GUIDELINES FOR APPLICATION TO ISEN BOOSTER RESEARCH AWARDS
FOR RESEARCH IN ENERGY AND SUSTAINABILITY

The Institute for Sustainability and Energy at Northwestern University (ISEN) is an umbrella organization whose unique mission is to promote and carry out transformational science and technological development, as well as education and policy for sustainability and energy.

ISEN meets this challenge through collaborative research, interdisciplinary training, and local and global outreach.

ISEN is pleased to invite semiannual proposals for research from Northwestern faculty and researchers.

1. What is ISEN looking for in a booster research proposal?

All proposals should address significant unmet needs with potential for transformative impact in the areas of energy and sustainability.

The following criteria must be fulfilled:

A. Innovative, high-risk/high-reward ideas for research in the areas of energy and sustainability.
B. New area of research that would not have otherwise been pursued by the principal investigator (PI).
C. Research that will lead to the writing of an external proposal during or after period of support to continue research in energy and sustainability.

Preference will be given to the consideration of proposals that include the following elements:

A. Collaborative research as defined as 2 or 3 investigators who wish to collaborate on a unified research project pertaining to energy and sustainability within or outside NU, with particular priority for Argonne National Laboratory. TEAM SCIENCE proposals are encouraged, especially those that could lead to team science external proposals. Possible collaborations might be found by viewing previously ISEN-funded faculty project at: http://isen.northwestern.edu/research/awards_summary/faculty.php?opt=All

B. ISEN provides Research that is already partially financially leveraged, that could be enhanced through collaboration since ISEN provides additional, rather than full, research funds.

C. ISEN is particularly interested in funding junior tenure-track faculty members starting a new research program or more senior faculty members initiating a new area of research.

D. ISEN particularly welcomes proposals from PIs from underrepresented groups.

Examples of fundable situations:
- I need additional funding to pay for salary and benefits for a post-doc that brings her own partial funding or is partially supported through another grant of mine.
- My NSF award has enough funding for 1.5 graduate student, but needs a boost for 0.5 student (6 months of stipend and tuition) to hire a second student.
- A company is sending a scientist to visit my group with all salary paid, but I need funds for materials and supplies, or user fees for central facilities.

**Examples of unallowable use of funds include:**
- alcohol
- travel
- conference (travel, registration, etc.)
- publication fees, website fees
- entertainment of visitors
- equipment and equipment maintenance
- teaching activities
- outreach activities, e.g., a NU symposium, or inviting of academic visitors

*Note:* Some of these items can be covered through different ISEN funding mechanisms (open to Directors of Centers and other established NU groups only, not individuals).

Generally speaking, the ISEN funds should be used only for research performed on the NU campus. The University policy on allowable costs for grants should be followed as well.

2. **Who is eligible to apply?**

All full-time faculty and researchers at Northwestern University are eligible to apply. Early career investigators and applicants with co-investigators are especially encouraged, as are PIs with collaborators from multiple departments, schools, other universities, national laboratories (particularly Argonne National Laboratory), and companies. Limit one project per PI per submission cycle.

*Please note:* A PI with current ISEN funding is ineligible to apply. A previously ISEN-funded PI who has not submitted post-deliverables is ineligible to apply and/or participate in a team science proposal until the post-deliverables are received. If the PI’s current award will close within a month of the award deadline, then a progress report may be submitted. The progress report would then be included with the new application as part of the evaluation and decision-making process.

3. **Can I apply for matching funds for an external proposal that I will be submitting in the near future?**

No. ISEN is not accepting request for matching funds at this time.

4. **What is the funding level?**

**ISEN provides non-sponsored funding.** Awards will be one-time for a maximum of $45,000 (free of overhead), for a maximum of one year. Proposal submissions for lesser amounts or shorter periods are welcome and may in fact have a better chance of funding. If you submit for a lesser amount, you may submit a renewal request for the same project up to a cumulative total of $45,000.

*Please note:* User Fees are limited to $4,000.
The chance of success depends on the number, cost, and quality of applications, as well as allocated research funds. ISEN anticipate funding a minimum of 10-15 projects annually.

5. **Can I submit a renewal request for a second year of funding?**

Yes, but only up to a cumulative total of $45,000 for a given project.

6. **How do I apply?**

A. Fill in the online application form at the below URL, upload a narrative description of your proposal, and hit submit.

   Online application form: [http://isen.northwestern.edu/application/booster.php](http://isen.northwestern.edu/application/booster.php)

   Please note that the narrative description should fit on at most 2 pages of 11 pt. font size; longer proposals will not be reviewed. Also, we strongly encourage the PI to review budget figures with the department administrator before submitting the application.

B. Electronic notification is sent once the application is saved. Edits may be made until the application is submitted. After submission, the application will be forwarded to the department administrator for budget review and department chair for approval. The **application is not complete until both of these individuals have approved the submission**.

7. **What are the application deadlines?**

   Academic Year 2015-2016: **Spring deadline April 20, 2015 (5:00 p.m. CST), Fall deadline TBA.**

8. **When will awardees be notified?**

All applicants are notified within **8 weeks** of the application deadline. Decisions may be announced sooner.

9. **How is the funding administered?**

Once pre-deliverables have been received, an ISEN chart string, indicating a project ID assigned to the ISEN-funded project, will be sent to the PI and business administrator. Access to the project ID is allowed on a view-only basis by sending the Project Café General Security Access form to Linda Naunapper at ISEN. User Fees are transferred into the PI’s discretionary account. The PI is responsible for any overcharges on user fees.

All requests for approval are checked against the award letter. Funds must be spent within the allotted budget for each category. **For HR approvals, MAKE SURE to include fringe benefits with salary figures.** Funding for vacation payouts or severance pay is unallowable. Clarification may be requested if the items or personnel differ between the request and the award letter.
With prior approval, the PI may make changes (postdoc, grad student, budgets, etc.) to the award. Please notify Linda Naunapper at linda.naunapper@northwestern.edu with a brief (1-2 sentences) explanation for requesting changes from the original proposal.

Monthly budget statements will be sent to the PI and business administrator, indicating the balance and any anticipated funding issues. Please be responsive to any issues addressed in the communication. If the project runs a deficit caused by Payroll, errors will be corrected and the funding returned to ISEN within 30 days. If the project runs a deficit for any other reason, the funding will be returned to ISEN immediately.

A reminder is sent approximately one month before the award closes. Unused funding becomes unavailable to the PI on the day the project ends. The balance is removed and the project ID is closed. On a case-by-case basis, awardees may seek approval for a no-cost extension.

10. How are proposals evaluated?

Proposals are sent to external reviewers for evaluation. Proposals are evaluated against the criteria mentioned under #1 of this document. Funding decisions are made by a multidisciplinary committee of ISEN and NU representatives.

11. Do Northwestern’s effort reporting policies apply to ISEN funding?

Yes. Any effort associated with ISEN funding needs to be included on reports of current and pending support and reported and certified in NU’s effort reporting system. Contact effort@northwestern.edu for more information.

12. What are the deliverables required from awardees to ISEN?

Pre-award:
   A. a signed, original letter agreeing to the terms and conditions in the award letter, including the timely submission of deliverables.
   B. a one-page PowerPoint summary slide of the project (using the PPT template provided by ISEN) for ISEN’s website.

Note: Funds will NOT be transferred to the project chartstring until all pre-award deliverables are received. Delay in project start date for these reasons is not an acceptable justification for seeking a no-cost extension.

Post-award:
   A. A 2-4 page final narrative report in .pdf format
   B. A 1-page PowerPoint summary slide of the work performed during the award, for posting to ISEN’s website, to replace the pre-award project slide

One year from end of funding:
   A. Provide details of publications resulting from the ISEN funded-project. (ISEN must be acknowledged in such publications)
   B. Provide details (funder, title, amount funded, project period) for external proposals resulting from the ISEN-funded project
Occasionally, and as requested by ISEN:
Various information on the project or its results for outreach purposes

13. What if I need more information?

For administrative matters, please contact: Linda Naunapper, Research Administrator
(linda.naunapper@northwestern.edu)

For team science questions, please contact Michael R. Wasielewski, ISEN Executive Director
(m-wasielewski@northwestern.edu)

For technical/scientific matters, please contact
Mark Ratner (ratner@northwestern.edu), ISEN co-Director.