

**CAREO Seed Grant Request for Proposals (RFP)**



**Synopsis:**

The Center for Agricultural Research, Engagement and Outreach (CAREO) is established to provide leadership and coordination in carrying out the 1890 Land Grant Mission of Virginia State University (VSU) through integrated research, educational outreach and university collaboration. With the goal of expanding the impact of the 1890 Land Grant Mission, CAREO Seed Grants are developed to increase university research and collaboration to support the national priorities of the United State Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) and priorities of the New Virginia Economy Strategic Plan <https://commerce.virginia.gov/media/3501/new-virginia-economy-12052014.pdf>. Particular emphasis will be placed on addressing the critical needs of underserved residents and communities within the state of Virginia.

CAREO Seed Grant Awards are awarded for up to a 2 year period. Funding for each award will range from $50,000 - $150,000 total costs. To encourage collaboration, awards will be funded as follows:

* Up to $50,000 awards - Granted to a proposal with faculty located within one division or department (i.e. an academic department or Cooperative Extension division)
* Up to $100,000 awards - Granted to a joint proposal with faculty located in more than one division or department at VSU (i.e. the Department of Accounting & Finance and the Department of Management & Marketing)
* Up to $150,000 awards - Granted to a joint proposal with faculty located within more than one college at VSU (i.e. College of Engineering & Technology and the Reginald F. Lewis College of Business)

**Once funded, all grant objectives and deliverables must be completed within one year.** Grant funds must be expended within the requested timeframe.

**USDA/NIFA Priority Areas:**

USDA is increasing its emphasis on interdisciplinary, transdisciplinary team approach research. Submitted proposals must clearly demonstrate, adhere to and outline how priorities of USDA/National Institute of Food and Agriculture will be addressed. The objectives and deliverables should support at least one of the listed priority areas below. Proposals that do not clearly establish goals that address USDA/NIFA priorities will not be considered. USDA/NIFA Priority areas may change yearly. If you are developing a proposal for one of these programs, make sure your proposal advances the priorities of USDA/NIFA and advances the 1890 Land Grant Mission of Virginia State University.

**The 2017 USDA/NIFA Priority Areas are as follows:**

* **Food Security and Hunger/Urban Agriculture** – boost local agricultural production, improve capacity to meet the growing local food demand, and foster innovation in fighting hunger and food insecurity in underserved populations
* **Human Health and Nutrition** – help reduce health disparities and chronic diseases among underserved populations
* **STEAM and Entrepreneurship Education** – Utilize the fields of agriculture and related sciences to increase youth interest and participation in STEM and entrepreneurship education to help develop a future workforce with in-demand skills.
* **Agriculture-Based Business Development** – Enhance economic development and support Virginia’s economy through food, fuel and fiber-based business development.

**Research and/or Extension Emphasis:**

Each proposal MUST include a research and/or extension emphasis. The research and/or extension emphasis should be clearly identified and included in the project justification section of the proposal). At least one emphasis must be included in the proposal as follows:

* **A research emphasis** that builds upon or adds to the current research being addressed within VSU’s Agricultural Research Station. For more information refer to: <http://www.agriculture.vsu.edu/agricultural-research-station/index.php>
* **An extension/outreach emphasis** that builds upon or adds to VSU/Virginia Cooperative Extension’s focus AND offers a program(s) or service(s) that is made available to the general public. For more information refer to: <https://www.ext.vsu.edu/>



**Proposal Format and Guidelines**

**Proposal Format and Evaluation Points:**

The Project Narrative shall not exceed 8 pages of written text and up to two (2) additional pages for figures and tables. The title page and table of contents will not count toward the narrative’s page limitation. Project narratives that exceed the applicable established page limit will not be accepted for review. Prepare the application using standard size (8 1/2” x 11”) page, one (1)-inch margins, no type smaller than 12 point font, and 1.5 line spacing. Use an easily readable font face (e.g., Arial, Times New Roman). The maximum score a proposal can receive is 100 points. The scores are distributed between the categories identified below. Please keep these evaluation criteria in mind while completing your application.

Format:

1. Title Page: Project Title and USDA/NIFA Priority Area(s) Addressed
2. Table of Contents
3. Executive Summary (5 points): The executive summary is limited to 250 words. In the summary, please include the relevance of the project to one or more of the 2017 USDA/NIFA Priority Areas.
4. Identification of the Problem (10 points): Clearly state the specific research, educational or outreach problem or opportunity to be addressed and the connection(s) with one or more of the 2017 USDA/NIFA Priority Areas.
5. Project Justification (15 points): How does the project add value to an existing body of knowledge in research, education and/or outreach? Summarize the body of knowledge and clearly justify the need for the proposed project. Graphical and tabulated formats may be used when possible. Discuss how the project will be of value at the local, regional or state level(s). **Clearly identify which emphasis area (research and/or extension) will be addressed through the proposed project, and include in this section.**
6. Innovation (10 points): Clearly identify the following: 1) the project’s creative approach to improving the quality of one or more of the 2017 USDA/NIFA Priority areas; 2) the project’s approach to solving an educational problem, a scientific problem or advancing a field of study that addresses objective(s) of high importance at 1890 institutions; and 3) a creative approach to improving the communication and/or relationships with clientele served by VSU.
7. Multidisciplinary and/or Problem-based Focus (5 points) – Indicate the following: 1) how the project is relevant to multiple disciplines in the food, agricultural, natural resources, and human sciences, or with other academic curricula, and 2) how the project is multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary, and/or involves integrated (teaching/education, research and outreach) activities.

1. Objective and Goals (10 points): Cite and discuss the specific project objectives to be accomplished (it is recommended that the project include no more than two objectives). Describe procedures for accomplishing the objectives of the project. Identify the individual(s) responsible (key personnel) to accomplish each objective. Describe the way in which resources and personnel will be used to conduct the project. Discuss extent to which students and/or youth will be involved in the research, education and outreach.
2. Plan of Operation and Methodology (5 points): Describe plans for management of the project to ensure its proper and efficient administration. Proposals should clearly identify the role of all key personnel, responsibilities and outcomes for each member, and describe the management plan to assure successful project outcomes. Clearly identify and describe the metrics for evaluating successful project management.
3. Timetable for project implementation and/or delivery (5 points)
4. Products, Results and Measurable Outcomes (5 points): Metrics to assess products and outputs are to be clearly delineated in the proposal. Describe the significant benefits gained from project outcomes.
5. Budget and Budget Justification (10 points): Create a line-item budget estimate. Include a budget justification that includes the cost details of each budget line-item

Elements considered in the justification include the reasonableness of costs to carry out project activities and achieve project objectives; the appropriateness of budget allocations between the applicant and collaborators; the adequacy of time committed to the project by key project personnel; and the degree to which the project maximizes the use of limited resources.

1. Evaluation Plans(5 points): Provide a methodology and implementation plan for evaluating the accomplishment of stated objectives, results, and measurable outcomes during the project. Clearly identify the performance measure(s) by which the project’s success will be assessed. Describe any data to be collected and analyzed, and explain the methodology that will be used to determine the extent to which the needs underlying the project are met. Indicate how the evaluation will determine whether and to what degree the project had an impact on the USDA/NIFA priorities.
2. Continuation Plans (5 points): Describe the likelihood of, or specific plans for, continuation or expansion of the project beyond the period of CAREO Seed Grant funding support. You must indicate how eventual self-support is built into the project and how plans are being made to support the program with other external funding sources if it is successful.
3. Literature Cited
4. \*\*\*Project Quality (10 points): Up to 10 points will be reserved to evaluate the overall quality of the proposal. Overall quality of the proposal relates to the degree to which the proposal complies with the application guidelines. The proposal is enhanced by its adherence to instructions (table of contents, organization, pagination, margin and font size, the specified page limitation, appendices, etc.); clarity of budget narrative; and presentation. Also assessed is how effectively ideas are presented, clearly articulated, and thoroughly explained.

**Important Information for Grant Seekers:**

1. The following is encouraged as part of the proposal:
* Faculty collaboration
* Student and youth engagement in research or outreach program delivery
* Engagement and partnership with Research and Extension faculty in the College of Agriculture
1. To reapply for a CAREO Seed Grant funds after receiving a previous award, applicants must adhere to the following:
* Successful completion all grant deliverables and outcomes within the expected timeframe;
* Demonstration of effective management of seed grant funds/resources and a demonstration that all university and Office of Sponsored Research Program (OSRP) guidelines have been followed;
* A two year waiting period after grant funding ends; AND,
* Evidence of submission of the project proposal to other external granting agencies.

Additional requirements:

* Projects may not exceed 1 year in duration.
* Funds may only be used on approved CAREO Seed Grant projects.
* Failure to meet an eligibility criterion by the time of application deadline may result in the application being excluded from consideration or, even though an application may be reviewed, will preclude CAREO from making an award.
* Faculty may not serve as PI/PD on more than one CAREO Seed Grant at a time.
* Signature approval should be obtained from a Dean or Director approving that the PI/PD may pursue the project.
* **Applications must be received by September 30, 2017.** Applications received after this deadline will not be considered for funding.
* In accordance with section 1473 of NARETPA (7 U.S.C. 3319), indirect costs and tuition remission are unallowable.

**Grant Review Process:**

CAREO will evaluate each application through a two-part process. First, we will screen each application to ensure that it meets the administrative requirements as set forth in this RFP. Second, a review panel will evaluate the applications that meet the administrative requirements.

We select reviewers based upon their training and experience in relevant scientific, extension, or education fields, taking into account the following factors:

* level of relevant formal scientific or technical education experience, as well as the extent to which an individual is engaged in research, education, or extension outreach activities;
* expertise from various areas of specialization within relevant scientific, education, or outreach fields;
* experts who can assess relevance of the applications to targeted audiences and to program needs;
* expertise from a variety of VSU Colleges/Departments;
* a balanced composition with regard to minority and female representation and an equitable age distribution; and
* reviewers who can judge the effective usefulness of each application to end users and the general public.

After each peer review panel has completed its deliberations, the Executive Director of CAREO will recommend that your project be approved for support from currently available funds or be declined due to insufficient funds or unfavorable review. CAREO reserves the right to negotiate with the PD/PI regarding project revisions (e.g., reductions in the scope of work, funding level) prior to recommending any project for funding. CAREO will send copies of reviews, *not* including the identity of reviewers, and a summary of the panel comments to the PD after the review process has been completed.

**Responsible and Ethical Conduct of Research**

In accordance with sections 2, 3, and 8 of 2 CFR Part 422, institutions that conduct USDA-funded extramural research must foster an atmosphere conducive to research integrity, bear primary responsibility for prevention and detection of research misconduct, and maintain and effectively communicate and train their staff regarding policies and procedures. In the event an application results in an award, the Authorized Representative (AR) assures, through acceptance of the award that the institution will comply with the requirements. Award recipients shall, upon request, make available to NIFA the policies, procedures, and documentation to support the conduct of the training.

**CAREO Seed Grant proposals should be submitted via email to:**

Jewel H. Bronaugh, Ph.D.

jbronaugh@vsu.edu

**Applications must be received via email by September 30, 2017.** Applications received after this deadline will not be considered for funding.

**CAREO Seed Grant Contact:**

Jewel H. Bronaugh, Ph.D.

Executive Director

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