

Biomedical Research and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) 2009

(March 10, 2009)

ARRA funds target turnkey or shovel-ready projects that allow expenditures over the next two years with associated economic impact to provide sustainable benefits for science and society. Federal agencies will distribute funds in a rapid, transparent manner with appropriate mechanisms for detailed monitoring and reporting of expenditures and outcomes (<http://www.hhs.gov/recovery/index.html>).

ARRA directs \$10.4B to the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and \$3B to the National Science Foundation as part of an overall, dramatic commitment to science and technology by the current administration. ARRA directs an additional \$1.1B for Comparative Effectiveness Research through the Agency for Healthcare Research Quality, of which \$400M will be transferred to and administered by NIH and \$400M will be allocated at the discretion of the Secretary of Health and Human Services.

Last week, NIH began to provide information about how they will distribute ARRA funds. This information is posted at the APR Research Resources Web Site (<http://research.musc.edu/researchresources.html>), and updated frequently as new information arises.

Of the \$10.4B provided to NIH, the Institutes, Centers and the Common Fund will receive \$7.4B with an additional \$800M to the Office of the Director to support research priorities. Mechanisms for distribution include funding of:

- a) recently reviewed, meritorious R01 applications that did not quite make the pay line;
- b) projects directed to achieve progress in two years;
- c) targeted supplements to existing grants; and
- d) NIH Challenge Grants (http://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/challenge_award/).

All funded investigators are advised to communicate with their program directors regarding the possible availability of a targeted supplement to an active research project grant. Institutes may have different guidelines for the supplemental funding requests. Based on advice from the NIH program office, they may develop supplemental funding requests with deliverables in two years. All supplemental requests should be processed through the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs via normal procedures.

The National Center for Research Resources (NCRR) of NIH received \$1B specifically to support extramural construction/renovations of research infrastructure directly involved in NIH-sponsored research and \$300M for shared instrumentation and other capital equipment.

Funds for construction and renovation involve a competitive application process with three deadlines and three brackets for project cost (starting at \$2M and capping at \$15M). Each institution is limited to a total of three proposals in response to this RFA: <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/rfa-files/RFA-RR-09-008.html>

NCRR issued an additional funding opportunity (\$1M to \$10M) for renovations related to establishing or consolidating core research resources, with a deadline of September 17th 2009. Each institution is limited to a total of two proposals in response to this RFA: <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/rfa-files/RFA-RR-09-007.html>

Funds targeting shared research instrumentation will be competed for by various mechanisms including a March 23rd submission date for shared instrumentation grants (\$100K to \$500K).

(<http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PAR-09-028.html>) and a May 6th submission date for high-end instrumentation grants (\$600K to \$8M) (<http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PAR-09-118.html>).

We at MUSC have taken several steps to prepare for this investment in our research mission including the following.

- a) Information regarding funding opportunities was communicated to the research community.
- b) MUSC faculty members were queried for instrumentation and research infrastructure needs (responses posted at http://research.musc.edu/arra/stimulus_idea.html).
- c) A Shared Instrumentation web page (<http://research.musc.edu/ord/SIG.html>) was established to provide information on applications under development and guidelines on submission.
- d) Research infrastructure projects were identified and categorized based upon anticipated funding mechanisms, programmatic strategies and current project status. Approximately 15 responses for Alterations & Renovations were received in response to a request for input regarding potential stimulus project possibilities. This request was broadcast multiple times by the Provost and Associate Provost for Research (posted at http://research.musc.edu/arra/stimulus_idea.html). A working group that includes Dr. Stephen Lanier, Peggy Schachte, John Malmrose and Leslie Kendall has been established. The working group is meeting with all groups whose renovation suggestions potentially align with the funding criteria in order to evaluate feasibility and determine which mix of projects represents an optimal strategy for institutional success in this competition.
- e) Operational needs related to grant submission, project implementation, monitoring and reporting were reviewed to ensure a facilitated process for projects going forward.
- f) Business managers were briefed on funding opportunities and anticipated support needs. Ongoing biweekly meetings are planned with Darren McCants, Director of the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, and Velma Stamp, Director of the Office of Grants and Contracts Accounting.
- g) We are also working on opportunities to access ARRA funds at NSF, NIST and various health care related agencies. We have appointed several task forces in this regard:
 - Dr. Frank Clark chairs a task force on Health Information Technology and Health Care Education.
 - Dr. Robert Adams chairs a task force on Health Information Technology and Innovations in Telemedicine.
 - Dean Gail Stuart chairs a task force on Healthcare Quality and Comparative Effectiveness Research.

Updates on funding opportunities and operational aspects are posted on the APR web site for Research Resources (<http://research.musc.edu/researchresources.html>).

Please contact the Office of the Associate Provost for Research [lynchre@musc.edu, 792-4242] with any questions or suggestions as we go forward.

This is a hugely important initiative to re-invest in science and technology as a fundamental platform for economic recovery with long-term benefit for society. We must contribute with all our talents and energy.