
PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) was founded in 1969 by the Texas Legislature as a university dedicated to the advancement of knowledge through research and discovery, teaching and learning, community engagement and public service. As an institution of access and excellence, UTSA embraces multicultural traditions and serves as a center for intellectual and creative resources as well as a catalyst for socioeconomic development and the commercialization of intellectual property for Texas, the nation and the world.

The Instituto Tecnológico de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey (TEC) was founded in 1943 by Eugenio Garza Sada and a group of Mexican entrepreneurs who implemented their vision for a cutting-edge educational institution. TEC is a private, non-profit institution, independent from political and religious affiliations. Tecnológico de Monterrey seeks to develop leaders who embrace an entrepreneurial spirit, a humanistic outlook, and are competitive on an international scale.

The three main objectives of this program are to provide seed funding to:

- Support innovative, early-stage collaborative projects that further our mutual research interests
- Strengthen connections among UTSA and TEC campuses
- Enable the development and submission of proposals for larger-scale support from federal, state, industrial, and/or private funding sources, either domestic or international, ultimately resulting in contracts from government or industry.

Preference will be given to proposals that:

1. Have a high potential for extramural funding,
2. Have significant scientific merit
3. Build or strengthen cross-disciplinary research partnerships between UTSA and TEC

Targeted Research: Funding will be made available for **AI research solving real-world challenges in the following application areas:**

- **Aging** – Challenges posed by aging itself, as well as an overall aging population, with a focus on improving quality of life through a comprehensive approach that covers physical, mental, social, legal, and ethical issues.
- **Food Security** – Challenges posed by food insecurity with a focus on improving the food production chain, from sustainable agriculture to distribution and consumption, striving for long-term solutions that contribute to economic stability, and sustainable development goals.
- **Industry 5.0** – Encourages collaboration between humans and advanced technologies in manufacturing and logistics, aiming for sustainable, efficient, and human-centric industrial processes.
- **Mobility** – Targets advancements in smart mobility technologies like electrification, autonomy, and connectivity to improve urban mobility and consumer experiences.
- **Water Supply** – Challenges posed by inadequate water supply, including scarcity, pollution and climate, aiming to ensure sustainable water and sanitation management.

- **Sustainable Energy** – Focuses on sustainable energy solutions, including the use of renewable resources and smart infrastructure to promote environmental sustainability and economic growth.

COLLABORATION REQUIREMENT

Proposals must include at least one UTSA PI and one TEC PI (minimum 2 team members) as defined by the UTSA and TEC requirements pages. Both UTSA and TEC PIs will have equal PI status; however, UTSA PIs will be identified as lead and are responsible for:

- Adhering to the Office of Sponsored Projects 15/5 rule
- Submitting Notices of Intent ([InfoReady](#) and UTSA OSP)
- Full Proposal Submissions (InfoReady and UTSA OSP)
- Abiding by all UTSA Institutional Policies

Throughout this guidance, items marked with **[UTSA ONLY]** are UTSA-specific and should be completed by the UTSA PI only. Items marked with **[TEC ONLY]** are TEC-specific and should be reviewed and completed by the UTESM PI.

If a Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA) is required, one should be drafted (by either organization's contract office) and approved by both parties prior to funding distribution.

AWARD INFORMATION

- **Estimated Number of Awards:** 4, subject to availability of funds.
- **Maximum Total Funding Per Project:** \$40,000*
- **Performance Period:** October 6, 2025 – September 31, 2026

*Each project will receive up to \$40,000 (USD) (\$20,000 TEC; \$20,000 UTSA)

Rollover to the next fiscal year and/or project extensions are not allowable. Funding not spent/encumbered by each organization's funding timeline requirements will automatically revert to the originating office.

PROGRAM TIMELINE

March 14, 2025	Request for Proposals (RFP) Released
April 11, 2025	Virtual Teaming Event (Register Here)
April 23, 2025	Notice of Intent due to UTSA's InfoReady system (by 5:00pm CST)
May 14, 2025	UTSA 15/5 Deadline for Routing Submission
May 21, 2025	Proposals Due through UTSA's InfoReady system (by 5:00 pm CST)
August 2025	Awards Announced
October 6, 2025	Performance Period Begins (Funds Available)
March 2026	Project Update Meeting
September 1, 2026	UTSA Funds Must Be Spent (Unspent Funds Will Be Swept)
September 30, 2026	Performance Period Ends
October 31, 2026	Final Project Report Due
October 31, 2027	Deadline for Extramural Funding Submission

NOTICE OF INTENT (NOI) INSTRUCTIONS [UTSA ONLY]

UTSA will be the lead institution for the collection and administration of this grant program. Information provided in NOIs will not be considered final and can be revised for full application submission, however, will be used by the Office of Research Seed Grants office to prepare for review.

Note—This is a notification process that is separate and distinct from a notification to the College Research Administrators for application development and approval prior to submission (described below). All UTSA faculty submitting a seed grant must comply by the institutional [15/5 rule](#).

Submit your NOI through InfoReady ([linked here](#)) by **5pm CST on April 23, 2025**.

- UTSA-TEC Program NOIs request the following:
 - UTSA and TEC PI (primary applicants) name, email college and department
 - UTSA and TEC PI (primary applicants) name, college and department
 - Proposed Project Title
 - 3-5 sentence project overview
 - 5 keywords related to project scope

INTERNAL PROPOSAL ROUTING & SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS [UTSA ONLY]

The UTSA PI is responsible for submitting all required materials as one combined proposal through the UTSA system(s).

1. Route the application through a [College Research Administration Team](#) using the standard process. Contact your respective [College Research Administration Team](#) to complete a [Notice to the College Research Administration Team](#) (first page of the Routing Form) at least 15 business days prior to the proposal deadline (*May 14, 2025*)
2. Submit application through InfoReady sire, as instructed in email notifications of advancement, by **5pm CST on May 21, 2025**.
InfoReady applicant guide with video available [here](#).

Regulatory Compliance:

Projects are subject to [Institutional Review Board \(IRB\)](#), [Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee \(IACUC\)](#), [Institutional Biosafety Committee \(IBC\)](#), export control, conflict of interest, and campus safety regulations and approvals. The PI is expected to have thoroughly investigated all [regulatory components](#) of the intended research and to have discussed relevant components in the proposal. Prior to making an award, required protocols must be in place.

PROPOSAL ELEMENTS

Application components required at the time of submission are listed below. If components are missing and/or formatting is not compliant, the application will not be reviewed.

Preferred Upload Method to Minimize Download Errors:

Applications should be uploaded in one standard Adobe PDF [binder](#). Adobe Portfolios should not be used for final submission.

Formatting requirements for items with an asterisk (*) below: single-spaced, 12pt Times New Roman font, 1" margins all around.	
Component	Maximum Length
1. Abstract	400 words (<i>enter in InfoReady</i>)
2. Project Description*	5 pages, including graphics
3. Joint Work Plan *	2 pages, including graphics
4.. Biographical Sketch from each PI/Co-PIs	3-5 pages, as limited by the format selected
5. Budget	Use Attachment A
6. Budget Justification*	2 pages
7. UTSA Award Requirement	Use Attachment B
8. TEC Award Requirement	Use Attachment C
<i>Items NOT to include in final upload:</i>	
1. Abstract (InfoReady abstract is required, but an additional abstract should not be included in the single PDF document uploaded to the platform) 2. Program Guidance's 3. Page Numbers 4. Letters of Support 5. Headers and Footers 6. Bookmarks	

1. ABSTRACT (400 WORD LIMIT)

InfoReady will prompt applicants to include a clear executive summary (or abstract) summarizing the essential content of the proposed research effort, including the objectives, benefits, and significance of the proposed research effort.

2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION (5 PAGE LIMIT, INCLUDING GRAPHICS)

Collaborators or other personnel who are not identified as Co-PI's must have clearly defined roles in this general section.

The project description must include, in this order:

- General background
- Intellectual merit, significance of the research and the potential impact on the researcher and discipline
- Impact of this research on society and application areas where this research can or will be applied
- Specific goals, objectives and anticipated results
- Description of methods, including anticipated barriers/technical difficulties and how these will be addressed

- Description of resources needed for this project (equipment, materials, etc.), with indication about their availability
- Describe the potential for extramural funding to support the proposed research in future years.

Additional information in an appendix is not allowed. A violation of this format will result in your proposal not being reviewed. A list of references/citations, if necessary, should be listed after the Project Description section. This list does not count against page limitations.

NOTICE REGARDING CONFIDENTIALITY: It is important that you consult the [Office of Commercialization and Innovation](#) before disclosing details of any research that may be patentable. Any confidential information in this proposal must be clearly identified by marking “Confidential” at the top and bottom of each page where the confidential information appears.

3. JOINT WORK PLAN (2 PAGES, INCLUDING GRAPHICS)

Summarize the task-level activities to be performed by UTSA and TEC as they relate to the overall project’s objectives. Describe areas of interdependence, the coordination and handoff of interim project materials and data, and the timeline of each organization’s participation in the overall project effort. This section is expected to contain a mixture of narrative and graphical information. Schedule preferably in a Gantt Chart to aid the evaluators’ assessment of the proposed scope, roles, and responsibilities within the team, and collaboration environment.

4. BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES (3-5 PAGES, *as limited by the format selected*)

Biographical sketch attachments must be included for the PIs (primary applicant) and Co-PIs (co-applicants). Each team member may use their own organization’s preferred format ([NSF](#), [NIH](#)) and content for their biographical sketch for this proposal.

5. BUDGET SUMMARY

Budget summaries must be submitted per the tables in Attachment A.

6. BUDGET JUSTIFICATION (2 PAGES)

Details for all proposed expenditures must be described in one budget justification section covering both institutions. For each institution, the budget justification must address each budget line item in Attachment A that contains a proposed cost. The budget justification must convey an integrated understanding of the types of resources necessary to complete the proposed effort. The proposed budget for each institution must conform to that institution’s requirements for internally funded research or grant activity.

Labor: Describe the labor types and levels of effort being proposed. The PIs from each institution must be identified by name; other labor can be characterized by labor category or type and level of effort. Since each institution may use the term “level of effort” differently, define the basis for the level of effort as presented in the justification.

Non-Labor: Describe the type, amount, and estimated cost of allowable purchased materials, services, or travel for the proposed effort.

7. UTSA AWARDEE REQUIREMENTS (see “UTSA Requirements”)

8. TEC AWARDEE REQUIREMENTS (see “TEC Requirements”)

PEER REVIEW

All UTSA and TEC seed grant program proposals will be reviewed by a committee consisting of up to three (3) senior representatives from TEC and up to three (3) experts from UTSA. Committee members will be chosen by the UTSA Office of Research and TEC. Substitutions will be allowed depending upon the project topic/focus. The committee will make a recommendation; however, the UTSA Office of Research and TEC will make the final determination on all funding decisions.

Applications are expected to include all required proposal components and fully and clearly address each criterion. **Proposals will be evaluated using the following weighted criteria:**

<u>Review Criteria (as appropriate within project discipline):</u>	<u>Max. Points</u>
Did the proposal address a feasible plan to obtain extramural funding to support the project in future years?	15
Is the project described in sufficient details and does the proposal provide strong justification for the intellectual merit and significance of this research?	15
Did the proposal demonstrate enhancement of cross-disciplinary research partnerships between UTSA and TEC? Do the investigators have complementary and integrated expertise?	15
Are the overall strategy, methodology, and analyses well-reasoned and appropriate to accomplish the project objectives?	15
Is the societal problem and its scale clearly identified? Will the proposed project help to address this challenge?	10
Are the goals, objectives and anticipated results stated clearly? And are they reasonable, given the funds and time provided?	10
Did the proposal specify the resources needed for this project (labor, equipment, materials, etc.) and indicate their availability?	5
Did the proposal outline a spending plan and thoroughly address each expenditure with a clear justification and calculations? Do proposed costs align with the proposed scope of work?	5
Is the joint work plan executable and realistic? Does it include approaches to resolving barriers, alternative strategies, and benchmarks for success presented?	5
Did the applicant (or team) convey through their biographical sketches that they have appropriate experience and training? And have they demonstrated an ongoing record of accomplishments that have advanced their field(s)?	5
Total Points Possible	100

GRANT ADMINISTRATION

Each PI (primary applicant) is responsible for the administration of grant funds within their respective institutions' rules and regulations. Of utmost importance, each PI (primary applicant) must be certain that over-expenditures do not occur and that all funds are fully expended according to institutional programmatic deadlines. All work must be completed within the performance period.

INTERIM & FINAL REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

A Project Update Meeting will be requested by the UTSA Office of Research and TEC. Each PI (primary applicant) is responsible for submitting a Final Grant Report per the program timeline. Awardees will be provided final reporting instructions prior to the end of their project.

Extramural Grant Submission Required

Awardees must produce a new proposal for extramural funding as part of the final reporting requirements within one year of completion of the project. In exceptional cases, where seed funding may prove the project non-competitive, a waiver of the extramural proposal requirement can be requested from the UTSA Office of Research and TEC. If neither an extramural proposal nor waiver is submitted, no new research funds will be made available to the PI (primary applicant) or Co-PIs (co-applicants) from either institution until an extramural proposal or waiver is submitted. **The PIs (primary applicant) must submit a report describing the extramural proposal submission details by October 31, 2027.**

CONTACT INFORMATION

Lyndsey Lepovitz
Research Program Coordinator
The University of Texas at San Antonio
Email: SeedGrants@utsa.edu

Bertha Sofia Villarreal González
Research Specialist
Tecnológico de Monterrey
Email: sofia.v@TEC.mx

UTSA Requirements

UTSA PI Eligibility & Application Limits

- PIs (primary applicant) and Co-PIs (Co-Applicants) must be full-time, tenure track or tenured faculty at UTSA in residence at time of application and award. *Other personnel or students can be incorporated into a project team, including individuals outside UTSA, however, only those who are UTSA employees or UTSA students can be funded through this program.*
- A faculty member may be designated as PI (primary applicant) on only one proposal per program each application cycle. However, an individual may serve in a Co-PI (co-applicant) or other collaborative role on more than one application each cycle.
- It is the PI's responsibility to ensure all team members are eligible and not exceeding application limitations.
- Faculty identified as PI (primary applicant) or Co-PIs (co-applicants) that have any outstanding reports under previously funded Office of Research awards are ineligible.
- Applicants submitting a proposal closely related to a project previously funded by the Office of Research must demonstrate that the new application is substantially different from the prior award.

Budget Justification Requirements

In addition to providing details for each line item, please provide detailed calculations for how you arrive at totals/estimates and note whether funds will be expensed during the academic year (October – May), summer (June – July), or both.

UTSA Budget Considerations

Funds **can** be used for the following:

- Salaries and/or wages for faculty, postdoctoral fellows, graduate, and undergraduate students. Faculty are not required to request funding for their effort. However, if a faculty member does request funded effort, each faculty member is limited to no more than 1 summer month of effort. This limitation is in place to encourage increased student support. For most T/TT faculty, 1 summer month is the equivalent of 1/9th of your base annual academic salary contract amount. Fringe benefits are paid centrally and should be **excluded** from the budget worksheet.
- Materials and supplies (any item with a cost of less than \$5,000/unit; must be justified as needed for project success)
- Expenses for field work, data collection, archival research, training, educational purposes and/or presentations on research, creative or scholarly activities directly related to the proposed project.
- Consultant fees
- Contracts for activities outside of UTSA (must be clearly and convincingly describes as necessary for successful execution of the proposed project)
- Domestic travel (Data collection, conference presentation, meeting with a collaborator). *Travel must adhere to UTSA Financial Management Operational Guidelines and GSA per diem rates.*

Funds **cannot** be used for the following:

- Fringe benefits
- Equipment (unit cost of \$5,000 and useable life of greater than one year)
- Office equipment, including computers or laptops
- International travel
- Non-UTSA employee travel
- Stipends, scholarships, and/or tuition
- Indirect costs (F&A) costs
- Payment of salaries to non-UTSA personnel
- Refreshments (includes food/refreshments for participants, business meals. Excludes meals while on travel)
- Hosting conferences, workshops, or seminars
- Travel to visit program officer

If additional resources are available to support this project through other sources, the budget justification should include a list of these resources, noting when the resource will be available and who it will be provided by. ***Examples include*** lab or studio time, equipment, computer resources and research assistantships made available through a department, as well as support obtained from external sources. Note: While additional resources can be listed, no formal cost-sharing is allowed.

NOTE – If awarded, applicants are unable to reallocate funds without prior approval from the Office of Research. Please contact SeedGrants@utsa.edu prior to working with your departmental financial lead to allocate funds differently from that described in your approved application. The Office of Research will review costs to ensure it is an allowable expense. When budgeting for participant support, estimate with the most accuracy as possible. Reallocation to and from this spending category is not permissible.

UTSA Requirements (Attachment B, below)

Each UTSA PI (primary applicant) and UTSA Co-PI (co-applicant) must have this document signed by their direct supervisor (i.e. Department Chair or School Director), acknowledging that they have also read all responsibilities and obligations of the applicant and their department or school.

TEC Requirements

Proposal Submission Instructions

UTSA will be the lead institution for collection and administration of this grant program. Their system for receiving the final proposal is called InfoReady; however, this system does not levy any additional requirements on TEC.

TEC PI Eligibility

The project funding will be \$10,000 USD from the Office of Research, in addition to a PhD student supported by CONACYT, bringing the total budget up to \$20,000 USD.

- PIs (primary applicant) and Co-PIs (co-applicants) must be full-time faculty at TEC at the time of application and award. *Other personnel or students can be incorporated into a project team, including individuals outside TEC, however, only those who are TEC employees or TEC students can be funded through this program.*
- A faculty member may be designated as PI (primary applicant) on only one proposal each application cycle. However, an individual may serve in a Co-PI (co-applicant) or other collaborative role on more than one application each cycle.
- It is the PI's responsibility to ensure all team members are eligible and not exceeding application limitations.
- Faculty identified as PI (primary applicant) or Co-PIs (co-applicants) that have any outstanding reports under previously funded Office of Research awards are ineligible.
- Applicants submitting a proposal closely related to a project previously funded by the Office of Research must demonstrate that the new application is substantially different from the prior award.

TEC Budget Considerations

Funds **can** be used for the following:

- Salaries and/or wages for graduate, and undergraduate students.
- Materials and supplies (any item with a cost of less than \$5,000/unit)
- Expenses for field work, data collection, archival research, training, educational purposes and/or presentations on research, creative or scholarly activities directly related to the proposed project.
- Contracts for activities outside of TEC (must be clearly and convincingly described as necessary for successful execution of the proposed project)
- Travel expenses (data collection, conference presentation, meeting with a collaborator).

Funds **cannot** be used for the following:

- Fringe benefits
- Equipment (with a cost larger than \$5,000/unit)
- Office equipment, including computers or laptops.
- Non-TEC employee travel
- Stipends, scholarships and/or tuition
- Indirect costs (facilities and administrative) costs
- Payment of salaries
- Refreshments (Includes food/refreshments for participants, business meals. Excludes meals while on travel)

- Hosting conferences, workshops, or seminars
- Travel to visit program officer

If additional resources are available to support this project through other sources, the budget justification should include a list of these resources, noting when the resource will be available and who it will be provided by. ***Examples include*** lab or studio time, equipment, computer resources, and research assistantships made available through a department, as well as support obtained from external sources. Note: While additional resources can be listed, no formal cost-sharing is allowed.

NOTE- *If awarded, applicants are unable to reallocate funds without prior approval from the Office of Research. Please contact Bertha Sofia Villarreal González (sofia.v@TEC.mx) prior to working with your departmental financial lead to allocate funds differently from that described in your approved application. The Office of Research will review costs to ensure it is an allowable expense. When budgeting for participant support, estimate with most accuracy as possible. Reallocation to and from this spending category is not permissible.*

TEC Requirements (Attachment C)

Each TEC PI (primary applicant) and TEC Co-PI (co-applicant) must have this document signed by their Associate Dean of the Research of the School of Engineering and Science, acknowledging that they have also read all responsibilities and obligations of the applicant and their department or school.

A budget justification (not to exceed one page) must also be submitted describing each of the proposed line-item expenditures for both institutions.

UTSA Budget	
1. Staff Salaries:	\$
2. Wages:	\$
3. Equipment:	\$
4. Travel:	\$
5. Participant Support Costs:	\$
6. Material and Supplies:	\$
7. Other Direct Cost:	\$
Total <u>UTSA</u> Request:	\$

TEC Budget	
8. Total Proposed Labor Cost:	\$
9. Equipment:	\$
10. Travel (Foreign or Domestic):	\$
11. Materials and Supplies:	\$
12. Services and/or Other Direct Costs:	\$
Total <u>TEC</u> Request:	\$

If this research proposal is funded, I agree that my acceptance obligates me to:

1. Maintain program eligibility throughout the award/performance period, including residence and employment with UTSA. If there is any change in employment in residency status, the PI and/or their direct supervisor (department chair, school director, or dean) must notify Office of Research staff at SeedGrants@utsa.edu.
2. Include the following acknowledgement on all publications resulting from this grant award:

“This project was funded (fully or in-part) by The University of Texas at San Antonio, Office of the Vice President for Research and Instituto Tecnológico de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey.”

3. If human subjects, animals or biohazardous materials will be utilized in the research, protocols to the UTSA Institutional Review Board (IRB), Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC), or Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC) must be approved prior to funds being released.
4. Secure prior written approval from the Office of Research if the research to be conducted differs from that describes in the proposal that was funded. Requests for such approval should be submitted to SeedGrants@utsa.edu.
5. Submit at least one extramural proposal for funding to support the future progress of the project, within one year of the completion of the UTSA and TEC Seed Grant.
6. Adhere to the assigned UTSA and TEC Seed Grant Timeline:
 - October 1, 2025** – Grant Performance Period Begins (Funds Available)
 - September 1, 2026** – All UTSA Funds Must Be Spent
 - September 30, 2026** – Grant Performance Period Ends
 - October 31, 2026** – Final Project Report due
 - October 31, 2027** – Extramural Proposal Submission Due
7. Respond to all inquiries and communications from the Office of Research related to the UTSA and TEC Seed Grant funded project.
8. Participate as a reviewer on the Seed Grant Review Committee(s) during award period.

Principal Investigator (PI) / Co-Investigator (Co-PI)	
Signature:	
Project Name:	
Date:	

PI/Co-PI Supervisor “I agree with the faculty’s obligation and responsibilities for this funding opportunity.”	
Approved By:	
Signature:	
Date:	

If this research proposal is funded, I agree that my acceptance obligates me to:

1. Include the following acknowledgement on all publications resulting from this grant award:

"This project was funded (fully or in-part) by The University of Texas at San Antonio, Office of the Vice President for Research, and Instituto Tecnológico de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey."

2. Submit at least one extramural proposal for funding to support the future progress of the project, within one year of the completion of the **UTSA and TEC Seed Grant**.
3. Adhere to the assigned **UTSA and TEC Seed Grant** Timeline:
 - October 1, 2025** – Grant Performance Period Begins (Funds Available)
 - September 1, 2026** – All UTSA Funds Must Be Spent
 - September 30, 2026** – Grant Performance Period Ends
 - October 31, 2026** – Final Project Report due
 - October 31, 2027** – Extramural Proposal Submission Due
4. Comply with TEC policies for proposing and executing internal research projects.

Principal Investigator (PI)	
Signature:	
Project Name:	
Date:	

PI Supervisor "I agree with the PI's obligation and responsibilities for this funding opportunity."	
Approved By:	
Signature:	
Date:	