PRIME
Funding for Preliminary Studies for New Investigators
The University of Texas Health Science Center, School of Public Health

PRIME Funding Facts & Dates FY2018:

- Number Awards: 2
- Duration of Awards: up to 1 year
- Award Amount: up to $25,000
- Application Due Date: Wednesday, July 18th by noon (Central)

Background:

PRIME is a funding program for UTSPH faculty who are new investigators and new to the funding process. It is a mentor-based program that provides funding for pilot studies that are needed to support applications for external funding.

PRIME applications are reviewed by the SPH internal funding review committee. Applicants will be provided with summaries of the reviews for their application, to aid them in revising their application for submission to other funding mechanisms.

PRIME awardees are expected to submit an application for major research funding to NIH, CDC, AHRQ, or other state or national agency within one year of completing their PRIME award. Appropriate funding mechanisms for post-PRIME applications include the R01 mechanism used by NIH and AHRQ, as well as comparable programs used by other agencies. Applications for career development and other mentored awards, small grants, developmental projects, bridge funds or pilot funding are not appropriate post-PRIME funding mechanisms.

Eligibility:

Eligible:
- UTSPH full-time faculty at the rank of assistant professor or higher, tenure or non-tenure track who qualify as “New Investigators” by the NIH guidelines: [http://grants.nih.gov/grants/new_investigators/index.htm#definition](http://grants.nih.gov/grants/new_investigators/index.htm#definition)

Not Eligible:
- Faculty who have previously been funded by UTSPH PRIME program.
- Faculty who are currently funded for related work through any mechanism (e.g. UTSPH, UTHSC, NIH etc.) other than start-up funds.
Application Guidelines:

- **Face Page** (attached)

- **Detailed Budget**: Budgets should be presented in an EXCEL spreadsheet or similar format. The funding period may not exceed 12 months. Approval of budgets by SPH Pre-award staff is not required at this stage.

  Budget categories may include:

  - non-faculty personnel
    - fringe benefits for non-faculty personnel must be budgeted
    - include estimated effort of faculty, but without salary
  - equipment
    - purchases of cellular phones/plans are subject to approval by UTHealth
    - purchase of computers may be subject to approval by UTSPH IT Services
  - supplies essential to the project
  - travel
    - travel within the U.S., Mexico or Canada is allowed
    - foreign travel (other than Mexico and Canada) is not allowed
    - professional meeting expenses are not allowed
  - Other expenses as typically acceptable in most federal grant applications
    - Consultants and sub-contracting are not allowed

  Indirect costs are not required and there is no need to request a waiver. Projects do not involve OSP. Budgets are subject to review and revision by UTSPH prior to funding.

- **Budget Justification**: Provide a detailed description/justification for each item in the budget.

- **Biosketch for PI, Co-Investigators and Mentors**: Biosketches must be in NIH format. Templates and examples can be found at: [http://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/phs398/phs398.html](http://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/phs398/phs398.html)

The following sections must be prepared using a 12 point font, and at least ½ inch margins.

- **Specific Aims** (1 page)

- **Research Strategy** (6 pages)
  - Must include: significance, innovation and approach

  Details on the content of the Specific Aims and Research Strategy sections can be found in the PHS 398 Instructions: [http://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/phs398/phs398.html](http://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/phs398/phs398.html)

- **Mentoring Plan** (0.5 page/26 lines): Applicants must identify one or more research mentors who have established programs of funded research. The mentor’s qualifications to serve in this role should be described in the Personal Statement section of his/her biosketch. The applicant should provide specific details describing how their mentors will facilitate the proposed research project
and submission of a subsequent external grant application. It is expected that the mentoring plan for a PRIME award will extend beyond a general mentoring relationship (e.g. monthly meetings with a Division Director or Regional Dean to discuss general progress) and include plans specific to the proposed project.

- **Grant Submission Plan** (0.5 page/26 lines): Applicants must identify potential funding mechanisms for their post-PRIME grant application and explain why completion of the work proposed in the PRIME application is essential to the preparation of a competitive application. The applicant should provide details of the proposed funding agency (e.g. CPRIT, AHRQ), grant type (e.g. R01), funding announcement, anticipated submission date and co-investigators. In addition, this section of the application must include a timeline that spans from the initiation of PRIME funding through submission of the proposed external grant application.

- **Bibliography** (not counted in page limit)

- **Human Subjects, Inclusion of Women, Minorities and Children, and Animal Welfare** (not counted in page limit)
  - All research is subject to UTHSC HOOP guidelines for assurance of human subjects, animal welfare, and biosafety policies
  - Awardees must provide evidence of review and approval through appropriate UTHSC committees
    - Protocols must carry the same title as the PRIME application
    - The PRIME funding period will start within 30 days of notification of award. However, funds will not be released to the investigator until all required approvals are in place.
  - Information on Research Compliance can be found: [https://sph.uth.edu/content/uploads/2014/08/RESEARCH-COMPLIANCE_2014.pdf](https://sph.uth.edu/content/uploads/2014/08/RESEARCH-COMPLIANCE_2014.pdf)

- **Appendices**, as needed (not counted in page limit; appendices are *not to be used as an extension of the Research Plan*)

**Submission Process:**

Applications must be submitted electronically as one PDF document to Brian Miller at: [Brian.C.Miller@uth.tmc.edu](mailto:Brian.C.Miller@uth.tmc.edu) (x9054) on or before the due date listed at the beginning of this document.
PRIME Funding Application Checklist

Reminder – Submit all materials as one PDF file.

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<th>Item</th>
<th>Done</th>
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<tr>
<td>Face Page</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Conflict of Interest Forms</td>
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<tr>
<td>Detailed Budget</td>
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<td>Detailed Budget Justification</td>
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<tr>
<td>Biosketches</td>
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<tr>
<td>Specific Aims (1 page)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Plan (6 pages)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Bibliography</td>
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<tr>
<td>Human Subjects, Inclusion of Women, Minorities and Children, Animal Welfare</td>
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<tr>
<td>Appendices</td>
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Title:

Principal Investigator
Name:
Academic Rank:
Campus:
Division/Center:

Mentor (provide the following information for each mentor)
Name:
Academic Rank:
School:
Campus:
Division/Center:

Co-investigators (provide the following information for each co-investigator)
Name:
Academic Rank:
School:
Campus:
Division/Center:
Role on Project:

Performance Sites:

Signatures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of PI (print)</th>
<th>Signature</th>
<th>Date</th>
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</thead>
</table>
Each application has been assigned one primary and two secondary reviewers. The responsibilities of these reviewers are summarized below:

**Primary Reviewers** provide: (1) an overall impact score, summarize the application and provide verbal critique during the in-person meeting and (2) a full written critique with individual section scores.

**Secondary Reviewers** provide (1) an overall impact score and verbal critique during the in-person meeting and (2) a full written critique with individual section scores.

All other reviewers should read the application and be prepared to participate in the discussion of the application during the in-person meeting. All reviewers will provide a final overall impact score. Overall impact scores will be averaged across the five reviewers, and the two applications with the best scores will be funded. The scoring scale is provided at the end of this document.

Applications will be reviewed using NIH style criteria. The details provided below were adapted from: [http://grants.nih.gov/grants/peer_review_process.htm#Criteria](http://grants.nih.gov/grants/peer_review_process.htm#Criteria). Reviewers’ should keep in mind that PRIME is a mentored research award, intended to provide junior investigators with funding that will lead them to a major external award, such as an NIH R01 or similar mechanism from other agencies.

**Overall Impact.** Reviewers will provide an overall impact/priority score to reflect their assessment of the likelihood for the project to exert a sustained, powerful influence on the development of the applicant’s research program, in consideration of the following scored review criteria.

**Scored Review Criteria.** Reviewers will consider each of the review criteria below in the determination of scientific and technical merit, and give a separate score for each. An application does not need to be strong in all categories to be judged likely to have benefit to the investigators development. For example, a project that by its nature is not innovative may be and essential step for the investigator to advance.

**Significance.** Does the project address an important problem or a critical barrier to progress in the field? Will successful completion of the aims significantly enhance the investigators likelihood of obtaining external funding to move his/her research forward?

**Investigator(s).** Are the PI, collaborators, and other researchers well suited to the project? Does the PI have appropriate experience and training?

**Innovation.** Does the application challenge and seek to shift current research or clinical practice paradigms by utilizing novel theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions? Are the concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions novel to one field of research or novel in a broad sense? Is a refinement, improvement, or new application of theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions proposed?
**Approach.** Are the overall strategy, methodology, and analyses well-reasoned and appropriate to accomplish the specific aims of the project? Are potential problems, alternative strategies, and benchmarks for success presented? If the project is in the early stages of development, will the strategy establish feasibility and will particularly risky aspects be managed? If the project involves clinical research, are the plans for 1) protection of human subjects from research risks, and 2) inclusion of minorities and members of both sexes/genders, as well as the inclusion of children, justified in terms of the scientific goals and research strategy proposed?

**Environment.** Will the scientific environment in which the work will be done contribute to the probability of success? Are the institutional support, equipment and other physical resources available to the investigators adequate for the project proposed? Will the project benefit from unique features of the scientific environment, subject populations, or collaborative arrangements?

**Mentoring Plan.** Does the proposed mentor have the expertise and resources needed to effectively mentor the applicant? Is the proposed mentoring plan adequately described? Will the plan contribute to the success of the application and applicant?

Reviewers providing written critiques may use the NIH format, which includes a brief statement of overall impact, followed by bulleted lists of strengths and weaknesses for each of the scored criteria reviewed above. An example of the format is provided below.

**Scoring**

Applicants will be scored using the NIH 9-point rating scale (1 = exceptional; 9 = poor) for all applications; the same scale is used for overall impact scores and for criterion scores.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall Impact or Criterion Strength</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Descriptor</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Exceptional</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Outstanding</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
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<td>Medium</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Very Good</td>
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<td>Good</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
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<td>Low</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Marginal</td>
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<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Poor</td>
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PRIME Reviewer Guidelines

Application #: 
Principal Investigator(s): 

OVERALL IMPACT

Reviewers will provide an overall impact score to reflect their assessment of the likelihood for the project to exert a sustained, powerful influence on the research field(s) involved, in consideration of the following five scored review criteria, and additional review criteria. An application does not need to be strong in all categories to be judged likely to have major scientific impact.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall Impact</th>
<th>Write a paragraph summarizing the factors that informed your Overall Impact score.</th>
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SCORED REVIEW CRITERIA

Reviewers will consider each of the five review criteria below in the determination of scientific and technical merit, and give a separate score for each.

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<tr>
<th>1. Significance</th>
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<tr>
<td>Strengths</td>
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<td>Weaknesses</td>
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<th>2. Investigator(s)</th>
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<td>Strengths</td>
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<td>Strengths</td>
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<td>3. <strong>Innovation</strong></td>
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<td>4. <strong>Approach</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>5. <strong>Environment</strong></td>
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<td>6. <strong>Mentoring Plan</strong></td>
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**Innovation**

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**Approach**

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**Environment**

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**Mentoring Plan**

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