**Request for Proposals**

**2025-2026 Signature Research Initiatives
Cohort 2: Research Informed Civic Engagement**

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| ***Preliminary Proposals* Due** *(required)*: | October 30, 2024 *(due by 5 PM Eastern)* |
| ***Full Proposals Due*** *(by invitation)*: | December 19, 2024 *(due by 5 PM Eastern)* |
| ***Finalist Presentations*** *(by invitation)*: | January 10, 2025 *(In person, time and campus location TBD)* |

## Background and Purpose

Society's grand challenges require grand action. As a community of changemakers, American University is committed to addressing society's challenges through civic engagement that is informed by research and scholarly inquiry. As noted in AU's strategic plan, today's increasingly competitive higher-education landscape requires that universities establish zones of clear distinction. At American University, we have a long history of producing and applying research to advance positive changes in our civic life by working together to contribute to the broader health of our society. **Our zone of clear distinction is in enabling informed civic engagement through research that supports evidence-driven public policy and non-profit and private sector practice.**

This request for proposals launches the [Signature Research Initiative (SRI) Program](#) RICE Cohort selection process. The SRI RICE Cohort projects will align with President Alger's commitment to **advancing Research Informed Civic Engagement (RICE) and research translation for societal impact**, the focus of our National Science Foundation (NSF)-funded [Translating Research into Action Center (TRAC)](#)[1], housed in the AU Office of Research as the newest university-wide center. ***Projects selected for the SRI RICE Cohort*** will further university efforts to mobilize institution-wide research activity with specific emphasis on strengthening AU's position as a leader in translating research into action for societal impact.

### *What is Research Translation?*
The NSF Accelerating Research Translation (ART) program defines research translation as a process of "advancing discoveries made while conducting academic research into tangible solutions that benefit the public. This could shape research processes, such as answering decision-makers' questions, or the communication of findings, such as collaboration on problem solving using existing evidence" ([NSF ART](#)). Research translation activities range from those that involve potential end-users in the initial research design and throughout the research process, to those that focus primarily on translating research that has already been completed. The end users of the research can include policymakers at multiple levels of

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government, non-governmental actors, community associations, private companies, or other actors whose engagement will benefit society.

## Summary of Program Requirements

**Projects selected for the SRI RICE Cohort** will further university efforts to mobilize institution-wide research activity with specific emphasis on strengthening AU's position as a leader in translating research into action for societal impact. **Successful applications** will describe how the seed funding will support translation efforts in at least one of three ways: expanding current translation activities, enabling planned translation activities, or supporting researchers with completed or nearly completed basic research projects who are interested in translating their research into practice but need support.

### Award Information
- Estimated Number of Awards: 3
- Duration: Up to 24 months *(depending on project goals and planned activity)*
- Anticipated funding for each project: $15,000 - $75,000.

The number of awards and average award size/duration are subject to the availability of funds.

### Eligibility and Research Requirements
- **Who May Serve as PI:** Lead applicants must be a full-time faculty member (term, tenure track, continuing appointment, library continuing appointment) at the time of application and the time of project launch.
- **Limit on Number of Proposals per PI or co-PI:** A faculty member may serve on the leadership team of, at most, two applications.
- **Foundational Research Requirement:** The project must be based around foundational research *(content to be translated).*
    - If the aim is to translate completed foundational research, then this research must be completed before the project start date of February 3, 2025. The research must have been conducted by a member of the research team.
    - If the aim of the project is to support a research-policy-partnership that will co-produce research, then the project plan must include an indication of how the initial research will be conducted and translated during the project time period.

## Proposal Preparation and Submission Instructions

**Proposal Preparation Instructions**
- **Preliminary Proposals:** Submission of a preliminary proposal is required.
- **Full Proposals:** Full proposals will be by invitation.

**Submission Format Instructions for all proposals (preliminary and full)**
- Use 12-point font, single-spacing, and 1-inch margins for all written documents.
- Submit a single pdf document that includes narrative and appendices as one combined document.
- Submit applications via email to TRAC@american.edu with the subject line **"SRI RICE-[Lead Applicant first and last name]"** in advance of the deadline (Preliminary Proposals: October 30, 2024, by 5 PM Eastern; Invited Full Proposals: December 19, 2024, by 5 PM Eastern).
- No late applications will be accepted.

**Budgetary Information**
- Projects will receive seed funding to enable faculty efforts to translate research into broader societal impact and support research-informed civic engagement.
- Proposed budgets will range between $15,000-$75,000.
- Budget requests may only include translation-related activities. These activities may include workshops, training, services, process implementation, project monitoring and evaluation, community engagement, patents, sustainable partnerships, and related efforts (this is not an exhaustive list of activities). Preliminary proposals must include a summary budget with justification. Full proposals must include the budget template along with budget justification.

**Submission and Selection Process**
The SRI RICE cohort submission and selection process includes three phases: preliminary proposal (open call), full proposal (by invitation), and finalist presentations (by invitation).

*Phase 1 – Preliminary proposal*
Preliminary proposals will consist of a 2–3-page white paper that includes the following:

- *Research Overview*: Provide an overview of the research to be translated (background with support literature, research question(s), methods, results (if applicable), status (completed with date, in-progress), sponsor (if applicable), and collaborators (if applicable).

- *Research Translation*: Describe the target audience for research translation. Indicate who they are and what evidence exists that they need and are interested in engaging with the proposed research. Describe the research team's prior relationship with this audience (if applicable). Describe the proposed translation activities and discuss why these activities have the potential to generate significant societal impact, strengthen the university's reputation, support research-informed civic engagement, and/or increase

opportunities for external sponsorship. Who will benefit from the research translation? Briefly describe how you will define success.

- *Capacity*: Discuss the lead AU participants – who will lead the effort and what are their qualifications? If this is a team, do you have a history or plan for the collaboration? Will any students be involved in the effort? Discuss any partners or collaborators outside of the university (if applicable). Summarize any existing resources (financial or other) for supporting the research translation (if applicable).

- *Timeline and Budget*: Summarize proposed project timeline and the budget request (a completed budget template is not required in the preliminary proposal phase).

*Phase 2 – Full Proposal (By Invitation)*
Applicants invited to submit a full proposal will be notified via email to the lead applicant.

Full proposals will include a proposal summary, an expanded treatment of the sections briefly outlined in the preliminary proposal, and the appendices described below. Please note the page length recommendations:

- **Proposal Summary (1 page maximum)**
- **Project Description (5 page maximum)**
    - *Research Overview*: Provide an overview of the research to be translated (background with support literature, research question(s), methods, results (if applicable), status (completed with date, in-progress), sponsor (if applicable), and collaborators (if applicable).

    - *Research Translation*: Describe the target audience for research translation. Indicate who they are and what evidence exists that they need and are interested in engaging with the proposed research. Describe the research team's prior relationship with this audience (if applicable). Describe the proposed translation activities and discuss why these activities have the potential to generate significant societal impact, strengthen the university's reputation, support research-informed civic engagement, and/or increase opportunities for external sponsorship. Who will benefit from the research translation? *De*scribe your plan to assess the efficacy of the research translation activities. How will you define success? How will you collect information on the relationship between your activities and these outcomes? How will you know when your proposed translation is complete?

    - *Capacity*: Discuss the lead AU participants – who will lead the effort and what are their qualifications? If this is a team, do you have a history or plan for the collaboration? Will any students be involved in the effort? Discuss any partners or collaborators outside of the university (if applicable). Summarize any existing resources (financial or other) for supporting the research translation (if applicable).

- *Budget* **(2-page narrative maximum, plus required budget template):** Provide a detailed budget narrative justification supporting all line-item budget requests on the budget template

- **Appendices (see page limits below):** Appendices are required and are not included in the narrative page count.
  - Appendix A – Phase 1 preliminary-proposal (with no revisions).
  - Appendix B - Biographies or brief center descriptions of no more than 1 page per participant.
  - Appendix C – DEIA plan that describes how DEIA principles will be enacted through the proposed translation (1 page maximum)
  - Appendix D – Project work plan, including a basic description of the main activities and proposed timeline (2 page maximum)

*Phase 3 – Finalist Presentations (By Invitation)*
Projects selected as SRI RICE Cohort finalists will be invited to brief their proposed project to the TRAC leadership team and the SRI RICE selection committee. Each 1-hour briefing will be held in-person (on campus) and will be open to the public. Finalists will receive a briefing template and specific instructions upon notification of their selection. Final slides will be due to the committee on January 9, 2025, at 5pm Eastern. Presentations will be scheduled during the Ann Ferren Conference on January 10, 2025. Time and specific location TBD.

**Selection Process**
- *Selection of Full Proposals*: Members of the TRAC leadership team will review the preliminary proposals and select the projects invited to submit full proposals. The TRAC leadership team includes Rachel Borchardt, Raychelle Burks, Diana Burley, Susanna Campbell, Jordan Tama, and Bei Xiao. The number of proposals advanced to the full proposal round will be determined based on the pool of applicants, proposed project duration and funding requests, and the availability of funds.
- *Selection of Finalists*: The TRAC leadership team will seat the SRI RICE selection advisory committee to support the review of full proposals and recommend finalists to the TRAC leadership team. The selection advisory committee will include representatives from each academic unit who have expertise and experience in research translation and the TRAC leadership team will augment the committee roster as appropriate should additional expertise or insights be required to make final cohort selections. The committee will offer advice and feedback on finalists to the TRAC leadership team. The TRAC leadership team will collaborate with the Vice Provost for Research and Innovation (VPRI) to make finalist selections. The number of finalists is to be determined based on the applicant pool, proposed project duration, funding requests, and the availability of funds.
- *Selection of SRI RICE Cohort*: The VPRI will make final selections of the SRI RICE Cohort in collaboration with the TRAC leadership team and advisory selection committee. The number of SRI RICE Cohort members is to be determined based on the pool of

applicants, proposed project duration and funding requests, and the availability of funds.

**Important Dates**

| Activity | Dates |
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| Information Sessions *(Via Zoom.)* | October 7, 2024 1:00-2:00PM [Register Here](#). October 18, 2024 1:00-2:00PM [Register Here](#). *Tentative: November 18, 2024 9:00-10:00AM [Register Here](#).* |
| Office Hours *(Via Zoom.)* | October 23, 2024 10:00-11:00AM [Register Here](#). October 29, 2024 12:00-1:00PM [Register Here](#). December 2, 2024 3:00-4:00PM [Register Here](#). December 10, 2024 12:00-1:00PM [Register Here](#). |
| Preliminary proposals due | October 30, 2024, 5PM Eastern |
| Notifications/Invitations for full proposals | November 20, 2024 |
| Full proposals (By invitation) due | December 19, 2024, 5PM Eastern |
| Finalist presentations (in-person): Slides due 1/9, Live briefings 1/10 | January 9 & 10, 2025 |
| SRI RICE Cohort Announced | January 17, 2025 |
| SRI RICE Cohort Start Date | February 1, 2025 |