

**University of California
Agriculture and Natural Resources**

**High Risk/High Reward
Grants Program 2017**

Request for Proposals

Released January 2017

High Risk/High Reward Grants Program

Given the complexity of societal problems, high risk research is necessary in order to achieve gains needed for real progress towards addressing present and emerging challenges. Therefore, the high risk/high reward grants program will provide funds to initiate and complete research and proof-of-concept efforts that serve as the basis for larger funding opportunities. These projects must be of a high risk/high reward nature that are best conducted in an appropriate controlled, research setting and, if successful, lend themselves to subsequent larger funding opportunities and/or intellectual property development.

Proposed projects must be within the scope of the ANR [Strategic Vision](#)¹—which was developed to address the scientific, technological, social, and economic demands facing California presently and in the future. ANR also identified five strategic initiatives of critical importance to California best equipped to achieve maximum results and focus on pressing issues facing the state:

- [Endemic and Invasive Pests and Diseases](#) (EIPD)
- [Healthy Families and Communities](#) (HFC)
- [Sustainable Food Systems](#) (SFS)
- [Sustainable Natural Ecosystems](#) (SNE)
- [Water Quality, Quantity and Security](#) (Water)

All proposals submitted to this program must address high risk/high reward projects and efforts that fall within the range of areas identified by the strategic initiatives listed above. For more information on the initiatives, please click on the bulleted titles—which have been hyperlinked to their respective websites.

Eligibility

All ANR academics with PI status are eligible to apply and will follow the eligibility requirements outlined in ANR's traditional competitive grants program (see below):

- Proposals must be submitted by someone that holds an academic appointment in ANR with Principal Investigator (PI) status, such as Cooperative Extension (CE) Advisor, CE Specialist, or Agricultural Experiment Station (AES) Faculty. Early career academics are strongly encouraged to apply.²
- Strategic initiative leaders may not apply as Principal Investigators (PI) or Co-PIs of a proposal, but they are eligible to contribute to projects as collaborators. Strategic initiative leaders may not receive funds directly from this high risk/high reward grants program.
- Strategic initiative panel members are eligible to apply as PIs and/or Co-PIs on proposals, but will not be involved in the review of their own proposals.
- We encourage non-ANR UC academics to serve as collaborators on projects.

¹ *Strategic Vision 2025* (<http://ucanr.org/sites/anrstaff/files/1006.pdf>)

²Early career academics have held their current appointments with ANR 6 years or less

Criteria

The high risk/high reward grants program seeks to support investigators with project ideas that have potential high impact, but that may be at a stage too early to discern. This program also aims to support projects that are creative and innovative, and that pursue ideas that can push the boundaries of traditional science.

Innovation

- Is the project original/ creative?
- Does the project challenge existing paradigms and present an innovative hypothesis?
- Does the project develop novel concepts, approaches, methodologies, tools, or technologies?
- If appropriate, will the proof of concept effort generate novel intellectual property/technologies?

Significance

- Does the project address an important problem directly related to ANR's Strategic Vision, and at least one of the five strategic initiatives listed in this RFP?
- If the aims of the proposal are achieved, will scientific knowledge be significantly impacted?
- Will there be an effect on the concepts, methods, and technologies that drive efforts in the addressed field/strategic initiative?

Approach

- Are the conceptual framework, design, methods and analyses adequately developed, well integrated, well-reasoned and appropriate for the aims of the project?
- Does the project investigator/team acknowledge potential problem areas and consider alternative strategies?

Feasibility

- Is the investigator/co-investigator appropriately trained and well suited to carry out this work?
- Does the project team bring complementary and integrated expertise to the project?
- Will the project lead to pilot or seed funding beyond the granting period?
- If applicable, will the project lead to intellectual property development?

Please note that the criteria in this funding opportunity are different from ANR's traditional competitive grants program, and investigators are expected to apply to the appropriate funding mechanism.

Funding, Timeline and Process

Proposals will be accepted using the same timeline as outlined for ANR's traditional competitive grants program, but will be reviewed separately due to the nature of the proposals.

As with ANR's traditional grants program, investigators may select a project start date from two options—*April 2018 or August 2018*. The flexibility in start date is intended to provide the time needed to find graduate students, modify project goals to align with seasonal considerations, and facilitate the collaboration between PIs and partners, both internal and external.

Funding

- High risk/high reward grants will be limited to no more than \$100,000 per project and the duration is not to exceed five years.

Timeline

The following deadlines and processes are applicable for both the April 2018 and August 2018 project start dates.

Letter of Intent (LOI) due March 20, 2017

Applicants must submit LOIs no later than March 20, 2017 by 5pm (Pacific Time) in the Universal Review System (URS). Submission and approval of an LOI is required to submit a full proposal to this RFP. The LOI is reviewed by the appropriate strategic initiative panel(s) to determine applicability to initiative goals.

Applicants notified of LOI decisions April 26, 2017

Notifications will be generated from the Universal Review System (URS), sent via email to PIs, and circulated in ANR Update.

Full proposals due June 19, 2017

Applicants must submit all requirements via the Universal Review System (URS) by June 19, 2017, 5pm (Pacific Time).

After PIs have been notified of their approved LOIs, PIs will be granted access to the full application cycle and templates in the URS, found within the ANR Portal.

The online submission system will have materials and instructions that address technical and application requirements.

Technical reviews (mid-June to early September, 2017)

While both ANR's traditional competitive grants program and high risk/high reward grants program will follow parallel timelines and submission processes, proposals from each funding mechanism will be reviewed separately—especially due to the nature of the proposals and the difference in criteria.

Reviewers that are deemed to have a conflict of interest (COI) with lead project PIs/ Co-PIs will not assess those grants.

Strategic initiative leader reviews (end of September, 2017)

The strategic initiative (SI) leaders will collectively discuss technical reviews, and categorize proposals into priority groups using the criteria outlined in this RFP.

Program Council reviews and makes recommendations (October/November, 2017)

All proposals will be reviewed by Program Council review teams. The review teams will consist of primary and secondary reviewers, in addition to utilizing the expertise of the respective strategic initiative leader.

Program Council will also use the criteria outlined in this RFP to generate a list of recommended projects to fund for the Vice President's consideration.

Vice President announces awards (November/December, 2017)

Applicants will be notified via the Universal Review System (URS) and email of the funding decisions, in addition to disseminating the information via ANR Update.

Contracts and agreements executed (January to February, 2018)

The office of Program Planning and Evaluation (PPE) will contact PIs to undergo relevant post-award processes.

Letter of Intent Submission Instructions

Submission and approval of a letter of intent (LOI) is required to submit a full proposal to this RFP. The deadline for submitting an LOI via the Universal Review System (URS) is **March 20, 2017 by 5pm (Pacific Time)**. Once the LOI is approved, applicants will be notified of their eligibility to submit a full proposal by April 26, 2017. The deadline for submitting a full proposal is June 19, 2017.

Required elements for the LOI:

Name of Principal Investigator (PI) and affiliation (e.g. UCCE County Office or Campus and Department)

Name of Co-PI(s) and affiliation (if applicable)

Name(s) of collaborator(s) and affiliation (if known)

Title of proposed project

Strategic Initiative(s): Describe the area(s) the proposed work will focus on and choose a strategic initiative with which your proposal best fits.

Estimated Start and End Date: Indicate an estimated start and end date for the entire duration of the project. Projects in this RFP are expected to start April 2018 or August 2018 and last no longer than five years.

Estimated Budget: Specify the estimated total budget not to exceed \$100k for the proposed project, and a brief summary explaining the allocation and use of funds over the course of the entire project.

Key Words: List 3-5 keywords most relevant to your proposed project.

Potential Technical Reviewers: Please provide a list of five potential reviewers that can evaluate your proposed project. Reviewers may be UC or non-UC. You will need to provide reviewer name, affiliation/organization, and email.

Please note: Do not recommend reviewers if you anticipate that someone may potentially serve as a Co-PI or collaborator on your project or you are aware of a known conflict of interest. In addition, please be aware that only initiative panel members review LOIs; technical reviewers evaluate the full proposals.

Reviewers that are deemed to have a conflict of interest (COI) with lead project PIs/ Co-PIs will not review those grants. **COI Policy:** Reviewers are deemed to have a conflict of interest if they have been a co-author of a peer-reviewed published paper within the last three years with the lead PI or Co-PI of the proposal, or have been a PI or Co-PI on a funded grant with the lead PI or Co-PI of the proposal also within the last three years.

Project Summary: Please provide a one-page summary that presents an overview of the proposed project. The LOI should address how the project meets the criteria specified in this RFP, in addition to the points below. Be sure to include the following in your one-page summary:

- descriptive title
- rationale for high risk/high reward
- overall hypothesis or goal
- specific objectives

To begin your LOI, please log into your ANR Portal and locate the Universal Review System (URS). Under Open Systems you can click on **ANR High Risk/High Reward Grants Program 2017** to begin your submission.

If you have questions about the proposal solicitation process and/or technical requirements you may contact Melanie Caruso at (530) 750-1254 or mmcaruso@ucanr.edu.

For questions related to the strategic initiative areas please contact:

- (EIPD) Cheryl Wilen: cawilen@ucanr.edu
- (HFC) Keith Nathaniel: kcnathaniel@ucanr.edu
- (SFS) David Doll: dadoll@ucanr.edu
- (SNE) John Harper: jmharper@ucanr.edu
- (Water) Doug Parker: doug.parker@ucop.edu