

## **W.M. Keck Foundation -- Research Program**

**External Link:** <http://www.wmkeck.org/grant-programs/research>

### **Notre Dame Limited Submissions Listing:**

<https://research.nd.edu/our-services/funding-opportunities/faculty/limited-submissions-program/>

**Submission Limitation per Institution:** Up to eight (8) concept notes may be submitted for the Concept Counseling Phase. From these, only two (2) proposals will be selected for advancement to the Phase I Cycle in May.

**Internal Expression of Interest Deadline:** December 8, 2025

**Concept Counseling:** January 5 - February 13, 2026

**Internal Selection Notification:** March 1, 2026

**Phase I Proposal Due:** May 1, 2026

**Focus:** The W.M. Keck Foundation seeks projects that aim to deliver pioneering and fundamental scientific discoveries in important and emerging areas of research. We fund high-impact research in basic physical, life, and biomedical sciences, including instrumentation development and engineering approaches in service of answering basic scientific questions.

**Required Internal Application Materials:** Upload the following information to the Google Form at <https://forms.gle/hSiSYnDSKHsb7CPBA> by the internal deadline. See attached documents from W.M. Keck Foundation.

- **Principal Investigator (PI) Name**
- **Project Title**
- **Concept Note** — A one (1) page and in Arial 12 point font with 1 inch margins per the password-protected directions.
- **CV** — Limited to two (2) pages, submitted in PDF format

**Questions:** Contact Kara Primmer, Ph.D., Director, Foundation Relations at [Kara.Primmer.1@nd.edu](mailto:Kara.Primmer.1@nd.edu).

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Unless otherwise noted, all internal applications are due by 11:59 PM Eastern Daylight Time on the internal expression of interest deadline.

Internal applications submitted after the deadline will not be accepted.

The purpose of this informational document is to help clarify our goals, mission, and process for prospective PIs. We seek to fund high-risk, high-reward projects that will have an outsized impact in advancing **basic science**. Institutions may nominate up to **eight** concept papers by **December 15, 2025** that fit our funding guidelines.

We are looking for projects that aim to deliver pioneering and fundamental scientific discoveries in important and emerging areas of research. We fund high-impact research in basic physical, life, and biomedical sciences, including instrumentation development and engineering approaches in service of answering basic scientific questions.

### Concept Paper Instructions For PIs:

Concept Papers must be no more than one page in 12 point font with 1 inch margins and include:

- **Organization Name**
- **Project Title**
- **Full name of Principal Investigator**
- **Project overview:** Emphasize any unique aspects and pilot studies and include the following bolded sections
  - **Methodologies**
  - **Key Personnel**
  - **Knowledge Gap:** what is the basic scientific question to be answered by the end of the project
  - **Impact:** if successful, what will be enabled? who will benefit?
  - **Innovation:** how is the proposed work distinctive and innovative, field-expanding, or paradigm-shifting
  - **Fit:** See our [funding guidelines](#) for more details on what we do and do not fund. We have funded projects from faculty at all career stages as single PIs and in multi-disciplinary teams at single or multiple institutions.
- **Budget:** Broken down, if possible, by major areas, e.g. personnel, equipment, consumable supplies, etc.
- **References:** If a reference is necessary, use a footnote and abbreviate as (Science, 323, 45, '11). Footnotes should be in 8 point font.
- Do not include figures or illustrations.

A template is available for download [here](#).

## Frequently Asked Questions for PIs:

1. *Who is eligible to be a PI on a proposal?*
  - Principal Investigators must be tenure-track faculty or equivalent, i.e., normally eligible to submit proposals at your institution without exceptional approvals.
2. *What areas do you fund?*
  - See our funding guidelines for more details on what we do and do not fund. Proposals should address why the questions and approaches fit our mission to fund basic science research, as well as how they are distinctive and innovative, paradigm-shifting, or field-expanding.
3. *Can PIs join the counseling call?*
  - No, PIs or personnel directly involved with any concept to be discussed may not join the call.
4. *Are there restrictions on the project period or requested budget?*
  - Our standard funding period is 3 years, with budgets not greater than \$1.3 million. See our website for details on allowable costs.
5. *Can we resubmit a declined Phase I proposal?*
  - No, we do not accept resubmission of the same proposal.
6. *Can a past grantee apply again?*
  - Past WMKF grantees can submit again but only on significantly different projects.
7. *Can an awardee ask for more support for a project that was already funded by WMKF or elsewhere?*
  - WMKF is unable to accommodate follow-on funding. Awardees should pursue other avenues of funding, such as federal agencies.

We are piloting a new concept counseling process, and concepts should **NOT** be designated into *Medical Research* nor *Science and Engineering Research* areas of emphasis.

### **Institutional Submission Documents**

To help us better understand the scope of concepts that institutions are fielding, institutional liaisons must upload the following information to the portal to request a concepts counseling call to be scheduled between January 1 – February 15, 2026.

**1. Cover letter**

- List the members of your internal selection committee
- Describe your internal selection process
- List the eight nominated concept titles and PIs

**2. Brief bios**

- Minimum full name and title for all anticipated call participants

**3. Concept papers**

- A single, consolidated PDF of up to eight concept papers that may be discussed during the counseling call

**4. Additional concepts**

- A single, consolidated PDF of all other concepts that your internal selection committee declined to submit, to be used for our own internal informational purposes only
- If your internal selection committee did not exclude any concepts from submission, please upload a document simply stating so.

**Frequently Asked Questions:**

1. *Which institutions can apply?*  
Please check eligibility [here](#).
2. *Who is eligible to be a PI on a proposal?*  
Principal Investigators must be tenure-track faculty or equivalent, i.e., normally eligible to submit proposals at your institution without exceptional approvals.
3. *How many concept papers can our institution submit?*  
We will accept up to eight concept papers for consultation. Calls may be scheduled from January 1 through February 15, on a first come-first served basis. Designated liaisons make requests through our web portal.
4. *Can we submit our concepts after December 15?*  
Yes. However, we ran out of scheduling capacity for counseling calls in recent cycles, and we will be prioritizing call scheduling for those who have submitted by this deadline.
5. *What areas do you fund?*  
See our [funding guidelines](#) for more details on what we do and do not fund. Proposals should address why the questions and approaches fit our mission to fund basic science research, as well as how they are distinctive and innovative, paradigm-shifting, or field-expanding.
6. *How should we prioritize concepts?*  
We strongly recommend that institutions utilize an internal, limited selection committee to build knowledge on our process and to give feedback to applicants.
7. *Are the concept papers due at the time of submission in the portal?*  
Yes. The papers are first read by our research program directors, and we will email you with a scheduling link
8. *What is the purpose of the concepts counseling call?*  
These 30-minute Zoom consultations with our research program directors are intended to provide feedback from Foundation staff on the types of projects we fund. They may provide advice on how individual concepts may be strengthened if nominated as a Phase 1 proposal, e.g., feasibility, fit to our mission and funding priorities.
9. *Who should join the counseling call?*  
We strongly recommend that the institutional liaison, administrators involved in the selection, as well as several members of your limited selection committee join the call.
10. *Can PIs join the counseling call?*  
No, PIs or personnel directly involved with any concept to be discussed may not join the call.

**Frequently Asked Question (cont.)**

11. *Does submitting a Phase I application without counseling negatively impact our application?*

No, the counseling calls are optional, and the selection process for the Phase I submission is entirely up to the applicant institution. We will accept two applications from your institution.

12. *Are there restrictions on the project period or requested budget?*

Our standard funding period is 3 years, with budgets not greater than \$1.3 million. See our website for details on allowable costs.

13. *When is the Phase I submission deadline?*

Our deadline is May 1 for December funding.

14. *When do we hear back about our Phase I application?*

We typically send out invite/decline emails within 3 months after the Phase I deadline. The Phase II application is by invitation only. The PI must be ready to submit a full 10-page proposal by the Phase II deadline, which is August 15 for December funding.

15. *Can we resubmit a declined Phase I proposal?*

No, we do not accept resubmission of the same proposal.

16. *Can a past grantee apply again?*

Past WMKF grantees can submit again but only on significantly different projects.

17. *Can an awardee ask for more support for a project that was already funded by WMKF or elsewhere?*

WMKF is unable to accommodate follow-on funding. Awardees should pursue other avenues of funding, such as federal agencies.

**Project Title**

**Institution Name**

**PI:** First and Last name

**Overview:** An overview of the proposed project emphasizing any unique aspects and pilot studies.

**Methodologies:**

**Key Personnel:**

**Knowledge Gap:** What is the basic scientific question to be answered by the end of the project?

**Impact:** If successful, what will be enabled? who will benefit?

**Innovation:** How is the proposed work distinctive and innovative, field-expanding, or paradigm-shifting?

**Fit:** See our [funding guidelines](#) for more details on what we do and do not fund. We have funded projects from faculty at all career stages as single PIs and in multi-disciplinary teams at single or multiple institutions.

**Budget:** Broken down, if possible, by major areas, e.g. personnel, equipment, consumable supplies, etc.

If a reference is necessary, use a footnote<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Abbreviate footnotes as (Author, Science, 323, 45, '11)