**Dean’s Fund for Scientific Advancement**

**2022 Acceleration Award RFA**

**Application Deadline: July 13, 2022 (11:59 PM)**

**Submission requirements:** All applications should be submitted through the Harvard University Funding Portal (HUFP). See below for more information on submission via HUFP.

**Contact regarding questions:** Elizabeth Sylvester at [esylvester@hsph.harvard.edu](mailto:esylvester@hsph.harvard.edu) or visit the [***Frequently Asked Questions***](https://cdn1.sph.harvard.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/57/2018/11/FAQ_FINAL_11.30.18.pdf) section of our website.

The **Dean’s Fund for Scientific Advancement** expands the School’s internal research funding program and is designed to create a pipeline of support that facilitates the exploration of early ideas, the development of strong interdisciplinary team science, and the creation of new transformative research collaborations that advance the frontiers of science. Acceleration Awards represent a critical component of the funding program and are intended to nurture research collaborations and develop research platforms.

OVERVIEW AND GOALS OF THE ACCELERATION AWARD

Acceleration Awards are collaboration-focused grants and applications will be accepted in two focal areas: Research Grants and Research Platforms. Both types of applications will require the substantial engagement of at least two Harvard Chan School departments or centers and must include collaboration from at least one other Harvard school. The actual number of awards distributed in each focal area may vary based on School priorities and the quality of applications received.

**Research Grant** applications submitted in response to this call will be accepted in the three priority areas identified in the School’s recent Research Strategy Optimization Process. Grant applications that align with priority areas will be given special consideration. However, any faculty member who has a novel approach or innovative idea in need of funding is encouraged to apply. This year’s Acceleration priority areas are:

1. **Health Inequities**  
   Understanding how structural racism affects health outcomes in the US requires an expansion in the small body of existing empirical research on racism and health. Conceptually, structural racism involves interconnected institutions, whose linkages are historically rooted and culturally reinforced; a focus on structural racism offers a concrete, feasible, and promising approach toward advancing health equity and improving population health. While racial health inequities are widely acknowledged, understanding of the causal pathways between societal processes and population health outcomes remains incomplete. By increasing the availability of data, including race and ethnicity, and recognizing the health impacts of racism, Harvard Chan’s advancement of health inequities research is aimed at equipping public health experts with more robust tools to understand and probe the underlying causes and impacts of health disparities within their own research domains.
2. **The Public Health Impacts of Climate Change**  
   Human disruption of Earth’s natural systems is driving a growing share of the global burden of disease. In this context, universities in general, and schools of public health in particular, face the increasingly urgent task of spearheading scholarship and education focused on characterizing and quantifying the myriad health threats associated with rapidly changing biophysical conditions and the many opportunities to address those threats. Meeting this challenge will require significant collaboration across disciplines and provides an opportunity to leverage the Harvard Chan School’s expertise in the global public health impacts of climate change.
3. **Pandemics**  
   Harvard Chan has been a key center for research and policy analysis on the SARS-CoV-2 virus and has been at the forefront of the COVID-19 response. We are conducting groundbreaking research on everything from the basic biology of the virus to population-level strategies to help stop its spread. The School has hosted/participated in hundreds of public forums and press conferences to advise governments, businesses, and other organizations on safely navigating the crisis. Our experts continue to work with local and state health departments, foreign political leaders, and international ministries of health on issues ranging from impacts of human mobility on virus transmission to vaccine prioritization and evaluation. This unique expertise builds on decades of groundbreaking research on infectious disease dynamics and development of new methods to study them; our faculty continue to generate novel strategies used globally to fight infectious diseases.

**Research Platforms**, defined broadly, are research resources that can be accessed by multiple faculty to support projects in a variety of disciplines. The goal of these awards is to provide one-time support for the development of research platforms that can be funded in the future by other mechanisms. Examples include support for developing a publicly available database of cancer genes, bio-banking samples accessible to multiple research groups, platforms to increase access to shared datasets or software programs, writing shared code for complex data sets, or pooling expertise on health inequities research to incorporate diversity aspects into grant applications.

AWARD AMOUNT AND DURATION

Both Research Grants and Research Platform Awards will be made for up to $100,000 (direct cost) for projects that are designed to be completed in a 12-month project period. An automatic 6-month no-cost extension will be granted if needed, after which no additional extensions will be allowed.

ELIGIBILITY

Principal investigators must be:

* Primary Harvard Chan School faculty whose research operation is based at the Harvard Chan School. Co-investigators or team members may include individuals with any academic appointment.

Applications must include:

* Coinvestigators from at least two Harvard Chan School departments or centers representing interdisciplinary collaboration; and
* Collaboration with at least one other Harvard School (see below for more details).

If you have any questions regarding your eligibility to apply for this award, please contact Elizabeth Sylvester at [esylvester@hsph.harvard.edu](mailto:esylvester@hsph.harvard.edu).

COLLABORATION REQUIREMENT DETAILS

The grant application will include a required section called “Interdisciplinary Approach and Coordination” for applicants to explicitly describe how the proposed research project or research platform is interdisciplinary in nature.

* In this section, applicants should describe how collaboration across Harvard Chan School departments or centers and at least one other Harvard school will be operationalized. Topics to be addressed include communication, shared decision-making, conflict resolution, personnel decisions, management of changes in study protocol, and authorship. Administrative and technical responsibilities should also be outlined.
* Any rank of researcher (faculty, research scientists, postdocs, students) will meet the requirement for collaboration with another Harvard school.
* An example of a collaborative approach could include a shared student or postdoctoral fellow working with investigators from multiple departments or schools. Other models for operationalizing collaboration may include provisions for regular co-investigators and team meetings, or agreements for shared resources and equipment, as appropriate.
* The inclusion of Harvard Chan School junior faculty as part of a research team is *strongly* encouraged and will be factored into application review and scoring.

ADDITIONAL PROJECT SUPPORT

All awardees will receive additional support from the Office of Research Strategy and Development (ORSD) during the project period. Specifically, ORSD will work with teams to identify and connect with additional resources and collaborators, as needed. There will be periodic check-ins with ORSD staff to identify roadblocks and facilitate solutions. The Acceleration Award mechanism is designed to position faculty for external support mechanisms.

SUBMISSION PROCESS

Proposals are to be submitted through the [Harvard University Funding Portal](https://harvard.communityforce.com/Funds/Search.aspx) (HUFP). If you are using the application portal for the first time, you must complete a short registration process (see below). Please note, you can search for awards without logging in, but you must be registered and logged in with your Harvard Key to submit an application. There is an option to assign a proxy for proposal submission, but your grant manager cannot use your Harvard Key to submit your application. Please see below for more information on registering for an account and assigning a proxy.

**Registering your HUFP Account:** Select “Log-in” in the top right corner of the HUFP webpage, which will bring you to a log-in page with two options. Select the "with Harvard Key" icon, which will prompt you to enter your Harvard Key. You will be led through a short three-question registration process. Once registered, you will be able to log in with your Harvard Key to submit applications.

Assigning a Proxy for Submission: Before beginning an application, both the proxy and the PI must register for individual accounts in HUFP using their Harvard Key credentials. Once the proxy and the PI are registered, the proxy can begin an application on behalf of the PI. The Proxy will indicate that they are a proxy applicant and will be asked to locate their PI in HUFP. Proxies should never “Add User” in HUFP. Once this is done, both the PI and the proxy will be able to access and edit the application.

Please contact ORSD ([esylvester@hsph.harvard.edu](mailto:esylvester@hsph.harvard.edu)) if you have any questions about using HUFP.

PROPOSAL CONTENT AND PAGE LIMITS

You must complete all sections within the application portal before submitting your application. The sections within the application portal are as follows:

1. Applicant Information
2. Collaborators
3. Project Information: In this section, you must complete a 200-word research abstract and upload the following documents as a single PDF:
4. Project Proposal: Maximum of 4 pages of text, not including items b – e listed below. Figures and references are allowable in addition to this page limit. No other appendix material will be accepted.

* Within the project proposal, please describe any key challenges that may arise during the course of this project and how you will manage them.

1. Additional Required Forms by Award Type:
   * All Applications: Interdisciplinary Approach & Coordination Form. Maximum of 1 page of text. Use this [Downloadable Form](https://cdn1.sph.harvard.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/57/2018/12/Interdisciplinary-Approach-and-Coordination.docx) as a template.
   * Research Platform Applications: Sustainability Form. Maximum of 1 page of text. Use this [Downloadable Form](https://cdn1.sph.harvard.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/57/2018/12/Sustainability-Form.docx) as a template.
2. Biosketch: Current [NIH Biosketch](https://grants.nih.gov/grants/forms/biosketch.htm) for each participating investigator.
3. Budget Request: Budget estimates should be submitted on [NIH PHS 398 detailed budget form](https://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/phs398/fp4.pdf) with major divisions of funds (personnel, equipment, etc.). PIs may include effort and salary support commensurate with their effort. The full amount of the award may be used for direct costs. **PLEASE** **NOTE: Indirect costs, including indirect costs on sub-contracts, cannot be charged to internally funded awards.**
4. Budget Justification
5. Electronic Signature

REVIEW PROCESS AND CRITERIA

Proposals will be reviewed by a standing committee of faculty with broad representation across the School’s disciplinary clusters (life sciences, quantitative sciences, and social and policy sciences). The purpose of the Acceleration Award is to encourage collaborations and support innovative ideas that capitalize on the strengths of an interdisciplinary perspective. As such, reviewers will evaluate applications based on the following review criteria:

Research Grant Review Criteria:

1. **Overall Impact:** The likelihood of the project to exert a sustained, powerful influence on the research field(s) involved, in consideration of the review criteria below.
2. **Significance:** The extent to which the application addresses an important problem or a critical barrier in one of the identified priority areas or other important public health problem central to the mission of the School.
3. **Innovation:** The extent to which the application seeks to shift current research or clinical practice paradigms by utilizing novel theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions.
4. **Feasibility:** The extent to which the application demonstrates that measurable results are achievable within an 18-month timeframe and the potential for the project to be scaled-up.
5. **Interdisciplinary Approach:** The extent to which the application provides evidence of the ability of the team of investigators to work together in an interdisciplinary fashion and the likelihood that the proposed interdisciplinary approach will yield new insights into the problem being addressed.

Research Platform Review Criteria:

1. **Overall Impact**: The likelihood for the project to exert a sustained, powerful influence on the research field(s) involved and the likelihood that the platform will fill a critical gap in the intellectual infrastructure of the Harvard Chan School, in consideration of the review criteria below.
2. **Significance:** The extent to which the project addresses an important problem or a critical barrier to progress in the field.
3. **Innovation:** The extent to which the application seeks to shift current research or clinical practice paradigms by utilizing novel theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions.
4. **Feasibility & Sustainability:** The extent to which the application demonstrates that measurable results are achievable within an 18-month and includes a well-defined and appropriate plan to ensure the long-term sustainability of the research platform.
5. **Interdisciplinary Approach:** The extent to which the application provides evidence of the ability of the team of investigators to work together in an interdisciplinary fashion and the likelihood that the proposed interdisciplinary approach will yield new insights into the problem being addressed.

Other considerations include:

* Successful applications will make a compelling case that articulates the public health or research platform need to be addressed and specific goals/impact to be achieved with the aid of the grant.
* Measurable results must be achievable within an 18-month timeframe.
* Project goals should emphasize not only the significance and innovation of the project, but also demonstrate how an interdisciplinary approach will maximize the potential impact of the work – the potential to create new scientific paradigms or develop transformative technologies and platforms.
* For Research Platforms: Particular attention will be given to the likelihood of long-term sustainability.
* The inclusion of Harvard Chan School junior faculty as part of a research team is strongly encouraged and will be factored into application review.

Additional Budget Guidelines:

* **Subcontracts:** External collaboration beyond Harvard is permitted in cases where there is a clear scientific rationale for why the work needs to be done externally. A letter describing the subcontractor’s commitment to the work outlined in the proposal and the scope of their contribution should be submitted at the time of application. All other paperwork needed to set up the subcontract can be submitted if and when the project is funded.
* **Outside spending/salary support:** Funds may be used for project-related expenses at other Harvard Schools, though they cannot provide salary support for faculty outside of the Harvard Chan School whose salaries are already fully covered by institutional funds.
* **Indirect costs:** Indirect costs should not be included. The full award should be used to support direct project costs.

REPORTING

* A final report will be due 30-calendar days after the end of the 18-month funding period that summarizes the impact of the project and progress towards broader dissemination of knowledge. A final report template will be sent to awardees one-month prior to the close of the award.

ADDITIONAL TERMS OF THE AWARD

* Should the PI leave the Harvard Chan School, the remainder of the award will be forfeited (i.e., may not be transferred to another institution).