

## MEDICAL COLLEGE OF GEORGIA BRIDGE FUNDING PROGRAM

### Definition

- Bridge funds are intramural funds that allow extramurally funded research to continue without interruption during the course of the renewal process for extramural funding.

### Purpose

- Bridge funds are meant to provide a means to maintain viability of existing research laboratories and thereby avoid the loss of trained research staff (research assistants, pre- and post-doctoral fellows, research coordinators, etc.) due to an interruption in extramural support.
- Because they will provide stability when external support is interrupted, bridge funds are seen as an investment whose return will increase the size of the institution's research portfolio by facilitating the renewal of funding for existing but as yet unsuccessfully renewed projects.

### Available Funds

- The Medical College of Georgia Research Institute has authorized up to \$500,000 to provide partial support for the bridge funding program in FY08, with up to 2/3 of that amount (\$333,333) to be available for bridging commitments in the first six months and the remainder available in the second six months. It is expected that to the extent possible the bridge burden will be shared by the Principal Investigator, the department/center/institute, the school, and the Medical College of Georgia Research Institute. Examples of appropriate sources of available funds to provide bridge support include:
  - a sponsored project unobligated balance specific to the project being bridged that is carried forward into an unfunded extension period
  - the investigator's start-up funds
  - research incentive funds
  - residual balance funds
  - discretionary funds available to departments/centers/institutes and schools.

### Eligibility

- A faculty member may request bridge funding if he/she is:
  - A Principal Investigator of an existing major competitively reviewed funded grant (eg. R01, P01, etc), which has been submitted for competitive renewal but will not be funded; or
  - A Principal Investigator who has unsuccessfully attempted to convert a smaller grant (eg., R03, R21, AHA or JDRF Grant-in-Aid, etc.) to an R01 or equivalent level grant.
- All submitted grants must have received a numeric score.
- Note that the following are not eligible:
  - A Principal Investigator submitting a new grant application of any kind. The existing intramural funding programs, i.e. the Scientist Training Program

(STP), Interdisciplinary Research Program (IRP), and Pilot Study Research Program (PSRP) are the appropriate venues of support for the preparation of new grant applications.

- A Principal Investigator of a previously funded major grant which has unsuccessfully re-competed and which because of delays in resubmission is no longer eligible to be submitted for competitive renewal.

### **Duration of Bridge Funding**

- Bridge funding awards will be made for a one-year period, with the possibility of a second year of support.
- Funding after the first year will be available contingent on adequate progress in meeting the stated project goals for the bridge period and on resubmission of the extramural project within the approved timeline of the bridge award. It is expected that revised scores will be more competitive than previous scores.
- Renewal of bridge funding for a second year will follow the same process as the initial bridge funding request.
- Bridge support will stop once the project being bridged has been successfully re-competed.

### **Amount of Bridge Funds**

- Bridge funds are intended to maintain funding for critical research support staff, supplies, and services, and therefore will be flexible to accommodate the needs of specific project to be bridged.
- Bridge budget requests are expected to be modest (e.g. normally in the range of \$25,000 - \$75,000) and must be justified.
- Departments/centers/institutes and schools will be asked to certify to the appropriateness of the bridge funding request based on the scientific goals of the project during the bridge period.
- It is expected that unobligated balances carried forward into an unfunded extension period for the specific project being bridged will be exhausted first.

### **Application Process**

Application for bridge funding will be considered on a rolling basis. Upon receipt of a non-fundable priority score and review critiques, the Principal Investigator and department chair/center or institute director will prepare and submit the following material through the usual internal routing process:

- Study section critique
- A justified bridge funding budget, with available funds identified from the Principal Investigator, the department/center or institute, and the school
- A two-to-three page revision plan to include the date for the next submission of the amended application
- A written recommendation from the chair/center or institute director

**Approval Process**

- Chairs/Directors and Deans of the schools will be asked to certify to the appropriateness of the bridge funding request based on the scientific goals of the project during the bridge period.
- The Deans of the Schools will recommend the request to the Vice President of Research and the Executive Director of the MCGRI and will specify the recommended level of support.
- The Deans of the schools will notify MCGRI when activation of bridge funding will be needed.