

VUMC Limited Submission Opportunity

W.M. Keck Foundation Research Program

Applications due November 6, 2024

VUMC: These instructions are for VUMC investigators. VU investigators should apply through [InfoReady](#) and address any questions to VU-LSO@vanderbilt.edu.

VUMC may submit up to **two proposals**, one in Medical Research and one in Science and Engineering, for the [W.M. Keck Foundation Research Program](#). We are currently soliciting **concept papers**, which will be considered for presentation to the Keck Foundation in early CY 2025. The goal of the program is to benefit humanity by supporting work that has a distinctive and novel approach, questions a prevailing paradigm, or has the potential to break open new territory in a field. Grants are typically awarded for roughly **\$1,200,000 to \$1,300,000** over three years. Indirect costs are not allowed. Abstracts from previously funded proposals can be found [here](#).

Program Priorities for Funding

Projects must be consistent with the Keck Research Program's funding priorities:

- Focus on important and emerging areas of research
- Have the potential to develop **breakthrough** technologies, instrumentation, or methodologies
 - See *Additional Considerations* below if considering a concept paper
- Are innovative, distinctive, and interdisciplinary
- Demonstrate a **high level of risk** due to unconventional approaches, or challenge the prevailing paradigm
- Have potential for transformative impact, such as the founding of a new field of research, enabling of new observations, or altering perception of a previously intractable problem
- Fall outside the mission of public funding agencies
- Demonstrate that W. M. Keck Foundation support is essential to the project's success

The Keck Research Program does not fund medical devices, clinical or translational research, treatment trials or research for the sole purpose of drug development. See the [Funding Guidelines](#) for more information.

Additional considerations:

Applicants are highly encouraged to review the [abstracts from previously funded proposals](#) when developing their internal applications.

- **Basic Science Impact:** The foundation's overall funding strategy is to support projects with exceptional basic science impact. Projects proposing development of new devices

or instruments are considered, but typically only supported when those devices are connected to large, unanswered basic science problems. Concept papers focused on development of new devices or instruments should address how the device or instrument will answer basic science research questions.

- **High-risk and high-impact work:** The foundation prefers to fund projects that are too high-risk for federal funding programs. ‘High-risk’ may denote projects that push the edge of a field, leverage novel approaches to address a previously intractable problem, or question prevailing paradigms.
- **New, unexplored areas:** The foundation is interested in supporting new and unexplored areas of research where few publications currently exist.
- **Interdisciplinary Research:** Keck prioritizes projects that are interdisciplinary, unconventional, and transformative.

Concept Paper Requirements:

- Must be a single page with 12-point font and 1 inch margins
- Please indicate the area of emphasis for the project - **Medical Research** or **Science and Engineering Research**
- Include an overview of the proposed project emphasizing any unique aspects and pilot studies
 - **Emphasize attributes that address program priorities, e.g. high level of risk, transformative impact.**
- Include a description of the methodologies and key personnel
- Must include a brief justification of the need for Keck support
 - **Concept papers should provide evidence that the proposed research is a poor fit for federal funding, i.e. summary of reviewer comments or program officer discussion**
- Include an estimated budget broken down, if possible, by major areas, e.g., personnel, equipment, consumable supplies, etc. (budgets can be rough approximations at this stage)

Internal Application Instructions

Anyone interested in being considered as VUMC’s nominee must submit the following (in PDF format) to LSO@vanderbilt.edu by **5 p.m. on November 6.**

1. 1-page Concept Paper (See guidelines above)
2. Statement of support from department chair/center director;
 - a. Letter must additionally acknowledge that this grant does not allow indirect costs. This statement can be used/modified within the letter: “The Department recognizes that this grant does not allow indirect costs and will commit to covering any associated indirect costs per applicable school/institutional policy.”
3. NIH Biosketch

Any questions about this opportunity or the LSO process may be directed to LSO@vanderbilt.edu.