Research Acceleration Seed Grant Program

2027 Application and Award Guidance

Issued November 12, 2026

Program at a Glance

The Florida A&M University Division of Research is investing $250,000 in the Research Acceleration Seed Grant Program to provide competitive internal funding for faculty to initiate promising research and scholarship; generate preliminary findings; establish interdisciplinary partnerships; strengthen the pipeline of student researchers; and develop competitive applications for external support. Awardees must submit at least one external proposal by the six-month deadline in Tables 1 and 3.

The program will fund a defined, achievable phase of work that moves an idea toward a larger research or scholarly opportunity. Supported activities may include pilot studies, feasibility assessments, prototype development, community-engaged research, methodological development, and the formation of interdisciplinary teams. Awards will support faculty at any rank who meet FAMU principal investigator (PI) requirements. Every project must (1) identify a credible external funding pathway, (2) include meaningful participation by at least one FAMU student researcher, and (3) present a feasible plan for the requested award period of up to 12 months. This program strongly encourages interdisciplinary collaborations across FAMU and will give preference to collaborative proposals as described in Section 9.

Applicants should submit projects that can begin promptly, produce measurable results within the requested award period, and are feasible if hiring, purchasing, compliance review, or partner coordination requires lead time. Awards will range from $15,000 to $50,000 and are allocated to support direct project costs only. The program pairs funding with individualized research development assistance, monthly progress reporting, and monthly technical assistance calls with the Office of Research Development.

Table 1. Key Dates

Milestone	Date
Program guidance released	November 12, 2026
Applications due	December 11, 2026, 11:59 p.m. ET
Administrative screening and peer review	December 14, 2026 – January 15, 2027
Anticipated award notification	January 20, 2027
Award and expenditure period	February 1, 2027 – January 31, 2028 (up to 12 months). Applicants may request a shorter period, such as six or nine months.
Final project and financial report due	30 calendar days after the approved project end date
External proposal submission	No later than six months after the project end date in the original award letter, unless the Division separately approves a later date in writing.

Table of Contents

Program at a Glance 1
1. Program Purpose and Required Outcomes 3
2. Funding Target Areas 4
3. Eligibility and Application Limits 4
4. Award Period and Use of Funds 5
5. External Funding Target 6
6. Student Researcher Requirement 7
7. Application Package 7
8. Compliance and Institutional Requirements 9
9. Review Process 9
10. Scoring Method 10
11. Proposal Scoring Rubric 11
12. Awardee Onboarding and Research Development Support 12
13. Monthly Reporting and Performance Management 13
14. Awardee Benchmarks and Deliverables 14
15. Program Evaluation Framework 15
16. Award Terms and Conditions 17
17. Application Readiness Checklist 17
Questions 18

1. Program Purpose and Required Outcomes

The program advances FAMU's research growth by helping faculty close a specific evidence, feasibility, partnership, or methodological gap that currently limits an external proposal. Seed funding is not intended to support a stand-alone project with no external funding destination. The proposed activities must create a clear bridge from internal investment to a competitive external submission.

Projects may address fundamental, applied, translational, creative, community-engaged, or implementation-oriented questions. For this competition, contemporary relevance means that the proposal explains why the question matters now or is emerging as important to the field, a community, industry, the public sector, or an external sponsor. Immediate policy or commercial application is not required; fundamental research may demonstrate relevance through an important current knowledge gap or new scientific opportunity.

Program Objectives

The program seeks to:

- Generate preliminary data, proof of concept, or foundational scholarly work needed for competitive external proposals.
- Support innovative ideas and new research directions with substantial scientific, scholarly, creative, or societal potential.
- Increase meaningful collaborations among faculty, research staff, students, academic units, and external partners.
- Strengthen the participation of undergraduate, graduate, and professional students in mentored research.
- Develop the research independence and proposal readiness of early-career investigators and researchers entering new areas.
- Address consequential problems affecting local communities, Florida, the nation, and the world.
- Build a sustainable pipeline of proposals to governmental agencies, foundations, industry, and other external sponsors.
- Produce documented outcomes that allow FAMU to assess the value of its internal research investments.

Required Outcomes

- A seed project completed within its approved award period, with documented milestones and an identifiable research product, such as preliminary data, feasibility findings, a validated method, pilot results, a partnership framework, or another discipline-appropriate output.
- Meaningful participation by at least one FAMU student researcher, with defined responsibilities, supervision, and learning outcomes.
- A verified external sponsor and funding mechanism, or an approved replacement target if the originally identified opportunity changes or does not materialize.
- At least one external proposal based on or materially strengthened by the seed-supported work, submitted no later than six months after the project end date in the original award letter, unless the Division separately approves a later submission in writing.
- Monthly progress reports and technical assistance meetings during the approved award period, followed by a final project and financial report. Follow-up surveys are issued 12 and 24 months after the approved project end date. Responses are due within 30 calendar days of each survey's issuance.

2. Funding Target Areas

Each application must select one primary tier level. The Division of Research prioritizes the following tiers: (1) discovery and feasibility, (2) research development, and (3) interdisciplinary research acceleration. A project may have features relevant to more than one tier, but it will be reviewed and budgeted under the selected tier. The Division may recommend reassignment to another tier after consulting the applicant. Applicants must justify the requested amount against the work proposed. Requesting the maximum amount will not improve competitiveness. Award amounts are ceilings, not entitlements, and the Division may offer partial or conditional funding.

The interdisciplinary research acceleration tier will require meaningful collaborations across at least two academic units or substantially different disciplines. A single-unit team may qualify if it demonstrates distinct, necessary expertise and explains why the large investment is warranted. Approximately 8–12 projects are anticipated across all target areas, depending on proposal quality, justified budgets, and the final portfolio. The Division will make at least one award at every tier level.

Table 2. Funding Tiers and Award Ranges

Tier	Award range	Primary purpose	Illustrative deliverables
Discovery and Feasibility	$15,000–$24,999	Test an idea, establish feasibility, or develop an initial scholarly foundation	Pilot dataset, feasibility report, archival findings, preliminary model, or documented creative research
Research Development	$25,000–$39,999	Generate substantive preliminary results or develop a competitive next-stage project	Validated methods, analysis, prototype, manuscript draft, or external proposal draft
Interdisciplinary Research Acceleration	$40,000–$50,000	Support an integrated team addressing a problem that requires complementary expertise	Integrated preliminary results, partnership commitments, and a competitive collaborative proposal

3. Eligibility and Application Limits

- The lead PI must be a FAMU faculty member at any rank who meets institutional PI eligibility requirements and will remain available for the full award period.
- Single-investigator and collaborative projects are eligible. The interdisciplinary research acceleration tier requires an interdisciplinary team as described above.
- An individual may serve as lead PI on only one application. Participation as a collaborator on additional applications is permitted when roles and effort are feasible and disclosed.
- Students may participate as researchers but may not serve as lead PI. At least one FAMU undergraduate, graduate, or professional student must be included in the research plan.
- The proposed work must be distinct from, and may not replace, activities already fully supported by another internal or external source.
- External collaborators are permitted, but FAMU must retain substantive leadership and responsibility.
- Jointly appointed investigators must identify the administering institution and demonstrate a clear benefit to FAMU.

- Applicants with overdue final reports or unresolved requirements from prior Division internal awards may be found ineligible until those requirements are satisfied.
- Awards are non-renewable. A materially distinct follow-on project may compete in a later cycle.

Required Unit Awareness

The application must include acknowledgment from the lead PI's department chair, director, or dean confirming awareness of the submission, availability of the proposed facilities and resources, and the unit's ability to administer the award if selected. This acknowledgment is not a scientific endorsement and does not replace Division review.

4. Award Period and Use of Funds

Award Setup and Access to Funds

Awards begin February 1, 2027, and may run for up to 12 months, through January 31, 2028. Applicants may request a shorter period, such as six or nine months. Each award letter specifies the approved project end date, the final report due date, and the external proposal deadline. The full approved amount is credited to a university project account under the lead PI. Spending may begin once the award is activated, on or after February 1. Activities that require institutional or compliance approval may begin only after approval. Funds are institutional budget authority and must be spent through FAMU systems in accordance with university, state, and applicable federal requirements.

Use award funds for the approved scope and complete spending by the approved project end date. The Division may grant a written no-cost extension only for exceptional circumstances that could not reasonably have been anticipated and only if the funding source permits. Before the award ends, email a justification and proposed revised end date to researchdev@famu.edu. Spending beyond the current end date requires written approval. The extension letter specifies the revised end date. The final report is due 30 calendar days after that date. The external proposal deadline changes only if the Division separately approves a later submission in writing (Section 5). Material changes in scope, key personnel, student participation, target sponsor, or budget require prior written approval from the Division. Unspent funds return to the program at closeout.

Table 3. Example Deadlines for Awards Beginning February 1, 2027

Award length	Original project end date	Final report due	External proposal due by
6 months	July 31, 2027	August 30, 2027	January 31, 2028
9 months	October 31, 2027	November 30, 2027	April 30, 2028
12 months	January 31, 2028	March 1, 2028	July 31, 2028

Allowable Costs

- Student research wages, stipends, or other allowable support, including applicable fringe, when processed through the appropriate university mechanism.

- Faculty summer salary and research staff and postdoctoral salary support, including applicable fringe, for effort directly attributable to the approved project and performed within the authorized award period. These costs may be charged only to the extent that the same effort is not paid by another source. Seed funds may not replace or supplant funding already committed to that effort. The budget justification must identify each person's role, effort, salary calculation, and any other funding supporting the position; all payments must follow applicable university appointment and payroll requirements.
- Research supplies, materials, data acquisition, participant costs, and approved participant incentives.
- Specialized testing, laboratory analysis, core or shared facility services, software, data sets, and other project-specific research services.
- Small research equipment essential to the project when existing university resources are not reasonably available and procurement can be completed within the approved award period.
- Consultant, vendor, or partner costs that are necessary, reasonable, and supported by an appropriate scope or documentation.
- Limited project travel required for data collection, access to specialized facilities, partner engagement, or dissemination of seed-generated findings that directly advances the targeted external proposal.

Generally Unallowable Costs

- Facilities and administrative or indirect costs charged to the internal award.
- Bonuses and salary supplements other than the faculty summer salary and research staff or postdoctoral salary support expressly permitted above, general administrative support, or costs not directly attributable to the approved research plan.
- General-purpose computers, office furniture, routine office supplies, renovations, or permanent space improvements.
- Memberships, entertainment, hospitality, food, or routine conference attendance unrelated to the seed-generated work and external proposal.
- Student tuition unless expressly authorized through the applicable university mechanism.
- Costs incurred before the award period, existing deficits, or expenses already supported by another source.
- Unrestricted faculty accounts or any use inconsistent with the approved project and university policy.

The Division will make final cost-allowability determinations in consultation with the responsible university offices. Applicants should identify procurement, contracting, hiring, or compliance lead times in the project schedule.

5. External Funding Target

Every application must identify an external sponsor and funding mechanism or program that the seed-supported work will strengthen. If a current solicitation is available, applicants must provide the program title, solicitation number, link, and published due date. If the next solicitation has not been released, applicants must identify the anticipated cycle and the basis for that projection, such as a recurring sponsor deadline, forecast, prior-year solicitation, or documented consultation with a program officer.

At award launch, the assigned research development officer (RDO) and PI will verify that the target remains viable and develop a proposal pathway working backward from the anticipated submission date. If the opportunity is cancelled, delayed, materially changed, or no longer fits the project, the PI and RDO will identify an appropriate replacement. The PI and RDO must document any replacement target and obtain Division approval. The external proposal is due no later than six months after the project end date in the original award letter. This deadline applies even if the Division grants a no-cost extension. A later submission requires separate written approval from the Division.

6. Student Researcher Requirement

Each application must include at least one FAMU student researcher. The program does not prescribe a single model of participation. Student involvement should be appropriate to the discipline, project, and student's level of preparation and should be substantive rather than observational or nominal.

- State whether students are identified or will be recruited and describe the selection process if recruitment is pending.
- Describe the research responsibilities, anticipated time commitment, supervision, and safety or compliance training required.
- Identify learning outcomes or demonstrable skills the student should gain.
- State whether students will be paid for their research work. If so, identify the funding source (this seed award or another source) and how payment will be made through FAMU, such as hourly wages or a stipend.
- Describe expected student products or recognition, when appropriate, such as a poster, presentation, data product, abstract, manuscript contribution, or acknowledgment.

7. Application Package

Applications must be received at researchdev@famu.edu by December 11, 2026, at 11:59 p.m. ET. Submit one searchable PDF in the order below, using the email subject line "Seed2027 Application – LastName – Project Title." The Office of Research Development will confirm receipt by reply email. If a confirmation is not received within two business days, contact Mrs. Brandy Carlson Moore (Brandy.carlsonmoore@famu.edu) or Dr. April Carswell (April.carswell@famu.edu) to verify receipt. Confirmation acknowledges receipt only and does not establish eligibility or completeness. The time the application is received in the program inbox determines whether it meets the deadline.

To replace an earlier submission, email a complete revised PDF before the deadline using the subject line "Seed2027 Replacement – LastName – Project Title" and state in the message that it replaces the previous application. The most recent complete version received by the deadline will be reviewed; do not send only revised pages. Applications received after the deadline, exceeding page limits, or missing a required component may be removed from consideration during administrative screening. Substantive revisions after the deadline are not permitted, except that Division staff may request limited clarification as described in Section 9.

Table 4. Required Application Components

Component	Limit	Required content
Cover page and project summary	1 page	Project title, primary target area, award tier, lead PI and team, dept # for lead PI, amount requested, requested length and end date. Include a 250-word summary, current or anticipated external target, and status of requested approvals.
Proposal narrative	6 pages	Significance and research merit; contemporary relevance; aims or objectives; preliminary evidence gap; approach and methods; expected results; risks and alternatives; team roles and target-area alignment; external funding pathway; student plan.
Timeline and milestones	1 page	Month-by-month activities from February 1, 2027, through the requested end date. Include measurable milestones, responsible persons, student activities, compliance and procurement timing, expected outputs, and proposal-development actions.
Budget and justification	2 pages	Itemized direct-cost budget and concise justification connecting each cost to an activity, milestone, or output. No indirect costs.
Biographical sketch or CV	2 pages each	For the PI and each Co-PI. Emphasize qualifications relevant to the project and targeted sponsor. A current sponsor-format biosketch may be used if it fits the page limit.
Current, pending, and prior internal support	1 page each for the lead PI and each Co-PI	For the lead PI and each Co-PI, list active and pending support relevant to the work and FAMU internal research awards received during the previous five years, including outcomes and outstanding obligations. Identify scientific, budgetary, or effort overlap with the proposed project and explain how duplication and supplanting will be avoided.
Unit acknowledgment	1 page	Signed acknowledgment from the lead PI's department chair, director, or dean.
Letters or documentation	As needed	Partner or collaborator letters only when the relationship, access, data, site, facility, or contribution is essential to feasibility. Include prior external reviewer comments when the project supports a resubmission.
References cited	As needed	A concise list of references cited in the proposal narrative.

Formatting and Submission Standards

- Use Arial 11-point or another readily legible 11-point font, single spacing, one-inch margins, and consecutive page numbers. Tables and figure labels may use 10-point font when readable.
- Write for a mixed-disciplinary faculty review audience. Define specialized terms and acronyms and explain why the work matters beyond a narrow subfield.
- References cited do not count toward the narrative page limit. Appendices may not be used to circumvent page limits.
- Name the file using the convention LastName_Seed2027.pdf and verify that the file opens correctly before submission.
- No match or cost share is required. Committed institutional or partner resources should be described when they are necessary to feasibility.

Required Timeline

The timeline is a scored component. It must show that the project can produce the promised evidence and outputs within the requested award period. At minimum, identify the activity, responsible person, start and completion month, measurable milestone, dependency, and recovery strategy if the task is delayed. Projects involving hiring, purchasing, contracting, human participants, animals, biological materials, data-use agreements, export controls, or other approvals must account for those dependencies before regulated work begins.

8. Compliance and Institutional Requirements

Institutional review or approval is not necessarily required before application unless otherwise directed, but applicants must identify all anticipated requirements and incorporate realistic lead time. No regulated activity may begin until the responsible university office has issued the required approval. Relevant requirements may include IRB, IACUC, IBC, radiation or laboratory safety, conflict-of-interest disclosure, export controls, data-use agreements, information security review, clinical or site authorization, procurement, contracting, and subrecipient or consultant documentation.

Seed program review does not replace institutional review, budget approval, or sponsored-programs submission requirements. The PI is responsible for securing approvals, maintaining records, and following university policies throughout the project.

9. Review Process

Administrative screening and faculty peer review run from December 12, 2026, through January 15, 2027. The Division anticipates notifying applicants on January 20, 2027, ahead of the February 1 start. Reviewers will receive the same guidance and scoring rubric provided to applicants.

1. Administrative screening. Division staff will confirm on-time submission, PI eligibility, selection of one target area, inclusion of all required components, compliance with page and budget limits, student participation, a work plan covering the requested award period, and a credible external funding pathway. Staff may request a limited clarification but will not permit substantive revision after the deadline.
2. Reviewer selection and assignment. The Division will solicit nominations from deans and department chairs and directly recruit faculty with relevant subject, methodological, community-engagement, team-science, or sponsor-review expertise. Enough reviewers will be recruited to keep assignments manageable, ordinarily three to five applications per reviewer.
3. Conflict and confidentiality review. Reviewers must disclose actual, potential, or perceived conflicts and recuse when appropriate. Conflicts may include a supervisory or reporting relationship, participation in the application, a close personal or financial relationship, or a recent or active collaboration that could reasonably affect impartiality. Applications and deliberations are confidential.
4. Independent review. Each responsive application will receive at least three independent faculty reviews. Assignments will seek at least one reviewer with relevant disciplinary or methodological expertise and complementary perspectives appropriate to the target area. Reviewers will provide numeric scores and concise written comments on strengths and concerns.

5. Panel discussion. The Division will convene one multidisciplinary panel or multiple panels if proposal volume or subject breadth requires. RDOs will orient reviewers, moderate discussion, and support consistent application of the rubric but will not substitute for disciplinary or methodological reviewers. Panels may recommend full, partial, conditional, or no funding.
6. Recommendation and decision. Panels will provide ranked recommendations to the Chief Research Officer, Dr. Robert Nobles, for consideration under university approval procedures. Final decisions will consider peer-review scores and comments, available funds, budget reasonableness, risk, and the overall portfolio. Among proposals of comparable merit, the Division may consider cross-campus collaboration and representation of FAMU's breadth of expertise and priorities.
7. Notification and feedback. Applicants will receive the funding decision and concise written feedback. Reviewer identities will not be disclosed. The award letter will specify the project end date, final report due date, external proposal deadline, and any required budget, scope, compliance, or milestone revisions. Accounts will receive the approved funding upon notice of award; any specified restrictions must be resolved before the affected funds are spent or activities begin.

Reviewer Independence and Consistency

Among proposals of comparable overall merit, the Division of Research will give preference to projects that demonstrate meaningful interdisciplinary collaboration. Reviewers will assess whether proposed collaborations are substantively integrated into the project and whether the participating disciplines contribute expertise necessary to the work. No additional points will be awarded solely for interdisciplinary status.

Reviewers will neither favor nor disadvantage applicants because of faculty rank. All proposals will be evaluated on their research merit, readiness, feasibility within the requested award period, student engagement, and potential to strengthen external funding competitiveness.

10. Scoring Method

Reviewers will assign a rating from 0 to 5 for each criterion. Whole-number ratings are recommended. Weighted points are calculated as: rating ÷ 5 × maximum points. For example, a rating of 4 on a 20-point criterion equals 16 points. The maximum total is 100 points.

Table 5. Reviewer Rating Scale

Rating	Performance level	General meaning
5	Exceptional	Fully responsive, compelling, specific, and well supported; no material weakness.
4	Strong	Highly responsive and credible; minor weaknesses do not threaten success.
3	Adequate	Meets the requirement, but important details, evidence, or safeguards are underdeveloped.
2	Limited	Partially responsive; one or more material weaknesses reduce confidence.
1	Deficient	Minimally responsive, unclear, or unsupported; major weaknesses substantially limit feasibility or value.
0	Not addressed	Required information is absent or the proposal does not meet the criterion.

11. Proposal Scoring Rubric

Applicants should use the rubric as a writing guide. Reviewers should apply the stated criteria consistently across disciplines and explain the basis for unusually high or low ratings in the written comments.

Table 6. Scoring Criteria and Review Guidance

Criterion	Max	Evidence supporting a high rating	Concerns that lower the rating
Research merit and significance	15	A clear and important question, problem, hypothesis, or creative inquiry; sound intellectual rationale; appropriate grounding in the field; potential to advance knowledge, practice, methods, or scholarship.	Question or gap is vague, incremental, unsupported, or disconnected from the proposed activities.
Contemporary relevance and potential impact	10	Persuasively explains why the work matters now or is emerging as important to the field, communities, industry, the public sector, or an external sponsor. Expected impact is credible and proportionate to the project.	Relies on broad claims, trend language, or urgency without evidence; relevance or potential beneficiaries are unclear. Fundamental research is not penalized when current intellectual importance is well established.
Need for seed support and preliminary evidence	10	Identifies the precise evidence, feasibility, partnership, or methodological gap the award will close and shows how the requested activities will materially strengthen the next proposal without duplicating existing support.	The seed need is generic; requested work is already funded; outputs are unlikely to change external competitiveness.
External funding strategy and sponsor fit	15	Names a credible sponsor and mechanism; provides a due date or defensible anticipated cycle; connects seed outputs to sponsor review expectations; presents a realistic proposal-development and submission pathway.	Target is vague, ineligible, poorly aligned, too speculative, or disconnected from the seed activities; submission pathway is missing or unrealistic.
Approach, milestones, and project feasibility	20	Methods and activities are appropriate and sufficiently detailed. Milestones and deliverables are measurable. The timeline assigns responsibility and accounts for hiring, purchasing, compliance, analysis, risks, and alternatives within the requested award period.	Methods are weak or underdeveloped, dependencies are overlooked, milestones cannot be verified, or the scope is unlikely to be completed within the requested award period.
Investigator and team capability and target-area alignment	10	PI and team have relevant expertise, access, and clearly differentiated roles. The proposal meets the selected target area's distinguishing expectations. Collaborations are integrated and necessary where applicable.	Key expertise, access, commitment, or role clarity is missing; collaboration is nominal; target-area fit is asserted but not demonstrated.

Criterion	Max	Evidence supporting a high rating	Concerns that lower the rating
Student researcher engagement	10	At least one FAMU student has meaningful, feasible research responsibilities, suitable supervision, defined learning outcomes, and appropriate training or compensation plans. Expected student products or skill gains are clear.	Student participation is absent, observational, token, poorly supervised, or disconnected from learning and research outcomes.
Budget justification and value	10	Costs are allowable, reasonable, necessary, and aligned with activities and milestones. The budget demonstrates stewardship, avoids duplication, and can be executed during the award period.	Costs are weakly justified, inflated, unallowable, duplicative, or unlikely to be spent in time; essential costs are omitted.

Table 7. Reviewer Score Sheet

Criterion	Maximum	Rating 0–5	Weighted points
Research merit and significance	15		
Contemporary relevance and potential impact	10		
Need for seed support and preliminary evidence	10		
External funding strategy and sponsor fit	15		
Approach, milestones, and project feasibility	20		
Investigator and team capability and target-area alignment	10		
Student researcher engagement	10		
Budget justification and value	10		
Total	**100**		

Scores support, but do not mechanically determine, funding decisions. The panel may consider material risks, budget reductions, conditions necessary for success, and portfolio considerations described in the review process. No score guarantees funding.

12. Awardee Onboarding and Research Development Support

Award Activation and Management

Before spending commences, awardees must complete an orientation, accept award terms, finalize milestones, and secure required administrative approvals. Human subjects, animal, biosafety, and other regulated activities may begin only after applicable approvals. Where feasible, an award may be activated for separately approved preparatory activities while regulated work remains restricted.

Each award will have:

- An accountable lead investigator.
- An approved project and budget.
- A baseline milestone plan.
- A reporting calendar.
- An assigned research development contact.

Individualized Support

The Office of Research Development will work with each recipient from award launch through the planned external submission. The support is consultative and capacity-building. Faculty remain responsible for conducting the research, supervising students, preparing the proposal, meeting compliance requirements, obtaining budget approvals, and completing institutional submission steps.

During the first month of the award, the assigned RDO and PI or team will confirm the external funding target and establish an individualized support plan working backward from the expected submission date. The plan will identify research milestones, preliminary evidence needed, student roles, required approvals, proposal-development steps, draft review points, and internal deadlines.

Monthly Technical Assistance Meetings

Each awardee meets with the assigned RDO once a month during the approved award period. At the final month's closeout meeting, they review results, expenditures, and next steps for the external proposal. The PI records agreed actions in the final report. Discussion topics vary with the stage of the project and may include the following.

- clarifying aims, outcomes, and the connection between pilot work and sponsor expectations;
- checking milestone progress and resolving foreseeable barriers;
- interpreting a solicitation or sponsor guidance and monitoring whether the target remains viable;
- planning compliance, partner, data, methodological, or sponsored-programs coordination;
- strengthening proposal structure, logic, responsiveness, and review readiness; and
- connecting the team to institutional expertise, collaborators, or mock review when appropriate and feasible.

Technical assistance does not constitute a promise that Division staff will write the proposal, conduct the research, secure approvals, or guarantee an award. Each meeting will conclude with documented next actions, responsible persons, and dates.

13. Monthly Reporting and Performance Management

For each month before the final month of the approved award period, awardees submit a progress report by the fifth business day of the following month. The final project and financial report serves as the last month's report and records actions from the closeout meeting. It is due within 30 calendar days after the approved project end date. If the Division grants a no-cost extension, count the 30 days from the revised end date. The program coordinator maintains the reporting calendar, milestone record, and outcome data and flags delays for follow-up.

Table 8. Monthly Report Requirements

Monthly report element	What to provide
Project identification	Title, PI, award amount, reporting period, and approved project end date.
Milestone status	Completed, in progress, delayed, or not started for each scheduled milestone, with a brief explanation.
Research progress	Activities completed, preliminary findings or outputs produced, and next-month priorities.

Monthly report element	What to provide
Student participation	Students involved, responsibilities completed, supervision or training provided, approximate effort, compensation status, and skills or products developed.
Financial status	Approximate expenditures and commitments compared with the approved budget; anticipated variances or procurement concerns.
Compliance and dependencies	Status of required approvals, agreements, hiring, purchasing, data access, sites, or partners.
External funding pathway	Status of the targeted opportunity and proposal-development actions completed or planned.
Risks and assistance needed	Barriers, corrective actions, decisions needed, and requested technical assistance.

Table 9. Progress Status and Response

Status	Definition	Expected response
On track	Major milestones and spending are proceeding within the approved timeline.	Continue implementation and document results.
At risk	A delay, approval, staffing, procurement, technical, or sponsor issue could affect a major milestone.	PI and RDO establish corrective actions and dates.
Off track	A major milestone, required report, student commitment, or approved scope is not being met and recovery is uncertain.	Written corrective plan and Division review; scope, budget, or award conditions may be revised.

14. Awardee Benchmarks and Deliverables

Table 10. Benchmarks, Deadlines, and Evidence

When	Required benchmark or deliverable	Evidence
Award launch	Accept award terms and confirm the account, approved budget, team, student plan, compliance pathway, external target, and milestones for the approved award period.	Signed terms and finalized support plan.
Each month of the approved award period	Meet with the assigned RDO each month. Submit a progress report for each month before the final month. Hold the closeout meeting in the final month.	Monthly reports and meeting notes. The final report covers the last month and records the closeout actions.
By the approved project end date	Complete project activities and expenditures and produce the planned preliminary evidence or other research output. Spending after the approved end date requires a written no-cost extension.	Data, analysis, product, feasibility finding, partnership output, or other documented deliverable.
Within 30 calendar days after the approved project end date	Submit the final project and financial report, including student outcomes, lessons learned, closeout actions, and the external proposal plan or submission details.	Final report with proposal schedule or record of submission.
No later than six months after the project end date in the original award letter	Submit at least one external proposal based on or materially strengthened by the seed-supported work. A later submission requires separate written approval from the Division.	Proposal identifier, sponsor, mechanism, submission date, and dollars requested.

When	Required benchmark or deliverable	Evidence
12 and 24 months after the approved project end date	Within 30 calendar days of each survey's issuance, provide a brief update on new submissions and resubmissions, funding decisions and amounts, related research products, and significant student or partnership outcomes linked to the seed-supported work.	Institutional records supplemented by a brief annual investigator update; no repeat reporting of information already available.

Final Report Content

- Summary of completed aims, activities, methods, and departures from the approved plan.
- Preliminary results or other research outputs and an explanation of how they affect the targeted external proposal.
- Milestone completion and unresolved work, with reasons for delays and next steps agreed at the closeout meeting.
- Student participation, compensation, supervision, skills, and resulting presentations, publications, data products, or other outputs.
- Final expenditure summary and explanation of material variances or unspent funds.
- Confirmed external sponsor and mechanism, with the expected deadline, proposal status, and internal submission schedule. If the proposal has been submitted, provide the submission date and identifier.
- Publications, presentations, intellectual property, partnerships, follow-on work, and other outcomes known at closeout.

Publications and presentations should acknowledge support using a standard statement: "Supported by the Florida A&M University Division of Research – Research Acceleration Seed Grant Program, Award [number]".

15. Program Evaluation Framework

The Division will evaluate both program implementation and longer-term return on investment. The inaugural cohort is a pilot; no fixed financial return is assumed. Results will be interpreted considering award type, sponsor timelines, proposal review cycles, and the time required for funding decisions.

The Division will track outcomes at 12 and 24 months after the seed project's approved end date to assess whether the internal investment strengthens external funding competitiveness and produces sustained research benefits. At closeout, the Division assesses whether the project completed its planned activities and produced preliminary evidence or other research outputs within the approved award period. Follow-up establishes whether those outputs contribute to external submissions, resubmissions, funding decisions, and subsequent research activity. These outcomes may occur after project closeout because proposal preparation, sponsor review, and revision extend beyond the seed award period.

The two-year window provides a defined period for assessing these outcomes while limiting ongoing reporting obligations. Findings will inform decisions about continuing or modifying the program, allocating future seed funding, and improving research development support. Results will be interpreted in light of disciplinary differences and sponsor timelines; an external award within two years is not the sole measure of project success.

Follow-up will consist of brief surveys issued at 12 and 24 months after the seed project's approved end date, focused on new outcomes linked to the seed-supported work. Awardees must respond within 30 calendar days of each survey's issuance. The Division will use existing institutional proposal and award records whenever possible, asking investigators only to verify those records and supply information not otherwise available. Detailed expenditures will be obtained from institutional records, and project implementation information will be collected through monthly and closeout reporting rather than requested again annually. Outcomes will be reported as contributions of the seed investment, without assuming the seed award alone caused subsequent success.

Table 11. Program Evaluation Framework

Evaluation domain	Core indicators	Inaugural-cohort benchmark or use
Reach and portfolio	Applications, awards, award amounts, colleges and schools, faculty rank, disciplines, target areas, and team composition.	Assess whether outreach reached FAMU's breadth; no quota substitutes for merit.
Implementation	Timely account setup, onboarding, monthly reports, RDO meetings, learning exchanges, compliance readiness, and expenditure progress.	At least 90% of scheduled reports and TA meetings completed; all awardees receive documented support.
Project execution	Milestone completion, preliminary evidence or outputs, corrective actions, and final-report completion.	At least 80% complete the major approved deliverables by closeout or an approved revised date.
Student benefit	Number and level of students, compensation, responsibilities, mentoring, skills, presentations, publications, and other products.	100% of projects document meaningful FAMU student participation and learning outcomes.
Proposal conversion	Verified target, submission rate, time to submission, dollars requested, resubmissions, and proposal quality/readiness indicators.	At least 80% submit by the approved target date. Delays require an approved revised plan. A submission beyond the six-month deadline requires separate written Division approval.
Funding and research growth	External awards, dollars awarded to FAMU, time to award, subsequent research expenditures, publications, partnerships, and follow-on proposals.	Track for two years using institutional records and brief annual updates; report amounts requested, awarded, and expended separately.
Capacity building	Faculty assessment of sponsor knowledge, proposal readiness, team function, and usefulness of individualized and cohort support.	Use pre/post or closeout feedback to identify support that should be retained, changed, or discontinued.
Stewardship and return	Allowable use, spending against plan, unspent funds, cost to deliver the program, and external funding secured per seed dollar invested.	Report the ratio transparently without attributing outcomes unsupported by evidence or setting a fixed first-year ROI expectation.

Division Reporting

The Division will maintain a monthly internal dashboard, provide the President's Office with concise quarterly progress updates, complete a year-end assessment, and report outcomes annually for two years after the cohort ends. Requests, awards, and expenditures will be reported separately. Outcomes will be linked to seed-supported work without duplication or unsupported attribution.

16. Award Terms and Conditions

- The lead PI accepts responsibility for the project, budget, student supervision, required approvals, reports, technical assistance meetings, and external proposal submission by the deadline in Section 5.
- The project may not begin regulated activities until all required institutional approvals are in place.
- The approved budget and scope govern expenditures. Prior written approval is required for material rebudgeting, scope changes, key-personnel changes, or a replacement external funding target.
- Awards may be reduced, suspended, or terminated for failure to make reasonable progress, submit required reports, participate in required meetings, maintain eligibility, follow university requirements, or implement an approved corrective plan.
- If the PI leaves FAMU, becomes ineligible, or cannot complete the work, the Division will determine whether the award may be transferred to an eligible FAMU investigator, revised, or closed. Unspent funds remain with FAMU and return to the program.
- Any publication, presentation, or product resulting from the project should acknowledge support from the FAMU Research Acceleration Seed Grant Program, consistent with university requirements.
- An award does not guarantee approval of a later external submission or external funding. All proposals must follow the responsible university offices' budget, compliance, routing, and submission procedures.

17. Application Readiness Checklist

☐ One primary target area selected and the requested tier amount is within its cap.

☐ Lead PI is eligible and is not lead PI on another application in this round.

☐ External sponsor, mechanism, and anticipated submission date are documented and meet the timing requirements in Section 5.

☐ The specific preliminary evidence or capacity gap is defined.

☐ Scope, methods, deliverables, and budget are feasible within the requested award period, starting February 1, 2027, and lasting up to 12 months.

☐ Timeline includes measurable monthly milestones, responsible persons, dependencies, and risk mitigation.

☐ At least one FAMU student researcher has substantive responsibilities, supervision, and learning outcomes.

☐ All anticipated compliance, hiring, purchasing, data, site, and partner requirements are identified.

☐ Budget contains only allowable direct costs and can be executed during the award period.

☐ All required documents are complete, within page limits, and combined into one searchable PDF.

☐ Unit acknowledgment and any essential partner or collaborator documentation are included.

☐ The PDF file opens correctly and is received at researchdev@famu.edu by December 11, 2026, at 11:59 p.m. ET.

Questions

Questions about program fit, application requirements, or the external funding target should be directed to the FAMU Division of Research, Office of Research Development, at researchdev@famu.edu. You may also send questions directly to Mrs. Brandy Carlson Moore (Brandy.carlsonmoore@famu.edu) or Dr. April Carswell (April.carswell@famu.edu). Applicants are responsible for allowing sufficient time to obtain unit acknowledgment and assemble a compliant application.