



Goergen Institute for Data Science and Artificial Intelligence

Seed Funding Program

Call for Proposals for 2026-27

1. Synopsis and Review Criteria

The Goergen Institute for Data Science and Artificial Intelligence (GIDS-AI) invites proposals for seed grants in data science. The GIDS-AI seed funding program aims to support collaborative research efforts toward attracting major external funding, with a particular focus on work aligned with at least one of the following research priorities in data science and artificial intelligence:

1. Foundations of machine learning and artificial intelligence (AI)
2. Imaging, optics, and computer/human vision
3. Life sciences and biomedical data science
4. Health analytics and digital health
5. Human-data-system interfaces and computational reality (including human-computer interaction, augmented and virtual reality (AR/VR), robotics)
6. Computational social science
7. AI for physical science

PIs will be expected to identify which of these seven areas their proposal is most closely aligned with, although exceptional proposals in other data science and AI-related research areas will also be considered. Collaborations are not required but encouraged. Innovation in data science and/or AI is expected together with tangible impact to the target discipline/application (if applicable). PIs will also be expected to identify specific external funding opportunities they are planning to pursue based on their seed grant. The narrative must detail a new research project that is not funded by other sources. Seed funding is to be directed at pilot research projects that are both innovative and will likely lead to successful external applications. Seed grants are NOT to be used for bridge funding between grants.

Proposals will be evaluated based on their intellectual merit and on their potential to attract collaborative external funding in areas of interest for GIDS-AI. Proposals will be reviewed by anonymous reviewers from the University community with relevant expertise.



2. Award Information

The maximum budget for GIDS-AI seed grants is \$40,000. Grants will be awarded for September 1, 2026, through August 31, 2027. Funds can be used for student/post-doc support, graduate school tuition, equipment, materials and supplies, software, publication costs, travel, and other justified expenses. Funds may not be used for faculty salaries. PIs are expected to submit a brief report within a month of the completion of awarded projects, describing project activities and efforts to secure external funding. Additionally, on an annual basis and over a two-year span following the project's end date, PIs will be asked to provide details on all external funding secured that is related to their GIDS-AI project.

3. Due Date

Proposals must be submitted by 11:59 p.m. (ET) on Monday, June 15, 2026.

4. Eligibility

Principal investigators (PIs) must be full-time faculty members at the University of Rochester. Each proposal must have a PI, and may include up to three co-PIs, and other senior personnel, as needed. The PI or at least one of the co-PIs must be a GIDS-AI affiliated faculty member.

Applicants may serve as PIs in, at most, ONE proposal submitted to this program. They may serve as co-PIs in a second application as well, however no more than TWO total proposals are allowed per faculty member.

5. Submission Instructions

The following information must be submitted as part of the application. All documents should be in 11 point, Times New Roman font, single column.

- i. Project title, names of the PI, co-PIs, senior personnel, amount of funding requested, GIDS-AI research area (this information will be entered into an online form).
- ii. Project abstract (up to 400 words).
- iii. Project description (3 pages maximum). The project description must clearly describe the intellectual merit of the proposed work. It should also indicate the specific external collaborative funding opportunities the project team is planning to pursue based on their seed grant. References can also be included as additional



pages in the project description document. We encourage applicants to provide a clear problem description, and discuss motivation of the proposed work, methodological contributions, potential impact, as well as how the project will prepare the team for external funding.

- iv. CVs/biosketches of the PI, co-PIs, and all senior personnel (NSF or NIH style is preferred but not required).
- v. Budget spreadsheet (template available on the GIDS-AI website).
- vi. Budget justification (1 page maximum).

Proposals must be submitted electronically via REDCap.

6. Contact

For questions about the GIDS-AI seed funding program, contact GIDS-AI Director Mujdat Cetin (mujdat.cetin@rochester.edu) or GIDS-AI Associate Director for Research Gonzalo Mateos (gmateosb@ur.rochester.edu).

For questions about the submission process, contact Sylvia Tiballi (sylvia.francisco@rochester.edu).