

# The Mid-Career Faculty Experience of Grant Writing at UVM: Getting Started

Presented by:

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The University of Vermont

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# Housekeeping & Ground Rules

- **All forms of participation are okay**

- Video on or off
- Speak, type in chat box, gesture, emoticons/reactions, mix/match
- Walk, move around, fidget, eat/snack, take breaks

- **We affirm all aspects of identity**

- Neurotype, gender, sexual orientation, race, disability, ethnicity, and all other forms of diversity

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# Purpose of the Presentation






Participants will:

- Learn about UVM services and tools to support you in finding funding, writing, and submitting grant proposals
- Refresh re: the concept of a “sponsored project”
- Strategies and best practices for developing grant proposals

Conclude with Questions & Answers!

# UVM FY24 Sponsored Research Snapshot

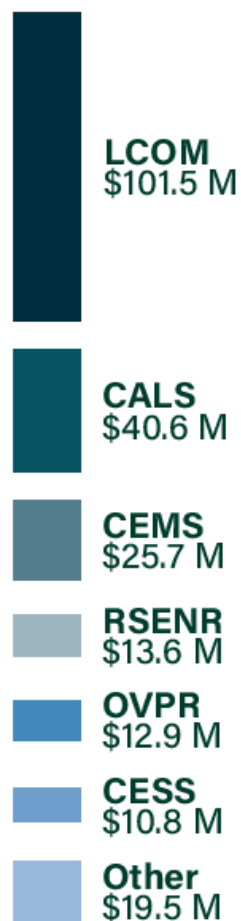
**\$266.4M**  
In External Research Support

Source	Amount	Awards
 Federal Government	\$202.4 M	534
 Foundation & Nonprofit	\$11.3 M	83
 State and Local	\$6.5 M	29
 Industry	\$4.5 M	22
 Philanthropy	\$41.7 M	—
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$266.4 M</b>	<b>668</b>



# UVM FY24 Sponsored Research Snapshot

## Sponsored Award Funding by College



# 50

## Number of awards worth \$1 million or more

Just 50 out of more than 660 sponsored awards at UVM accounted for over \$120 million in sponsored research funding, public service, instruction, and extension. These awards covered vast areas of research with projects like the Rural Communities Opioid Response Program, the Vermont Genetics Network, and the Climate Measurements Center of Excellence.

# 69.3%

## Growth in sponsored research over the last 10 years

## Sponsored Awards by Purpose



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# Getting to Know You...

What are the most **intimidating or stressful** aspects of writing grant proposals for you?

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# Research Development Support



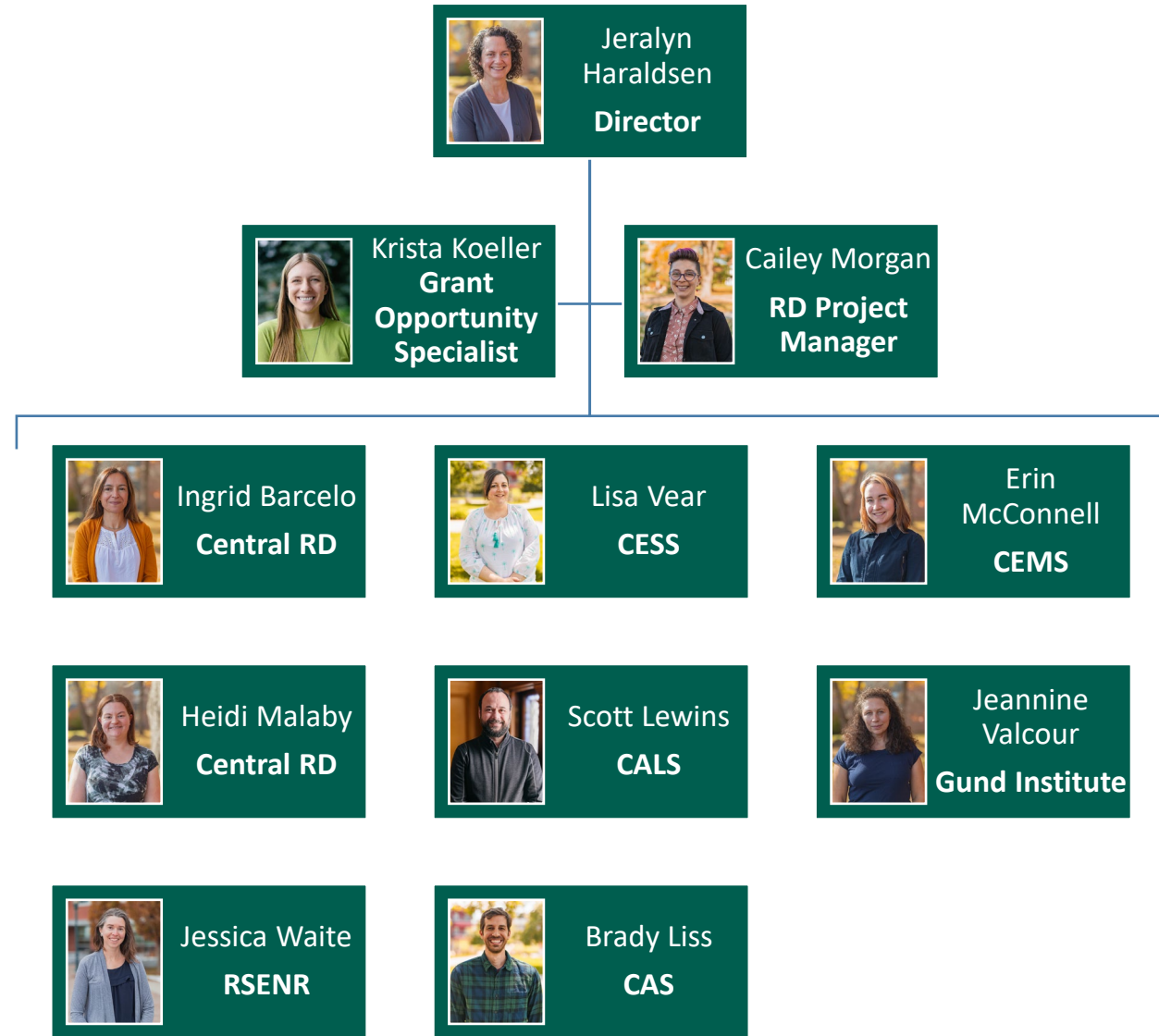
THE UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT  
**RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT**

# Research Development Support

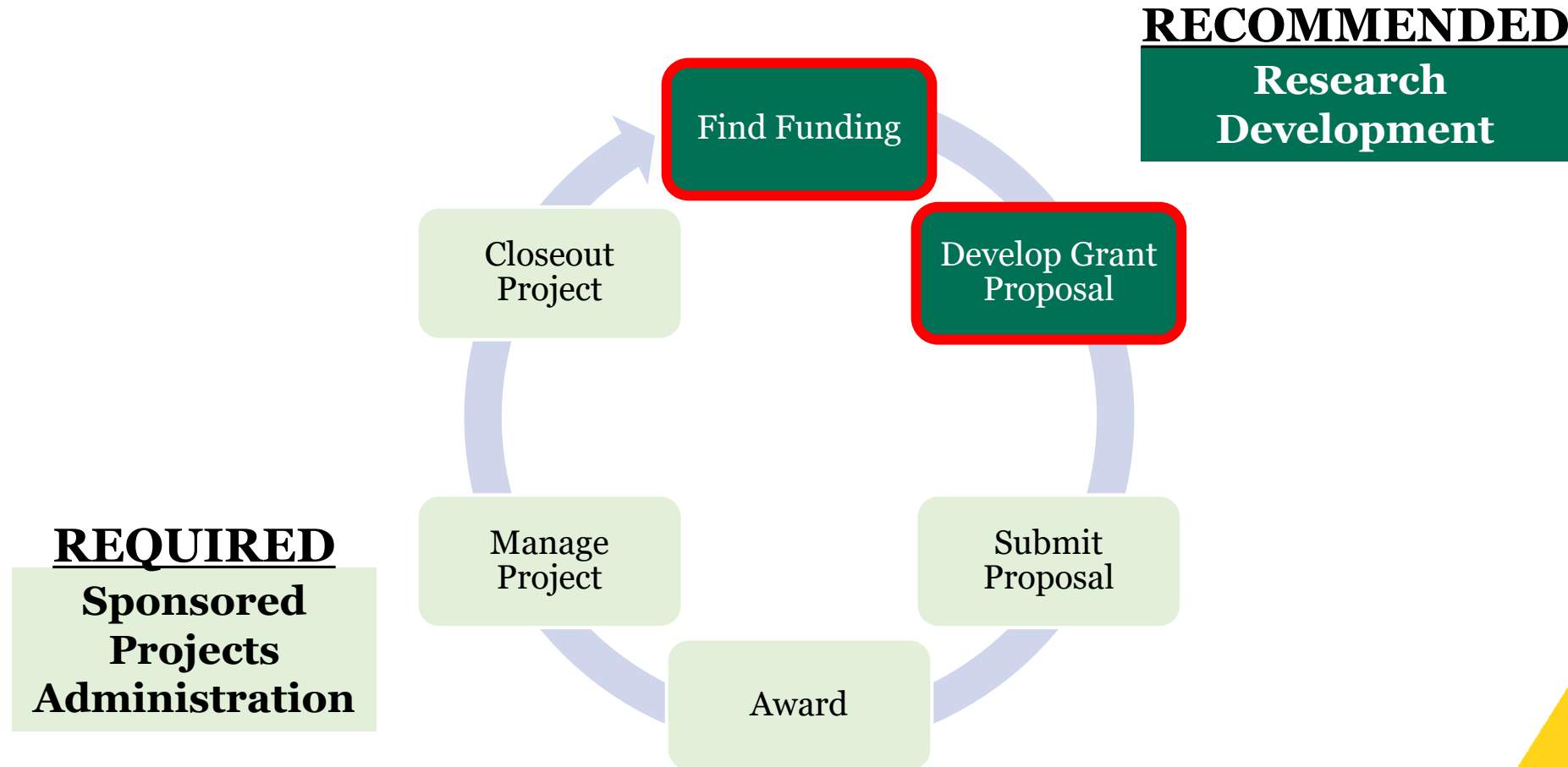
Research Development offers a suite of services to assist scholars in their pursuit of extramural funding. Our team of trained researchers provides support during the grant development process to help proposals reach their full potential and conveys skills and experience to the UVM community to create highly competitive proposals.



# Research Development Team



# Where does UVM Research Development fit in?



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# What Is A Sponsored Project?

- Externally-funded activity in which a formal written agreement, i.e., a grant, contract, or cooperative agreement, is entered into by recipient (UVM) and Sponsor (e.g. federal, state, other universities, industry)
- Supports research, public service, or instructional efforts



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# Research Development

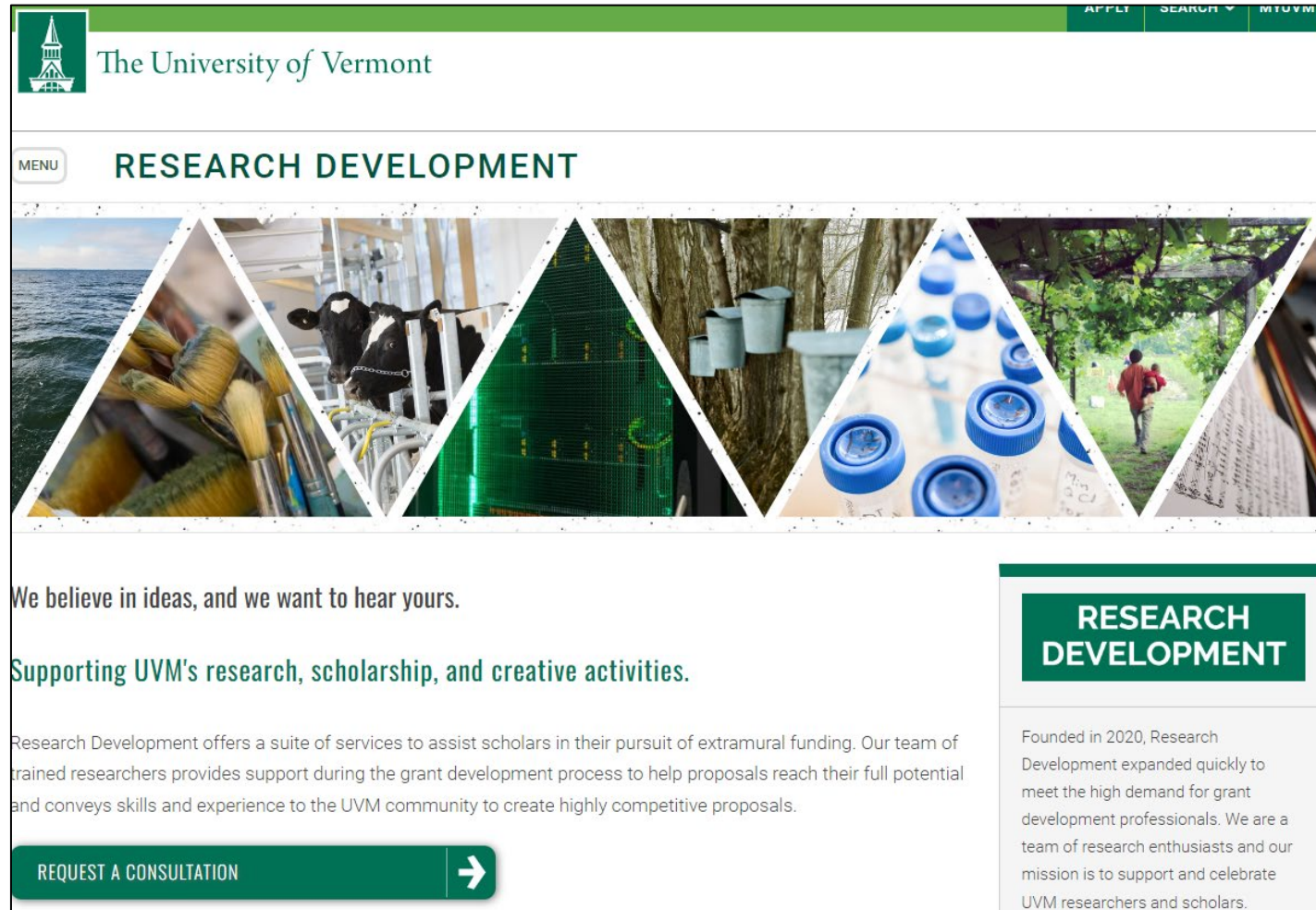
- Communicate funding opportunities
- Manage Limited Submission process
- ★ • Provide Grant Proposal Development Support
  - Including Project Management for large proposals
- Develop Grant Writing Resources, Programs, Tools

# RD Project Management for Proposals

- Regular Meetings
- Strategic Planning
- Tailored checklists
- Tailored timelines
- Custom outlines for the main proposal document
- Templates for supporting documents

Date	Deliverable(s)
March 19 – April 1	Write <b>Specific Aims</b>
<b>April 2</b>	<b>Specific Aims (1<sup>st</sup> Draft) Completed</b>
April 3 - 29	Write <b>Research Strategy</b>
By April 20	Begin <b>budget</b> development with business manager support
<b>April 30</b>	<b>Research Strategy (1<sup>st</sup> Draft) Completed</b>
May 3 - 19	Iterative revisions to <b>Research Strategy</b> ( <i>as needed</i> )
By May 7	Enter grant information into UVM Click
May 10 - 24	Write/update <b>Supporting Documents</b>
By May 11	Complete first draft of <b>full budget</b> (in UVM Click)
May 19	Revise <b>Budget</b> if needed, write <b>Budget Justification</b>
<b>May 20</b>	<b>Full, "near final" Project proposal completed</b>
May 21 - 26	PI, grant developer, colleagues review of text
May 26	All <b>final, signed Letters of Support</b> due ( <i>if applicable</i> )
May 26	All <b>final biosketches</b> and <b>Other Support</b> due
May 26 – June 1	Finalization of all documents
<b>Wed, June 2</b>	Upload all final documents into <u>UVMClick</u> and <b>ROUTE</b> proposal
On or before Fri, <b>June 4</b>	<b>GOAL:</b> proposal submission
<b>Mon, June 7</b>	<b>NIH Proposal submission deadline</b>

# Strategic Resources – Research Development!



The screenshot shows the website for The University of Vermont's Research Development office. At the top is the university's logo and name. Below is a navigation menu with a 'MENU' button and the title 'RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT'. A large banner image is composed of several triangular panels showing various research-related scenes: a cow in a lab, a green circuit board, blue lab caps, and a person in a field. Below the banner, the text reads: 'We believe in ideas, and we want to hear yours.' followed by 'Supporting UVM's research, scholarship, and creative activities.' A paragraph describes the office's mission to assist scholars with extramural funding. A green button with a right arrow says 'REQUEST A CONSULTATION'. On the right side, a green box contains the title 'RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT' and a paragraph about the office's founding in 2020 and its mission to support researchers.

The University of Vermont

MENU RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT

We believe in ideas, and we want to hear yours.

Supporting UVM's research, scholarship, and creative activities.

Research Development offers a suite of services to assist scholars in their pursuit of extramural funding. Our team of trained researchers provides support during the grant development process to help proposals reach their full potential and conveys skills and experience to the UVM community to create highly competitive proposals.

REQUEST A CONSULTATION →

**RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT**

Founded in 2020, Research Development expanded quickly to meet the high demand for grant development professionals. We are a team of research enthusiasts and our mission is to support and celebrate UVM researchers and scholars.

Our website: <https://www.uvm.edu/ovpr/resdev>

# What We Offer

- **Finding Funding:** consultations, Pivot-RP tutorials, weekly funding opportunity newsletter. [\*Request a funding opportunity and/or Pivot-RP consultation or subscribe to the newsletter\*](#)
- **Limited Submissions:** management of internal competition and selection process for limited submission funding opportunities. [\*View and apply for open limited competitions\*](#)
- **Grant Writing Support:** grantsmanship and writing feedback and assistance. [\*Request grant writing support\*](#)
  - *Grant proposal review and grantsmanship critique:* annotated feedback and suggestions to enhance competitiveness; proposal review for responsiveness to funding program solicitation and/or reviewer critiques
  - *Grant proposal writing assistance and editing:* substantive editing of draft text; editing to improve clarity, flow, formatting, and presentation; assistance with drafting non-technical proposal components; suggested outlines, checklists of required documents, and timelines
- **Project Management for Large Proposal Preparation:** addition of skilled, flexible capacity to your team for developing large and complex proposals. [\*Request complex project management support\*](#)
- **Grant Writing Programs and Resources:**
  - View [\*calendar of events\*](#) or [\*list of ongoing programs\*](#)
  - Access [\*grant writing resources\*](#)
  - [\*Request a UVM Research Impacts consultation\*](#) for broadening and amplifying the impact of your research
- **Strategic Planning:** positions faculty for funding and leadership opportunities. [\*Request a consultation with Lewis-Burke Associates\*](#)

Our website: <https://www.uvm.edu/ovpr/resdev>



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# Finding Funding



- Tools for finding funding opportunities
- Limited Submissions
- Flavors of federal funding opportunities: Concept of solicited vs unsolicited funding opportunities



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# Tools for Identifying Funding Opportunities

- UVM Internal funding opportunities (OVPR and college websites)
- Funding Databases:
  - **PIVOT** (UVM subscription); SPA website; RD website
- Funding agency announcements, e-alerts, social media:
  - Grants.gov - Funding opps for 26 federal agencies
  - Individual federal agency websites (e.g., NIH Guide for Grants and Contracts, National Science Foundation Funding Opportunities and Updates)
  - Philanthropy News Digest (Candid. newsletter)

# Pivot-RP Database

- Searchable – funding database and expertise
- Updated daily
- Sources:
  - Federal and regional governments
  - Foundations
  - Professional societies, associations
  - Corporations
- Can create customized, saved searches, e-alerts
- Claim and keep your **profile** updated!
- **Pivot-RP training available through Research Development**

<https://www.uvm.edu/ovpr/resdev>

Pivot-RP

ExLibris  
Pivot-RP

Pivot-RP is a funding database that brings together thousands of opportunities representing tens of billions of dollars in available funding from federal, non-federal, and international sponsors in all disciplines. Results are updated daily, and users have the capability to track funding opportunities, set up saved dynamic searches, and get weekly funding updates. With these tools and more, Pivot-RP helps scholars navigate and organize thousands of results so that they can find the funding relevant to their research. **This database is available to anyone who has a current UVM email address.**

If you would like to schedule a Pivot-RP tutorial or request help with a funding search, please fill out the Research Development consultation form. If you have questions regarding the database, contact [Cailey Biles, Grant Resources Coordinator](#).

REGISTER FOR A PIVOT-RP ACCOUNT →

DOWNLOAD USER GUIDE

REQUEST PIVOT-RP SUPPORT →

Curated Pivot-RP Searches

- [DEI Funding Opportunities](#)
- [CAS - Anthropology](#)
- [CAS - Geosciences](#)
- [CAS - History](#)
- [CAS - Religion](#)
- [CAS - Sociology](#)
- [CNHS - General Search](#)
- [CNHS - Autism](#)
- [CNHS - Brain Health and Cognition](#)
- [CNHS - Human Disease Mechanisms](#)

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# Limited Submissions

**Limited Submission:** Funders sometimes **restrict the number** of applications an institution can submit to a particular program.

**UVM Internal Competition:** Internal process to ensure we do not exceed a stated limit, jeopardizing multiple applications.

- Announced in weekly Limited Submissions Newsletter
- Self-subscription – Click on “[Sign up for our newsletter](#)”
- Brief LOI
- Submit pre-proposal for internal review, if needed

<https://www.uvm.edu/ovpr/resdev/limited-submissions>

# There are Two “Flavors” of Federal Funding Opps

## Solicited Opportunities:

- RFAs or RFPs requesting projects in response to a **specific** topic of interest
- May have only **one** deadline (or a few)
- Can have short “drop” between announcement and submission deadline



## Unsolicited (investigator-initiated) Opportunities:

- Recurring opportunities with relatively predictable submission deadlines
- Broad areas of interest
  - “Core” programs
  - Broad Agency Announcements (BAAs)
  - “Parent” Announcements

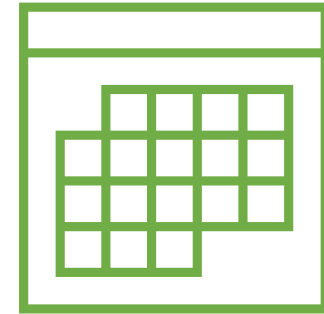
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# Develop a Process for Identifying Funding Opps

Many funders have recurring opportunities with relatively predictable due dates

Process should:

- Provide **early/timely** notification
- Cover your target funding agencies
- Cover a range of other potential funders
- Meet your needs (i.e., doesn't overwhelm)



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# **Sponsored Project Administration (SPA) & SPA 2.0 Support**

# What Is Sponsored Projects Administration (SPA)?

**Sponsored Project Administration** is a full-service research administration and compliance office committed to assisting faculty, staff, and sponsors **navigate the lifecycle of a sponsored project**. SPA provides institutional approval for all proposal submissions, accepts awards on behalf of UVM, and facilitates award administration.

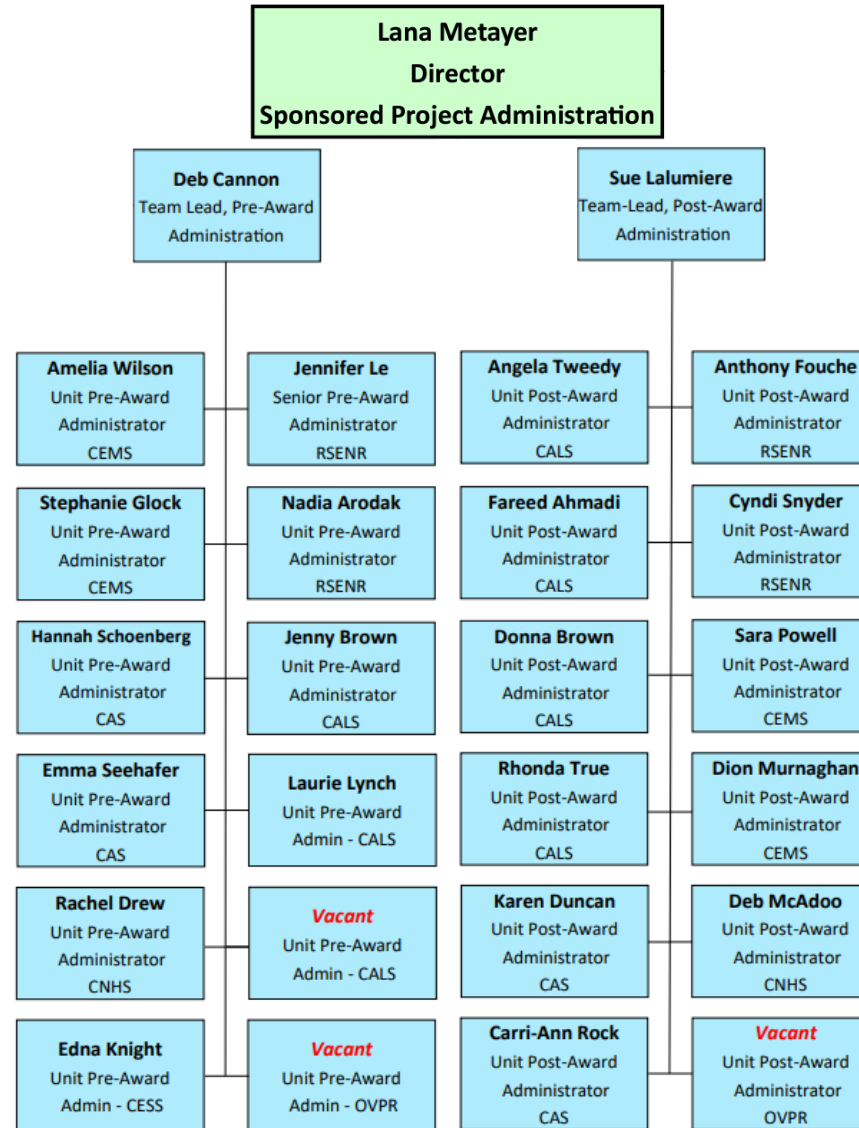
## Sponsored Project Administration (SPA)



# SPA 2.0

**SPA 2.0 Administrators** serve the faculty on a more individual and personal level and act as a liaison between the faculty and the central team.

[Find Your Admin!](#)





# Fundamentals of a Sponsored Project

- Whose grant is this?
  - Awards are made to the **institution** (almost always)
- Who gets to call the shots?
  - A Principal Investigator (PI) is the lead researcher for the grant project
  - PIs and Central and Department administrators form a partnership
    - ✓ PIs direct the science
    - ✓ Administrators manage the business processes and compliance functions
- Who answers to whom?
  - Science without administration would not receive grant funding
  - Administrators without science would not receive grant funding

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# Systems for Managing Sponsored Projects

- Used by Principal Investigators (PIs) to:
  - Initiate proposal in UVMClick
  - Prepare budgets
  - Upload proposal documents
  - Route proposals for internal approvals
  - System-to-system proposal submissions
- Used by the PI & business unit administrators to:
  - Track & report – current & pending support data
  - Storage of finalized documents relating to proposals, awards and subawards



# Systems for Managing Sponsored Projects

The screenshot displays the UVM Grants Management System interface. The top navigation bar includes tabs for Dashboard, Grants, Agreements, COI, IRB, IACUC, Safety, and a Help icon. Below this, a sub-navigation bar lists Funding Proposal, Complex Projects, Awards, Reports, and Help Center. The main content area is titled 'Callahan Draft Proposal Demo' and includes a 'Draft' status indicator and a 'Funding Proposal' button with the ID 'FP00004273'.

**Next Steps:**

- Edit Funding Proposal
- Printer Version
- COI Disclosure Status
- Submit For Department Review
- Certify
- Withdraw Proposal
- Send to COI
- Manage Ancillary Reviews
- Manage Relationships
- Manage Tags
- Create Agreement
- UVM Add Attachments
- Copy
- Create Additional Budget
- Export Budget
- Send Email
- Manage Access
- Add Comment
- View Related IRB Protocols
- View Related Safety

**Proposal Information:**

Pt:	Christopher Callahan
Submitting Department:	Ext - Programming & Fac Sup
College:	EXTENSION
Direct Sponsor:	Food and Nutrition Service/FNS/USDA
Prime Sponsor:	
Application Deadline:	6/1/2024 Sponsor Deadline (Hard)
SPA Deadline:	5/30/2024
Department Administrative Contact:	Christopher Callahan
SPA Administrator:	Amy Santos
SF424 Link (if applicable):	

**Budget Information:**

Project Period:	8/1/2024 - 7/31/2029
Number of Periods:	5
Sponsor Total Direct:	\$0
Sponsor Total F&A:	\$0
Sponsor Total Cost:	\$0
Proposal Activity:	RESEARCH - Basic - 311
Cost Share Direct:	\$0
Cost Share F&A:	\$0
Cost Share Total:	\$0

**Workflow Diagram:**

```
graph LR; Draft([Draft]) --> DeptReview([Department Review]); DeptReview --> SpecialistReview([Specialist Review]); SpecialistReview --> SponsorReview([Sponsor Review]); SponsorReview --> Awarded([Awarded]); DeptReview --> ClarificationsRequested1([Clarifications Requested]); ClarificationsRequested1 --> DeptReview; SpecialistReview --> ClarificationsRequested2([Clarifications Requested]); ClarificationsRequested2 --> SpecialistReview; SponsorReview --> ChangesRequired([Changes Required]); ChangesRequired --> SponsorReview; ChangesRequired --> NotFunded([Not Funded]);
```

**Working Budgets:**

Name	SmartForm	Date Modified	State	Funding Source	Total	In Financials?
Food and Nutrition Service/FNS/USDA	[Edit]	4/15/2024 2:55 PM	Draft	Federal	\$0	yes

1 items | page 1 of 1 | 10 / page

<https://www.uvm.edu/ovpr/uvmclick-grants>

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# Grant Proposal Development

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# Getting to Know You...

What do you think are **typical reasons** that proposals  
don't score well?

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# What do you think are typical reasons that proposals don't score well?

- Mis-alignment with program/sponsor
- Over-ambitious – scope too large
- Significance
- Team expertise – collaborators needed
- Disagree with approach/methods
- *All of these are determined by the Reviewers!*

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# What Drives Success?

- Knowing your “audience” – who are your reviewers?
- Alignment between your goals and the funder’s goals/mission
- Significance/relevance of your idea
- FEASIBILITY and technical approach
- YOU as an investigator
  - Credentials and track record (publications, scholarly productivity, awards)
  - Expertise of you and your team
- Leaving enough TIME to write – it takes longer than you think!



# It Starts with a Good Idea!



when I think it



when I say it

...



when I try to write it down

Ideas are the product of preparation



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# Mid-Career: Can be both Exciting and Overwhelming

- What do your next 5 years look like?
- **Expanding or growing** research/scholarship you're already engaged in?
  - Could be a good time for a new direction, or
  - Move into a completely new research/scholarly direction
- Take on areas of research that you have been interested in for a while, but have been postponing
- Have different type of responsibilities that may allow new explorations
- At a point in your career when you can afford to take on bigger and riskier projects



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# Grants for Mid-Career Faculty

- They focus on professional development at a mid-career level
- They provide protected time that sometimes can be used to buyout teaching, to develop/learn new techniques that the PI would like to explore
- They provide support during longer periods of time
- They provide support during sabbatical periods



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# Mid-Career Specific Grant Opportunities

- NSF MCA - [Mid-Career Advancement](#)
  - The only cross-directorate NSF program specifically aimed at providing protected time and resources to established scientists and engineers targeted at the mid-career stage.
- NIH F33 - [Individual Fellowships for Senior Fellows](#)
  - To enable experienced scientists to make major changes in the direction of their research careers or to broaden their scientific background by acquiring new research capabilities as independent investigators.
- NIH K24 - [Midcareer Investigator Award in Patient-Oriented Research](#)
  - To provide support for mid-career clinicians with research support, to allow for protected time to devote to patient-oriented research and to serve as mentors for beginning clinical investigators.
- NIH K25 - [Mentored Quantitative Research Career Development Awards](#)
  - To provide support for a period of mentored study and research for productive professionals with quantitative and engineering backgrounds to integrate their expertise with NIH-relevant research.
- NIH K26 - [Midcareer Investigator Award in Biomedical and Behavioral Research](#)
  - To provide grant support for biomedical and behavioral scientists to allow them protected time to devote to their research and mentoring.
- NEH Fellowships – Not midcareer specific but often will include language like “Midcareer scholars are encouraged to apply.”

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# How Can an Award Database Help Me?

- Compare your work with funded projects – assess “fit” and competitiveness
- Has something similar been funded already?
- Where is my “home” within the funding agency?
- Identify funded colleagues
- Determine number of grants awarded in the previous funding cycle




# Use Sponsor Award Databases to Find Out What's Being Funded - What is Competitive?

- Keyword search
- Search a specific, existing Program funding opportunity announcement number (FOA, PA, RFA number)
  - Abstracts - publications
  - Project team
  - Awarded budget
  - Assigned Program Officer
  - Funding program - Institute/Directorate




An open repository of funding proposals  
<https://www.ogrants.org/>



U.S. National Science Foundation  
[www.nsf.gov/awardsearch/](https://www.nsf.gov/awardsearch/)

Awards Simple Search

[Overview of Award Search Features](#)

Search award for:   

Use double quotes for exact search. For example "water vapor".

☒ Active Awards ☐ Expired Awards

# Before You Write You Must Understand Your Audience



- Reviewers take the role seriously, but... busy, over-committed, tired
- Inherently skeptical and critical mindset
- Perhaps only peripherally interested in your research

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## Make Their Job Easy



- Understand the review criteria and give the reviewers the words they need to defend your proposal to the rest of the panel
- **Explicit** statements
- Clear and concise writing

# Writing a Proposal is NOT like Writing a Paper

A Paper is:	A Proposal is:
A scholarly pursuit – individual passion	Aimed at funder goals – service attitude
Past oriented, work that has been done	Future oriented, work that <i>should</i> be done
Theme centered; theory and thesis	Project centered; objectives and activities
Expository rhetoric: explaining to the reader	Persuasive rhetoric: “selling” to the reader
Impersonal tone, objective, dispassionate	Personal tone, conveys excitement
Fewer length constraints (sometimes)	Strict length constraints, brevity rewarded
Specialized terminology, “insider jargon”	Accessible language, easily understood







“Agreed. We fund only those proposals  
we can understand.”

# What Are They Looking For? Review Criteria

NIH*	USDA	NEH	NSF
Significance	Relevance	Significance	Intellectual Merit
Investigators	Investigators	Applicant	Broader Impacts
Approach	Scientific Merit	Feasibility	
Environment	Facilities	Design and Work Plan	
Innovation		Cost	
		Clarity of Expression	

\*Changes coming in January 2025!



# Don't Take Negative Reviews Personally

Distinguishing between **excellent science/ scholarship** and *slightly less excellent science/ scholarship* is exceedingly difficult



# Responding to Critiques

- Respect the reviewers' opinions
- Assume reviewers' comments are intended to be helpful
- Read the critique thoroughly and dispassionately
- In general, respond from the perspective that “the reviewer is always right” (even if you disagree with them!)
  - Errors in clarity and grantsmanship
- Be appreciative, not defensive
- Be persistent and consider resubmission



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# How to Request Research Development Support:

- Initiate contact early – **ideally 4-8+ weeks in advance** of your proposal deadline.
- **Complete intake form** on website with info about **funding opportunity** and **deadline**.

<https://www.uvm.edu/ovpr/resdev>



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# Questions?

  
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The University of Vermont

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# Additional Questions?

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