The University of Maryland Catalyst Funds

The Maryland Catalyst Funds program – formerly known as the Faculty Incentive Program – is the University of Maryland's internal faculty research support program and a key resource in the university's overall effort to expand its research activity, visibility and impact. The program aims to **enable innovative research**, to **incentivize the pursuit of large, complex, and high-impact research initiatives**, and to **increase competitiveness** for UMD-led extramural research awards.

The Maryland Catalyst Funds consist of five funding categories (detailed in **Table 1**).
- **New Directions Fund**, providing support for faculty pursuing a new line of research, or pursuing particularly innovative research, writing, and/or creative work in fields where external funding is scarce.
- **Fearless Ideation Workshops**, supporting brainstorming events in high potential multidisciplinary topics leveraging unique strengths within UMD.
- **Big Opportunity Fund**, supporting proposal development for faculty actively pursuing a large, high-visibility, externally-funded research opportunity (typically ≥$2M/year)
- **Strategic Growth Fund**, supporting proposal development for faculty actively pursuing a major research opportunity in one of the following categories:
    - Priority Topics (defined biennially)
    - Headliner Awards – particularly prestigious extramural awards below $2M/year.
    - Future Research Leaders seeking to lead their first multi-investigator award
- **Reinforcement Funds**, operating support to cover unfunded requirements that would be critical to the operation of a proposed large-scale externally-funded research award.

Table 1: Categories of Maryland Catalyst Funds. Definitions provided on page 2.

	Old	Program Name	In Support of	Available Funding	Cost Share			Fund Distribution	Submission Deadline
					Unit(s)	VPR	Provost		
Capacity-building	Tier 1	**New Directions Fund** (pg. 3)	New lines of research and/or partnerships	L1: ≤ $25K L2: ≤ $50K	50%	50%	-	Up-front distribution	Semiannual: May 1 + Nov 1
			Limited External Grant Opportunity (LEGO) fields						
	-	**Fearless Ideation Workshops** (pg. 7)	Identifying unique UMD strengths within high-potential multidisciplinary topic areas	≤ $15K					Quarterly: Feb/May/ Aug/Nov
Opportunity-Specific	Tier 2	**Big Opportunity Fund** (pg. 10)	Proposal support for large-scale high-impact opportunities (≥$2M/yr)	≤ $50K	33.3%	33.3%	33.3%	Reimbursement only	20th of each month
		Strategic Growth Fund (pg. 13)	Proposal support for: • Priority topics • Headliner awards • Future research leaders	≤ $15K	50%	50%	-		
	Tier 4	**Reinforcement Fund** (pg. 17)	Unfunded requirements for large proposals (≥$2M/yr), to optimize productivity	≤10% IDC to UMD	50%	25%	25%	Up-front distribution	

The Maryland Catalyst Funds program is overseen by the Vice President for Research (VPR) and managed by the VPR's Research Development Office, in coordination with UMD academic units and the Provost. All awards are supported by Designated Research Initiative Fund ("DRIF") contributions from both faculty organizational unit(s) and central resources from the VPR and the Provost, and all award decisions are made subject to the availability of funds.

Only tenured/tenure-track and professional track faculty (at the rank of assistant research scientist or higher) whose full-time, home position is at UMD, are eligible to be the Principal Investigator of any Maryland Catalyst Funds award. Visiting, adjunct, and affiliate faculty are not eligible to apply; postdoctoral fellows are also ineligible.

Detailed Program Guidance
The remainder of this document includes detailed guidance for each of the five categories of Maryland Catalyst Funds. All questions should be directed to Associate Vice President for Research Eric Chapman at echapman@umd.edu.

Definitions
- **Unit:** For all Maryland Catalyst Fund categories, the term "unit" can be defined as any combination of benefiting department(s)/college(s)/center(s)/individual researchers, etc. Formulas used for the "unit" cost-sharing portion are at the discretion of the benefiting entities. It is common, though not a requirement, for units to contribute funds proportionate to their relative involvement in the project.
- **Fund distribution models:**
  - **Reimbursement model**: Research units submit invoices to the VPR for reimbursement. The funding distribution policy for this tier 2 award is an expense reimbursement model. The Office of the VPR (and Office of the Provost, if applicable) will reimburse the designated percentage of expenditures reported, on either a rolling basis or (for Reinforcement Awards) twice a year.
  - **Front-loading funding model** (up-front distribution): Upon selection for award, approved funds are sent directly to the designated KFS account(s).

I. New Directions Fund
(formerly Tier 1)

Purpose:

The New Directions Fund aims to enable important new lines of research and creative work with high potential for impact. There are two competition tracks:

Track A: **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 <u>not</u> intended to support research closely related to past work but rather to support exploratory work enabling 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.

New Direction Limited External Grant Opportunity (LEGO) awards also support new directions in faculty research, writing, and/or creative work but 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 through a seminal publication, monograph, or other recognized means of discipline impact. Follow-up proposals to obtain external funding are not required but 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 research at an archive or special collection.
- Projects leading to seminal work 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.
- **A meeting with the Research Development Office is recommended before submission**.

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:

	L1: $10k–25k	*L2: $25k–50k*
Track A: Proof of concept	3–5 awards	2–3 awards
Track B: LEGO fields	1–3 awards	1 award

Cost Share:

- VPR will fund 50% of the requested amount;
- The benefiting Unit(s) contribute the remaining 50% of requested funds.

Eligibility Criteria:

- Both tenured/tenure-track and professional track faculty (assistant research scientist or higher) whose full-time, home position is at UMD are eligible to apply.
- *Track B only:* No disciplines automatically qualify for Track B. Proposal should briefly detail the funding landscape and demonstrate the scarcity of external research funding opportunities for their discipline (and why New Directions funding is critical for the proposed effort). Contact the Research Development Office with questions.
- 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) within the last ten (10) years **are not eligible** to compete to be principal investigator for New Directions awards.

Award Fund Use:

Award funds may be applied to a range of cost categories, including but not limited to:

- Collection of pilot data required for agency/private proposal submission;
- Coordination of new multidisciplinary activities that will lead to development of a proposal for external funding;
- Graduate student support to conduct proposed research;
- Hosting of conferences which bring visibility and expertise to UMD;
- Travel of UMD personnel to conduct research and/or to disseminate research;
- Research supplies;
- Faculty summer salary – 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, and limited review feedback will be provided to all applicants.

- **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 relevance**: What are the potential implications of this research for society? 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?
- **Alignment with the goals** of the New Directions Fund award track: Does the proposal make clear how the proposed project would be a new direction of investigation for the faculty involved? Would it facilitate a new collaborative partnership? (Preferred but not required) Could the work be conducted without New Directions Fund support?
  - *Track B only:* Does the proposal make a compelling case that the work would be significant to the field but external funding sources are severely limited?
- **Likely project outcomes:** 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 could enable new lines of research for others in the future? (The proposal should clearly articulate significance or expected impact on both the faculty member's professional development and the larger relevant discipline.) Is the effort likely to inspire follow-on work by others in the field?
  - *Track A only:* Do the investigators present reasonable plans to garner extramural support from specific funding agencies? *Proposal should demonstrate why the*

NOTE: All Maryland Catalyst Fund Awards are subject to availability of funds.

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).

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 ET on the deadline date. The electronic submission form can be found at https://umd.infoready4.com/.

Application materials include:

- **Universal Funding Form** with department/college signatures affirming willingness to support **50%** of the request.
- **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), and project summary (suggested length: 150 words max).

Expectations of Applicants and Awardees:

- An annual progress report must be completed for 2 consecutive years.
- 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.

If these expectations are not met, the faculty member's department may not be eligible for New Directions funds for one year.

NOTE: All Maryland Catalyst Fund Awards are subject to availability of funds.

II. Fearless Ideation Workshops
(new in FY19)

Purpose:

Fearless Ideation Workshop awards support organized events with each of the following goals:

- Identify complementary research strengths and explore potential collaborations.
- Develop high potential, innovative research ideas that require the involvement of multiple disciplines and leverage unique strengths within UMD.
- Facilitate new and enhance existing collaborations among faculty.
- Generate "competitive intelligence" analyses to identify gaps in the current body of research, assess future funding opportunities, and generate insights on next steps.

Fearless Ideation Workshop Awards are **not** intended to fund convening events designed only for information exchange among scholars but rather exploratory events that seed new ideas and large initiatives for future research collaborations.

Submission Cycle:

- Applications are accepted four times a year: February 1, May 1, August 1, and Nov. 1
- Notification to applicants/awardees is anticipated within 2-3 weeks following the submission deadline.
- Meeting with the Research Development Office is recommended prior to submission.

Support Provided:

Up to $15,000 per award. We anticipate funding 6–8 events per year. Awarded funds are distributed up-front. All funds must be used within 12 months of award.

Cost Share:

Award support will be split evenly – 50% of the requested amount funded by the VPR, and the benefiting Unit(s) covering the remaining 50%.

Eligibility Criteria:

- Events must be organized by faculty champions from **at least two distinct disciplines that do not typically partner together**.
- Both tenured/tenure-track and professional track faculty (assistant research scientist or higher) whose full-time, home position is at UMD are eligible to apply.
- Eligible ideation events may include faculty from other institutions (especially University of Maryland in Baltimore), but a **majority** of expected attendees must be from UMD.
- Faculty may serve as champion for a maximum of one Fearless Ideation Workshop award per academic year.

Award Fund Use:

Award funds may be applied to a range of cost categories, including but not limited to:

- Event space;
- Participant travel (in adherence to UMD travel policies);
- Professional facilitators;
- Logistics/conference services;
- External consultation for graphics or editing support;
- Small follow-up seed funding;

Fearless Workshop champions may also request the support of a *proposal development manager*, to attend the ideation and support development of follow-on proposal writing. (Learn more at https://research.umd.edu/proposal-development-services.)

Review Criteria and Process:

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

- **Technical Vision**: Is the proposed ideation theme a high potential area for exploration? Is the timing right to explore this opportunity? Are the proposing faculty champions appropriately trained and well-suited to lead this work? Does the investigative team bring complementary and integrated expertise to the ideation effort?
- **Societal Relevance**: What are the potential implications of this research for society? Does this ideation proposal address a problem area with potential regional, national, or global significance? Does the proposed effort align with strategic goals of the department, college, or the University of Maryland?
- **Ideation plan:** Are the proposed timeline and budget reasonable? Do proposing faculty champions offer a solid vision, including plans to follow up with participants afterward and make sure the discussion does not end with the conclusion of the event? Does the proposal describe strategies for promoting the workshop to all interested participants and for ensuring demographically diverse representation?
  - Ideation proposals that integrate social science or humanities disciplines with STEM disciplines, and that incorporate both junior and senior faculty, are encouraged.
  - Inclusion of faculty champions or attendees from University of Maryland at Baltimore is encouraged where appropriate.
- **Prospects for New Funding:** Is the workshop bringing researchers together to help identify collaborations that could lead to the pursuit of new funding opportunities?

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 ET on the deadline date. The electronic submission form can be found at https://umd.infoready4.com/.

Application materials include:

- **Universal Funding Form** with department/college signatures affirming willingness to support **50%** of the request.
- **Project description:** not to exceed three single-spaced pages, with one-inch margins and at least 11-point font. The description should clearly provide:
  o Why the topics and timing are right for Fearless Ideation.
  o Objectives for the proposed ideation event(s).
  o Strategies for promoting the ideation effort to all interested participants.
  o A summary timeline for implementation.
- **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.
  o Include details of unspent start-up, gift, or retention funding
- **Biosketch or CV** for the submitting champion faculty and for other lead co-investigators if applicable (up to two pages each)

The InfoReady online submission form will also request: Title; co-champion information (names, titles, affiliations and emails); and a project summary **including the purpose of the Fearless Ideation effort, the intended audience, collaborators, and a summary timeline for implementation**. (suggested length: 150 words max)

Expectations of Applicants and Awardees:

The expected products of Fearless Ideation Workshop award program include:

- A white paper within three months of ideation effort end summarizing:
  o Core themes that emerged from the workshop discussions
  o UMD-internal assets (faculty, research programs, infrastructure) and unique capabilities
  o Potential funders and funding programs to support this work
  o "Competitive intelligence" analysis such as: What research groups are the current leaders (or likely competitors) in this problem space? Who has converging/competing interests? Who are your institutional peers?
- Within two years of award, at least one related multidisciplinary research proposal should be submitted to an external funding agency.

If these expectations are not met, the faculty member's department may not be eligible for Fearless Ideation Workshop funds for one year.

NOTE: All Maryland Catalyst Fund Awards are subject to availability of funds.

III. Big Opportunity Fund for Proposal Support
(formerly Tier 2)

Purpose:

The Big Opportunity Fund (BOF) offers proposal preparation support to incentivize faculty to pursue and be more competitive for large, high-visibility, externally-funded research opportunities (typically ≥$2M/year for multiple years). Such awards contribute to the university's overall research volume, impact, and reputation.

Submission Cycle:

- Applications are accepted on a rolling basis and reviewed after the 20th of each month. Please allow two weeks to process these applications.
- Applications should be submitted prior to incurring proposal development expenses, preferably more than two months prior to the agency submission date.
- Meeting with the Research Development Office is highly encouraged prior to submission.

Support Provided:

Up to $50,000 per award.

Funds are distributed on an **expense reimbursement model** from ledger expenditures, reimbursed on a rolling basis to accommodate the shorter proposal development timeline. Proposals must detail budgets with accompanying justification.

Cost Share:

- VPR will fund 33.33% of the requested amount.
- Provost will fund 33.33% of the requested amount.
- The benefiting Unit(s) cost shares 33.33%.

For proposals involving multiple units, formulas used for the "unit" cost-sharing portions are at the discretion of the benefiting entities. It is common, though not a requirement, for units to contribute funds proportionate to their relative involvement in the project.

Eligibility Criteria:

- Both tenured/tenure-track and professional track faculty (assistant research scientist or higher) whose full-time, home position is at UMD are eligible to apply.
- PI must be actively pursuing a large externally-funded award (typically ≥$2M/year for multiple years) involving multiple investigators.
- Proposal must be UMD-led with the majority of the funds remaining at UMD.
- The award if won should contribute to UMD overall impact and reputation.

Big Opportunity Funds may be requested prior to the release of the agency's formal request for proposals if an expected announcement date is known. If the opportunity to be pursued is a limited submission, Big Opportunity Funds cannot be requested until the university has officially designated its eligible candidates. There is no lifetime limit to the number of BOF awards granted to a given PI.

NOTE: All Maryland Catalyst Fund Awards are subject to availability of funds.

Award Fund Use:

The fund use for this award should be considered moderately flexible but must be outlined in the proposal budget because funds will only be awarded as a **reimbursement for expenses already posted to the ledger**.

Uses include but are not limited to:

- Collection of pilot data;
- Student support;
- Summer salary (up to one month);
- Required travel;
- Workshops;
- Hiring of outside technical editors/writers;
- Proposal graphics development;
- Use of specialized consultants such as programmers or web developers.

Review Criteria and Process:

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

- **Quality of Proposed Research:** Does the PI indicate a solid research plan, responsive to funder priorities, that is likely well-placed for funding consideration?
- **Increased Competitiveness:** Do the proposal and team have a high probability of success? (e.g. strong research plan well-aligned to the solicitation and priorities of the funding agency) Will funding this BOF application lead to the development of an outstanding research proposal? Will the proposed planning and research tasks make the team more competitive in obtaining external funding?
- **Enhanced Collaboration:** Will the funds enhance collaboration and yield a well-integrated proposal?

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 through https://umd.infoready4.com/.

Application materials include:

- **Universal Funding Form** with department/college signatures affirming willingness to support a total of **33%** of the request.
- **Project Narrative:** Prepare a two (2) to three (3) page project narrative that describes the targeted externally-funded research opportunity and the proposed research effort, and details all proposal planning activities. This document should clearly outline:
  - The project's intellectual merit;
  - How the project fits into the university's stated priorities;
  - Proposal preparation plan and how the activities/expenses to be covered by the BOF will help to make the external proposal more competitive for funding;
  - All UMD co-PI's and any university sub-awards;
- **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), and Project summary (suggested length: 150 words max).

Expectations of Applicants and Awardees:

- Applicants must provide a complete copy of their proposal to the Research Development Office following submission to the agency.
- Big Opportunity Fund awardees **must** notify the Research Development Office in writing when a decision (either funded or not funded) has been made by the agency. Failure to do so may impact eligibility for future Maryland Catalyst Fund consideration.
- BOF awardees may submit expense ledger reimbursement reports to the VPR and Provost business offices on a rolling basis; funds will be reviewed for adherence to the proposal budget and allowable uses before reimbursement occurs.

IV.   **Strategic Growth Fund** for Proposal Support

Purpose:

The Strategic Growth Fund (SGF) aims to incentivize faculty to **pursue and be more competitive for high-visibility, externally-funded research awards in areas in which the University seeks to quickly build capacity and/or visibility**. SGFs support proposals that are not large enough to qualify for Big Opportunity Funds but have high strategic potential for the University. They also broaden and diversify the base of faculty who can be supported by proposal development funds.

There are three competition tracks:

Track A: **Priority Topic awards**
Track B: **Headliner Awards**
Track C: **Future Research Leaders**

SGF Priority Topic awards catalyze research relevant to priority research areas identified by the Vice President for Research and Provost.

As of October 1, 2018, SGF priority topics are:

- Aging
- Trusted Artificial Intelligence and Autonomy
- Medical or Environmental Humanities
- Water Security

Future updates will be posted at https://research.umd.edu/development/MarylandCatalystFund.

SGF Headliner Awards support faculty to be more competitive for particularly prestigious extramural research awards not eligible for Big Opportunity Funds. Eligible award programs for the **2018–2019 academic year** are:

- Department of Defense Multidisciplinary University Research Initiative (MURIs); and
- Foundation proposals requesting > $1M total.

SGF Future Research Leaders awards support talented faculty seeking to lead their first multi-investigator award, that in turn would better prepare them to apply for, win, and succeed in large campus center awards in the future. Applications should support mid-sized awards (at least $1M total) seen as building toward larger initiatives.

Submission Cycle:

- Applications are accepted on a rolling basis and reviewed after the 20th of each month. Please allow two weeks to process these applications.
- Applications **must** be submitted prior to incurring proposal development expenses, preferably at least two months prior to the agency submission.
- **Meeting with the Research Development Office is highly encouraged prior to submission.**

NOTE: All Maryland Catalyst Fund Awards are subject to availability of funds.

Support Provided:

Up to $15,000 per award

Funds are distributed on an **expense reimbursement model** from ledger expenditures, reimbursed on a rolling basis to accommodate the shorter proposal development timeline.

Cost Share:

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

Funds are distributed on a **reimbursement model from ledger expenditures**. All applicants must document in the proposal how the funds will be used, via a budget with accompanying justification.

Eligibility Criteria:

- Both tenured/tenure-track and professional track faculty (assistant research scientist or higher) whose full-time, home position is at UMD are eligible to apply.
- PIs must be actively pursuing a high visibility award with a total budget over $1M and average annual budget ideally over $400 K, with the majority of the funds remaining at UMD.
- Track-specific eligibility criteria:
  - *Priority Topics:* External proposal under consideration must be multi-investigator and propose a novel approach to one of the priority topics defined above.
  - *Headliner Awards:* External proposal under consideration must be in one of the eligible award programs, or the PI must make a compelling case for how winning the targeted proposal would significantly raise the visibility and external recognition of the University.
  - *Future Research Leaders:* Application must include a letter of support from the Dean or Associate Dean for Research of the PI's College.
- Faculty chosen as the principal investigator for past Strategic Growth Funds awards **are not eligible** to compete for SGF awards of the same track **within the next five (5) years**.

Strategic Growth Funds may be requested prior to the release of the agency's formal request for proposals if an expected announcement date is known. If the opportunity to be pursued is a limited submission, Strategic Growth Funds cannot be requested until the university has officially designated its nominees.

Award Fund Use:

Funds used for this award should be considered moderately flexible but must be outlined in the proposal budget because funds will only be awarded as a **reimbursement for expenses already posted to the ledger**.

Uses include but are not limited to:

- Collection of pilot data;
- Student support;
- Required travel;
- Planning workshops;
- Hiring of outside technical editors/writers;
- Proposal graphics development;
- Use of specialized consultants such as programmers or web developers

Review Criteria and Process:

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

- **Quality of Proposed Research:** Does the PI indicate a solid research plan, responsive to funder priorities, that is likely well-placed for funding consideration? Do the proposal and team have a high probability of funding success?
- **Increased Competitiveness:** Do the proposal and team have a high probability of success? (e.g. strong research plan well-aligned to the solicitation and priorities of the funding agency) Will funding this SGF application lead to the development of an outstanding research proposal? Will the proposed planning and research tasks make the team more competitive in obtaining external funding?
- **Enhanced Collaboration:** Will the funds enhance collaboration and yield a well-integrated proposal?
- Track-specific evaluation criteria:
  - *Priority Topics:* Will the proposed interdisciplinary research advance the field of the priority topic in a novel way? Is the proposed effort likely to inspire follow-on work by others in the field? Will research success lead to new lasting technical capacity that could help establish UMD as a leader in the discipline?
  - *Headliner Awards:* External proposal under consideration must be in one of the eligible award programs.
  - *Future Research Leaders:* Does the applying PI have a record of success in securing grants and working with teams? Does the PI articulate a long-term research vision and frame how this project might build toward a larger initiative? The proposal should clearly articulate significance or expected impact on the faculty member's professional development.

NOTE: All Maryland Catalyst Fund Awards are subject to availability of funds.

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. The electronic submission form can be found at https://umd.infoready4.com/.

Application materials include:

- **Universal Funding Form** with department/college signatures affirming willingness to support **50%** of the request.
- **Project Narrative:** Prepare a two (2) to three (3) page project narrative that describes the targeted externally-funded research opportunity and the proposed research effort, and details all proposal planning activities. This document should clearly outline:
    - The project's intellectual merit;
    - How the project fits into the university's stated priorities;
    - Project research plan;
    - Pre-proposal preparation plan and how the activities/expenses to be covered by SGF will help to make the external proposal more competitive for funding;
    - All UMD co-PI's and any university sub-awards.
- **Budget and Justification:** Please provide an estimated budget and justification for planned SGF 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)
- *Future Research Leaders* **track only***:* Letter of support from the Dean or Associate Dean for Research of the PI's College

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

Expectations of Applicants and Awardees:

- Applicants **must** provide a complete copy of their proposal to the Research Development Office following submission to the agency.
- Strategic Growth Fund (SGF) awardees **must** notify the Research Development Office in writing when a decision (either funded or not funded) has been made by the agency. Failure to do so may impact eligibility for future Maryland Catalyst Fund consideration.
- SGF awardees may submit expense ledger reimbursement reports to the VPR and Provost business offices on a rolling basis; funds will be reviewed for adherence to the proposal budget and allowable uses before reimbursement occurs.
- *Future Research Leaders* **track**: Program success will largely be measured by assessing not only proposal success but impact on the faculty member's professional development. In a brief annual report, awardees should alert the VPR to large proposals (>$1M) submitted to external funding agencies and along with other professional milestones for at least two years following SGF award.

NOTE: All Maryland Catalyst Fund Awards are subject to availability of funds.

V. Reinforcement Grants for Operational Support
(formerly Tier 4)

Purpose:

Provide operating support to cover activities critical to the execution of a proposed large-scale externally-funded research award, when grant funding is not available to cover certain operational expenses.

Such operating support is intended to help build infrastructure for new center-level research awards whose establishment improves the university's overall impact and reputation. Reinforcement Grants aim to make major funded research programs more productive and more competitive for future renewal.

Submission Cycle:

- Applications are accepted on a rolling basis and reviewed monthly.
- Applications must be submitted prior to funding agency decision.
- **Meeting with the Research Development Office is <u>mandatory</u> prior to submission.**

Support Provided:

- Up to the equivalent of 10% of awarded IDC that stays at UMD.
- Start-up operating support can be provided for up to the first 5 years of award depending on the term of the establishing grant/contract.
- Reinforcement Grants are eligible for a one-time renewal of up to a second five years. If renewed, in years 6–10 the percentage of support from the VPR and the Provost will decline 1% per year.
- Funds are distributed on an **expense reimbursement model** from ledger expenditures, reimbursed twice a year.

Cost Share:

For new applications and applications for renewal,

- VPR will fund 25% of the requested amount.
- Provost will fund 25% of the requested amount.
- The benefiting Unit(s) cost shares 50%.

Note: Funds are distributed on a **front-loading** (vs. reimbursement) model. Applicants must document how the funds will be used, via a detailed budget with accompanying justification.

Eligibility Criteria:

- Both tenured/tenure-track and professional track faculty (assistant research scientist or higher) whose full-time, home position is at UMD are eligible to apply.
- PI must be actively pursuing a large externally-funded award (typically ≥$2M/year for multiple years) involving multiple investigators.
- Proposal must be UMD-led with the majority of the funds remaining at UMD.
  The award if won should contribute to UMD overall impact and reputation.
- The application for Reinforcement Grants must be submitted **prior** to the funding agency decision; funds are only awarded if the proposal is successful.

Award Fund Use:

Uses include administrative and operational support activities, including but not limited to:

- Coordinator/administrator support;
- New proposal generation;
- Outreach to partners;
- General equipment and operating expenses;
- Training;
- Required travel not covered by award;
- Data archiving costs;
- Center communication efforts (graphics, website, social media platforms etc.).

Review Criteria and Process:

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

- The extent to which the research initiative reflects University priorities;
- The perceived long term value to the research effort of the activities to be supported.
- The degree to which the proposal has demonstrated a plan for long-term financial sustainability of the research initiative, given the eventual expiration of Reinforcement Grant funds;
- Demonstrated, significant advocacy from department(s)/college(s).

NOTE: All Maryland Catalyst Fund Awards are subject to availability of funds.

Application Process and Materials:

In addition to completing the electronic submission form, all application materials must be uploaded in one PDF file and submitted at https://umd.infoready4.com/.

Application materials include:

- **Universal Funding Form** with department/college/unit signatures affirming willingness to support **50%** of the request
- **Project Narrative:** Prepare a one (1) to three (3) page project narrative that describes the overall project, the targeted externally-funded research opportunity, and the proposed activities to be supported by the Reinforcement Grant. This document should clearly outline:
    - The project's intellectual merit;
    - How the project fits into the university's stated priorities;
    - Project research plan;
    - How the activities/expenses to be covered by Reinforcement Grant funding will help to ensure the success of the research program, if funded;
    - All UMD co-PI's and any university sub-contracts;
- **Budget and Justification:** Please provide an estimated budget and justification for the planned expenditures. The budget justification should detail the following:
    - Which expenses will be borne by the agency program (if awarded);
    - Which expenses will not covered by the agency program;
    - Detailed outline of how the equivalent 10% IDC will be spent and justification for how/why this will best support the program
- **Biosketch or CV** for the submitting principal investigator and for any co-investigators if applicable (up to two pages each)
- **Letter of Endorsement** from department/college leadership

Expectations of Applicants and Awardees:

- Applicants must provide a complete copy of their proposal to the VPR's Research Development Office following submission to the agency.
- Applicants must notify the VPR's Research Development Office in writing when a decision (either funded or not funded) has been made by the agency.
- Awardees must submit yearly progress reports on the research program progress.
- Unit-earned DRIF distributions will be allocated directly to departments and colleges whose faculty participate in the research program, based on level of faculty contribution negotiated at time of proposal submission.