The University of Maryland Catalyst Fund

New Directions Fund
(formerly Tier 1)

Purpose:
The New Directions Fund aims to enable important new research with high potential for impact. There are two competition tracks:

Track A: **New Direction Proof of Concept awards** support researchers pursuing a new line of research or collaborative partnership, to help them be competitive for external funding.

Track B: **Limited External Grant Opportunity (LEGO) awards** support particularly innovative research, writing, and/or creative work in fields where external funding is scarce.

**New Direction Proof of Concept awards** are not intended to support research closely related to past work, but rather to support exploratory work that will serve as the enabling foundation of a new line of research. This new line of research may be facilitated in part by new collaborative partnerships. Research may be basic or applied but should hold potential for future external funding.

**Limited External Grant Opportunity (LEGO) awards** are also intended to support new directions in faculty research, writing, and/or creative work for fields with limited access to external funding. Proposed research should advance the body of knowledge and/or build UMD’s reputation in scientific and scholarly communities. Funded awards are expected to lead to a seminal publication or monograph or other recognized means of discipline impact. Follow-up proposals to obtain external funding are not required but still highly encouraged.

Examples of eligible New Directions LEGO award projects include:

- Projects that obtain pilot data, demonstrate the feasibility of an approach or method, or contribute to the development of a prototype.
- Unique opportunities to conduct field work or conduct research at an archive or special collection.
- Projects leading to seminal publications or monograph projects intended for publication with an academic press.
- The development and execution of particularly innovative creative work that will be exhibited or performed in nationally or internationally known venues.

Submission Cycle:

- Applications are accepted twice per year: May 1 and November 1
- Notification to applicants/awardees is anticipated within 1-1.5 months following the submission deadline.
Support Provided:

New Directions funds can be requested at one of two levels:

- Level 1: $10,000 – $25,000 per award.
- Level 2: $25,001 – $50,000 per award.

In each semi-annual competition cycle, it is anticipated that proposals selected for award will be roughly distributed as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Track A: Proof of concept</th>
<th>L1: $10k–25k</th>
<th>L2: $25k–50k</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Track B: LEGO fields</td>
<td>3–5 awards</td>
<td>2–3 awards</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2–4 awards</td>
<td>1–2 awards</td>
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Cost Share:

- VPR will fund 50% of the requested amount;
- The benefiting College/Unit(s) cost share the remaining 50%.

Eligibility Criteria:

- The New Directions Fund is open to tenure track and professional track faculty whose full-time, home position is at UMD. Visiting, adjunct, and affiliate faculty are not eligible to apply.
- Faculty may only submit one New Directions proposal in a given competition cycle.
- Faculty chosen as the principal investigator for past New Directions awards (or the predecessor program “Tier 1” awards) are not eligible to compete for New Directions awards.
- **Track B only:** Faculty must demonstrate the paucity of external research funding opportunities for their discipline and why New Directions funding is critical for the proposed effort; a meeting with the Research Development Office is recommended before submission.

Award Fund Use:

The fund use for this award should be considered very flexible but must be outlined and justified in the proposal budget. Uses include but are not limited to:

- Collection of pilot data required for agency/private proposal submission;
- Graduate student support;
- Coordination of new multidisciplinary activities that will lead to development of a proposal for external funding;
- Development of proposal to establish new research directions;
- Hosting of conferences which bring visibility and expertise to UMD;
- Research supplies;
- Travel to conduct research and/or to disseminate research;
- Equipment purchase (allowable if funds are used for instrument development);
- Faculty summer salary – only in cases where the researcher does not have 12-month salary support. Applicants should be prepared to justify why this summer salary is vitally important.
• **Track B only:** Teaching release time *(requires department chair authorization).* Note that these New Directions Funds do not buy out faculty salaries directly but rather are intended to be used by departments to cover the costs of bringing on a replacement instructor.

Funds must be spent within one calendar year of receipt of funds; if the work proposed will require a longer period of performance, the application should state this and provide justification.

**Review Criteria and Process:**

All proposals will be evaluated in accordance with the following criteria:

- **Technical Approach:** Does the project develop or employ novel concepts, approaches, methodologies, tools, or technologies? (Proposals should make clear the current state of the art.) Do the proposed outcomes represent a new paradigm for concepts in this area of research? Are the conceptual framework, design, methods, and analyses adequately developed, well-integrated, well-reasoned, and appropriate to the aims of the project?

- **Societal Interest:** Does this study address a problem with regional, national, or global significance? Does the proposed project align with strategic goals of the department, college, or UMD?

**Track A** proposals will also be evaluated based on:

- **Alignment with the goals** of the New Directions Proof of Concept award track:
  - Does the proposal make clear how the proposed project would be a new direction of investigation for the faculty involved?
  - Will the project facilitate a new collaborative partnership? (Preferred though not required)
  - Could work be conducted without New Directions Fund support?

- **Likely project outcomes:**
  - Do the investigators present reasonable plans to garner extramural support from specific funding agencies? Proposal should demonstrate why the proposed scope of work will improve the proposer’s ability to secure external funding, and should include a detailed plan for obtaining future support (ideally with more than one external funding program identified).
  - Is the project likely to result in new scholarly recognition and/or visibility for the University?
  - Will this effort lead to new lasting technical capacity at the University that will enable new lines of research in the future?

**Track B** proposals will also be evaluated based on:

- **Alignment with the goals** of the New Directions LEGO award track:
  - Is the proposed research in a demonstrably new area?
  - Does the project represent a new direction of investigation for the faculty involved? Is it a new collaborative partnership?
  - Does the proposed project address UMD’s strategic goals?
  - Could work be conducted without New Directions Fund support?

- **Likely project outcomes:**
  - Is the project likely to result in new scholarly recognition and/or visibility for the
University?
  o Is the effort likely to inspire follow-on work by others in the field?
  o Will this effort lead to new lasting technical capacity at the University that will enable new lines of research in the future?
  o The proposal should clearly articulate significance or expected impact on both the faculty member’s professional development and the larger relevant discipline.

Limited review feedback will be provided to the candidates/awardees.

**Application Process and Materials:**

In addition to completing the electronic submission form, all application materials must be uploaded in one PDF file and must be submitted electronically by 11:59pm on the deadline date. The electronic submission form can be found at [https://umd.infoready4.com/](https://umd.infoready4.com/).

- **Project Narrative:** not to exceed three single-spaced pages (plus up to one additional page of figures if needed), with one-inch margins and at least 11-point font, detailing:
  - Project background and objectives (including ties to previous faculty research)
  - Innovation and impact including alignment with organizational priorities
  - Approach and research plan (listing specific tasks)
  - Strategies to leverage award, optimize outcomes, and increase impact
  - A summary timeline for implementation.
- **References** (does not count against the page limit)
- **Budget and Justification:** Please provide an estimated budget and justification for the planned expenditures. The budget and justification should demonstrate that you have thought through all aspects of your project and the costs associated with them. Please include any other sources of funding that will be supporting the project (if applicable) and whether those funds are committed or pending.
  - Include details of any of unspent start-up, gift, or retention funding
- **Biosketch or CV** for the submitting principal investigator and for any co-investigators if applicable (up to two pages each)

The InfoReady online submission form will also request:
- **Title**
- **Co-investigator information** (names, titles, affiliations and emails)
- **Project summary** (suggested length: 150 words max)

**Expectations of Applicants and Awardees:**

- An annual progress report must be completed for 2 consecutive years. If proposal/publication reporting information is not submitted, faculty member’s department may not be eligible for New Directions funds for one year.
- Within two years of award, at least one of the following deliverables should be completed: a related research proposal submitted to an external funding agency, written publication submitted to a journal or book publisher, book contract secured, and/or creative work exhibited or performed.