Tulane WSPH–SOM Collaborative Research Seed Awards

Executive Summary

The Tulane WSPH–SOM Collaborative Research Seed Award is a joint initiative of the Celia Scott Weatherhead School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine and the School of Medicine designed to catalyze interdisciplinary research partnerships that bridge clinical, biomedical, and population health science, positioning Tulane investigators to collaborate and compete for external funding.

Awards of up to $100,000 each will support a minimum of four projects over a 12-month period. Each proposal must include primary faculty leads from both schools, with substantive involvement reflected in project co-leadership and research design.

Priority research areas — including cancer, infectious diseases, cardiovascular disease, aging, artificial intelligence in health, health disparities, housing insecurity, Gulf South health challenges, and disaster response — reflect both urgent regional needs and nationally competitive funding landscapes. All compelling proposals at the intersection of medicine and public health will be considered.

Selected teams will be expected to pursue extramural funding, with pilot grant post-award requirements including a peer-review simulation for the evolving external proposal, and participation in a joint dissemination symposium at project close.

The call for proposals will be issued June 15, 2026, with an application deadline of October 31, 2026 and award notifications in December 2026.

Call for Proposals: Tulane WSPH–SOM Collaborative Research Seed Awards (2026-2027)

Tulane University Celia Scott Weatherhead School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine (WSPH) & Tulane School of Medicine (SOM)

Program Overview

Tulane University has a long-standing tradition of advancing discovery, practice, and leadership in both medicine and public health. To foster stronger interdisciplinary research collaboration across schools and the university, the Seed Grant Program is designed as a one-year initiative to fund innovative joint projects between investigators in WSPH and SOM.

Program Goals

1. Encourage Interdisciplinary Collaboration: Strengthen cross-school partnerships by requiring involvement of faculty and teams from both medicine and public health.
2. Generate Innovative Formative Research: Support pilot projects that create new knowledge bridging the range of clinical and biomedical research and public health and population health research.
3. Catalyze Extramural Funding Opportunities: Provide pilot awards that position teams to pursue and secure federal, foundation, industry, and/or donor support.
4. Expand Partnerships Across Tulane and Externally: Allow additional participation from investigators of other Tulane schools, as well as collaborations with multi-sector external partners, including healthcare entities, community-based organizations, governmental agencies, and more.

Priority Research Areas

While all compelling proposals at the intersection of medicine and public health will be considered, the program is particularly interested in supporting projects that address the following shared priorities:

- Cancer
- Infectious Diseases
- Cardiovascular Diseases
- Aging and Age-related Conditions
- Artificial Intelligence in Health Applications or Research
- Health Disparities
- Homelessness and Housing Insecurity as Health Determinants

- Top Health Issues in the Gulf South (e.g., diabetes, obesity, environmental health concerns, maternal and child health)
- Disaster Response and Resilience in Health Systems

These priority areas reflect both high-impact urgent regional needs and global challenges, aligning Tulane's expertise with opportunities for transformative research and sustainable funding.

Long-Term Impact

The Tulane WSPH–SOM Collaborative Research Seed Award is a strategic investment in interdisciplinary research that exemplifies our strong commitment to collaboration and that will strengthen Tulane's scientific leadership and positioning.

- Create a diversified, sustainable funding portfolio that leverages the expertise and resources of both schools
- Respond to the most urgent health and healthcare needs of Gulf South residents.
- Lead in disaster preparedness and resilience research.
- Strengthen interdisciplinary and multi-sector scholarly networks.
- Elevate Tulane's profile as a hub for impactful, regionally-grounded science.

Eligibility

Each proposal must include:

- At least one primary faculty investigator from the School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine, and one from the School of Medicine
- Faculty from both schools must be substantively involved, reflected in project co-leadership and clear contributions to the project design and execution.
- The WSPH and SOM project leads may invite participation of faculty from other schools. Teams are encouraged to include both junior and senior faculty, with emphasis on fostering new interdisciplinary partnerships, supporting early stage investigators where appropriate, and overall contributing to the Tulane scientific pipeline.

Program Structure

Funding Period: One year (12 months). Extensions of up to 6–12 months may be granted (with approval) if significant progress is demonstrated.

Award Amounts:

- Award amounts up to $100K each are available.
- Requests for funding must be commensurate with and appropriate for the project scope and needs.
- The total number of awards (at a minimum of 4) will be determined by the pilot grant administration co-leads, should projects requesting <$100K be awarded.

Allowable Uses of Funds:

- Research assistants, students / RAs, or other staff necessary to complete project objectives.
- Research materials, data collection, supplies, publication fees, and analysis.
- Partnership engagement activities / stipends or pilot project costs.
- Restrictions: Grant funds may not be used for faculty salary support.

Expected Outputs:

- Establish active new cross-school, multidisciplinary research collaborations.
- Generate preliminary results to support larger extramural grant applications.
- Produce conference presentations, manuscripts, or pilot datasets.
- Present findings at a dedicated session of the annual Tulane Research, Innovation, and Creativity Symposium (TRICS), where co-PIs from each funded project will showcase outcomes and progress toward external funding.
- Submit final progress report to the Seed Grant Program leadership committee.
- Be willing to participate in evaluation efforts with Seed Grant Program over time (e.g. brief annual surveys for X years following the completion of the award) to monitor impact and investment.

Leadership and Oversight

The program will be jointly administered by school research leadership representatives of the:

- Celia Scott Weatherhead School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine
- Tulane University School of Medicine

They will jointly:

- Issue the call for proposals.
- Oversee proposal review process and award decisions.
- Monitor project performance.
- Organize dissemination opportunities for grantees across Tulane and beyond.

Required and Encouraged Touchpoints & Engagement with Research Supports

To encourage intentional team formation and long-term success, applicants are expected to complete required touchpoints and are encouraged to participate in additional engagement activities as appropriate for their project and research team. Applications that demonstrate broader engagement across these touchpoints will be considered more competitive.

Required Touchpoints	Purpose
PIVOT Profile Completion – Claim and update Tulane PIVOT profile (link).	Meaningfully engage with Tulane's funding-discovery infrastructure.
Identify one or more future external funding opportunities (e.g., NIH, NSF, CDC, or major foundation) that this pilot research would support – Applicants may use any credible source to identify these opportunities; however, it is highly encouraged that teams use Tulane's PIVOT database to inform and document their external funding plan.	Strengthen the connection between internal pilot funding and future external submissions.

Encouraged Touchpoints	Purpose
Collaboration with Relevant Centers and Institutes — Teams are encouraged to identify and engage centers, institutes, or research programs within WSPH or the SOM that align with their proposed work (e.g., cancer center, clinical research units, population health programs). Early engagement can strengthen the interdisciplinary dimensions of the proposal, surface potential co-investigator relationships, and connect teams to shared resources or existing infrastructure.	Better align proposal with the intent of the pilot program.
External Partner Engagement Activity – Teams are encouraged to connect with and engage external partners relevant to the project. Engagement level would be appropriate for the design and goals of the project and expected translation and impact opportunities, ranging from high engagement (e.g. external MPI) to lower engagement (e.g. project community advisory board).	Strengthen the project's relevance, mutual benefit, and translational potential for local/regional healthcare, community, governmental agency, and other partners.
Mentorship Plan – When applicable, applicants are encouraged to include a structured mentorship component. Mentors may be from the same department as the PIs, from other departments across the schools, or across the university. The plan should describe how the mentor will	Strengthen research capacity and foster intergenerational, cross-disciplinary learning that extends beyond the pilot award.

support the team in developing external grant readiness, leadership skills, and cross-disciplinary collaboration.	

Proposed Timeline

- June 15th, 2026: Call for proposals announced.
- October 31, 2026 (11:59 PM CDT): Application deadline
- December 2026: Review and selection of awardees completed and award notification
- December 2026 – December 2027: Funded projects implemented (with extensions permitted upon approval for significant progress).
- January 2028: Final reports submitted; outcomes presented in a joint symposium.

Application Components

Submitted as a single PDF to WSPHresearch@tulane.edu

1. **Cover Page** – Title, PI/co-PIs, departments, contact info.
2. **Abstract (≤250 words)**
3. **Project Narrative (≤3 pages)** – Rationale, objectives, significance, innovation, and methods. Must describe the team's collaborative composition and how it strengthens the science.
4. **External Funding Plan (≤1 page)**
    - External funding opportunity identified (include URL or RFP).
    - Anticipated external mechanism and timeline.
5. **Budget & Justification (2 pages)**
6. **Timeline & Milestones (≤1 page)**
7. **Short biosketches (≤2 pages each)**
8. **If applicable, description of completed encouraged touchpoints (≤1 page)**

Review Criteria and Selection

A joint leadership committee from both schools will select awardees based on:

Criterion	Description
Scientific Merit	Scientific merit, innovation, and strength of the proposed research
Significance	Alignment with priority research areas, with flexibility for strong proposals in other fields
Interdisciplinary	Interdisciplinary novelty and integration of diverse expertise across fields
Feasibility	Quality of plan, design, budget, and timeline; feasibility within the proposed time frame
External Readiness	Clear trajectory toward an external proposal and likelihood of attracting external support
Partnership	Integration of university-wide and external collaborators where relevant

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Reporting & Post-Award Expectations

- Midpoint check-in with WSPH and SOM administrative co-leads – Conducted at Month 6 or Month 12, depending on the project timeline.
- Peer Review Simulation – All funded teams must participate in a joint school peer-review process for their external proposal; project timelines (12–24 months) should include this activity.
- External Proposal Development Consultation – Funded teams intending to pursue federal funding must meet with the Tulane Office of Research Proposal Development (ORPD) to support proposal development and external submission planning.
- Final Report (due within 30 days of project completion) – Summarizes key project outcomes and progress toward external funding, including how feedback from the ORPD consultation informed next steps or proposal development.
- Dissemination – Grantees will be invited to present their work to the Tulane community.