

Program Synopsis

The IDEA Institute supports scholarship, innovation, collaboration, and leadership in the areas of inclusion, diversity, equity, and access. The goal of the Grassroots Initiatives to Address Needs Together ([GIANT](#)) program is to enable teams of students, postdocs, staff, and faculty to propose and implement research-based initiatives in these areas. A summary of currently supported GIANT projects is listed for [2020](#) and [2021](#).

Areas of Interest

The GIANT program seeks proposals from teams that want to actively collaborate with a target population to jointly identify a need, address it through project activities, measure the outcomes, document best practices, and publish the results. The target population can be at any level, e.g., the general public, K-12 students in low-resourced schools, or undergrads, grads, postdocs, staff, and/or faculty within the Grainger College of Engineering. An example project could be to identify and address how Illinois can promote community, belonging, empowerment, and access to resources for under-engaged populations with the goal of publishing the results as a case study in an ASEE journal or conference. General areas of interest include but are not limited to:

1. Recruitment, mentoring, development, retention, and/or engagement of individuals from underrepresented groups in STEM.
2. Integration of inclusion, diversity, equity, or access in engineering education
3. K-12 outreach and STEM pipeline development
4. Public policy and/or engagement of the general public
5. Continuing education, cooperative education, and engineering workforce development
6. Scholarly research of best practices at Illinois or other institutions and effective methods to institutionalize these best practices

In addition, IDEA would especially like to receive proposals this year that:

1. Reduce or eliminate inequities in remote and online education
2. Actively address racism, especially if the effort is aligned to an ARTF recommendation
3. Focus on staff and/or faculty as the target population
4. Focus on vocational schools, community colleges, and/or minority serving institutions as the target populations
5. Build connections with industry, include industrial collaborators, and/or consider research questions from an industry context
6. Have impact across the state of Illinois or in strategic engagement areas like Chicago

Note that projects may not duplicate work that is already being supported, but may leverage resources provided by existing programs.

Proposals to host a conference, workshop, or community building event are welcome, as are planning projects (e.g., conducting literature reviews, gathering preliminary data, and building partnerships) towards an extramural proposal focused on broadening participation (e.g., NSF's [broadening participation portfolio](#), especially [LSAMP](#), [INCLUDES](#), [ADVANCE](#), [BPE](#), [AGEP](#), [REU/VRS/RET](#) sites) or for which broadening participation is a major program component (e.g., NSF CISE BPC, ERC, STC, MRSEC).

A single RSO is ineligible for funding through the GIANT program. Instead, it is highly encouraged for two or more RSOs to submit a joint proposal to address a larger need.

Evaluation criteria

Proposals will be evaluated on the extent to which they address each of the prompts in the proposal template as well as their timeliness, appropriateness of budget, and scholarly rigor.

Phase 1 and Phase 2 Funding

New GIANT projects will be considered for Phase 1 funding. Successful projects from GIANT 2020 or 2021 may apply for Phase 2 funding.

Total program budget

The 2022 GIANT program will support approximately four Phase 1 and three Phase 2 projects, each at up to \$13K. Two or three of the projects will be funded with support from IBM-Illinois Discovery Accelerator Institute ([IIDAI](#)). To encourage student leadership and involvement, the program intends for at least two of the awards to be made to student-led teams or multi-RSO collaborations.

Multi-Office Funding

IDEA Institute, the Office of Research, and the Undergraduate Programs Office are partnering to support cross-cutting initiatives through their GIANT, [SRI](#), and [SIIP](#) programs, respectively. GIANT proposals that complement existing or proposed SRI or SIIP projects are encouraged and may be eligible for joint sponsorship and/or supplemental funding to expand the scope and impact of the work.

Who may submit proposals?

The project leader may be any member of the Grainger College of Engineering (e.g., a student, postdoc, staff, or faculty). Teams may include a mixture of students, postdocs, staff, and faculty from any department on campus as well as from external community organizations. Each team should have at least three members.

Important dates

- Project proposals call opens: Monday February 14, 2022
- Informational meeting: Monday February 21, 2022, noon-1pm, register [here](#) for Zoom meeting
- Project proposals due: Friday March 11, 2022
- Project decisions: Monday March 28, 2022
- Project start date: Monday April 11, 2022
- Project end date: Sunday December 31, 2023

Proposal templates

The proposal consists of a 2-page narrative and a budget spreadsheet. Download the proposal templates from [Box](#). If there are participating faculty member(s), a single merged PDF of their biosketches is required.

Budget guidelines and rules

- Typically allowable budget items include salary/wages for students (e.g., undergrad hourly or grad TA/RA) or postdocs, materials, software, equipment, and travel/conference registration funds to present project findings.
- No support for faculty or staff salary is allowed.

- Support for food/beverages, remuneration of study participants, or external partners may require additional justification and approval upon project selection.
- No more than \$5,000 for equipment.
- Tuition and overhead should not be included in the budget. Benefits are automatically computed in the spreadsheet.
- There is no explicit cap to the number of proposals a person can take part in, but team members should be mindful of the number of projects we expect to fund.

Program structure

GIANT is modeled after SIIP. In addition to funding support, each project will have a mentor to discuss progress and advise the team as the project moves along. The IDEA Institute will hold a consultation towards sustainability joint meeting with all GIANT projects in May 2023. When relevant, the Institute will help interested teams identify opportunities to obtain external funding to supplement and extend GIANT funding.

A final report (~1-2 pages) is due on the project end date. The report should include: (1) a list of goals met, outcomes achieved, total expenditures, and remaining funds, (2) a “Best of” short paragraph, photo, or link that highlights a particularly positive outcome of your project, (3) a list of any ways you have publicized your project (papers, faculty meetings, websites, etc.), and (4) a description of how the project will be sustained.

To share the generated knowledge and ideas and to help build community, each team will give a mixed oral/poster presentation summarizing their project at the annual IDEA Institute workshop (to be scheduled in spring semester 2023).

Proposal submission

Upload your proposal materials to: <https://forms.illinois.edu/sec/210526318>. All team members must register to be a member of the IDEA Institute: <https://forms.illinois.edu/sec/8012339> by the proposal due date.

Questions

Please address questions to Lynford Goddard, Director of the IDEA Institute (lgoddard@illinois.edu) or visit <https://idea.illinois.edu/>