

Competition Details

CONVERGE MAINE

Research Seed Grants:

A UMaine Portland Gateway initiative

Overview

The UMaine Portland Gateway is pleased to announce a competitive seed grant program to facilitate convergence research across the University of Maine System (UMS). The purpose of CONVERGE Maine is to bring together people across the university with an interest in transdisciplinary work, develop and strengthen partnerships with other institutions and organizations within the state, and address a societal challenge or scientific question facing Maine today. Faculty and professional research staff/scientists are invited to submit proposals in accordance with the guidelines and timeline described in this program announcement. Each proposal must address a societal challenge or scientific question facing Maine today and each team must agree to attend a kickoff event to co-develop a research collaboration plan prior to receiving this award. Proposals that engage community members in a meaningful manner will be given special consideration.

Background

The UMaine Portland Gateway, located in Portland, Maine serves as a connection to UMaine research, education, and outreach by acting as the front door for university engagement in southern Maine and beyond. Initiated in 2021, the Gateway actively develops and fosters collaborations that address Maine's challenges, scientific questions, and education and business needs with the aim of preparing the knowledge and

innovation workforce, contributing to societal advancement and propelling economic development.

Program Guidelines

CONVERGE MAINE seed grant applications require at least two investigators to work together on a Maine-focused pilot project that will extend collaborations, generate preliminary data and/or proof of concept results, and optimally lead to a proposal submission to an extramural funding agency by June 30, 2022. Investigators may participate in no more than three proposal submissions as a Co-PI or senior investigator. Faculty may serve as the PI on one proposal. Research teams may include external partners, but at least one member must be a University of Maine faculty member. A limited number of twelve-month projects with budgets of up to \$35K will be selected and project performance periods will begin 1 January, 2022.

Applicants will describe their proposed pilot study in a three-page concept paper, including a separate one-page budget and justification, as well as team member biosketches (using the 3-page NSF format). References do not count against the three-page concept paper limit and may be included on a separate page. Applicants are encouraged to articulate specific federal, state, and private funding programs that will be pursued and include clear timelines. If prior seed grant or internal funding has been awarded to any of the named investigators, results of that funding should be included. If funding for travel is requested, applicants must include a COVID precaution plan and a plan to accomplish the research if travel is restricted. Applicants should work with UMaine Portland Gateway Director Pips Veazey (alice.veazey@maine.edu) and the Office of Research Development to prepare their proposal materials.

Special consideration will be given to proposals that:

- result in deep integration across disciplines and involve investigators from multiple disciplines,
- address a compelling societal problem and/or scientific challenge within the State of Maine,

- provide research learning experiences for students, and
- include partners from outside the university in a meaningful manner.

Applications that can secure matching funds in the context of working with companies in Maine and/or state government as well as applications that target follow on funding through NSF REU, NSF NRT, NSF NNA, or similar research training programs, are encouraged.

Proposal Submission

Applicants should include the following elements in the submission package:

1. three-page concept paper describing the proposed study with specific ideas for future extramural funding and/or new collaborations that will be sustained beyond the award period,
2. one-page budget and justification, and
3. biosketches for each team member (using the 3-page NSF format).

Note: References do not count against the three-page concept paper limit and may be included on a separate page. Letters of support/collaboration should not be included.

Budget and Award Period

Contingent on the availability of funding, maximum total support for each project is \$35,000. The award period will span one year, starting on 1 January, 2022 and ending 31 December, 2022 with up to 3 inaugural awards offered in 2022.

Funding may not be requested for faculty salary support, unless the faculty member is a soft-money researcher. Salary support for technicians is allowed. Graduate students who are included on the grant must be named, and their biosketches must be included with the proposal. Tuition is not an allowable charge.

The budget justification document, available on the competition page, details how budgets should be structured and submitted as part of the proposal package.

Evaluation Criteria:

A joint committee composed of faculty from UMaine and staff from the Office of the Vice President of Research and Dean of the Graduate School (OVPRDGS) will review and rank proposals based on the criteria listed below. The committee will provide recommendations to the Vice President for Research and Dean of the Graduate School, who will make the final funding decisions. Specific review criteria are included in the evaluation rubric, accessible on the competition page. These criteria include: overall scientific impact/merit, investigators/team, innovation/potential for success, and importance to the UMaine Portland Gateway. Grantees will be required to attend a kickoff meeting to create a research collaboration plan, submit mid-term and final reports and must be willing to present their projects at a UMaine Portland Gateway event; students sponsored through this program will be required to present their results and/or a summary of their experiences at the UMaine Student Research Symposium in 2022.

Timeline

Applications are due by **4:30 PM on Friday, December 3, 2021**. Proposals must be submitted via the [UMaine InfoReady Portal](#) and are accessible at <https://umaine.infoready4.com/>. The review committee will be assembled to review proposals, and evaluations will begin in late November. Final funding decisions will be made by the Vice President for Research and feedback will be communicated to each applicant by mid-December.

Resources

For questions concerning CONVERGE MAINE, please contact Pips Veazey, UMaine Portland Gateway Director (alice.veazey@maine.edu). Requests for technical assistance when submitting may be directed to Saul Allen, Office of Research Development (saul.allen@maine.edu). Those who have not applied through InfoReady previously will need to create an account in InfoReady prior to submitting their application.