



Collaborative Opportunities for Research Elevation (CORE) Program

Program Overview

The University of Michigan-Dearborn Office of Research (OR) is pleased to announce the new CORE Interdisciplinary Seed Funding Program, designed to catalyze bold, interdisciplinary research collaborations and position UM-Dearborn faculty for success in securing major external funding. This program prioritizes genuine interdisciplinary partnerships, particularly among colleges and disciplines with little to no prior history of collaboration, and supports projects with the potential for transformative impact of early-stage collaborative research teams working on transdisciplinary projects with substantial potential for producing highly competitive proposals in response to large-scale external funding opportunities within the next two to four years.

Total Available Funding: \$200,000

- Award Floor: \$20,000
- Award Ceiling: \$50,000

Submission Deadline: May 11, 2026, 5pm

Applications will be accepted, reviewed and awarded on a rolling basis; the competition might close before the May 11 deadline if funds are exhausted.

Program Goals

This funding opportunity is intended to:

- Spark new interdisciplinary collaborations across UM-Dearborn colleges and departments
- Build competitive research teams poised to pursue large-scale external funding
- Advance UM-Dearborn's research mission in alignment with the University of Michigan's "Look to Michigan" initiative
- Produce tangible research outcomes that demonstrate impact and readiness for external sponsorship

Eligibility Requirements

Applications are open to interdisciplinary research teams seeking to secure large-scale funding within the next two to four years.

- Applicants must be full-time UM-Dearborn faculty eligible to serve as Principal Investigator (PI) per campus policy.
- An individual can participate as PI on *only one proposal* submitted to this program. There are no limitations to participation as co-PI, Senior Personnel, or Consultant on other PIs' proposals if projects are substantially different. Award limits in relation to other competitive campus grants do not apply.
- A minimum of two (2) Dearborn units must be represented on the project team.
- Collaborations spanning disciplines that have historically had limited or no prior collaborative relationships are encouraged. Teams should propose projects tackling significant and complex research questions that require interdisciplinary collaboration. Teams that cannot demonstrate genuine interdisciplinary integration will not be considered.
- Teams must consist of (3) three or more interdisciplinary collaborators.
- All Dearborn team members must have updated PEERRS certification, and all reporting from their previous Campus Grants awards must be current.
- Each team member must commit to:
 - attending monthly in-person sessions regularly and;
 - be present and actively engaged throughout the project, and through the submission of at least one external proposal.
- The Standard Requirements for all Campus Grants apply- if in conflict with the CORE guidelines, the guidelines supersede the Standard Requirements.

External Collaborators

- External collaborators (from outside UM-Dearborn) are permitted
- External collaborator funding may constitute up to 20% of the total requested budget
- Cost-sharing is required from external collaborators at a 1:1 ratio

Example 1:

	Budget Element	Amount
1.	Total requested CORE budget	\$50,000
1.a	Dbn team salaries, materials, supplies, etc.	\$40,000
1.b	External collaborator funding (max 20% of requested budget)	\$10,000
2.	Required cost-share from collaborator's Institution	\$10,000
	Total Project Budget	\$60,000

Example 2:

	Budget Element	Amount
1.	Total requested CORE budget	\$50,000
1.a	Dbn team effort, materials, supplies, etc.	\$46,000
1.b	External collaborator funding (max 20% of requested budget)	\$4,000
2.	Required cost-share from collaborator's Institution	\$4,000
	Total Project Budget	\$54,000

External Funding Pathway Requirement

A defining feature of this program is its focus on **long-term external funding success**. All teams are required to:

1. Identify at least one (more is better) targeted external funding opportunity at the time of application- this should be a large-scale grant program for which the seed project will serve as foundational work
2. Submit an external proposal to the identified opportunity(ies) within 18 months of the internal project end date
3. Continue seeking external opportunities where the seed project research ideas fit, for the next 48 months/4 years past the internal project's end date

Teams should clearly articulate how their seed project will help build the evidence base, partnerships, and capacity needed to be competitive for the identified external opportunity.

Alignment with the “Look to Michigan” Initiative

Applicants are encouraged to identify how their proposed research aligns with one or more pillars of the University of Michigan's “Look to Michigan” initiative, or identify a research area of alignment. Please select all that is relevant from the list below:

Look to Michigan Pillars (1 through 5)

1. Life-Changing Education
2. Human Health and Well-Being
3. Democracy, Civic, and Global Engagement
4. Energy, Climate Action, Sustainability, and Environmental Equity
5. Advanced Technology
6. Other research area (please specify) _____

Application Process & Requirements

This program uses a multi-stage competitive application and review process. Applications are reviewed on a rolling basis upon receipt. Awards will be made contingent on merit and the availability of funding. Early submission is strongly encouraged.

Closing Date: May 11, 2025, 5 PM (last day applications will be accepted)

Project duration: 12 months. One no-cost extension of 6 months may be approved if requested BEFORE the initially approved project end date. After the project period end date, funds will be deobligated. Expenses incurred past the project end date will be deemed unallowable; remaining funds after the project period end will be returned to the Office of Research.

Stage 1: Lay Abstract (limit 400 words), White Paper (limit 5 pages), Key Personnel & Role on Project (InfoReady section), Budget (use provided template), and Budget Justification (1 page)

- Lay abstract- use plain English, avoid the use of terminology and abbreviations, describe your idea(s) in easy-to-understand words. In 400 words or fewer, outline the uniqueness of your idea and how the project outcomes will solve an important problem or contribute to the field. Include:
 - a. goals / objectives / specific aims
 - b. expected outcomes
 - c. significance of the proposed project
- In your 5-page white paper, include the following sections with distinct headings:

- a. Project description
 - problem statement (background & motivation)
 - goals/objectives/aims
 - approach/methodology
 - timeline
 - b. Interdisciplinary rationale - explain the nature of the collaboration and why it represents a new or non-traditional partnership across colleges/disciplines
 - c. Anticipated outcomes and impacts
 - d. Identified external funding target(s) and the seed project's alignment with it/them. Include any relevant funding opportunity announcements (FOAs) and their respective links. Also include the anticipated direct cost of the proposal to be submitted to the external sponsor
- List of key personnel and their role on the project- enter in designated InfoReady application field
 - Budget & Budget Justification- Requirements
 - a. *Allowable Expenses*
 - Faculty, staff, postdoc, or student support (not including tuition) for project-specific work
 - Team-building activities, e.g., team meetings, team workshops, etc.
 - Project-required materials and supplies
 - Participant compensation
 - Travel expenses for project-specific activities, e.g. field trips, team meetings, etc. and travel expenses or registration fees to government-sponsored symposia/events aligned with the targeted external funding opportunities. Limit to 10% of the total proposal budget.
 - Equipment (nonexpendable property having a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost of \$5,000 or more per unit)- include a detailed justification explaining why the equipment is essential at this preliminary stage of the research and why it is not reasonably available through existing resources (e.g., shared equipment, core facilities) and therefore must be purchased. This is NOT an instrumentation grant, and budgets that are primarily devoted to equipment purchases are strongly discouraged. We reserve the right to reject equipment requests that are not adequately justified
 - Fees for the use of facilities / U-M Research Cores, etc.
 - Research publication and dissemination costs up to \$5,000, including conference registrations and presentation costs
 - b. *Unallowable Expenses*
 - General supplies and other costs normally covered by the academic unit or other institutional support (e.g. office supplies, computers, hardware, software for routine use, etc.)

- Equipment maintenance costs
- Tuition support
- Instruction- related expenses and trainings
- Membership in professional organizations
- Financial transactions that occur prior to award (except when a written approval of the pre-award expense is obtained from the Director of Research Development), after the project period end date, or in excess of the awarded amount. Applicants assume the risk and responsibility for any financial commitments made prior to the award.

Stage 2: Team Presentation

Teams will present their proposed project to the Office of Research, the Provost, Deans and participating Department Chairs, and/or their delegates. This step is critical to verify authentic interdisciplinary collaboration and shared intellectual contribution among all team members.

Presentation requirements:

- All Dearborn team members should attend in person
- External collaborators can attend in person, join via Zoom, or, if needed, can be represented by their Dearborn teammates (the team should be able to clearly articulate the external collaborator's role on the project)
- Teams should plan to present their White Paper (~ 10 minutes), and answer questions from the audience about the proposed research (~ 30 minutes)

Stage 3 (when possible): External Program Officer Consultation

OR staff will facilitate contact with relevant program officers from targeted external funders to assess competitiveness and alignment of the presented research idea

Stage 4 (by invitation only): Final Proposal Budget, Updated Project Timeline & Requested Supporting Documentation (if any)

Teams will be invited to finalize the project plans and submit via InfoReady the following:

- A final, refined budget (if needed)
- An updated project timeline, including the submission of external proposal(s)
- Any additional materials requested during the presentation and review (if applicable)

Review Process

Submitted proposals will undergo a multi-step review:

- Office of Research Review- initial screening for eligibility, completeness, and program fit
- Expert Review- external review by ThornRun, a specialized research advisory group, for strategic fit to the listed external funding opportunities

- Program Officer Consultation (when possible)- to assess competitiveness and alignment with the selected external funding opportunities
- Provost, participating Deans, and Department Chairs (during presentation)- final award decision

Evaluation Criteria

- **Adherence to the guidelines and program requirements**
- **Scientific and technical merit of the proposal:** including feasibility of the research plan, quality of the proposed work, significance of the expected results, and likelihood for successful completion of the project
- **Interdisciplinary approach and rationale:** The proposal clearly describes an interdisciplinary research plan and explains why an interdisciplinary approach is necessary to address the problem
- **External funding competitiveness (2- 4 years):** The project positions the team to compete successfully for external research funding within the next 2- 4 years, with priority given to proposals with strong funding potential
- **Impact, scalability, and societal benefit:** The research problem has strong potential for significant scientific impact, a path to scaling beyond the initial project, and a clear societal benefit
- **Broader opportunities and outcomes:** The project is likely to create opportunities in research or creative practice, education, training, workforce development, outreach, and/or community engagement
- **Assistant professor participation:** Preference will be given to teams that include at least one assistant professor as a core team member
- **Practicality of the requested funds**

Post-Award Expectations

Award recipients will be expected to actively engage in the following post-award activities:

- Monthly team meetings with OR representatives | Team progress check, needed proposal development support, and/or additional resources
- 6-Month Progress Presentation | Mid-project presentation of results and updates to the Office of Research, Deans, and Chairs
- External Proposal Submission | Submission to the identified external funding opportunity within 12-18 months of the internal project end date
- Final Report Submission | via InfoReady within 30 days of project period end date. Future funding is contingent upon the acceptance of the final report by the UM-Dearborn Office of Research

- Campus Celebration & Lessons Learned Panel | Following project completion and external proposal submission/s, teams might be invited to and agree to participate in a campus event celebrating outcomes and sharing insights with the broader UM-Dearborn research community

Publication Acknowledgment

All publications resulting from this funding should acknowledge support received from the UM-Dearborn Office of Research. A suggested acknowledgement is below, but feel free to modify it as appropriate:

“The author’s work was supported by the University of Michigan-Dearborn’s Office of Research CORE grant program.”

How to Apply

To begin your application, submit your White Paper and draft budget via [InfoReady](#) no later than 5pm on May 11, 2026. Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis; the competition might be closed before the May 11 deadline if funding is exhausted.

Questions? Email <DbnCampusGrants@umich.edu>

*The University of Michigan-Dearborn Office of Research is committed to fostering an inclusive and collaborative research environment. We strongly encourage applications from faculty across all disciplines, career stages, and backgrounds.