

University of Alaska
AY27 Faculty Initiative Fund: Request for Proposals

I. FIF SUMMARY AND BACKGROUND

A financial commitment of at least \$360,000 by the University of Alaska (UA) for FY27 is identified as the Faculty Initiative Fund (FIF) aimed at fostering an institutionalized environment of cross-campus communication that inspires learning and disseminates knowledge while fostering the exchange and advancement of new, more efficient approaches to educating Alaskans and engendering high academic standards. It is designed to promote collaboration across the three universities, between universities and their community campuses, and/or across colleges and departments on the same campus. The fund may also serve as seed money toward the procurement of external grants and contracts and to promote collaborative networking and scholarship beyond Alaska.

Projects eligible for FIF funding include system-wide projects that develop, facilitate, and sustain effective and innovative efforts to fulfill the University's academic mission and to achieve systemwide goals. The fund can support traditional professional development opportunities as well as engagement and collaboration among faculty at all three universities that are crucial to maintaining academic innovation, quality, and rigor. UA system-wide collaborative research efforts are highly encouraged. Submissions describing UA system level professional development activities that serve the goals of course alignment, course sharing, and/or the establishment or improvement of new or existing learning networks are likewise encouraged.

Initiative Categories: The purpose of this request for proposals (RFP) is to serve the UA mission and system goals by providing an equal opportunity for FIF distribution to eligible faculty to pursue one or more of the following initiative categories:

1. Support the [Systemwide Attainment Framework](#) that prioritizes student recruitment, retention, and graduation
2. Build the intellectual capital of UA through basic and applied research
3. Promote obtainment of external grants and contracts or other cost-reducing measures
4. Develop high-impact pedagogical practices
5. Generate new professional development initiatives for faculty that will establish and maintain collaborations across the UA system
6. Foster community partnerships and engaged learning opportunities such as applied research, internships, apprenticeships, etc.
7. Reduce the cost of degrees and/or contribute to student recruitment, retention, & success
8. Enhance UA's service to the state

UA Mission: University of Alaska inspires learning, and advances and disseminates knowledge through teaching, research, and public service, emphasizing the North and its diverse peoples.

Systemwide Goals:

- Deliver academic excellence & success at all levels
- Modernize the student experience
- Contribute to Alaska's skilled workforce and engaged citizenship
- Operate efficiently, effectively, and responsibly
- Grow our world-class research
- Provide an open and welcoming university with equal opportunity and access for all students, faculty, and staff

II. AWARD LEVELS

The 2026/7 FIF has two tiers based on the size and scope of the project and budget.

- **Tier I:** Larger projects with a budget of up to \$30,000 (at least six (6) awards available)
- **Tier II:** Smaller projects or seed funds for larger projects with budgets up to \$10,000 (at least fifteen (15) awards available).

III. TIMELINE, EXPECTATIONS, AND EXCLUSIONS

All proposals in response to this RFP are due to the Office of Academics, Students & Research by **5pm Wednesday, September 30, 2026**. The review period will end at 5 pm Friday, October 30, 2026, with awards announced by November 13, 2026. All applications must be submitted via Google Forms to the Office of Academics, Students & Research Office. All submissions will receive email confirmation of receipt within two business days. Project funds will be available in January 2027.

Award funds are to be expended by **June 30, 2028**, after which date they will be rolled back into the Faculty Initiative Fund. Applicants should plan for their projects to be completed within that 18-month period. Requests for extensions are discouraged unless there are extenuating circumstances that could not have been anticipated, in which case requests should be directed to the Office of Academics, Students & Research.

Faculty are limited to serving as PI on one proposal. However, they may serve as a co-PI on one additional proposal but *may receive funding for their work on only one proposal*. Faculty workload hours committed to the project must be acknowledged in writing (email or letter) by all relevant unit(s)' Dean(s) or Director(s) and be included with the submission. Research assistants may receive hourly compensation for work on the project; undergraduates may commit 20 hours per week during the fall and spring semesters and 40 hours per week during the summer. Undergraduate wages will be provided according to the current wage schedules. Graduate student wages will be provided in line with the effective bargaining agreement. Travel that supports the goal of the proposed activity may be supported.

Awards cannot be used for: personal expenses, academic expenses such as classroom textbooks, or travel unrelated to the funded project. F&A/indirect costs are not allowable under this funding opportunity.

IV. PROPOSAL GUIDELINES

A. Required Elements (note: incomplete proposals will not be reviewed)

1. *Project Title and Tier (I or II) identification:* Include a descriptive title and abstract. Identify which Tier (I or II) and which initiative categories your project is pursuing.
2. *Project Abstract, including Award Level and Eligibility Category (250 words):* The abstract must identify the goal(s) of the proposed activity and describe the major steps required to meet the goal(s).
3. *Project Narrative: Purpose and Scope (not to exceed 1000 words, not including budget and budget narrative):* A detailed proposal narrative will include thorough descriptions of how the proposed activity or activities will serve the UA mission or system goals, with explicit attention to appropriate initiative categories listed above. The narrative should address the criteria for review listed below, including how the results might be communicated to the university community. Proposals requesting funding for research may involve one PI and multiple co-PIs.

The project scope should describe the project rationale and design with details regarding venue requirements, travel needs, consultant/speaker/contracting fees, project supplies, administrative support, and workload expectations of participating faculty.

Detailed descriptions of strategies for managing the project along with a completion timeframe are required. The project strategies should delineate the leadership role(s), major activities of the PI (and co-PIs), and the major duties of supporting personnel. In sum, the proposal should make a feasibility argument that the project can meet deadlines and be completed within the allotted time frame.

Community-based proposals must indicate the degree of collaboration, describe how the project will be developed and implemented, and address how the non-UA partners will contribute to the project's overall goals and UA mission.

4. *Budget (include budget justification and name of Budget Officer)* (1 page): The budget should be detailed and include the following:
 - total personnel services, including benefits
 - allowable travel
 - contractual services
 - commodities
 - other categories as appropriate.

The budget narrative should explain and justify the budget and demonstrate that the proposed budget is adequate. Proposed expenditures should comply with all UA policies and regulations. For assistance, please contact the Office of Grants and Contract Administration.

You must name your Budget Officer. Failure to identify the Budget Officer responsible for managing the fund will result in an incomplete proposal which will not be reviewed. Work with your Dean or Director to identify the appropriate Budget Officer. Because the criteria for the FIF encourages collaboration across the system, statewide teams have the option to manage the grant through one campus and one budget officer.

5. *Investigator Qualifications* (brief CVs, not to exceed 2 pages each): A lead principal investigator must be identified for each proposal. The principal investigator must be a UA faculty member. A proposal may have just one PI and as many co-investigators as the project warrants. All investigators must provide biographical information in an abbreviated CV or short bio. The short biography/CV must be no more than two pages in length per participant. A traditional format is highly recommended (e.g., NSF format). The brief biography or CV of the principal investigator (PI) will be listed first. Collaborators not affiliated with the UA system may not exceed 20% of the total workforce or receive more than 10% of the total award value.
6. *Dean Letter(s) of Approval*: Include approval (in the form of a letter or email) from the supervisor (dean/director) of each investigator on the proposal that indicates support of the scope of the proposal and workload and acknowledges that workload issues of the relevant faculty have been discussed and agreed upon.

B. Formatting

1. *Font Type*: Use one of these typefaces: Arial, Courier New, Times New Roman, or Palatino Linotype at a font size of 11 points or larger
2. *Font Size*: A font size of less than 10 points may be used for mathematical formulas or equations, figures, table or diagram captions, and when using a Symbol font to insert Greek letters or special characters. The text must remain readable.
3. *Paper Size and Page Margins*: Use standard paper size (8 ½" x 11"). Use at least one-inch margins (top, bottom, left, and right) for all pages. No information other than page numbers

should appear in the margins. The PI's name should not appear in the margins.

4. *Page Formatting*: Use only a standard, single-spaced, single-column format for the text. Number all pages sequentially and center page numbers at the bottom of each page.
5. *Figures, Graphs, Diagrams, Charts, Tables, Figure Legends, and Footnotes*: You may use a smaller type size, but it must be in black font color, readily legible, and follow font typeface requirements. Color can be used in figures; however, all text must be in a black font, clear and legible.
6. *Grantsmanship*: Use English and avoid jargon. If terms are not universally known, spell out the term the first time it is used and note the appropriate abbreviation in parentheses. The abbreviation may be used after that.

V. PROPOSAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

Efforts will be made to encourage a diversity of disciplinary representation and equitable distribution across the three universities. At least three reviewers will review all proposals: these will include at least one faculty member with expertise in the proposed area and two other faculty members selected by the Faculty Senates and UA Faculty Alliance. Project proposals will be reviewed according to the review criteria listed below and scored by the review team. Selected submissions will move forward to the UA Faculty Alliance Chair and Vice President and Chief Academic Officer for funding recommendation.

- A. *Overall Impact*: What is the likelihood that the project will exert a sustained, powerful influence on the ability of UA to meet its academic mission and contribute to the development of a culture of education in Alaska? How will the project contribute to systemwide goals for UA? How will project achievements be communicated to the UA community? (1-10 points)
- B. *Significance*: How does the proposed activity align with its initiative category(ies) to serve the UA Mission and Systemwide Goals? For example, does the proposal explicitly explain its relationship to one or more initiative categories? Does it address Systemwide Goals? Does it advance research, creative activity, performance, or other scholarly endeavors? (1-10 points)
- C. *Collaboration*: If the project is based on collaboration across the UA system or with community partners, how will it be implemented? How will it address existing barriers to collaborative opportunities for professional growth, research, and efforts at creative activity or aligned academic outcomes? Does the project include non-UA collaborators? If so, how do they contribute to the project's goals and the UA mission? (1-10 points)
- D. *Investigator(s)*: Are the PI, co-PIs, collaborators, and other researchers well suited to the project? Do they have appropriate experience and training? If established in the field of study proposed, have they demonstrated an ongoing record of accomplishments that suggests successful completion of the proposed activities? Do the investigators have complementary and integrated expertise; is their leadership approach and organizational structure appropriate for the project? (1-5 points)
- E. *Innovation*: Does the proposal support or lead to innovative approaches or methodologies that improve or enhance current methods of instruction, research, or service? Does the project have the potential for intellectual property, technology transfer, or commercialization? (1-5 points)
- F. *Approach*: Are the overall strategy and methodology well-reasoned and appropriate to accomplish the project's specific aims within the allotted time frame? (1-5 points)
- G. *Budget and Period Support*: Reviewers will consider whether the budget and the requested support period are fully justified and reasonable for the proposed research. (1-5 points)

Highest possible score = 50 points

VI. NOTIFICATION AND FUND SET UP

Grant recipients, budget officers, and dean(s) will be notified of award in writing. Proposals not accepted will also be notified. Funds will be established by System Office and available for use in January.

VII. REPORTING

Final reports are due to the Faculty Alliance Chair and Office of Academics, Students & Research Office by **September 1, 2028**. The proposal abstract (when funded) and final report (following project completion) will be posted on the Faculty Alliance website.

A. Core Elements of a Final Report (not to exceed 1000 words; executive summary required)

Final reports will necessarily vary given the range of projects but should include the following:

- Summary of Goals and Intentions (foresight)
- Reflective Narrative of the Project (hindsight)
- Lessons Learned (insight)
- Deliverables as promised in the proposal

B. Promotional Elements

Because the Faculty Initiative Fund is coordinated and managed by the Faculty Alliance, who report directly to the system President and Board of Regents, final reports should make an argument about the value and contributions the project has made. How has the project furthered the mission and goals of the university? How has the project met criteria? (Impact, Significance, Collaboration, Innovation)

A written report with promised deliverables is sufficient, but we welcome ancillary documentation in the form of slide decks, diagrams, recordings, posters, and any other media that would help us communicate each project's value to the university community and to the public at large.