



## COVID19 Rapid Grant Guidelines

(Adapted from NSF RAPID guidelines)

### Introduction

The mission of the Puerto Rico Science Technology and Research Trust (the Trust) is to invest, facilitate and build capacity to continually advance Puerto Rico's economy and its citizens' well-being through innovation-driven enterprises, science and technology, and its industrial base.

In light of its mission, and to further the objectives as described above, the Trust is pleased to issue this RAPID grant. Recently, the World Health Organization declared a public health emergency Worldwide in response to the 2019 novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Accordingly, this RAPID grant aims to support projects that will improve our understanding and available control measures for COVID-19.

The Trust's RAPID funding mechanism is used for proposals having a severe urgency with regard to the availability of, or access to data, facilities or specialized equipment, including quick-response research on natural or anthropogenic disasters and similar unanticipated events.

### Eligibility

The COVID-19 RAPID grant is open to researchers in public and private universities, colleges, and affiliated non-profit research institutions located in Puerto Rico. Startups and established companies based in Puerto Rico are also invited to apply.

This RFP should focus on helping Puerto Rico respond to and advance knowledge on the COVID-19 epidemic.

To be eligible for funding, projects must be presented in one of the following strategic activities:

- Pathogenesis of the disease
  - Patterns COVID-19 replication and excretion
  - Host factors (cardiovascular, diabetes, pulmonary, genetics, etc.) predisposing people groups to more severe disease
  - Pathophysiology and immunopathology of the disease and its complications
  - Innate, cellular and humoral immune response
- Epidemiology
  - Infectious disease and transmission dynamics



- Methods to comprehend the determinants of the spread of infectious diseases and the impact of control strategies
  - Local population risk factors, comorbidities and susceptibility factors
  - Molecular epidemiology
  - Development of models regarding public health mitigation measures that could be effective for control or long-term protection
  - Novel assays and logistics for contact tracing and early and prompt detection of the disease
- Clinical Research
  - Define and understand the natural history of the disease
  - Optimizing clinical management
  - Population cohort studies including selected vulnerable groups
  - Supportive and specific treatment impact in moderate and severe cases, including clinical recovery and outcomes
- Pharmacology
  - Detection of novel targets for treating the disease
  - Repurposing of drugs for treating the disease
- Mental health and social sciences
  - Assessing the social and economic impact of the disease
  - Concerns related to clinical appraisal of medical countermeasures
  - Operational response at the governmental or health systems levels
  - Impacts of social distancing, curfew, etc., on mental health in general or in specific groups like elderly
  - Effective health communications and behavioral modification campaigns
- Cyberinfrastructure and solutions
  - Data, artificial intelligence and/or software infrastructure development activities that address COVID-19 challenges
- Research & Development
  - Innovative personal protective equipment (PPE)
  - Valves
  - Sample swabs
  - Ventilators
  - Reagents and assays for virus detection
  - Point-of-care or rapid, sensitive, and specific diagnostic test or devices
  - Technologies to kill viruses



**\*\* Priority will be given to research that will lead to immediate action and response to promote prevention, risk reduction, positive health outcomes, and the development of the infrastructure required to minimize the transmission and impact of the virus.**

### Requirements

- The Project Description is expected to be brief and include clear statements as to why the proposed research is of an urgent nature and why a RAPID award would be the most appropriate mechanism for supporting the proposed work.
- Requests may be for up to **\$100K** and of one-year duration. The award size, however, will be consistent with the project scope and of a size comparable to grants in similar areas.

**Deadline:** April 7, 2020 until 11:59 pm (AST).

For questions about this RAPID process, you might contact Grants Advisory Team, only through [grants@prsciencetrust.org](mailto:grants@prsciencetrust.org). Answers will be provided in 24-48 hours.

### Proposal Content

The following information will be requested during proposal submission:

- **Title:** include project title, proposing institution, name and contact email of principal investigator.
- **Project Summary** (1,500 character with spaces): A brief technical summary including project background, significance, urgency, main objectives and expected outcomes. The project summary of awarded proposals will be published in the Trust website.
- **Project Description** (4,000 characters with spaces): Include an overall technical project description at a level that will be accessible to a technically competent non-specialist. Include a summary of project length, key performance milestones, and deliverables. The inclusion of timelines or Gantt charts is highly encouraged. Proposers should identify the novelty/originality in their proposal, (whether technical, market-focus, or both) and must include clear statements as to why the proposed research is of an urgent nature and why a RAPID award would be the most appropriate mechanism for supporting the proposed work. Description should also name special equipment, facilities or resources the investigators have access to that will be used in the project.



- **Research/Technology Background** (2,000 characters with spaces): The technology and/or proposed scientific advancement should be placed in a state-of-the-art context of similar, related and competing efforts being carried out worldwide. Explain the need, significance, and how there are no other solutions or research being done elsewhere that is applicable to the Puerto Rican context. In the case of technology development, if the technology is being transferred from a local research institution, provide the name of the institution and explain briefly the type of agreement reached with the institution. How will the applicant protect any IP resulting from this project? Describe all new IP that is likely to be produced under this grant, how it relates to COVID-19, and how it will be used to address COVID-19 needs in Puerto Rico. If applicable, list your university or campus technology transfer office contact (name, email, phone).
- **Project Management and Biosketch of PI and Key Collaborators** (1, 500 characters with spaces): Provide a brief summary of the project team members, including their relevant skills and time commitment to the proposed project. If the project is to be conducted in collaboration with a third party entity (e.g. a collaboration with academia, other private entity, etc.) please provide information about the third party entity and their expected scope of work. If specific consultants will be critical for the project's success, please also include a summary of their role and include their CV and/or Biosketch.
- **Budget and Budget Narrative** (1,500 characters with spaces): Itemize and justify all proposed direct costs for personnel, materials, equipment, travel, subcontractors, consultants, and/or suppliers, and facilities (you will be provided with a budget template)

### Allowable Costs

The following costs are eligible to conduct research and development efforts pertaining to an Eligible Activity as described above:

#### Direct Costs:

- Personnel Costs: Salaries of key personnel to conduct the work as presented in the proposal.
- Fringe benefits: Only those required by law: social security, federal and state unemployment, state disability, etc.
- Consultant Fees: Fees for consulting services or any other type of remuneration paid to technical advisors consulted with regard to research and development.
- Materials and supplies: Item of property other than equipment, costing less than \$5,000 each.



- Equipment, Item of property that has an acquisition cost of \$5,000 or more and an expected service life of more than one year. Equipment purchase must be essential for project and must be fully justified.
- Out-of-Jurisdiction-Travel: Only if necessary for the completion of the work proposed. Must be fully justified and itemized by destination and cost. Can include travel-related costs for transportation, lodging, and meals. Allowance for air travel normally will not exceed the cost of round-trip, economy airfares. All travel must be pre-approved by the Trust. Travel should not exceed \$5,000 per award. Travel in Puerto Rico (including mileage, meals, lodging) is not allowed.
- Sub award: to engage a third party organization, when needed, to perform a scientific or programmatic portion of the sponsored project. Must be less than 50% of the costs for the entire grant.

#### **Indirect Costs:**

- Indirect Costs: costs that are not readily identifiable with a particular cost objective (e.g., direct organizational activity or project), but nevertheless are necessary for the general operation of an organization. Indirect costs include salary and related expenses of individuals working in accounting, personnel, purchasing functions, rent, depreciation and utilities. Indirect costs are limited to a rate of 20% out of the total funding awarded.

The following costs are not eligible:

- Unreasonable costs based on the proposed scope of work. All costs must be fully justified.
- Acquisition of real property;
- Costs incurred pre-award, including proposal preparation costs;
- Maternity or sick leave expenses;
- Redundancy or other terminations costs;
- Contingency costs;
- Hospitality and entertainment costs;



- Journal subscription costs; and
- Relocation expenses.
- Travel in Puerto Rico, including mileage, meals and lodging.
- Direct or indirect support for any lobbying effort or for contribution to the political campaign of any candidate or for contribution to any political party or similar organization.

#### **Review Process**

- Only internal merit review is required for RAPID proposals. Under rare circumstances, program officers may elect to obtain external reviews to inform their decision. If external review is to be obtained, then the PI will be so informed in the interest of maintaining the transparency of the review and recommendation process.
- More information on selected proposals might be requested prior to award.