

Office of Research and Sponsored Programs

25-26 CAPACITY BUILDING GRANT COMPETITION REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

OVERVIEW

The Office of Research and Sponsored Programs (RSP) is pleased to announce the 2025-26 Capacity Building Grant program.

The purpose of this program is to:

- Enhance the ability of faculty and staff to successfully compete for external funding.
- Build UNI's capacity for scholarship, research, and creative activities.

Eligible projects must:

- **Demonstrate how the project will enhance the ability to compete for external funding.**
- Identify an external funding opportunity to be applied for as an outcome of the Capacity Grant.

Capacity Building Grants support projects such as pilot studies, small-scale research or demonstration projects, evaluations, validations of methodologies, instrument testing, and development of research partnerships. The project to be undertaken must clearly advance an opportunity for obtaining external funding. RSP reserves the right to fund or decline an application based on its capacity building merit.

- **Eligible Applicants:** All UNI faculty and staff. (Note: If you currently have an active Capacity Building Grant you cannot apply for funding in the Fall 2024 competition).
- **Project Period:** All funds must be spent between **February 1, 2026 and August 31, 2027**.
- **Award Range:** Up to \$15,000
- **Eligible Expenses:** Student wages, summer salary, instruments, supplies, non-conference travel, participant stipends, human subject compensation, consultant costs, data analysis costs. Other expenses may be allowed; all expenses are subject to approval.
- **Conditions of Award:** See "Requirements for Awardees" on page 5.

Questions and Answers: a list of common Q&A's is available at <https://rsp.uni.edu/internal-funding>. If you do not find your answer, please contact brian.warby@uni.edu or call 319-273-6148.

TIMELINE

Letter of Intent Due	October 24, 2025*
Proposal Form Due in Cayuse Sponsored Projects	December 3, 2025 (11:59 p.m.)*
Proposal Due (Must be emailed to rsp@uni.edu)	December 5, 2025 (11:59 p.m.)*
Notification to Applicants	January 26, 2025
Project Period of Performance	February 1, 2026 through August 31, 2027
Attend Summer Grant Writing Workshop	May 2026 or May 2027
Reports Due	October 1, 2026 (interim) and October 1, 2027 (final)
Submit at least one external contract or grant proposal	October 1, 2027

**Applications with components not submitted by the deadline will not be considered.*

IMPORTANT DATES

The Capacity Building Grant RFP includes three general steps, with the following deadlines. All components must be completed for an application to be considered. Instructions for each section are below.



LETTER OF INTENT (LOI) FORM

A Letters of Intent must be submitted by completing the letter of intent (LOI) which can be found [here](#). The LOI must be completed by **October 24, 2025**. Letters of Intent are used to recruit appropriate reviewers, so that the review process can proceed immediately after the full proposal deadline. Letters of Intent will not be seen by reviewers and do not receive any feedback. **Proposals submitted without an LOI will not be considered.**

PROPOSAL FORM

A [Proposal Form in Cayuse Sponsored Projects](#) must be submitted by December 3, 2025 by 11:59 p.m. The Proposal Form provides departmental and other related approvals for you to submit your application. This is completed separately from the final emailed application. Your full proposal should be emailed to rsp@uni.edu as noted in the Full Proposal Instructions, below.

FULL PROPOSAL INSTRUCTIONS

Send the completed full Proposal by emailing it directly to rsp@uni.edu. Complete proposals are due by December 5, 2025 by 11:59 p.m. Late submissions will not be considered. Submission of proposals within a PDF portfolio is encouraged. Please visit [the Adobe website for more information about PDF portfolios](#).

Prepare your full proposal by providing the following sections.

- Section I. [Project Description](#)
- Section II. [Budget Template \(EXCEL\)](#)
- Section III. [Budget Justification – example \(PDF\)](#)
- Section IV. [Biosketch\(es\) – example \(PDF\)](#)

Proposals must include all sections and be formatted in the following manner (with the exception of tables and figures)

- 1-inch margins.
- No less than 11-point font, with the exception of tables and figures

SECTION I: PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Maximum length: 8 pages, double-spaced. Include the following headings in the order below. Only sections A-F are included in the page limit.

A. Goals and Objectives

- Briefly list the goal(s) and objectives of the project.
 - A goal is a broad, long-term intention that may not be accomplished within the scope of a single project.
 - Objectives are endpoints you intend to achieve with the project. Good objectives are SMART: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Oriented.

B. Need and Significance

- Explain the importance of the project, grounding it in what you and others in your field have already established and what still remains to be done.

C. Design / Methods / Timeline

- Explain how you will accomplish the objectives. Be specific about the project design, who will do what and when.
- Describe the anticipated project outcomes in relation to each objective.
- Include a Project Timeline with milestones.

D. Qualifications and Resources

- If there is more than one investigator, what are the roles and responsibilities of each person?
- What resources, qualifications, and expertise does each investigator bring to the project?
- If applicable, explain how you will work with any external organizations, such as other institutions, schools, or community organizations.
- If collaborating with another institution or organization, please provide a Letter of Collaboration.

E. Student Assistants (if applicable)

- Inclusion of undergraduate and/or graduate students is encouraged. Describe how your project will involve undergraduate or graduate students, if applicable.

F. External Funding Opportunity

Capacity Building Grant awardees must submit a proposal to an external funding opportunity by October 1, 2026 (or the next specified deadline, if cyclic). An important consideration in determining which projects will be funded is the extent to which this project is a good match for the external funding opportunity and otherwise likely to be competitive.

- Identify the funder and opportunity to which you plan to submit a proposal.
- Provide a link to the funding source within your application (please include the specific application listing or call for proposals, if available).
- Explain how the opportunity is a good fit with the Capacity Building Grant project you are proposing.
- How will your proposed Capacity Building project enhance your ability to compete for external funding?
- Identify the next deadline for the opportunity.
- Describe your timeline for preparing a proposal by the deadline.
- State when you intend to participate in RSP's annual grant writing workshop (May 2025 or May 2026).

G. Results from Prior Support (not included in page limit)

- List all internal grant awards received during the PAST THREE years by all key personnel. Include funding from RSP, Colleges including the Division of Graduate Studies, the Office of the Provost, or other internal funding.
- Indicate the status and specific outcomes for each award, such as external grant proposals submitted, publications, presentations, or patents.

H. References (not included in page limit)

SECTION II. BUDGET

- Complete a budget for your project. The budget must be on the RSP customized [Budget Template \(EXCEL\)](#)
- Because funding is internal, there are no Facilities and Administrative (indirect) costs.
- Cost share is not required and should not be shown on the budget.
- Projects may be awarded partial funding.

SECTION III. BUDGET JUSTIFICATION

Provide a budget justification for your project. The budget justification is a narrative description that explains and justifies each of the requested expenses. For reference, a [Budget Justification – example \(PDF\)](#) has been provided.

In addition, the budget justification must include a description of any other resources, cash or in-kind, that the applicant may propose to include in support of the project. Include both current and pending sources of support (such as other proposals under review).

Requests for Subawards: Capacity Building Grants are not intended for pass-through funding to other institutions. Any requests to make a subaward to another institution must be **well-justified** within the proposal. Visit with the [RSP Preaward Team](#) for assistance with determining whether your proposal includes a true subaward or if the proposed expense is a vendor/service agreement.

If a sub-award is being considered as part of the budget, the proposal must include the following:

- [Subaward Scope of Work](#)
- [Subaward Budget](#)
- [Letter of Commitment signed by the subrecipient's Authorized Organizational Representative](#)

SECTION IV. BIOSKETCHES

Provide a one-to-two-page biographical sketch for each key personnel involved in the project. Biosketches are used to assess the experience and qualifications of the investigator(s) to carry out the project. Students are not considered key personnel.

A [Biosketch\(es\) – example \(PDF\)](#) has been provided on the Capacity Building Grant website. Biosketches may also be generated using [SciENcv](#). If using SciENcv, deviation from the font and margin formatting requirements is permitted.

REVIEW CRITERIA AND PROCESS

Review and Evaluation: Proposals will be evaluated and scored through a peer review process. Review and evaluation of applications will be based on the quality and completeness of the proposal, the significance or need for the project, the capacity of the investigator(s) to carry out the project, the suitability of the identified external funding opportunity and likelihood of success, the appropriateness of the budget, and outcomes from prior awards (if applicable). Based on the scoring and funding recommendations of peer reviewers, RSP will also conduct an administrative review and make final funding decisions.

Project descriptions should be well-written for a non-specialist audience.

Proposed subawards must be well justified.

Proposals that do not comply with the formatting and application requirements may be returned without review.

Proposals that did not submit an LOI or Proposal Form, or were submitted after the deadline, will not be considered.

Notification of Award: Applicants will be notified of award decisions by January 26, 2026.

REQUIREMENTS FOR Awardees

Compliance Requirements: Awardees must meet all applicable compliance requirements, such as human subjects or animal use review, prior to initiating a project.

Grant Writing Workshop Attendance: Awardees must attend the RSP Summer Grant Writing Workshop. The workshop consists of five sessions (one-to-two hours each) beginning after the end of the Spring semester. Those with significant grant writing experience may request a waiver of this requirement. Otherwise, participation is required in **May 2026 or 2027**.

External Grant Submission: Awardees must submit a proposal to an external grant or contract funding opportunity by **October 1, 2027** (or the next specified deadline, if cyclic).

Reporting: Awardees will be required to submit a brief, narrative progress report by **October 1, 2025**. In addition, a final report describing how the funds were used and the outcomes achieved will be due no later than **October 1, 2026**.

Failure to submit reports on time or to meet other award requirements may make the recipient ineligible for future internal funding.

Summer Salary Policy: All capacity grant recipients that request and receive summer salary, must remain at the University for the following 9-month academic year. If a capacity grant recipient receives summer salary and leaves the University prior to completing the subsequent academic year, they will be required to return the summer salary compensation to the University.

CONTACTS and QUESTIONS

For general questions about the Capacity Building Grant program, please contact:

- Tolif Hunt, tolif.hunt@uni.edu

For questions about application development, the Proposal Form, project ideas, budget development and feedback on draft proposals, please contact:

- Rebecca Rinehart, rebecca.rinehart@uni.edu

For technical questions regarding submitting your application in the preferred Adobe portfolio format, [please visit the Adobe website for more](#) or contact:

- Sean Parrish, sean.parrish@uni.edu

Please visit the RSP Capacity Grant website for updates and answers to Frequently Asked Questions:

- <https://rsp.uni.edu/internal-funding>