



Institute for Sustainability, Energy, and Environment (iSEE)

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2023 RFP: iSEE Offers Seed Funding for Interdisciplinary Research Teams

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The Institute for Sustainability, Energy, and Environment (iSEE) is announcing a call for proposals to support interdisciplinary research, visioning, and planning activities on ambitious topics related to sustainability, energy, and environment.

iSEE seed funds are available to promote research collaborations among faculty and scientists across campus and to raise the national visibility of the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and the research team in the topic area. The specific goal of the funding is to expedite the coalescence of interdisciplinary, interdepartmental

research teams that touch on any of the [thematic areas of interest](#) to iSEE and to develop multiple strong, large-scale (>\$1M) proposals that can be submitted for external funding through the Institute in 2024-25.

Three types of proposals are invited:

- **Seed Research projects** are limited to a maximum of \$30,000 for one year. Funding may support research assistantships for graduate students, postdoc time, data purchase, travel, and/or other necessary expenses that support growth of the initiative. [Read more about recently funded projects here >>>](#)
- **Campus as a Living Laboratory (CALL) projects** are limited to a maximum of \$30,000 for one year. CALL projects link faculty-level researchers to sites or initiatives on campus that are relevant to objectives in the Illinois Climate Action Plan (iCAP). CALL researchers are also expected to leverage the seed funding to develop interdisciplinary external funding proposals through iSEE. [Read more about the CALL program here >>>](#)
- **Visioning and Planning Activities** are limited to a maximum of \$50,000 (total) spread over two years. Funding may support workshops and planning meetings hosted by the project team, in addition to activities similar to Seed Research and CALL projects. *Funding in Year 2 is contingent upon meaningful progress in Year 1.*

All proposals must involve applicants from at least two different disciplines and two different campus units. **NOTE: Building on the recent Summit on Building Interdisciplinary Collaborative Research on Sustainability: Incorporating Social and Behavioral Science (jointly hosted by iSEE and the Center for Social and Behavioral Science, CSBS), proposal teams led by or that include CSBS-affiliated faculty are specifically encouraged.**

Successful applicants for the seed funding and CALL projects will be expected to submit external funding proposals related to this seed funding through iSEE* in 2024-25. Applicants for Visioning and Planning Activities proposal will be expected to explain how their activities will promote multi-disciplinary, multi-institutional collaborations that need a long lead time to develop a team to submit a proposal for a large team-based Center-type grant.

**Successful external funding proposals submitted through iSEE will not affect indirect cost recovery to the home department of the PI. iSEE will provide personnel support for event planning, proposal development, and, in the case of successful external proposals, post-award management. Recipients will also work with iSEE to communicate the findings of their activities, research, publications, and other outcomes through the Institute website on an ongoing basis.*

Guidelines for Preparing the Proposal

Proposals are invited from tenured/tenure track faculty and research scientists. Postdocs are not eligible to apply. The proposal will be submitted through an online portal with text boxes for the following sections:

- Project title
- Principal and co-investigator information (names, affiliations, and email addresses)
- Abstract [up to 150 words]
- Motivation and Opportunity [up to 500 words]
 - Describe the scholarly merit, innovation, and substantive interdisciplinarity of the proposed research
 - Describe the need for collaboration and the contributions of each of the team members to tackle the problem at hand
- Plan for Seed Funding [up to 600 words]
 - Describe specific plans for use of seed funding and potential impact on national visibility and growth of the initiative

- Describe the potential to develop a large-scale (>\$1M), externally funded research program, including comprehensive plan with specific funding opportunities (anticipated in 2024-2025) which the applicants will pursue
- Summarize any previous efforts to secure external funding for this research
- Productivity of the applicants and quality of their scholarship
- The fit to iSEE's research themes and interest in a longer-term engagement with iSEE to develop research programs in this area

Additionally, a single compiled PDF with the following documents for the principal investigator (PI) and co-investigators (co-Is) is required:

1. a CV (up to three pages) that includes five most relevant recent publications and five other publications; [template here >>>](#)
2. a summary of all internal and external current and pending research funding; [template here >>>](#)
3. an itemized budget. NSF- or NIH-style documents can be used for the CV and current and pending funding; [template here >>>](#)

The deadline for proposal submissions is 5 p.m. Friday, Dec. 1, 2023, uploaded to the [OVCRI Special Programs site](#).

Applicants will be informed about final funding decisions by mid-December, with a start date for funding beginning or after Jan. 1, 2024.

Questions about this RFP may be addressed to Heidi Leerkamp, iSEE Lead Proposal Developer, at leerkamp@illinois.edu.



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SEARCH

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