



Innovation Grants Program: 2020 – 2021 Request for Proposals (RFP)

EarthLab Overview

EarthLab envisions a world where nature and people thrive. Working in partnership with others, we accelerate and focus University of Washington expertise to address large-scale environmental challenges, making a positive impact on people’s lives and livelihoods.

Innovation Grants Program Description

The EarthLab Innovation Grants Program seeks to invest in teams of University of Washington researchers, students and non-academic partners developing innovative solutions to pressing environmental challenges.

The program will award up to \$300,000 to 4-6 projects that address **pressing environmental challenges**. Funding is intended to support **new partnerships** that are led by and with those most impacted by a particular environmental challenge, seek to co-define research priorities from multiple perspectives, and generate actionable science and knowledge (i.e., research that is usable and used). Those most impacted may refer to the people, communities, municipalities (e.g., a city planning for sea level rise), industries (e.g., agricultural industry facing increased flooding or drought), or other entities directly affected by an environmental challenge.

Pressing environmental challenges might include, for example: the effects of climate change on people and ecosystems, such as ocean acidification, increased food insecurity, and displacement due to sea level rise; environmental pollution or hazards disproportionately affecting Indigenous communities, communities of color and low-income communities; the impacts of nature and the built environment on human health; the effects of reduced biodiversity on ecosystems and human well-being; and more.

Project teams must include **at least one non-academic partner** (for example, a Tribe, a community-led organization, a non-governmental organization, a city, state or federal agency, or a business); **a minimum of two University of Washington researchers** from different disciplines; and **at least one University of Washington undergraduate or graduate student or postdoc**.

Timeline

Announcement of the RFP	October 16, 2019
Deadline for Letters of Intent	January 10, 2020 5:00 pm PST
Notification of Invitation to Submit Full Proposal	January 30, 2020
Deadline for Full Proposals	February 28, 2020 5:00 pm PST
Announcement of Awards	April 2020
Award Period	May 1, 2020 – August 31, 2021 (16 months)
Award Amounts	Up to \$75,000
Total Funding for FY 2020 – 2021	\$300,000
Funding Offices	EarthLab

If you have questions or need assistance in completing your grant application, please contact the Innovation Grants Program Lead at elgrants@uw.edu to schedule an appointment.

Anticipated Awards

There is \$300,000 available for the 2020 – 2021 funding cycle for projects focusing on pressing environmental challenges, as defined in the program description on Page 1. The maximum budget request per project is \$75,000. The number of projects awarded will depend upon the budget requests.

Applicant Eligibility

Funding is intended to support **new partnerships** that are:

- led by and with those most impacted by a particular environmental challenge
- seek to co-define research priorities from multiple perspectives
- seek to generate actionable science and knowledge (i. e., research that is usable and used)

Project teams must include:

1) Non-academic Partner

Non-academic partners may include, for example: Tribes, a community-led organization, a non-governmental organization, a city, state, or federal agency, or a business.

2) University of Washington (UW) Researchers

Two or more UW faculty or staff researchers, with *priority given to teams with researchers from different disciplines*. **At least one of the UW faculty or staff researchers must have Principal Investigator (PI) status with the UW.** If the project team is awarded a grant, this person will be responsible for obtaining any relevant compliance approvals, including IRB approval or exemption **prior** to the start of the research project if the project includes research activities with human subjects.

If you are unsure if you have PI status, please contact your UW departmental administrator.

3) UW undergraduate or graduate student or postdoc

There should be at least one undergraduate or graduate student or postdoc who is meaningfully engaged in the project's activities (e.g., opportunities for leadership and professional development).

Individuals may **NOT** serve as a project lead on more than one project team and organizations may not submit more than one application. Applicants with existing resources that could be used to fund their proposal are discouraged. Preference will be given to teams that have not received funding from the Innovation Grants Program in the past.

The Innovation Grants Program does **NOT** fund the following:

- Existing projects or projects needing bridge funds
- Academic course development
- Program evaluation
- Incremental research
- Non-transferable research

Proposal Requirements and Criteria

Projects should deliver on the program's desired outcomes and align with EarthLab's vision and mission (please see "Overview" and "Innovation Grants Program Description" on page 1).

Each project will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

- Is the project led by and with those most impacted by the environmental challenge the project will address? (*Are they leading or meaningfully engaged in the project?*)
- Is the collaboration a truly *new* partnership? (*The Innovation Grants Program seeks to catalyze and fund new partnerships.*)
- Is there a novel mix of disciplines (*e.g., art, ecology, and health*)?
- Is there potential for impact on a pressing environmental challenge?
- Is there potential for the co-creation of new knowledge as a result of the project?
- Is the project sustainable? (*Does it have the potential to persist and grow? Is it visible and understandable to various stakeholders?*)
- Is there potential for external funding to sustain the project?

Eligible Expenses

Proposed expenses must be tied directly to the implementation of the project and may include personnel, travel, services, or supplies where appropriate. **Certain non-academic partners* and the University of Washington Principal Investigator are eligible to receive a portion of the total award.** The University of Washington Principal Investigator will receive the funds as a budget transfer and no indirect costs will apply. The non-academic partner will be required to follow UW policy to receive the funds. ****Only non-academic partner organizations with 501c3 status or Tribes are eligible to receive funds directly.***

Examples of **allowable expenses** include:

- Salary and benefits for grant-related effort
- UW student tuition (**no more than 1/3 of the total budget should be tuition**)
- Travel support for project teams and participants, per [UW travel](#) guidelines
- Seminar/conference registration
- Accessing technical capacity (e.g., data analysis, meeting facilitation)
- Support (e.g., facility rental, food) - in accordance with UW and WA state [policy](#) - for convening workgroups or hosting community listening sessions or gatherings
- Printing

Examples of **ineligible expenses** include:

- Alcohol
- Goods and services for personal use
- Publication costs
- Patent costs
- Marketing costs

Awarded funds must be spent down by **August 31, 2021**. Any unspent funds need to be returned to EarthLab for future grant cycles.

Letter of Intent Submission Instructions

Potential applicants should submit a Letter of Intent (LOI) on or before January 10, 2020 at 5:00 pm PST at the online portal on the [Innovation Grants Program website](#). The online portal will be available beginning December 2019.

The Letter of Intent should be no more than 2 pages (single-spaced and no less than 12-point font), including a list of all proposed partners with a brief biography. The LOI should address the following questions:

- What pressing environmental challenge does your project team hope to address?
- Why is addressing that particular environmental challenge urgent?
- Is your project team new or established? How was the partnership formed?
- Why is your project team or partnership uniquely positioned to co-define research priorities from multiple perspectives and/or generate actionable science and knowledge (i.e., research that is usable and used?)
- How will your project make an impact on the pressing environmental challenge?

The LOI will be reviewed by a committee comprised of UW faculty from a variety of disciplines, as well as individuals from across sectors and graduate students. **Applicants will be notified on or before January 30, 2020 if they are encouraged or discouraged by the review committee from submitting a full proposal for the 2020-2021 funding cycle.** Project teams that are encouraged to submit a full proposal will be asked to follow the full proposal submission instructions (below).

Full Proposal Submission Instructions

Teams that are encouraged to submit a full proposal should submit their proposal on or before February 28, 2020 at 5:00 pm PST. A link to the online application portal will be made available on the [Innovation Grants Program website](#) on January 30, 2020.

Proposals should be a maximum of 4-to-5 pages in length (single-spaced and no less than 12-point font), not counting supplemental materials. The following are required elements of the proposal:

- 1) **Project Abstract:** A concise summary of your project which could be accessible to general audiences and which will be made publicly available if your project team is funded. *350-word limit.*
- 2) **Project Plan:** A description of the significance, goals, objectives, and activities of the project. Please also describe how the non-academic and academic partners will collaborate, including roles and responsibilities related to the successful implementation of the project activities.
- 3) **Final Product:** Please include a description of your final product. The final product could take the form of a report, a press release, a policy briefing, etc. The final product should reflect the new knowledge that resulted from the project and should be designed to make an impact on the pressing environmental challenge your project is focused on.
- 4) **Dissemination plan:** Your plan should include a description of how your project team will ensure that the final product and the results of your project are accessible, usable, and used.

- 5) **Timeline:** A 16-month timeline that describes relevant project activities for the duration of the award period.

Additionally, the following **supplemental materials** should be submitted with your proposal:

- 1) **Project Team:** The online application portal will require that you provide a first and last name, organizational affiliation, job title, and email address for each team member. You will also be asked to designate two primary contacts (one non-academic lead and the UW researcher with PI status). Additionally, you will be asked to include the administrative contact for both the non-academic partner's organization and the UW PI's department.
- 2) **Budget and Budget Narrative:** Provide an itemized budget with justification for each anticipated cost. Please indicate in your budget narrative the total amount of funding you would like to disburse to the eligible non-academic partner and the UW Principal Investigator.
- 3) **Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and/or Letters of Support (LOS):** An MOU or LOS is **required** from both the non-academic partner and the academic researchers.
- 4) **Letter of Commitment from External Funders:** If you will receive external funding to support your project, please submit a letter of commitment from the funder. Please note that if the University of Washington partner accepts external funding, those funds will be subject to the indirect costs charged by the University of Washington.
- 5) **Copy of current IRS 501(c)3 letter (if applicable)**

Full Proposal Review and Award Process

Proposals will be scored based on the criteria listed above (under "Proposal Requirements and Criteria"). The review committee will be comprised of UW faculty from a variety of disciplines, as well as individuals from across sectors and graduate students. The review committee will provide scores and written feedback and to make funding recommendations to the Executive Director of EarthLab for final approval. Funding recommendations will be based on overall score and overall strengths and weaknesses. Project teams will receive a written summary of feedback from the review committee.

Upon approval, the Grants Program Lead will email an award letter, including the awarded amounts, to the selected project teams no later than **April 2020**.

Reporting Requirements and Deliverables

As part of the 2020-2021 cohort, grantees will be asked to attend three cohort meetings during the award period. These meetings will take place on the following dates:

- **May 7, 2020: 3:00 – 5:30 pm**
- **September 15, 2020: 3:00 – 5:30 pm**
- **DATE TBD**

Teams will be required to submit two progress reports to the Grants Program Lead. Each report should be no longer than 2 pages. In funding innovative, complex projects, we anticipate that there will be challenges.

Teams should include in their report the ways in which EarthLab can support them in the completion of their project and feel free to email elgrants@uw.edu at any time with questions.

The mid-year report will be due on **December 11, 2020** and should include the following:

- List of expenditures (a template will be provided)
- Changes to key personnel or partnerships, the scope of work, or the proposed use of funds
- Description of major activities
- Description of significant achievements or relevant milestones
- Description of challenges, anticipated challenges, or changes in approach
- Description of any changes to the plan for the final product

The final progress report will be due on **August 31, 2021** and should include the following:

- List of expenditures (a template will be provided)
- Description of challenges and successes, major activities, and significant achievements
- Description of final product

Additionally, teams will be required to submit their final product within 30 days of their project's conclusion, no later than **September 30, 2021 at 5:00 pm PST**.

Terms and Conditions

EarthLab Innovation Grant recipients agree to the following:

- 1) For projects that involve research on human subjects or on animals, it is the UW PI's responsibility to ensure compliance with all applicable federal, state, and institutional requirements *including, but not limited to*, notifying the appropriate compliance offices on the UW campus (e.g., the Human Subjects Division for the Institutional Review Board or IRB) **PRIOR** to initiating any work and following all relevant protocols. Similarly, if there are any other compliance issues (e.g., biohazardous material), the UW PI will certify that the appropriate compliance offices on the UW campus will be made aware prior to initiating any work. If the project team is partnering with a Tribe, that team will be expected to also determine and follow the appropriate Tribal IRB protocols. Work may **NOT** begin on the project until all appropriate compliance procedures are complete and verification has been provided to the Innovation Grants Program at elgrants@uw.edu.
- 2) If there is a proposed change or absence (60 days or greater) in PI, recipients will immediately provide justification to the Grants Program Lead via email at elgrants@uw.edu.
- 3) Grantees will be expected to attend and participate in the grantee meetings.
- 4) Grantees will be expected to participate in a pre-and-post program evaluation survey and may be asked to complete a short survey after each grantee meeting.
- 5) One person from each winning team may be asked to serve as a peer reviewer on the Review Panel for the year following their project's completion.
- 6) Awarded funds must be spent down by **August 31, 2021**. Any unspent funds need to be returned to EarthLab for future grant cycles.
- 7) Project teams will be eligible to apply for a single, 3-month project extension only if there are extenuating circumstances that impact their ability to complete the project within 16 months.
- 8) Teams are required to submit their final product within 30 days of their project's conclusion.
- 9) Intellectual property will follow University of Washington [policy](#).