

Participating Organization(s)	National Institutes of Health (NIH)
Components of Participating Organizations	This Funding Opportunity (FO) is developed as a Common Fund initiative (https://commonfund.nih.gov/) through the NIH Office of the NIH Director, Office of Strategic Coordination (OD-OSC). All NIH Institutes and Centers participate in Common Fund initiatives. The FO will be administered by the Office of Strategic Coordination (OD-OSC) on behalf of the NIH.
Funding Opportunity Title	OTA-20-004: Targeted Needs to Achieve SPARC Program Goals
Activity Code	OT2 Research Project - Other Transaction Award
Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number(s)	93.310
Funding Opportunity Purpose	This funding opportunity will allow the SPARC (Stimulating Peripheral Activity to Relieve Conditions) program to evaluate and potentially fund new projects across all program components to address specific program gaps and stated Funding Priorities .
Program Background	https://commonfund.nih.gov/sparc
Objective Review	See Objective Review Process for this announcement and separate criteria for associated Funding Priorities .
Concept Letter Due Date(s)	Concept letters addressing SPARC Funding Priorities will be accepted any time after the posting of this announcement.
Earliest Start Date	July 1, 2020
Funding Instrument	<p>Other: An assistance mechanism that is not a grant, cooperative agreement, or contract. Other Transactions (OT) awards from this FO are subject to the requirements of the NIH Other Transaction Award Policy Guide for the SPARC Program. Applicants may review this policy guide and relevant SPARC OT information at https://commonfund.nih.gov/sparc/othertransactions</p> <p>With this mechanism, proposed or awarded activity may be expanded, modified, partnered, not supported, or later discontinued based on program needs; emerging methods, technologies, or approaches; and availability of funds.</p>

Eligibility	See Detailed Eligibility Requirements for this announcement.
Funds Available and Anticipated Number of Awards	NIH anticipates funding approximately \$6M in total costs in fiscal year (FY) 2020. Future year funding is contingent upon continued program success and the availability of appropriated funds. Total funding and number of awards is flexible, and awards may increase or decrease over time based on programmatic needs, availability of funds, and awardee performance.
Award Budget	Application budgets should reflect the actual needs of the proposed project. Awards resulting from this FO may range between \$50,000 and \$5,000,000 direct costs per year. OT applicants will be required to provide a well-justified budget that is appropriate for the scope of the proposed work. Award scope and budget may be adjusted during the duration of the project period based on programmatic needs, availability of funds, and awardee performance.
Award Project Period and Budget Periods	Expected duration of project period will be provided in the Funding Priority description. Initial budget periods may be one to 12 months, with additional award segments with one-month to 12-month budget periods based on timely completion of negotiated milestones.
Expiration Date	September 30, 2022

Contents

1. Agency Contacts.....	3
2. SPARC Program Core Values	3
3. This Opportunity	3
4. Application Process.....	3
5. Concept Letter Components and Guidelines	4
6. Application Guidance	4
a) Key Events.....	5
7. Objective Review Process.....	5
8. Detailed Eligibility Requirements.....	6
a) Federally Funded Research and Development Centers (FFRDC) and University Affiliated Research Centers (UARC)	6
b) Foreign Organizations.....	6
c) Individuals.....	6
d) Multiple Principal Investigators.....	7
e) Organizations.....	7
9. Cost Sharing	8

1. Agency Contacts

We encourage inquiries concerning this funding opportunity and welcome the opportunity to answer questions from potential applicants.

<i>Scientific/Research Contact(s)</i>	Felicia Qashu, Ph.D., Office of the NIH Director (OD-OSC) Email: NIH-CF_SPARC@mail.nih.gov
<i>Financial/ Agreement Officer Contact(s)</i>	Linda Shariati, Office of Strategic Coordination (OD-OSC) Email: NIH-CF_SPARC@mail.nih.gov

2. SPARC Program Core Values

SPARC is actively managed as an evolving network of partnerships and collaborations between public and private entities. Awardees are expected to collaborate and cooperate with NIH staff and one another and to share data, protocols, and tools as rapidly and seamlessly as possible. All SPARC OT awardees will be required to agree to the [SPARC OT Award Policy Guide](#) and [Material Sharing Policy](#).

3. This Opportunity

This funding opportunity will allow the SPARC program to evaluate and potentially fund new projects across all [program components](#) to address specific program gaps and [Funding Priorities](#). SPARC Priorities will be developed and updated by the NIH SPARC management team based on developing program needs. Priorities may be influenced by SPARC-funded investigators, other investigators, broader stakeholders, and SPARC Subject Matter Experts. The official list of SPARC [Funding Priorities](#) will be updated according to the timeline on the webpage. Updates may add, remove, and/or modify priorities, but if previously listed priorities are unaddressed, they may remain on the updated list.

4. Application Process

Acceptance and review of concept letters will occur on a rolling basis and continue for the duration of the SPARC program, subject to the scientific needs of SPARC and availability of funds, or until a closing notice is posted. To apply, a concept letter describing the proposed project addressing an existing [Funding Priority](#), must be emailed to NIH-CF_SPARC@mail.nih.gov. Following programmatic review by NIH and/or other federal staff, an invitation and instructions to submit a full application may be issued.

Before submitting a concept letter, potential applicants should ensure that the concept addresses a current [SPARC Priority](#). Concept letters that do not address a Priority, or those that address previous or anticipated future Priorities will be considered not responsive. Applicants are encouraged to develop an understanding of the SPARC program goals by:

- Examining the program [snapshot](#) and [components](#)
- Exploring the [SPARC Portal](#) and other [published](#) work from the consortium
- Reading [past funding announcements](#)

- Surveying [current awards](#)
- Making an appointment to discuss potential concepts with a member of the SPARC team

Successful concept letters will receive an invitation and a deadline to submit a full application. The invitation to submit will include feedback from the concept letter review and scientific or programmatic items to address in the full application.

5. Concept Letter Components and Guidelines

Applicants are required to submit a concept letter by email to NIH-CF_SPARC@mail.nih.gov that includes the following information:

- Number and title of this funding opportunity
- Descriptive title of proposed activity
- SPARC Funding Priority being addressed (must be one currently listed at [this website](#))
- Abbreviated project description, to include:
 - Designated project lead with address, phone number, email address, and organizational affiliation
 - Name, email address and organizational affiliation for key personnel
 - Description of planned activities to address the aims or objectives of the project and the impact to the SPARC program, **not to exceed 800 words** (excluding bibliographic information). Include a summary of major tasks to be accomplished with a timeline. Each task should have milestones and deliverables with quantitative benchmarks. Up to 3 figures or tables may be included.
 - Description of a data and resource sharing plan, in compliance with [the SPARC Material Sharing Policy](#), **not to exceed 500 words**
 - Description of relevant expertise for all key personnel, **not to exceed 100 words per person**
 - Period of support requested and estimated total costs (direct + indirect) for each major task

Concept letters should not exceed five (5) pages, including any figures and references, and should be formatted in Arial 11pt font and single-spaced with 1" margins.

6. Application Guidance

Specific instructions for submitting the full application will be provided in writing to applicants who are invited to submit a full application. Application components will include at a minimum a project plan that describes the approach for accomplishing the aims or objectives, milestones and benchmarks for major tasks, and budget for each milestone or major task. Applications must address any feedback provided in the Invitation to Submit. A copy of the Invitation to Submit must be included with your application. Applications that do not include an Invitation to Submit or fail to address concerns raised in the Invitation to Submit will not be accepted for review.

a) Key Events

Key Events	Dates	Action needed by applicants
Opportunity announcement posted	March 27, 2020	Required Registrations : Verify institution has completed or initiated the process *
Concept Letters accepted	Beginning April 17, 2020	
Concept Letters reviewed**	Rolling basis, approximately within 2-4 weeks of receipt**	
Decision on whether to request full application	Rolling basis, within approximately 4-8 weeks of concept letter submission	
Full application due	Date and submission requirements to be set in invitation; generally 4-6 weeks after invitation	Complete application through ASSIST
Full application review***	Within 4 weeks of application receipt	
Decision to move forward/start of negotiations****	Within 2-4 weeks of application review	Award candidates e-mail the Agency Contacts to verify completion of Required Registrations .
Award start	Dependent on complexity and efficiency of negotiations	

* [Required Registrations](#) can take 6 weeks or more. Applicants should begin the registration process early to ensure completion prior to a potential award.

** Related concepts submitted separately may be reviewed as a group.

*** Applications that are deemed nonresponsive will not be reviewed.

**** Unsuccessful applicants will not receive written feedback from the reviews.

7. Objective Review Process

Concept Letters will be evaluated by NIH or other federal staff for the following:

- Responsiveness to a current SPARC [Funding Priority](#) and likelihood that the project will address the stated need(s)
- Scientific and technical merit of the project plan
- Past performance and expertise of the team members and complementarity with related SPARC awards. This could refer to the applicant's track records of team science, translational research accomplishments, as well as to traditional measures of scientific productivity (e.g. publications, invited presentations, prior funding)

Written summaries of concept letter review will not be provided to applicants not invited to submit an application. Appeals of the review will not be accepted.

Review criteria for all priorities will include scientific/technical merit and past performance/experience of the applicant(s). Additional priority-specific review criteria will be posted alongside the [Funding Priority](#) and provided to the applicant in the invitation to submit a full application. Applicants may be requested to address identified weaknesses before or during negotiations for a potential award.

8. Detailed Eligibility Requirements

a) Federally Funded Research and Development Centers (FFRDC) and University Affiliated Research Centers (UARC)

FFRDCs and UARCs are eligible to apply and/or participate as partnering organizations. NIH will not issue funds specifically for laboratory directed research and development (LDRD) costs. Laboratory contractors may recover LDRD costs within the total funding included in the award. Other costs will be reviewed and negotiated prior to award.

b) Foreign Organizations

Non-domestic (non-U.S.) Entities (Foreign Applicants) **are** eligible to apply. Non-domestic (non-U.S.) components of U.S. Organizations **are** eligible to apply. Foreign components, as defined here, **are** allowed:

The performance of any significant scientific element or segment of a project outside of the United States, either by the awardee or by a researcher employed by a foreign organization, whether or not funds are expended, is considered a foreign component. Activities that would meet this definition include, but are not limited to, (1) the involvement of human subjects or vertebrate animals, (2) extensive foreign travel by project staff for the purpose of data collection, surveying, sampling, and similar activities, or (3) any activity of the awardee that may have an impact on U.S. foreign policy through involvement in the affairs or environment of a foreign country. Examples of other award-related activities that may be significant are:

- o Collaborations with investigators at a foreign site anticipated to result in co-authorship;
- o Use of facilities or instruments at a foreign site;
- o Receipt of financial support or resources from a foreign entity.

Foreign travel for consultation is not considered a foreign component.

c) Individuals

Any individual(s) with the skills, knowledge, and resources necessary to carry out the proposed research as the Program Investigator(s) is invited to work with his/her organization to develop an application for support. Individuals not affiliated with an organization, or who want to submit an application independently of their current organization, may apply. Individuals from underrepresented racial and ethnic groups as well as individuals with disabilities are always encouraged to apply for NIH support. Applicants must be U.S. citizens or permanent residents and must have a [U.S. tax payer identification number](#). Applicants will be subject to financial analysis and risk assessment conducted by NIH staff.

Eligible individual(s) must have documented in the concept letter technical expertise directly related to the scientific area in which the application is targeted and be capable of providing both administrative and scientific leadership to the development and implementation of the proposed project, monitoring and assessing the project, and submitting all documents and reports as required.

d) Multiple Principal Investigators

More than one individual may be named as Principal Investigator on a single application. One individual must be identified as the contact Principal Investigator.

e) Organizations

Higher Education Institutions

- Public/State Controlled Institutions of Higher Education
- Private Institutions of Higher Education

The following types of Higher Education Institutions are always encouraged to apply for NIH support as Public or Private Institutions of Higher Education:

- Hispanic-serving Institutions
- Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs)
- Tribally Controlled Colleges and Universities (TCCUs)
- Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian Serving Institutions
- Asian American Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institutions (AANAPISIs)

Nonprofits Other Than Institutions of Higher Education

- Nonprofits with 501(c)(3) IRS Status (Other than Institutions of Higher Education)
- Nonprofits without 501(c)(3) IRS Status (Other than Institutions of Higher Education)

For-Profit Organizations

- Small Businesses
- For-Profit Organizations (Other than Small Businesses)

Governments

- State Governments
- County Governments
- City or Township Governments
- Special District Governments
- Indian/Native American Tribal Governments (Federally Recognized)
- Indian/Native American Tribal Governments (Other than Federally Recognized)
- Eligible Agencies of the Federal Government
- U.S. Territory or Possession

Other

- Independent School Districts
- Public Housing Authorities/Indian Housing Authorities
- Native American Tribal Organizations (other than Federally recognized tribal governments)

- Faith-based or Community-based Organizations
- Regional Organizations

9. Cost Sharing

Cost Sharing is not required; however, applicants proposing to develop commercial applications may consider identifying a cost share percentage. Applicants may voluntarily choose to propose a financial plan that includes non-federal resources. The budget submission must clearly identify and justify the use of these resources. Any voluntary cost share must be supported in the application by including a letter of support from the providing organization(s)/individual(s).