

Effective September 1, 2019, Research Operations and the Chief Scientific Officer (CSO) will collaborate with CHLA departments/divisions to provide bridge funding to productive principal investigators (PI) whose federal funding has expired, but who remain competitive. The primary goal of the program is to provide key resources necessary to sustain research programs during an unfunded period between the end of a project period and successful acquisition of new funding or federal grant renewal. The bridge funding provided will offer PIs the opportunity to sustain a modest research effort that will lead to securing future federal grant support.

Eligibility Requirements

- Full-time faculty member or active PI at CHLA
- At least three years of continuous peer-reviewed federal agency funding at CHLA prior to the current funding gap
- A reviewed new or renewal application that receives a numerical score and percentile rank, but is not funded
- Less than a two-year current gap in federal funding
- Co-funding commitment of at least 33% of the total requested amount from the PI's home department or division
- PI must commit to resubmit the renewal application within 18 months from the start of the bridge funding period

Terms of Award

- Duration: Up to one year. Consideration of additional funding will be based on demonstrated improvement in review outcomes and likelihood of eventual funding.
- Cost Share: Cost sharing is required from the PI's home department or division as follows: 33% departmental or divisional resources.
- Amount: Up to \$60,000 awarded from Research Operations, based on justified budget request (additional \$30,000 from required departmental/divisional cost sharing).
- Use of Funds: Funds must be expended in accordance with approved budget. Rebudgeting is allowed without prior approval if a single cost budget category deviates (by increase or decrease) from the categorical commitment level established for the budget period by 25 percent or less of the total amount awarded. This rule applies to the bridge funding and to home departmental/division funds that count toward the matching requirement.
 - *Allowable costs*: materials and supplies; animal care; clinical study costs; salaries for research staff and trainees (pre- or postdoctoral fellows)
 - *Unallowable costs*: PI salary; previous budget overdrafts; equipment; travel
- Unspent Funds: Funds awarded from Research Operations that remain unspent on the start date of a new federal research award will be forfeited. In the absence of a new federal award and unless an extension is requested and granted, funds awarded from

Research Operations that remain unspent one year from the start date of a bridge award will be forfeited.

- Prior Bridge Funding: Previous receipt of bridge funds for unrelated research will not disqualify PIs from this program. However, priority will be given to individuals who have not received bridge funding in the previous three years.
- Current Extramural Funding: A PI who has other extramural funding is eligible to apply for bridge funding. Priority will be given to applicants who are seeking bridge support for their only federal grant.
- Recovered Funding: PI must notify Research Operations of recovered funding, and any remaining bridge funding at the time that the Notice of Grant Award is issued must be forfeited.
- Merit Awards: Merit Award balance at the time of the request for bridge funding must be incorporated into the budget justification as a resource for supporting the research, along with the requested funds

Application Process

Applications must be co-submitted by the PI and the Department/Division Chair and/or Institute Director who will provide partial bridge funding support. The following should be submitted as one PDF. Applications should be sent to TSRIFunding@chla.usc.edu and should include:

- Cover letter (up to 3 pages) summarizing: (a) reason for bridge funding request; (b) the total amount of the bridge funding request, indicating the amount pledged by the participating department/division and the amount requested from Research Operations; (c) the start and end date of the bridge funding request; (d) current status of research, including weaknesses that could be remedied by bridge funding; (e) description of research to be supported by bridge funds, addressing the opportunities to correct such weaknesses; and (f) plans and timeline(s) for application for new extramural funding using results obtained with bridge funding including specific grant number, title and start and end dates
- A copy of the full grant summary statement from the most recent review
- Budget for requested bridge funding (use current NIH budget form) and a comprehensive budget justification, inclusive of available Merit account funding, and the amount of co-funding from department(s) and/or institute(s)
- 'Other Support' page that lists grant resources on which the PI serves as PI or Co-I (federal, non-federal, other intra- and extramural)
- A current NIH biosketch of PI and key personnel to be supported by the bridge funding
- Copy of the unfunded renewal full grant application
- Letter from the PI's home department/division chair committing to the co-funding, including the amount of financial support allocated by department/division for the bridge funding request and a cost center number

Please note that applications that do not address all points, including applications that simply request general lab support without specific justification, will be returned to the applicant for revision and therefore not reviewed until all materials are submitted.

Review and Award

Requests for bridge funding will be reviewed by up to two CHLA/USC or outside faculty who have relevant scientific expertise. Recommendations will be made to the CSO, who will make the final decision. Applicants will be notified of the outcome of the review within 45 days from date of submission of complete applications.

Bridge funding awardees will submit brief (no more than 2 pages) six-month and year-end progress reports to the CSO. Requests for a second year of bridge funding should be included in the final report, following the initial guidelines and providing evidence of improved outcome of the resubmission during the bridge funding period.