

# FY 2024-2025 DePaul University's AGIF

## Program Guidelines & Application Details

### 1. PURPOSE AND OVERVIEW

DePaul's strategic plan calls for us to use our resources efficiently to ensure that we maintain our ability to carry out our mission sustainably into the future. An important part of resource efficiency involves investment in ideas that have the potential to increase revenue. The Academic Growth and Innovation Fund (AGIF) program was established in 2018 with a yearly budget of \$2M to find, encourage, and support innovative academic ideas that will positively impact DePaul revenue within the next 3 years. The definition of "idea" is intentionally left rather open; it may involve new academic programs, revisions of existing programs, co-curricular enhancements, new advising systems or processes, experiences that bring new students to our university, ways to commercialize new or existing ideas, or any other academic innovation that may enhance revenue.

Just as the definition of "idea" is quite open, the stage of development of the idea is also quite broad. Proposals may range from projects involving the collection of data needed to conceptualize an innovative idea to projects ready for full implementation. As described below, the types of support you may request depends on your idea's stage of development; an idea may be at any of these stages of development.

### 2. STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT FOR AGIF PROJECTS

**Idea/Concept Generation Stage:** "Idea Generation Project" is a project where information is collected to generate idea(s) and to investigate whether a certain idea is feasible before the actual prototyping and production implementation. The proposal will involve activities undertaken to better understand potential target audiences and/or competitive offerings, and will typically include data collection (e.g. survey development, survey fielding, participant incentives, focus groups, etc.), benchmarking, assessment of the likelihood of the project to generate revenue, a plan for prototyping and production implementation at scale if the idea is successful.

**Prototype/Working Model Stage:** "Prototype Project" is a project to develop a working model (prototype) for an idea that can be fully tested and evaluated. The proposal will typically involve activities needed to develop a realistic, functional version of the idea and assess the target audience's response. The proposal will also need to include a plan for financial sustainability and

implementation at scale if the working model is successful. Other sources of funding (current, pending, and future) besides the AGIF implementation stage funds should be identified.

**Institutional Adoption/Commercialization Stage:** The institutional adoption/commercialization project is a project that translates the prototype/working model into practice. The proposal will typically involve activities for implementation at scale, marketing and distribution channels, and commercialization. A plan for financial sustainability beyond the funding period is required. The evaluation for success will include but not be limited to the realization of the goals and measurements stated in the proposal and revenue generated for the University.

### 3. FUNDING INFORMATION

The requested level of funding should be reasonably commensurate with the proposed activities and with potential outcomes. Because the AGIF Program is focused on the goals of Design DePaul, funding priority will be given to those projects that are aligned with one or more of the strategic planning goals. The allocation of funds is dependent on the strengths of the proposals, and the number of awards is contingent on the submission of a sufficient number of meritorious proposals.

There are three types of funding available from the Academic Growth and Innovation Fund:

- Idea/concept generation: the maximum award is \$25,000 for up to one year of funding
- Prototype/working model: the maximum award is \$100,000 up to two years of funding
- Institutional adoption/commercialization: the maximum award is \$300,000 up to three years of funding.

A project can be submitted for the idea/concept generation stage, prototype/working model stage, or institutional adoption/commercialization funding stage. Over time the project can be submitted for subsequent stages, but it cannot be submitted twice for the same stage. If a project does not appear viable at the conclusion of the first or second stage, there is no expectation that the proposal will be submitted for the next stage. For project leaders/investigators who plan to submit a subsequent proposal continuing their project as a prototype/working model or implementation/commercialization, a progress report/final report would be reviewed, along with the new proposal, by the review committee to evaluate if further funding is warranted. The project leaders/investigators should be aware that (1) there is no guarantee that the successful completion of a project stage will result in funding of a subsequent project stage; and (2) decisions for subsequent funding following a previous idea or prototype project are to be reviewed and decided at the same time as all other regular applications during the academic year. Therefore, if project leaders are successful in applying for subsequent funding, they should know that there may be a gap between the different funding and plan accordingly. The AGIF Program will not provide interim funding.

## 4. ELIGIBILITY

All full-time faculty and staff at DePaul are eligible to apply for Academic Growth and Innovation Funds. The applicant submitting the proposal must also be the project lead/investigator, if funding is awarded. A faculty or staff can be part of more than one proposal per submission cycle, provided that each proposal is distinct, but can serve on only one proposal as project lead.

## 5. IMPORTANT DEADLINES

There are two rounds for the AY 2024-2025:

- December 10<sup>th</sup>, 2024 (decision by February 1, 2025, funding begins February 15, 2025)
- February 15, 2025 (decision by April 1, 2025, funding begins July 1, 2025)

## 6. APPLICATION MATERIALS

Applicants should submit proposals to [Blackbaud](#). All proposals must include the following components:

1. Cover Page
2. Checklist
3. Proposal Narrative
4. Letter of support from the project lead's Chair and the Dean
5. Budget
6. Budget Justification

Optional components:

7. Letter(s) of collaboration from other internal and external entities

**Applicants should use the templates for the cover page, checklist, proposal narrative, budget, and budget justification.** All six proposal components should be submitted as PDF files through the Blackbaud proposal system.

**Letters of support:** Names and email addresses must be submitted into Blackbaud. Once the name and email has been submitted, an email notification is sent to the chair/dean with a link to submit their letter. All letters must be submitted within 3 days of the deadline, therefore it is recommended to submit proposals prior to the deadline to give chairs/deans ample time.

## 6.1. PROJECT NARRATIVE

Project narrative for idea/concept generation project is limited to a maximum length of 3 pages. Prototype/working model, as well as the production implementation project narrative, are limited to a maximum length of 5 pages.

Basic formatting should follow these guidelines:

- Margins: 1" on all sides
- Spacing: single spaced
- Font style and size: Time New Roman size 12 point, or equivalent

The narrative should include:

- Project Title
- Project Description: What is the project? The significance and potential impact of the project; and the institutional support, equipment and other physical resources needed for your project to succeed.
- Relation to Design DePaul: Which of the strategic plan goals apply to your project? Explain how your project relates to these goals.
- Key Objectives & Measurable Outcomes: Identify your project's key objectives, measurable outcomes, and success criteria.
- Innovativeness: What makes the project innovative? What are the risks and challenges, and how will they be addressed in the project?
- Team Qualifications: Describe the qualifications of the team members to perform the proposed work. Why is the individual submitting the project suitable to lead the team?
- Suitability for AGIF: Why is the proposal uniquely suited to the stated goals of the AGIF rather than other funding sources? For working models, what is the plan for sustainability and implementation at scale if the working model is successful? What other additional sources of funding besides the AGIF implementation stage funds have been identified? Note that AGIF is not the place to seek alternative funding for projects or ideas, such as an expansion of an existing program. Those requests should go through the normal budgeting process in the project's lead department or office.
- Revenue Generation: Provide a plan for revenue generation along with a timeline of proposed activities and key outcomes/deliverables generating revenue.
- Commercialization: For the prototype and implementation projects, what are the marketing plans and what distribution channels have been identified? Provide specifics for the marketing and distribution plans along with letters of commitments as appropriate.
- Outcomes of Prior Projects: If you have been previously funded by AGIF, include what the goals were of the project, outcomes, and any revenue generated thus far.

## 6.2. BUDGET AND BUDGET NARRATIVE

The budget should use the template form for the AGIF proposals. Applicants should include a list of budget items under the year that they are requested along with their estimated costs. A budget narrative explaining each line in the budget should be submitted as an additional document of the proposal application.

Eligible expenses: Expenses that can be covered by the AGIF program may include, but are not limited to: DePaul faculty, DePaul research staff, DePaul students, non-DePaul consultants, travel to conferences/symposium/workshops related to the project, supplies and equipment, and support for activities related to data collection (e.g. survey development, participant incentives, and focus groups). Student assistants should be paid per campus student employment guidelines & pay categories. Faculty summer salary can be paid up to 1-month summer salary OR up to 1 course release per academic year can be budgeted from the AGIF grant. The budget should include any **fringe benefits** associated with personnel salaries and should add to the budget as a line item. Consultants should be used as a last resort when the necessary expertise is not available at DePaul.

Course release: Faculty who intend to propose reduced or redirected time should consult with their department chairs and deans prior to submitting a proposal. The letters of support from the project lead's department chair and dean should address what plans have been made by the unit in case a course release was approved to be included in the AGIF proposal budget. The course release should be budgeted to pay for the adjunct replacements costs of \$5,000/course plus 10% fringe benefits at \$500/course.

Funding Restrictions: **All awarded funds must be used in the year they were budgeted.** Special extensions from the duration of the approved AGIF project proposal and/or carry-over funds that are not expended during the period of the award must be approved by the Provost and will only be considered for extenuating circumstances.

## 7. APPLICATION EVALUATION

All AGIF proposal applications will be reviewed for both academic and financial soundness by the Provost Council and ranked using the following criteria:

- Alignment with strategic plan
- Potential impact on university revenue over the next three years
- Requested level of resources
- Likelihood of successful completion

Following this review, the project leads of those proposals that rank high enough to be considered for funding will be required to complete DePaul's conflict of interest certification and ORS' conflict of interest screening for sponsored projects. A disclosed conflict of interest that could potentially affect the management of AGIF funds, the implementation of the project, or reporting on project results will need to be addressed via a negotiated COI management plan before the proposal can be recommended for funding. In those rare situations where the conflict cannot be adequately mitigated with a management plan, the proposal will not be funded.

The proposals recommended for funding by the Provost Council will be submitted for approval by the Provost.

Authors of proposals not funded will receive a written proposal evaluation and may choose to revise and resubmit the proposal on the next due date.

## 8. AWARD ADMINISTRATION

Requirements of the awardees include reporting, participation in the Innovation Day at DePaul, and ultimately be an ambassador of innovation at DePaul.

### 8.1. REPORTING

- Within 30 days after the end of each year of funding, the project lead is required to submit an annual report outlining 1) the key objectives, outcomes, and success criteria evaluation and 2) how much of the awarded budget has been spent. Annual and final reports are submitted through [Blackbaud](#). An email notification will be sent from Blackbaud that contains a link to complete the report. The report can also be accessed by logging in directly into Blackbaud.
- A final report replaces the final annual report. An annual or final report may be submitted sooner if, for example, a project lead who was awarded funding for a one-year idea generation project would like to apply for a prototype proposal or is in the second year of a prototype project and would like to apply for a production implementation project. Please notify ORS to request this option.
- The report will be reviewed by the AGIF program review committee. Depending on the project and review of the report, access to funds may be contingent on the progress being made on the project and the project's continued viability.

### 8.2. AMBASSADOR FOR INNOVATION AT DEPAUL

- Attendance and presentation at the annual Innovation Day event.

- If nominated, willingness to serve on the DePaul Innovation Day organizing committee, and/or serve as an ambassador for innovation on campus, as well as to work closely with the Provost and AP for Research to support and promote new innovation activities.

## 9. INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

As a condition of accepting AGIF grant funds, recipients agree to grant to DePaul a royalty-free, irrevocable, non-exclusive, world-wide license to use, sublicense, duplicate, distribute, publicly display, modify, and create derivative works based upon any intellectual property generated using AGIF funds. Any profits generated by DePaul through commercial sublicensing or sale of AGIF-funded works will be subject to the royalty share and payment provisions detailed in Sections A(5.2) and B(5.2) of the university's Discovery and Copyright policy. These terms of ownership, license, royalty share, and/or payment may be changed, provided that the university and the recipient(s) enter into a written contract establishing the change.

## 10. RESOURCES AND USEFUL LINKS

The following programs have been identified at the federal level that target Small Business Innovation Research Programs.

- DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
  - <https://nifa.usda.gov/program/small-business-innovation-research-program-sbir>
- DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
  - <https://sbir.defensebusiness.org>
- DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
  - <https://www2.ed.gov/programs/sbir/index.html>
- DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY
  - <https://science.osti.gov/sbir/Funding-Opportunities>
- DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
  - <https://grants.nih.gov/funding/index.htm>
- DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY
  - <https://sbir2.st.dhs.gov/portal/SBIR/>
- DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
  - <https://www.volpe.dot.gov/work-with-us/small-business-innovation-research>
- ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
  - <https://www.epa.gov/sbir>
- NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION
  - <https://sbir.gsfc.nasa.gov/>
- NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF STANDARDS AND TECHNOLOGY
  - <https://www.nist.gov/tpo/small-business-innovation-research-program>

- NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION
  - <https://techpartnerships.noaa.gov/SBIR>
- NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
  - [https://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub\\_summ.jsp?ods\\_key=nsf19554Resources](https://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub_summ.jsp?ods_key=nsf19554Resources)