

Gillings Innovation Labs – SPECIAL CALL: COVID-19

Request for Proposals

Gillings Innovation Labs (GILs) are innovative, interdisciplinary across the School and beyond, and strive to achieve breakthroughs in **urgent, extremely important, public health issues**. By definition, GILs are well-suited to address solutions to the current COVID-19 pandemic.

In this special, accelerated call, applicants are asked to submit proposals that can make a difference *quickly* in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and/or have high potential to lead to larger grant funding from COVID-19 initiatives. The kinds of projects submitted may vary in focus from laboratory-based virus research, to behavioral and risk communication projects to disease modeling and assessment of different interventions. (These examples should not be regarded as boundaries for proposals.) Faculty members from across the school are encouraged to apply. Proposals should be interdisciplinary and collaborative and should articulate the potential for short-term impact. They should have the potential for scale-up to larger units, e.g. a region or state. Applicants should clearly indicate how the proposed project will impact public health, and its feasibility considering the accelerated, urgent implementation timeline of COVID-19 solutions. Projects with potential to improve public health in North Carolina are especially encouraged.

Projects led by a faculty member with a primary appointment (both tenure- and non-tenure-track) in the Gillings School of Global Public Health will be awarded up to \$100,000 for 1 year. We anticipate that not all awards will be made at this level and encourage projects of different lengths (from several months up to 12 months) and budget amounts. Researchers should be ready to apply for extramural funding within 6 months. The award is intended to support innovative, high-impact research with potential for substantive external funding. Proposed projects should draw upon unique strengths of Gillings and represent areas that we are poised to lead and make substantial impacts.

In addition to stand-alone projects, several co-funding opportunities with other campus entities (e.g., LCCC, CEHS, TraCS, IEHS, or others) may be possible. Such co-funding opportunities will be discussed with such entities after proposal review and ranking.

Eligibility and Rules

- Faculty members (both tenure- and non-tenure-track) with primary appointments in the UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health are eligible to apply.
- Early career scientists seeking to shift their research portfolios to address COVID-19 are encouraged to apply.
- An applicant cannot be Principal Investigator on more than one funded project.
- Given the extreme urgency of the pandemic, projects with the potential to 'hit the ground running' and accelerated timelines and potential for rapid impact will be prioritized.
- Gillings department chairs and senior SPH leaders may collaborate on projects but are *not* eligible to be PI.

Key Dates

- Thursday April 9, 2020 9:30-10:30: Virtual Q&A session
- Thursday April 9, 2020 5pm: Survey responses indicating intent due
- Wednesday, April 15, 2020 5pm: proposals due
- Early May 2020: Earliest notification of awarded GILs COVID-19
- Early May 2020: Earliest project start-date

Application Process

Given the urgency of COVID-19, decisions will be made on the basis of brief proposals. Applicants should be available for reviewer discussion/response between April 15th and April 22nd if modifications or response to reviewers is needed.

Teams applying for a GILs-COVID19 must complete a survey to indicate intent by 5pm Thursday April 9, 2020. The survey will be available on the [GILs webpage](#) by April 7th.

The final proposal is due no later than 5pm Wednesday April 15, 2020 via the Proposal Application form. The Proposal Application form will be available on the [GILs webpage](#) by April 9th.

Final decisions are expected in the beginning of May 2020.

Proposal Requirements

Proposals should be uploaded as a 2-page Word or PDF document. Use at least half-inch margins, single or exactly 12-point line spacing; and no smaller than 11-point Times New Roman font or its equivalent. **Please include the Principal Investigator's name and project title in the header of each page of the proposal.**

A maximum of 2 pages of references are accepted in addition to the page total for the project proposal. Only pivotal references should be included as part of the proposal. Please use the following headings:

1. Project Design

Describe the project design, including proposed aims, methods, assessment & evaluation, and plans for dissemination/translation of results.

2. Proposed innovation

Describe the specific innovation that this project represents and the COVID-19 public health breakthroughs to which it could lead. Discuss how this innovation is novel, including a brief summary of existing research/literature and how this project is different from others in the field.

3. Potential public health impact

Describe the public health challenge underlying the proposed project, and the impact the project will have on this public health challenge if project aims are successfully met. Additionally, applicants must clearly articulate how the project is likely to lead to statewide and broader impact on the COVID-19 pandemic.

4. Outcomes, Milestones and Deliverables

Describe how success will be defined for this project and outline key milestones and deliverables. List any next steps that will follow successful completion of your project. With specific attention to an accelerated timeline, discuss the plans for sustainability and the plan and timeline for return on investment of these funds. Provide details on patient-facing components, involvement with practitioners, NC Department of Health & Human Services, CDC or other national organizations, or describe path-breaking impacts and strategies to address COVID-19. Include planned RFA and other mechanisms that you will apply for within 6 months to accelerate scale-ability.

5. Team

List all project personnel, students, collaborators, and partners that will participate in the project. Participation of students and cross-disciplinary collaborations are highly encouraged. Partnerships with other schools, institutions, communities, organizations, and businesses are also highly encouraged.

6. Budget

Approximate the budget required to carry out the project, broken down by budget category. Budgets may include salary support (including fringe benefits) for investigators and study staff, costs of project materials, procurement or conduct of crucial assessments, or study-specific travel or transportation. In general, costs directly related to conducting the proposed work are allowed. In general, costs for infrastructure or other activities that are spread beyond the efforts of the GIL (e.g., buildings, general lab equipment and computers) are not allowed.

Budget Categories:

- Salaries of UNC personnel (provide an estimated salary for each team member; include fringe benefits and % effort)
- Consultants
- Sub-awards
- Supplies & Materials
- Travel
- Other

NOTE: Some expenditures will require preapproval from UNC. If your COVID-19 proposal will require any of the following, please consult with Katie Thornsvard, katiet@email.unc.edu for guidance:

- A purchase over \$50,000
- Contracts where the University would be required to advance or spend more than \$50,000 over the life of the contract
- Consulting agreements
- Cash advances greater than, or cumulatively exceeding \$5,000