are to be filed online at oardc.osu.edu/seeds. Because of the nature of the competitive grants programs and peer-reviewed publications, the OARDC Director’s Office may contact investigators periodically to inquire about additional funding or publications that may have resulted from the initial study.

The submission of annual and final reports on a timely basis is absolutely critical to our accountability process and directly impacts our capacity to receive further funding for this program. Any investigator with an outstanding annual or final report will be automatically disqualified from all competition and further funding until reporting obligations are met. Departments of investigators will be held responsible for any expenditure beyond the approved budget. The best policy is to keep track of funding and not overspend. Any funds remaining after the end of the project will be transferred back to the OARDC Fiscal Office 90 days after the final report has been received.

3.5 Intellectual Property
Ohio State faculty and research scientists working via a grant must submit disclosures of discoveries, inventions, designs, works of authorship (including computer software), mask works and other intellectual property to Ohio State’s Technology Commercialization Office (tco.osu.edu). All such inventions conceived or first actually reduced to practice in the course of a project by Ohio State faculty and research scientists will be owned by Ohio State.

Inventions made jointly with the industrial partner will be jointly owned. Ohio State will collaborate with the industrial partner to create an option agreement for the partner to obtain a royalty-bearing exclusive license to the invention. Questions about intellectual property developed under this program should be directed to Ohio State’s Technology Commercialization Office at the website listed above.

3.6 Acknowledgments
All publications and posters resulting from work done using SEEDS funding are required to include the following acknowledgment: “Salaries and research support provided by state and federal funds appropriated to The Ohio State University, Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center.”
3.7 Frequently Asked Questions

PROPOSAL PREPARATION

Q. If my proposal is over the page limit, will it be disqualified from the competition?
A. Yes. Proposals exceeding the page limits will be disqualified from the competition.

Q. If I forget to include a form (CV, conflict of interest, current and pending support, etc.), will my application be disqualified?
A. Yes. This would be considered an incomplete application and will be disqualified from the competition.

Q. What if I forget to include items in my application? Can I submit those after submitting my application?
A. Items will be accepted up until the deadline date and time. Any items received after the deadline date and time will be disregarded.

Q. What if I do not address a required section of the proposal, such as the “Strategy for Acquiring Future Funding?”
A. The proposal will be disqualified for failing to respond to all required sections in the SEEDS RFP.

Q. How long can the abstract be?
A. The abstract is limited to 250 words. Proposals containing abstracts with more than 250 words will be disqualified from the competition.

Q. If I resubmit a proposal, do I have to identify it as a resubmission?
A. Yes. Failure to identify your proposal as a resubmission will disqualify you from the process.

PROPOSAL DEADLINES

Q. Will my proposal be accepted if I submit it after 5:00 p.m. on the deadline date?
A. No. Proposals received after the deadline date and time will be disqualified from the competition. We encourage you not to wait until 4:59 p.m. to submit the proposal that is due at 5:00 p.m. The system automatically closes at 5:00 p.m. Late proposals will be rejected.

Q. Can I email my proposal for consideration?
A. No. Except for Agency External Competitive Grant Competition proposals, which can be emailed, all other proposals must be uploaded to the SEEDS website (oardc.osu.edu/seeds).

BUDGETING

Q. Can I charge my salary to the grant?
A. No. Faculty/investigator salaries cannot be charged to the SEEDS program.

Q. Does SEEDS pay indirect costs?
A. No. The SEEDS program does not pay indirect costs.

Q. If I have students enrolled in a college other than CFAES, can their tuition and fees be paid for?
A. No. Tuition and fees for students are only covered for those enrolled in CFAES. You will have to either include tuition in your budget request or find another source of funding.

ELIGIBILITY

Q. If I have a late final report, will my new proposal be funded?
A. No. Any investigator with outstanding annual or final reports will be automatically disqualified from competition until reporting obligations are met. Any project that has not submitted a final report is considered to be active. Proposals may be submitted if an active project has an end date before the end of the fiscal year of the current competition (June 30, 2017). If reporting obligations are not met on time, new awards may be forfeited.
Q. If one of my co-investigators has a past due final report on another project, will my proposal be funded?
A. No. Any investigator with outstanding annual or final reports will be automatically disqualified from competition until reporting obligations are met. Any project that has not submitted a final report is considered to be active. Proposals may be submitted if an active project has an end date before the end of the fiscal year of the current competition (June 30, 2017). If reporting obligations are not met on time, new awards may be forfeited.

Q. Do all investigators need to be members of The Ohio State University community?
A. Yes. All investigators listed on the cover page must have investigator or co-investigator status through The Ohio State University. Members from other universities may be listed as collaborators.

Q. Are some investigators really collaborators?
A. Graduate students, those without PI status, persons outside The Ohio State University, and faculty members who are taking part in the study in the role of an advisor or a consultant should be named as collaborators.

Q. On how many grants can one investigator serve?
   (1) Seed Grant: Investigators (PIs and Co-PIs) are only eligible to be on one active Seed project at any given time, regardless of the track.
   (1) Partnership Grant: Investigators (PIs and Co-PIs) are only eligible to be on one active Partnership project at any given time.

Q. If this application is recommended for funding but the lead investigator or a co-investigator is already listed on the maximum number of grants, will the proposal be funded?
A. No. If the lead investigator or a co-investigator exceeds the maximum grants allowed, the new funding will not be released and may be forfeited. This would be an ineligible application.

3.8 Questions/Contact Information
All questions relating to SEEDS funding opportunities should be referred to:

Sarah Elvey
SEEDS Program Coordinator
Grant Development Support Unit
OARDC Director’s Office
1680 Madison Avenue
Wooster, Ohio 44691-4096
330-263-3637
seeds@osu.edu
oardc.osu.edu/seeds