PLEASE NOTE: This FAQ page will be updated frequently with the update date posted. Please check back frequently

TOPIC AREA

QUESTION:
Are there specific areas of focus or topics that the committee feels are priorities?
ANSWER:
The call is really quite broad. This opportunity is designed to support research, scholarship and/or creative activity addressing the myriad issues on the theme of anti-racism and inclusive excellence. These projects may be highly scholarly/research focused, highly applied or creative. The only caveat is that curriculum development proposals are outside the scope of the opportunity as Mason already has mechanisms for funding curriculum development projects.

QUESTION:
What are your preferred outcomes for this Call for Proposal? Is it to promote "anti-racism and inclusive excellence"? How do you define "inclusive excellence"?
ANSWER:
We expect that the outcomes will vary widely by project. The mission of the ARIE Initiative from the beginning has been to ensure that Mason "creates an inclusive and equitable campus environment in which every member of our community, without exception, is valued, supported, and experiences a sense of belonging." With regard to research, scholarship and creative activities, successful projects will meaningfully contribute to advancing inclusive excellence and anti-racist communities. We recognize that this does not provide the specific guidance you are seeking, but these concepts are, by their very nature, quite broad.

QUESTION:
Would an art exhibit (held at Mason) focused on anti-racism/inclusive excellence would count as "creative activity" for the purposes of this funding.
ANSWER:
The quick answer is yes, it could be. That said, the details will matter in terms of exactly what is being proposed and the extent to which the project meaningfully contributes to advancing inclusive excellence and anti-racism, which is the focus of the ARIE initiative.

QUESTION:
Is the theme of "ant-racism" focused more on Mason community, or is it for broader sense or the society?
ANSWER:
While a project can focus on the Mason community, it does not have to. It could be focused on anti-racism in a broad sense or for the larger community or society.

QUESTION:
How do you define "anti-racism"?
ANSWER:
For us, it means eradicating any type of systemic inequalities (for the ARIE initiative, these initiatives address breaking down systemic equalities in higher education). Definitions can be found on the ARIE website and the ONE Virginia Plan documents (https://diversity.gmu.edu/arie/task-force-documents). Can include changing policies, practices and programs both within the university and broader society.

ELIGIBILITY (of Applicant) and TEAMING:

QUESTION:
I see the team can have external partners, I am wondering whether there are any restrictions on the external partners? Can they can come from industry, government, other universities, community organization, etc. In addition, what will be

their roles: can they be senior personnel, or they can also be the Co-PI? In the latter case, can they receive funds if the project gets funded and how?

ANSWER:

The external collaborator can be from a wide range of institutions including industry, community organization/NGO, government, academic institutions, or other external collaborators appropriate for your research, scholarship or creative activity. You also have the flexibility to define the role as is appropriate for the level of effort on the project. While funds can be budgeted for the partner, it should not be the majority of the funding. If funding is needed for external collaborators, they would be treated as sub-awardees on the grant. However, as Mason is providing funds for the seed funding project, applicants should consider asking the partner to equally invest their time and resources (funding of a student, in-kind contribution of time, other resources) in support of the project. The collaborator should be considered a true *partner* in the project.

QUESTION:

Is collaboration with external partners a requirement/a preferred requirement?

ANSWER:

Collaboration with external partners is certainly allowed as noted above but is neither a requirement nor particularly preferred. You should propose the team needed to complete the work, though there is a preference, as noted in the call, for engaging a diverse team of faculty and students within and across disciplines as appropriate.

QUESTION:

Is there a preference for multi GMU PI vs individual PI for the project?

ANSWER:

There really is no specific preference. Whether you are proposing a multi-PI project or a single-PI and other senior or contributing personnel depends on the project being proposed. You need to propose the strongest team to meet the goals of the project. A strong team would include a diversity of faculty and students within and across disciplines as need to meet the goals of the project.

QUESTION:

I noticed that many of the proposals that were awarded last year had multidisciplinary teams. Is that a requirement or preference?

ANSWER:

It is not a requirement and not specifically even a preference. That said, the issues associated with anti-racism and inclusive excellence are quite complex and often multidisciplinary in nature and bringing unique and different lenses from different disciplines to addressing these issues probably was a strength of the proposals that were awarded last year. While a single discipline proposal may also be quite strong, it may simply have been that the some of the multidisciplinary teams had a stronger approach to addressing these complex issues.

QUESTION:

As far as including students is concerned, is it okay to include non-Mason students (e.g., HBCU students)?

ANSWER:

You can include students from other MSIs or HBCUs if that is appropriate for your project. In terms of funding for students, we certainly prefer that there be funding for Mason students and for including Mason students as appropriate in the project.

QUESTION:

Is there a limit on the number of proposals on which a faculty member can serve?

ANSWER:

As the Call for Proposals is silent on this question, we will not impose a limitation. That said, a PI would not be able to receive more than one award.

BUDGET

QUESTION:
Does the $25,000 or $50,000 funding include Indirect/F&A?
ANSWER:
No. Indirect (or F&A) are not charged on internal grant applications.

QUESTION:
Is PI support allowed? What about travel? Is travel to present at a conference allowed?
ANSWER:
Applicants should budget what they need to complete the seed funding project. Salary support for the PI and others is allowed as is travel, but it needs to be justified. Travel to meet with collaborators may not be allowed as such meetings can be often be conducted remotely, thought collaboration on creative activities may require participants to meet in person. Travel to present at a conference would need to be justified in terms of how such travel is needed to meet the goals of the project. Any funding should be explained and justified in a budget narrative or budget justification.

QUESTION:
Does our college's grant department get involved in the budget for this or are we on our own to develop the budget?
ANSWER:
That is really up to you and the resources available in your college. You certainly can ask them for assistance if you want. You should *not* submit a request for OSP assignment for this internal opportunity. While OSP is a terrific resource, they also have limited bandwidth and while these seed funding opportunities are important, OSP is at capacity working with faculty and submitting proposals for external funding. You should also ask your academic unit about any policies related to including salary or a course buyout as part of the budget. Every college is different in terms of their policies related to course buyouts.

QUESTION:
Would it be useful if we used OSP's Excel template for our budget (but leaving off F&A)?
ANSWER:
You certainly can use the OSP budget template if you are familiar with it and comfortable using it. That said, you do not have to use it. You can provide us with a simple budget with each budget item broken out (e.g., Personnel and Fringe; GRA Stipend; Student Wage; Consultants/Subcontract; Travel if applicable; and Other Direct Costs such as specific supplies, data from an external source, equipment utilization fees, publication or printing costs, etc.).
PLEASE NOTE: Regardless of the template used for the budget, you must include a budget narrative or budget justification explaining the costs.

OTHER

QUESTION
What is the earliest start date? When does the clock start on the 12-18 months? Is there a particular time frame by which the project should be started/completed?
ANSWER
As noted in the Call for Proposals, it is our hope that the notification of award be made in October 2023 with funding beginning in January 2024. We felt that it was better to start at the beginning of the semester. The time between October 2023 and January 2024 will allow the awards to be set up and for any compliance processes (e.g., human subjects/IRB review for applicable projects) to be completed.
The clock starts on the 12-18 months when the seed fund award is set up and we would like the projects to be completed in the 12 to 18-month time frame.

QUESTION:
Are there example proposals for internal seed funding that we can view?
ANSWER:
You may request proposal from one or more of the awardees from last year's competition, but it would be up to the PIs to share their proposals. You can find the list of awardees from the 2022 competition [here](#):

QUESTION:
We are planning to ask for letters of Letters of Collaboration for our proposal, but I want to be sure I am correct in my understanding. The Call for Proposals notes that the letters should be brief and reference the collaboration (that they are not letter of support). I presume that means that a letter of support from the department chair simply noting the importance of the activity is not permitted. Is that correct?
ANSWER:
You are correct that the letters should be from collaborators acknowledging the way in which they will be collaborating in the project. Letters of support, simply noting the importance of the project, from the department or college should not be included, though we do encourage you to speak with your department and Dean's office about your project.

QUESTION:
Is the project required to be completed in 12-18 months? If our goal is to complete a pilot study (part of a long-term project) within 12-18 months, will that work for the Committee?
ANSWER:
A pilot study that can be completed in 12-18 months (that is part of a longer-term project) is completely appropriate for this opportunity. We will be asking awardees to present their progress, results, scholarship, or creative activity to date at an upcoming ARIE National Conference. Awardees should also consider how their projects could be extended through external funding.

QUESTION:
Can you tell us what the review criteria are?
ANSWER:
The review process and criteria are noted on the third page of the Call for Proposals.

QUESTION:
Will there be a "selection committee"? How will it be constituted?
ANSWER:
As noted in the Call for Proposals, each application will be reviewed by an group of experts who are EXTERNAL to Mason. Applications will be down-select to a short-list of the most promising proposals. These proposals will be recommended for funding to an internal selection panel. The internal selection committee will be comprised of senior leadership and administrators in the Office of Research Innovation and Economic Impact and Office for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.

QUESTION:
How many awards are you anticipating?
ANSWER:
As noted in the Call for Proposals, we anticipate funding 4-8 projects.