

The Institute for Society, Culture, and Environment (ISCE)

2024-25 ISCE Social Science PREP Program

Preparing your Research for an Extramural Proposal

The Institute for Society, Culture, and Environment (ISCE), a Virginia Tech research investment institute, is offering an opportunity for a cohort of faculty members in the [social sciences](#) who are planning to submit a research grant proposal to a federal agency (e.g., NIH, NSF, NEH) for funding in the next year. The program is intended for faculty who are relatively new to the proposal writing process, or whose prior proposals for which they have served as PI or a co-investigator have not been funded, but who are actively pursuing an externally funded research agenda. Faculty selected for the program will receive ISCE funding to support activities related to the development of their proposal and mentoring to prepare the proposal to be submitted no later than August 2025.

Program: This two-semester, structured program consists of didactic and interactive sessions where cohort members learn (a) the grantsmanship process, including how to write a compelling narrative and develop a budget; and (b) to craft a competitive grant proposal.

Anticipated fall activities include:

- Mandatory 1 to 2 in-person sessions per month to learn grant writing basics and review funding agency requirements; and
- Development of a compelling 1 to 2-page concept paper that presents the project idea for communicating with a program officer.

Spring semester activities include:

- Mandatory, in-person monthly sessions of approximately 2-3 hours each that will consist of writing, reviewing, critiquing, and discussing cohort member proposals; and
- Development of a complete draft of a proposal to be refined for submission to identified federal agency by August 2025 (or soon thereafter, dependent on agency deadline).

Cohort members are required to spend time outside of sessions on tailored assignments (fall) and preparing their proposals and brief written reviews of their peers' proposals (spring). The ISCE leadership team will provide group and tailored mentoring throughout the year.

Eligibility: Faculty from any department/program across Virginia Tech's campuses whose research addresses significant societal concerns that impact people and places through a social sciences lens.

- The program is designed for faculty in a tenure/tenure-track position at the assistant or associate level.
- Priority will be given to faculty who have an advanced degree in a social science discipline or whose home department is typically within the realm of the social sciences and humanities.
- Proposals for the development of the NSF CAREER Award, student education/training programs, conferences/workshops, or individual fellowships are not supported by this program.

Requirements: Award recipients must commit to attending scheduled in-person meetings, contacting program officers as appropriate, providing feedback on proposal ideas and drafts of cohort members in a timely manner, and submitting a grant proposal by August 2025 (or soon thereafter) for which they will serve as PI. In addition, award recipients will provide ISCE with an annual report

detailing activities leading up to the submission of the proposal as well as publications, presentations, and any other grant submissions for three years after completion of the program.

Timeline: The deadline for applications is **May 30, 2024**. A single pdf file of the application [last name_ISCE_PREP.pdf] should be emailed to Yancey Crawford (yanceyc3@vt.edu). Notification of awards will be made by mid-July 2024. The funds will be transferred to the faculty's home department and must be spent by June 2025 in accordance with university guidelines.

Review Criteria: A committee consisting of the ISCE leadership team and affiliated faculty with diverse expertise in different focus areas will review the proposals. The review criteria will include a brief overview of the faculty's research agenda, the scientific merit, impact and feasibility of the proposed idea for which they anticipate pursuing external funding, relevance to ISCE's [mission](#) and [thematic areas](#) and/or the [University's Research Frontiers](#). Past recipients of ISCE awards will also be evaluated on outcomes of previous funding.

Awards: ISCE anticipates making up to 6 awards of up to \$10,000 per award. Awardees will:

- Receive group and tailored mentoring from ISCE leadership;
- Participate in in-person grant writing seminars that will include comprehensive instruction on the details of successful proposal development and resources of the University that support proposal submission;
- Participate in in-person working sessions with other cohort members to share progress and obtain feedback for continuous improvement.

Questions: Contact Yancey Crawford (yanceyc3@vt.edu)

Application Guidelines

[Format: single spaced; 12-point font; 1-inch margins]

Cover Page (PREP Cover Sheet required): Include name, rank, department and college, brief statement of why you are interested in being a part of the PREP program, tentative project title and project summary (~150 words). The summary will be used to announce the awards and will be published on the ISCE website.

Project description (2 pages max): Describe the research that will be the focus of your proposal and your plans to date for the proposed project. If known, share details about your research questions or hypotheses and anticipated sample, data collection methods and expected outcomes and identify members or positions on your research team (if relevant). If not within a traditional social science discipline or department, be sure to explain how your work would be considered within a social science paradigm.

Plan for submission of an extramural proposal by August 2025 (1 page max): Identify the potential funding agency, specific RFA (if available), due date for your planned proposal submission, and the level of funding you anticipate requesting.

Budget and Justification (PREP Budget Form required): Up to \$10,000 in funding may be requested. If acceptable practice within the home department, it is strongly recommended that applicants request funds (~\$5,000) for a course buy-out for Spring 2025 to ensure they have dedicated time to prepare the proposal (requires department pre-approval). In addition to the course buy-out, or if a course-buy-out is not feasible, up to \$5,000 may be requested to support preliminary research/pilot activities for the proposed project. Other acceptable expenses include:

- Student wages
- Travel for data collection
- Support for pilot/feasibility study (e.g., purchasing data/samples, equipment, printing)
- Other (must specify)

Funds may not be used for open-access fees, activities typically supported by departments/colleges (e.g., conference travel, computers, standard software, books), or graduate student research.

BioSketch (2 pages max): include prior experience (funded or not) in preparing grant proposals, participation in other grant writing programs, and list of key publications relevant to proposal idea.