

FY2026 PMF - Frequently Asked Questions

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Overview for FY26

What are the FY26 Pitt Momentum Funds?

The FY26 Pitt Momentum Funds will support Teaming Grants, Regional Catalyst Grants, and Arts and Humanities Microgrants. **No Priming or Scaling grants will be made in this cycle.**

How narrow is the focus on research? And to what extent do Pitt Momentum Funds grants support curriculum development and student-centered projects?

Pitt Momentum Funds are research development funds. Grants support projects to grow research and scholarship. It is acceptable to integrate research experiences for students into your research project within the budget threshold; this is particularly appropriate for regional campus faculty. *However, curriculum development and student-centered projects are not within scope of the Pitt Momentum Funds.*

Eligibility

Who is eligible to serve as a Lead Investigator on a Pitt Momentum Fund project?

Any Pitt faculty member with an appointment that includes research responsibilities is eligible to serve as a Lead Investigator. Appointment stream faculty must have their position confirmed by their department chairs. No undergraduate, graduate student, post-doctoral fellow, staff, or research associates should be listed as investigators.

What qualifies an investigator as having an appropriate amount of research responsibility?

The ability to independently pursue sponsored research funding and, since the precise nature of appointments varies among schools, the support of your department chair is required. For appointment stream faculty, the department chairs must provide a letter of support indicating the individual has research responsibilities and an independent research agenda. Postdoctoral scholars can serve on a team but cannot be investigators.

Can an individual serve as a Lead Investigator on more than one Pitt Momentum Funds project?

Lead Investigators may not participate in more than one project at a time. The only exception is lead investigators on Regional Catalyst Grants may apply for other PMF opportunities.

Can a Pitt Momentum Funds application include more than one Lead Investigator?

No. An individual Lead Investigator is responsible for managing the submission and processes related to the Pitt Momentum Funds. Faculty co-investigators can be listed via the online application form.

Can I submit my Pitt Momentum Funds proposal using my secondary – rather than primary – appointment?

If your effort is drawn from that portion of your time and any awarded funds will be allocated to that responsibility center, then it is appropriate to do so. Applying using your secondary appointment to meet the 3-school eligibility requirements is not appropriate.

If a co-investigator on the project is faculty at another university, will they count towards the 3-school participation minimum?

No. The teaming requirement of investigators representing 3 different schools requires 3 Pitt investigators, and research faculty in non-academic units (e.g. the University Library System) to count towards this requirement. Nonetheless we encourage you to collaborate with investigators at other institutions, and you may find additional support for your project at their home institution.

Faculty at minority-serving institutions may be listed and counted, on a case-by-case basis, towards the 3-school participation minimum. These are “institutions of higher education enrolling populations with significant percentages of undergraduate minority students, or that serve certain populations of minority students under various programs created by Congress” as listed by the U.S. Department of Education. Contact us at researchdev@pitt.edu if you have a collaborator from an MSI.

If the lead investigator or a team member leave Pitt while the project is still going on, can they continue to serve as the lead investigator or as a project member?

They can continue to serve as team members but not as a lead investigator.

Are visiting faculty eligible to serve on a team, and does their participation count towards the 3-school requirement for Teaming projects?

Yes, visiting faculty may serve on a team, but their participation is not credited towards the 3-school requirement. In the humanities and social sciences, a visiting faculty is counted as a) someone who is already in a position comparable to that of a tenure track faculty in another institution, b) recent doctoral graduate from Pitt who is serving as a Visiting Lecturer, c) a postdoctoral visiting faculty, or d) appointed by Pitt as a visiting Assistant professor for a term of more than one year.

Can undergraduate students be included as Pitt Momentum Funds project team members?

Absolutely! Engaging students in a Pitt Momentum Funds grant is highly encouraged, however, students should be listed as team members and not as investigators.

Expression of Intent (EOI)

Is the EOI required?

An EOI is only required for Teaming Grant applications.

Does the EOI impact my application or influence reviews?

No, the EOI is not shared with the reviewers of your application. Pitt Research staff will use the EOI to check eligibility requirements and to identify appropriate peer reviewers for your proposal. Some modest editing of the EOI statement is allowable when developing the abstract to your full proposal, but please alert us if you are revising the project's direction compared to the original EOI.

What should I include in the EOI?

1. Project title
2. Brief abstract (1000 characters)
3. Explanation of alignment with at least one of the moonshots listed in the [2028 Plan for Pitt](#) (500 characters)
4. Faculty investigators
5. Keywords (5)

We have a team working on our EOI. They are currently working to identify the collaborator from a third school but may not have one pinned down before the EOI deadline. Would it be ok to submit an EOI with TBD for the third school/collaborator?

Yes, that is acceptable – the EOI does not limit the Lead Investigator from developing the project further between now and the full proposal deadline. *The 3-school requirement must be met by the time a full application is submitted or the proposal will be returned without review.*

Application Development for a Teaming Grant

[Please click here to access the Guidelines to apply for a Teaming Grant.](#)

Application Development for a Microgrant or Regional Catalyst Grant

[Please click here to access the Guidelines to apply for a Microgrant.](#)

[Please click here to access the Guidelines to apply for a Regional Catalyst Grant.](#)

Budget

Do I build a budget for a Pitt Momentum Funds project the same way I would for an external grant (concerning fringe rates, indirect costs, etc.)?

Yes, prepare your budget for the Pitt Momentum Funds as if you were writing an external grant. Exceptions: there are no indirect costs, and faculty salaries are not a permitted budget item. When budgeting for graduate student assistance, please consult the Academic Regulations for GSRs and GSAs. If the graduate student's responsibilities could be considered academic training, they should be appointed as a GSR/GSA with a tuition scholarship rather than as an hourly worker.

A budget template can be found on the InfoReady application page and includes fields for you to input various budget categories. It also contains information about current fringe rates. If you have further budget questions, please coordinate with your department or school grants administrator.

Are there restrictions on how Pitt Momentum Funds can be spent?

Momentum Funds cannot be used to support or supplement salaries for either Pitt faculty or external co-investigators; neither are the funds intended to be used to hire new permanent staff.

Teaming Grants are not intended to be used to extend existing, externally funded projects or for projects that already have preliminary results in hand sufficient to obtain funding from external agencies (e.g., NIH, NSF). Momentum Funds are not bridge funds.

Funds can be used to hire temporary workers, travel, capital equipment purchases or other acquisition of materials, consulting or contracting other technical support, software and other expenses needed to successfully implement the project. A listing of budget elements is available in the budget template. Funds must be expended in accordance with University policy. Supplemental, overtime and temporary wages are subject to tax reporting and withholding but are not eligible for defined contribution deductions or matching.

Can we conduct research with Teaming Grants funds?

While the performance of research is not the primary intent of Teaming Grants, some sources of follow-on funding may require evidence of prior research collaboration. In such cases, include a justification for research as an element of building the team.

Can Pitt Momentum Funds be used to support a conference?

No, not if that is the sole purpose of the request. A conference may be a legitimate expense for inclusion in a Teaming proposal, but proposers should explain how they will use the conference in pursuit of follow-on funding for their research project. Humanities and Social Science Faculty in the Dietrich School of Arts & Sciences who are seeking to fund conferences in support of faculty scholarship should consider the [DSAS Symposia, Conferences, Performances fund](#).

Can Pitt Momentum Funds be used for administrative support (e.g., project coordinator salary support) for the proposed project?

Yes, the funds can be used for administrative support costs within the budget guidelines. Because credible efforts at building cross-disciplinary teams that can tackle large-scale research efforts require administrative support, applications for Teaming grants must include a letter from the dean or department chair of the team lead offering at least partial in-kind administrative support. Supplemental, overtime and temporary wages are subject to tax reporting and withholding but are not eligible for defined contribution deductions or matching.

If I have an existing, current project funded through another Pitt internal funding mechanism should I include information about that in my budget?

Yes, this should be included as 'current support' in your CV/biosketch, narrative, and budget. This should also be described in your application in the section labeled, "Pitt Internal Funding history."

Faculty salaries are not an allowable expense, but is salary support for a co-investigator at another organization an allowable expense?

No.

The Pitt Momentum Funds do not support faculty salaries, but is it acceptable for a dean or department chair to provide time buyout/course release as an in-kind contribution?

Yes, note this in your budget, and have it highlighted in the support letter.

Graduate Student tuition remission/benefits are calculated at 50% of Graduate Student stipends but I'm paying graduate students by the hour. Should I be adding anything to that?

When budgeting for graduate student assistance, please consult the Academic Regulations for GSRs and GSAs. If the graduate student's responsibilities could be considered academic training, they should be appointed as a GSR/GSA, which includes a tuition scholarship, and may not concurrently be paid as an hourly worker.

Can Pitt Momentum Funds be used to compensate people who are external to Pitt?

This is permissible for a professional services contract that complies with University purchasing policies. Expenses incurred would be included in the contract and paid via invoice. Momentum Funds awards cannot be used to support or supplement salaries for either Pitt faculty or external co-investigators.

Do we need to follow University policy regarding all purchases?

Yes. Per University purchasing policies, University-wide contracted suppliers must be used when available. Purchases from other suppliers and service providers must comply with the University's competitive bidding and directed or sole source policy.

Could we establish a postdoctoral fellowship under this grant?

Given the scale and 1-year duration of Teaming awards, partial support for an existing postdoc is a better choice than using this mechanism hire a new postdoc.

Can funds be used to pay for professional services from another Pitt organization, such as the Center for Teaching and Learning?

Yes. And it may be helpful to look to services offered through the University Center for International Studies (UCIS) for travel or translation support, and the University Center for Social & Urban Research (UCSUR) for data and statistical support.

Is there a limit on what fraction of the budget can be used for external to Pitt consultation or services?

No. There are no designated budget percentage requirements based on expense type.

Does this program allow to budget for instruments, such as a microscope?

Yes, adhering to University policies.

Can we use these funds for student housing?

No.

Can we use these funds for student travel (to/from campus for research purposes)?

Yes. Funds may be requested for student travel.

Can we use these funds for research materials and supplies?

Yes, adhering to University policies.

Can we use these funds for socialization activities?

Yes, but you would need to explain why this is an integral part of the work outlined in the application. Note, these would be business entertainment expenses that must comply with University policies.

What, if any, expectations exist for in-kind contributions?

There is no set percentage or dollar amount for unit level support/matching funds. However, it will be considered a positive attribute if units are willing to commit some type of support for a proposed project. This information can be included in your budget. Applications must include a letter from the dean or department chair of the team lead offering an appropriate level of in-kind administrative support.

Can we claim contributions from our partners (meeting space and catering funds, for example) as matching funds?

Yes.

Letter of Commitment/Department Chair Support

Is a letter of commitment required?

Yes, one letter of commitment from the lead investigator's department chair is required as part of every Pitt Momentum Funds application. As a courtesy to your recommender, please give them advance notice of your request for a letter.

What is the purpose of the letter of commitment?

The letter must describe the in-kind administrative support or other resources deans or department chairs will provide.

Should my letter(s) of support be confidential?

No, Lead Investigators are responsible for requesting, securing and uploading the letter as part of their online application.

I am a department chair planning a Pitt Momentum Funds project, who should write my letter?

Your school's associate dean for research (or regional equivalent for Regional Campuses) should write the letter.

Funding

When will Lead Investigators be notified of funding awards?

Lead Investigators will be notified in March 2026.

What time period is covered during this cycle of funding?

Teaming and Microgrants are awarded for a one-year period of performance. Regional Catalyst Grants are awarded for a two-year period of performance.

When will funds be available to awarded investigators?

Funds will be disbursed shortly after lead investigators are notified of their award. Projects requiring IRB or IACUC approvals will receive funds as soon as the appropriate approvals are shared with Pitt Research staff. Once funds are disbursed, the one-year timeline begins.

Will the Pitt Momentum Funds be offered again next year?

While the Provost and Senior Vice Chancellor for Research are committed to the ongoing support of the Pitt Momentum Funds, the launch of a new cycle is informed by the availability of finances in any particular year.

If we were to form a partnership, would the University commit ongoing budgetary support, such as paying the salary for a key staff person?

Pitt Momentum Funds are internal research development funds. Faculty are generally expected to leverage these awards into external sponsored funding for ongoing research and scholarship. Any prolonged commitment to the project is at the discretion of Deans or Department Chairs.

What cost center/unit will the funding be allocated to for the project?

The specifics of budget logistics will be communicated to Lead Investigators and to their unit's business administrator.

Who has access to award funds?

Access to the award account is limited to the Lead Investigator and their business unit manager. Level reports must be reviewed and reconciled each month in accordance with University policy.

May this money be used for tuition remission?

Due to recent changes in Pitt policies, please contact researchdev@pitt.edu for questions related to this.

Do we get a purchase card or are expenses reimbursed?

A financial account is established for each Pitt Momentum Fund award, and purchase card or other expenses are charged back to that financial account as they would for any other source of funds. Spending of these funds must comply with existing University policies. Reach out to researchdev@pitt.edu for more information.

Will there be a Pitt Momentum Funds renewal option?

Renewals are only intended for scholarship in areas where there is a demonstrated lack of external funding. Investigators would need to compete again to receive funding as part of a future application call, recognizing there is a very strong preference for supporting new, rather than continuing, projects.

Review

Can you describe the evaluation process?

All proposals are reviewed by faculty peers, and reviews and recommended slates of proposals are provided to the Office of the Senior Vice Chancellor for Research.

Teaming Grants

Teaming grants are evaluated by faculty peers from across the University of Pittsburgh using the rubric and weights described in the Guideline document. Finalists will be invited to make oral pitch presentations before a committee comprised of faculty peers and the Vice Chancellor for Science Policy and Research Strategies. That committee will recommend a slate of proposals for funding to the Provost and the Senior Vice Chancellor for Research, who jointly make the final selection.

Microgrants

Microgrants are evaluated by faculty peers from across the University of Pittsburgh using the rubric and weights described in the Guideline document.

Regional Catalyst Grants

Regional Catalyst Grants are evaluated by a panel of reviewers from across the University of Pittsburgh using the rubric and weights described in the Guideline document. The panel will be composed of regional faculty making up no less than one-third of the panel, with remaining panel members coming from the Pittsburgh campus.

Miscellaneous

Will there be resources available from the University to support program management?

Unfortunately, no. We encourage you to include the necessary resources within your project budget, and please be sure to note any resources that have been contributed in kind to your project.

Will we be assigned a grant manager by Pitt Research?

No. The Lead Investigator and their business administrator will be responsible for managing the administration of the project.

Can Pitt Momentum Fund be used to support other pilot projects?

Pilot projects are only allowed in cases where they are disclosed and justified in the proposal. Applicants should assume reallocation of your award through pilot projects does not align with the intent of any Momentum Fund category.

If awarded, is there a specific reporting process that we need to follow?

Yes. All Pitt Momentum Funds awardees are required to:

- Ensure that resources are utilized according to what is outlined in the proposal.
- Should submit progress reports via Qualtrics. Teaming awardees should submit a midyear and year-end report; Regional Catalyst Grant awardees should submit reports every six-months for the 24-month duration of the project; and Microgrant awardees should just submit a year-end report.
- If applicable, submit metrics on an annual basis for a minimum of two years post-award to researchdev@pitt.edu.

What happens to intellectual property when the university supports my project/idea? If my project is funded, what percentage of equity does the university share?

After completion of activities, the awardee will submit Invention Disclosures to the Innovation Institute in order to document, assess and protect any new intellectual property developed during the course of the award. If the University licenses or commercializes any intellectual property, inventors, creators or developers will receive a share of proceeds consistent with the terms of the University of Pittsburgh Intellectual Property Policy (RI-10, effective April 5, 2021).