

Request for Proposals



Wanger Institute for Sustainable Energy Research (WISER) 2020 Cross-Disciplinary Seed Funding Grants (CSFG)

[Posted: 2/19/2020]

The objective of the WISER Cross-disciplinary Seed Funding Grants (CSFG) program is to provide funding to initiate innovative programs that will use the results obtained during the project period to develop major proposals seeking external funding in areas of national interest related to energy and sustainability. Proposals based on new and innovative cross-disciplinary research concepts that are expected to be promising in attracting major external funding in the area of energy and sustainability are solicited. The proposals should be focused on **one or both** of these areas: 1) new areas of cross-disciplinary research of national interest, and/or 2) areas that are in-line with WISER's current research centers and programs. Proposals that are only marginally related to the energy and sustainability area will be rejected without review.

GUIDELINES FOR SUBMISSION

Only IIT tenured and tenure-track faculty are eligible to serve as Principal Investigator (PI). In order to promote cross-disciplinary activities, *both within IIT and with other institutions*, the proposal must be submitted by the IIT PI and at least one other (internal or external) co-PI who must hold an appointment or position in a different discipline. **Proposals that do not include a co-PI from a different discipline will be rejected without review.** No subcontracts are allowed. The allowed funding **must not exceed \$30,000**. Each grant will be funded for a maximum of one year. The funds awarded will be released at the beginning of the project period, **June 1, 2020, subject to the discretion of the IIT Controller's Office**. Applicants are encouraged to use the format outlined in the proposal format section for their proposal submissions. **Important New Eligibility Stipulation: To assure that the CSFG projects continue to represent diverse cross-disciplinary research areas, all PIs and co-PIs who received CSFG awards in the previous year's program are ineligible to apply as either a PI or a co-PI for the subsequent year's CSFG program.**

ROUTING SHEET (CAYUSE) INSTRUCTIONS

All PIs must complete a routing sheet in Cayuse. See the PI Portal on the "[Research: Office of Sponsored Research and Programs](#)" webpage for further instructions. Contact osrp@iit.edu if you have questions regarding the routing sheet.

Note: These Instructions Deviate from OSRP's Routine Procedures.

1. Please start a Cayuse routing sheet as early as possible, but **do not submit** the routing sheet for departmental and college approval until you have uploaded the final proposal document in Step 5 below.
2. In the "Sponsor" field, search for "WISER" (and select "WISER" - Wanger Institute for Sustainable Energy Research) as the sponsor.
3. In the "Affiliated Units" section, click on the link and select "WISER" as an affiliated unit.
4. Submit your proposal by uploading the final proposal document in the attachments tab in Cayuse. **Proposals must be uploaded by 5:00 pm on Wed., April 1, 2020.**
5. After the final proposal has been uploaded, please submit the routing sheet for departmental and college approval. The Cayuse timestamp of the file upload, not the timestamp of the departmental approval, will be used to determine if the proposal has been submitted on time.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Recipients are required to submit a progress report for the first half of the project period no later than December 31, 2020. Continuation of the second half of the allocated funding will depend on satisfactory demonstration of progress. A final technical report is required by August 31, 2021 and must include an outline for major proposal submission.

All programmatic or budgetary questions should be directed to Margaret Murphy, WISER Assistant Director and Program Outreach Manager (murphym@iit.edu, 312.567.6881).

PROPOSAL FORMAT

Typeface, Size, and Page Formatting

Each proposal is limited to **five pages** including figures, tables, and appendices (excluding references cited, budget, budget justification, and biographical sketch). Proposals should be submitted in either **Times New Roman** or **Arial** typeface using **no smaller than size 11 font, with one-inch margins**.

The **title of the proposal** should read as follows: Cayuse#, WISER: Title of Project, PI Name and PI Department. *Note: The Cayuse number is generated from the routing sheet.*

Proposals that do not meet the formatting requirements or are received after the deadline **will not be accepted**.

REQUIRED CONTENT

Proposals should include the suggested sections described below. **However, proposals that exclude separate responses to the required documentation outlined for Sections 3, 4, and 5 will be rejected without review.**

1) Objectives

List the broad long-term objectives and identify the specific intended accomplishments of the proposed research. Indicate how the work will enhance the cross-disciplinary activities of the faculty involved and the specific plan for preparation and submission of cross-disciplinary proposals based on the results of the proposed work.

2) Background and Significance

Briefly sketch the background leading to the proposed work, critically evaluate existing knowledge, and specifically identify the gaps that the project is intended to fill. State concisely the importance and relevance of the proposed work by relating the specific aims to the broad long-term objectives.

3) Intellectual Merit of the Proposed Research Work and Proposed Research Tasks

Clearly specify the intellectual merit of the proposed research work and proposed tasks. Describe any new methodology and its advantage over existing methodologies. Discuss the potential difficulties and limitations of the proposed procedures and alternative approaches to achieve the aims. As part of this section, provide a tentative timetable for the project. Point out any procedures, situations, or materials that may be hazardous to personnel and the precautions to be exercised. Any proposals that include human or animal subjects must have the appropriate institutional approvals prior to the issuance of any award.

Note: Proposals that do not include a separate section titled “Intellectual Merit of the Proposed Research Work and Proposed Research Tasks” and a detailed description of the intellectual merit of the proposed research work and proposed research tasks will be rejected without review.

4) Collaborative Team

Explain how the research team has been formed, and describe the responsibilities of all team members and why this collaborative effort is essential. **Note: Proposals that do not include a separate section titled “Collaborative Team” and detailed descriptions of the team formation/team member responsibilities will be rejected without review.**

5) Plans for Seeking External Funding

Clearly identify how the investigators will use the results of this proposed work to prepare a multi-investigator cross-disciplinary proposal, the agency/agencies and division(s) within the agencies and/or industries to which the investigators are planning to submit the proposal, the expected range of the total funding request, the timeframe for the submission, and an assessment of the potential success of the proposal. State how the resources requested from the CSFG will enable the development of these external proposals. **Note: Proposals that do not include a separate section titled “Plans for Seeking External Funding” and a detailed plan for seeking external funding will be rejected without review. Note: Proposals that mention only the names of agencies and do not provide specific timelines and programs will be rejected without review.**

6) Budget and Budget Justification

Include a budget that **does not exceed \$30,000**. An explanation (budget justification) of how the expenditure of the CSFG funds would lead to results for developing strong proposals for external funding agencies **also must be included**. Lists of WISER CSFG allowable/unallowable expenditures are provided below.

Important New Budget Stipulation for Awarded CSFG Projects: Reallocation of more than 10% of any budget item **is not allowed**; reallocation of any budget item of 10% or less **may be allowed subject to the specific review and approval of the WISER director**.

WISER CSFG Allowable Expenditures

- IIT graduate student support in the form of stipend or tuition (no support is allowed for students outside of IIT)
- IIT undergraduate student support in the form of hourly stipend
- Essential research supplies/equipment/services

WISER CSFG Unallowable Expenditures

- Faculty time and salary
- Indirect costs
- Travel
- Subawards

7) Biographical Sketch

Include a two-page (maximum) biographical sketch for each investigator. (Format may be similar to that used for NSF proposal submissions.) **Note: Current and Pending section not required.**

REVIEW CRITERIA

The following general review criteria will be used for the evaluation of the proposals.

Innovation and Technical Merit (35%)

Does the project employ novel concepts, approaches, or methods in a sustainable energy and/or sustainability related area? Are the aims original and innovative? Does the project challenge existing paradigms or develop new methodologies or technologies in a sustainable energy and/or sustainability related area?

Significant Impact of Proposed Work in a Sustainable Energy and/or Sustainability Related Area and Cross-disciplinary Nature of the Proposal (30%)

Does this study address a significant problem in a sustainable energy and/or sustainability related area? If the aims of the application are achieved, how will scientific knowledge be advanced and used by the multiple investigators in preparing future major research proposals? Is this a cross-disciplinary collaboration in which all investigators are contributing significantly to the proposed research in sustainable energy and/or sustainability?

External Funding Plan and Potential (35%)

Is the plan for seeking external funding appropriate and clearly defined? How is the proposal's potential to successfully attract external funding assessed?