

Healthy Food, Healthy Lives (HFHL) Institute
Request for Proposals Fall 2008
Seed Grant Program

The University of Minnesota Healthy Foods, Healthy Lives (HFHL) Institute is supported by the office of the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost. Affiliated units include the Academic Health Center, the Colleges of Medicine, Veterinary Medicine, Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences, University Extension, and the School of Public Health. The College of Food, Agricultural, and Natural Resource Sciences serves as the fiscal agent for the initiative.

The mission of the HFHL Institute is to increase and sustain the University's impact in the interdisciplinary arena of food, agriculture and health by building the University's capacity in research, learning and community engagement. The priority areas for focus are food safety, prevention of obesity and chronic disease, and food policy. Within these priority areas, of special importance is the integration of agriculture and health sciences.

The major goal of the HFHL Institute is to utilize and help build the strengths of the University of Minnesota in the area of food and health to advance scientific and public knowledge and influence public policy. One of the mechanisms used is funding interdisciplinary research teams whose goal is the development and implementation of cutting edge extramurally funded research and training programs.

Focus of this Request for Proposals

The HFHL Institute is requesting applications for small research grants to fund faculty research teams or faculty-community collaboratives. Funds will be distributed through a competitive review process.

The grants to be funded through this program must utilize novel and innovative approaches to answer potentially high impact research questions. The request should be highly interdisciplinary, including members from at least three distinct disciplines. The research should have a high potential for growth and for becoming self-supporting over time.

Up to three projects will be funded through this request for proposals. Up to one award will be made to a research team working in each of the following priority areas:

- Food safety
(Topics are not limited to, but could include: production of crops that contain naturally-occurring antibiotics that when fed to animals, reduce risk of pathogens that can be transmitted to humans; risk-based sampling models to stimulate more efficient and effective inspection methods; evaluation of epidemiological food choice data to illustrate the impact of foodborne illness on the economics of individuals, households and businesses)

- Prevention of obesity and chronic disease
(Topics are not limited to, but could include basic or applied topics such as: revisions in school lunch program food offerings to reduce obesity; inhibition of adipogenesis; bioactive food compound influence on obesity and chronic disease)

- Food policy
(topics are not limited to, but could include: impact of organic standards on organic food availability, prices and consumer food choices; impact of social issues (such as buying local foods for the home or schools and production changes due to animal rights movements) on food prices, consumer food choices and potential health risks)

These topics could include nutritional issues that are of central interest to global health including over and under consumption of energy and specific nutrients, environmental exposure to toxins and infectious agents, translation of knowledge into policies and procedures that improve human health.

Funding

Up to three grants will be awarded through this program. Each grant will be awarded to an interdisciplinary team for a project with a maximum total cost of \$25,000-50,000 for one year of funding, with the potential for a one-time renewal for one year. Projects should be faculty-led or led by faculty-community collaboratives, focused on well defined problems, and should assemble an interdisciplinary and cross-college team for basic, translational, or community-based participatory research. HFHL Institute funds should be requested to produce preliminary data for future funding from outside sources. A high priority will be to fund new collaborations and team development.

Appropriate uses of the funds may include, but are not restricted to:

- support for graduate students, or other research personnel, including research personnel based in the community
- shared equipment
- laboratory supplies
- database or other infrastructure development
- purchase of support services for research

The funds should be designated for the direct support of research, although they may not be used to support a currently funded on going program. In addition, funds may not be used to support faculty salaries.

The most important criteria for funding will be interdisciplinarity, innovation, significance (potential impact), utilization of new collaborations, quality of the research proposal, and potential for future external funding.

The funds must be spent within a one-year time period, although no-cost extensions will be allowed with appropriate justification. Expected performance criteria include building on competitive advantages, developing new synergies among research teams, publications demonstrating interdisciplinarity, submission of a proposal for extramural generation of significant preliminary data, funding, and integrating the research activities with teaching, and potential for public impact, training of graduate students/postdoctoral fellows.

Who is Eligible:

Faculty members from any University program or department are eligible to apply for these grants. However, it is important to understand that this RFP is intended for support of multi-disciplinary, multi-investigator (faculty teams) proposals. A faculty member may apply for only one grant per cycle on which he/she would be the PI or co-PI. There is no limitation to the number of grants on which a faculty member could participate as an investigator or other role.

Proposal Requirements:

- Title Page
- Abstract
- Research Plan (not to exceed 3 pages)
 - Statement of Hypothesis and Specific Aims
 - Background and Rationale
 - Preliminary Results (if applicable)
 - Research Design and Methods
- Budget and budget justification
- Biosketch for the Principal Investigator(s) and Co-PI's
- Letters of support from collaborating investigators
- References (need not be included within 3 page limit)
- The following questions must be addressed separately from the proposal, on one page
 - How is this proposal interdisciplinary and why is an interdisciplinary team necessary to carry out this work?
 - How is this proposal highly innovative?
 - What is the potential impact of this proposal?
 - What future research might this project lead to that could be funded externally?
 - What are the potential future external sources of funding?

Criteria for evaluation of grant applications include:

- Interdisciplinarity
- Innovation
- Potential impact
- Expertise and track record of members of the research team
- Intellectual merit of the proposed research
- Identification of specific extramural granting opportunities, plus potential competitiveness for external funding
- Leveraging of resources
- Appropriateness of budget
- Graduate student involvement and support

Review Process:

The HFHL Institute Director will select the reviewers, with advice from the HFHL Advisory Board. The review panel will include faculty members multiple colleges and disciplines, and may include external reviewers. The review panel will recommend additional members and reviewers for specific proposals depending upon the number of applications submitted and the areas of proposed research. Recommendations of the review panel will be submitted to the HFHL Director for final decision and approval.

Application Process:

1. The deadline for submission is **November 21, 2008 (4:30 pm)**. Grant applications (original plus 6 copies) should be submitted to Laura Richardson, Food Science and Nutrition 266 FScN, 1334 Eckles Ave. St Paul, MN 55108. A hard copy of the Proposal Routing Form (PRF) should be completed and signed by the department head and dean for the PI, co-PIs and any other key investigators. (DO NOT SEND THE PRF and PROPOSAL TO SPONSORED PROJECTS ADMINISTRATION). An electronic version of the application and PRF (PDF files) should also be sent to hfh1@umn.edu. This request for proposals is not restricted to one per college.
2. Awards will be announced the week of **December 15, 2008**.
3. Funding will commence **January 5, 2009**.