FY25 Pitt Momentum Funds - Scaling Awards Guidelines

I. INTENT AND FUNDING PRIORITIES

The Pitt Momentum Funds (PMF) Scaling Awards support multi-disciplinary teams undertaking project planning and proof-of-principle work to competitively pursue large-scale, complex extramural funding. The Scaling Awards are specifically designed to further the goal of the Plan for Pitt by positioning the University to participate in large research collaborations.

Funds may be used to hire trainees, temporary workers, contract with consultants, purchase software, consumables, or acquire the instrumentation and equipment needed to successfully position the project for follow-on funding. Scaling Award budgets are expected to include funding for convenings and travel to meet with program managers at funding agencies or foundations to further refine that funding strategy.

Scaling Awards ***are not*** intended for:

- Curriculum development and student-centered projects.
- Salary support or supplement salaries for either Pitt faculty or external co-investigators.
- Organization of conferences.
- Bridge funding between projects.

II. AWARD AMOUNT

Scaling Awards provide up to $400,000 for two-years of research support.

III. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- Awardees from the immediate previous funding cycle ***may not*** apply to the same award-type they were awarded funds for previously (e.g., Scaling awardees from FY24 cannot apply for a Scaling Award in FY25). This applies to **all** PMF award types.
- Faculty can join only one Teaming or Scaling grant proposal submission at a time (either as a PI or co-PI).
- Scaling applicant teams ***must*** include faculty from at least three schools.
    - The Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences (DSAS) divisions of the Humanities, Natural Sciences, and Social Sciences will each be considered as separate “schools” for the purpose of this eligibility test.
    - A team ***may not*** be comprised of faculty exclusively from DSAS.
    - A team ***may not*** be comprised of faculty exclusively from Health Science schools.
    - Up to one collaborator from an HBCU, non-R1 minority-serving institution (MSI), government agency, or local 501(c)(3) organization ***may be*** credited as a co-investigator for the purpose of this eligibility test if their organization has the capacity to join Pitt in large-scale, follow-on funding proposals. In the case of co-investigators at community-based non-profits, modest stipends to enable participation will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

IV. APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

Application for the PMF Scaling Awards requires the submission of an initial Expression of Intent (EOI) via InfoReady and must include:

1. Project title
2. Brief abstract (150 words)
3. Faculty investigators
4. Keywords (5)

Once the EOI is submitted and accepted, applicants will be notified they can submit a full application for the Scaling Awards. The application must include:

1. Name of primary applicant
2. Pitt email address (assigned pitt.edu address, not your alias)
3. Primary department
4. Appointment type
5. Full title
6. Year of terminal degree
7. Name of department administrator
8. Email for department administrator
9. Name(s) of any Co-Applicant(s)
10. Primary department of any Co-Applicant(s)
11. Project statement (3-page max)
    The statement should describe the significance of the project and its intended outcomes. The project statement is limited to a maximum of 3 pages of text, prepared in 11-point font with .75-inch margins and is to be submitted as a PDF document. An additional page is allowed and may only include relevant figures, images or citations. The statement should include:
    a. a statement of the broader impact the project will have on the field;
    b. a description of the interdisciplinary team and expertise each investigator contributes to the project;
    c. a description of the assembled team, and what expertise each member will allow the project to be successful;
    d. the methodology and workplan to be followed;
    e. a brief budget justification;
    f. and a detailed strategy of the follow-on funding to be pursued to advance the project (with specific examples).
12. Letter of commitment from Associate Dean for Research
    The letter describes the in-kind or other financial commitments being made by the department to support the success of the project. The Scaling Awards require the letter to describe the transdisciplinary team applying for the award. Additionally, the letter must be co-signed by the appropriate leadership of all the co-investigators. If the primary applicant is an Associate Dean for Research, the letter must come from the Dean of the school representing the primary applicant.
13. Budget
    Applicants must use the PMF Budget Template to detail the projected expenses

for the proposal. Applicants will provide the total of the Scaling Award budget as a whole number, rounded up to nearest $100.

Applicants with competitive proposals for Scaling Awards will be invited to give a 15-minute pitch session (10-minute presentation, 5-minute Q&A) to the Provost and SVC Research, who will make the final selections.

V. TIMELINE

All items are to be submitted by 12:00 PM Eastern Time by the dates below.

August 2024	PMF 2025 Awards Announced
September 3 & 4, 2024	Virtual Information Sessions with Pitt's OSVCR and Office of the Provost
September 27, 2024, **by 12pm**	Deadline to submit **required** Expression of Intent (EOI) for Scaling Awards
November 1, 2024, **by 12pm**	Deadline to submit full applications for Scaling Awards
January 2025	Pitch practice sessions for Scaling Awards
January 2025	Pitch sessions for Scaling Awards
Mid-February 2025	PMF Scaling awardees announced

VI. REVIEW CRITERIA AND SCORING RUBRIC

The Scaling Awards are reviewed by faculty peers from the University of Pittsburgh using the following rubric and weights. The rubric sums to a possible 10 points for the most meritorious of proposals and a possible low score of zero for proposals not aligned with intent of the awards.

The following rubric sums to a possible 10 points for the most meritorious of proposals and a possible low score of zero for proposals not aligned with intent of the awards.

A. *Significance of the Project and Intended Outcomes*
To what extent does the proposed project suggest and explore creative, original, or potentially transformative concepts? Proposals should describe novel research or projects that advance scholarship and merit in their respected field. The significance of the proposed project is: [score 0 (low) – 2 (high)]
- 0 = Not Competitive
- 1 = Fair
- 2 = Strong

B. *Proposal's Clarity of Expression*
How well does the proposal describe the intended work? Does the proposal convey confidence that the applicant can lead the effort? Proposals should provide clarity of expression in describing the intended goals and be well-written and concise. The clarity of the proposed project is: [score 0 (low) – 2 (high)]
- 0 = Not described at all; significant questions exist about the intended work
- 1 = Modestly described; questions exist about the intended work
- 2 = Described very well; there are no questions about the intended work

C. *Feasibility of the Project*
Is there a plan in place to carry out the proposed project? Proposals should detail a well-developed, well-organized plan that considers cost, design and the methodology to achieve the stated outcomes and goals. The feasibility of the proposed project is: [score 0 (low) – 3 (high)]
- 0 = Not Competitive
- 1 = Good, any concerns are addressable.
- 2 = Strong, no significant concerns
- 3 = Excellent, no concerns about ability to execute in a timely fashion

D. *Follow-on Scholarship and Funding*
Does the proposal explain the applicant's strategy for pursuing follow-on funding? Have one or more specific agencies or foundations been identified for funding opportunities? The follow-on plan of the proposed project is: [score 0 (low) – 3 (high)]
- 0 = Absent or not entirely clear
- 1 = Explained
- 2 = Credible and clear
- 3 = Thoroughly explained and compelling

E. *Funding Recommendation*
Should this proposal be funded? If partial funding is recommended, provide a suggested funding level. ***If your scores from the preceding questions sum to less than 6, then do not recommend the project for full or partial funding.*** The funding suggestion for the described project is:
- Do not fund
- Partially fund
- Fully fund

F. *Reviewer Comments (to be shared with applicant)*
Please provide specific feedback on the proposed project. Comments should focus on the strengths or weaknesses; significance of the project on the broader area of study; the appropriateness of the proposed budget; and the potential for impact. All comments should be constructive and intended to provide supportive feedback to the applicant.