OVERVIEW
A top priority of the Milken Institute School of Public Health at the George Washington University (SPH) is to facilitate the growth and development of innovative research. In turn, the School has established a comprehensive faculty research development program, including the Springboard Grants Program as a key component of the program. As the centerpiece of the Milken Institute SPH’s internal facilitating fund, the Springboard Grants Program will provide investigators not only with funding necessary to obtain critical preliminary data, but also with intensive training and mentoring. The goal of the Milken Institute SPH Springboard Grants Program is to rapidly grow the research success of our faculty through competitive, externally funded grants. The Springboard Grants Program will include a variety of internal funding mechanisms facilitating a diverse portfolio of research disciplines, themes, methodologies, and foci.

The present, inaugural Springboard Grants Program mechanism, Pathways to NIH Funding, is focused specifically on developing grantsmanship in pursuit of NIH R21 and R01 funding. The Springboard Grants Program takes a unique training approach by providing awardees with (1) sequential hands-on proposal development, (2) intensive mentorship, (3) peer learning, and (4) continual evaluation and feedback. The Pathways to NIH Funding program also requires an upfront commitment from primary investigators (PIs) to engage in and complete a series of essential training components. The intended outcome is a well-vetted, competitive proposal submission to NIH within 6 months of completing the program. The Springboard Grants Program is offered through and funded by the Milken Institute SPH Office of the Dean. In keeping with GW’s Vision 2021 and the Milken Institute SPH strategic goals, we encourage proposals that are cross-disciplinary (that is, involving investigators from two or more academic departments) and facilitate applied, translational, and policy research on current public health problems.

PROGRAM COMPONENTS
Awardees of this innovative program will receive (1) sequential hands-on proposal development, (2) intensive mentorship, (3) peer learning, and (4) continual evaluation and feedback. More specifically, the program will engage participants in the following:

- A one-day kickoff meeting for participants in the cohort get acquainted with each other and the program leaders and mentors
- Assignment of and planned interactions with relevant mentors
- Sequential preparation of drafts through cohort meetings (to complete required proposal drafts)
- Grant writing seminars
- Springboard funding for pilot project implementation and preliminary data
- Pilot project reporting and monitoring
- Mock and intensive mentor proposal reviews of proposal drafts (“beta” versions)
- Follow-up and program evaluation
- Intensive proposal submission assistance to the NIH (upon submission of official proposals)

ELIGIBILITY
- Full-time active status faculty in the Milken Institute SPH; this includes regular and research track faculty at the rank of assistant, associate and full professor.
- An application may be submitted by a PI with no previous NIH funding, pending NIH funding, or an active or previous NIH award. However, the current application cannot overlap the aims in a funded grant. If a notice of award occurs for a grant with similar or overlapping aims before or during involvement with the Springboard program, please notify the Associate Dean for Research immediately.
- An investigator may not: (a) serve as PI on more than one proposal in a given round, or (b) serve as PI and co-investigator (Co-I) in a given round. An investigator may serve as a Co-I on an unlimited number of proposals in a given round.
- PIs must be in good standing with the Milken Institute SPH Springboard Grants Program in order to continue to receive funds during the duration of the grant program and via future grants from this granting body.
• Funds will not be granted for similar projects currently supported by other internal or external funding mechanisms. Funds cannot be requested for continuation of existing funded projects or as bridge funding for research activities or staff.
• Second submissions with the same research aims will not be accepted.

FUNDING AND PROJECT DURATION
• Project funding to develop an NIH R21 may not exceed $25,000.
• Project funding to develop an NIH R01 may not exceed $50,000.
• The number of awards will vary based on the availability of Milken Institute SPH funding and competitiveness of the applications.
• The program, including the completion of the pilot project, will be limited to 12 months in duration. Projects that do not have a clear plan to be completed within 12 months will not be funded. The SPH Dean’s Office will not cost reimburse funds to the PI after 12 months. “No-cost extensions” are not allowed. Unspent funds will revert to the Springboard Program in the Dean’s Office.
• Funding will be on a cost-reimbursable basis from accounts set up in the PI’s department.

ALLOWABLE AND UNALLOWABLE EXPENSES
• Allowable expenses: Supplies for data collection and analysis, laboratory reagents, reasonable travel expenses essential to achieving project aims or to present pilot study data at scientific meetings, equipment, research support staff, Graduate Research Assistants, and publication costs.
• Non-allowable expenses: Capital equipment, direct PI salary support, indirect costs, rent, and hospitality charges.

AWARDEE REQUIREMENTS
The Milken Institute SPH Springboard Grants Program: Pathways to NIH Funding was developed specifically to help SPH faculty acquire NIH grants and build their own externally funded research programs. Successful Springboard applicants will be required to perform a number of tasks and trainings in order to receive the entire award and remain in good standing with the program, including:

• Attend monthly grant writing workshops and trainings (offered through the SPH Dean’s Office along with fellow awardees) to develop a “Beta version” NIH R21 or R01 proposal.
• Submit the full “Beta version” NIH R21 or R01 proposal to the SPH Grants Program Review Committee by the end of the first quarter of the award period.
  o This proposal will be reviewed by the ad hoc committee and provided with NIH review equivalent feedback to the awardee to maximize the competitiveness of the final proposal.
  o This proposal will also serve as the foundation for the required workshops and trainings.
• Submit two progress reports and one final report to the Springboard Grants Program Committee. Forms provided.
• Submit an official NIH R21 or R01 to the NIH within 6 months of completion of the Springboard Grants Program.
• See the timeline at the end of this document for the chronological order of events.

Those who fail to comply with the above requirements will be out of good standing with the SPH Springboard Grants Program and ineligible for future funding for a period of two years.

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS
• Investigators should be aware that reviewers outside of their designated research areas might review the application. Therefore, it is important to write the proposal in a manner understandable to non-content experts. A panel of peers internal to GW will review proposals using the standard NIH scoring criterion and scoring sheet (see http://grants.nih.gov/grants/peer_review_process.htm).
• In keeping with NIH standards, use standard layout size of 8 ½ x 11 with at least 1/2-inch margins.
• Use an Arial typeface (or other accepted NIH fonts), a black font color, and a font size of 11 points or larger. Charts, graphs, figures, and so on may be in color with a font size no smaller than 8 points. Text should be single-spaced. SF 424 guidance should be consulted (http://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/424/#inst).

• Page limits for each section of the application are stated below.

• Follow the outline below, Sections 1-9, in developing your proposal.

Section 1 Face Page. Required form provided.

Section 2 Cover letter. Applicants must submit a cover letter with the Springboard Grants Program application. The cover letter should include the following:

1) Briefly describe your proposed idea and your expertise (and that of your research team, if applicable).

2) State specifically how your proposal is consistent with GW Vision 2021 (https://provost.gwu.edu/sites/provost.gwu.edu/files/downloads/Strategic%20Plan_May13.pdf) and the Milken Institute SPH strategic goals.

3) Provide the specific funding opportunity (funding level such as R01, R21, RFA or PA #, etc.), institute, and target submission date you plan to pursue. Describe how your research is innovative in the context of the specific funding opportunity.

4) Discuss previous/current grant funding experience and your expectations for how the Springboard Grants Program will advance your research career trajectory and your ability to secure extramural funding.

The cover letter should be approximately 1 page.

Section 3 Budget Page. Use attached budget template. Follow NIH guidelines for a budget and budget justification. Limit to 1 page.

Section 4 Budget Justification Page. Follow standard SF 424 instructions. Limit to 1 page.

Section 5 Biographical Sketch Page. Use the standard NIH ‘biosketch’ format, including the “Personal Statement” for the PI and all Co-Investigators. Limit biographical sketch to 4 pages. The NIH form and biosketch sample are available at http://grants1.nih.gov/grants/funding/phs398/phs398.html.

Section 6 Research Plan. The Research Plan, including all components of section 6, is limited to a total of 4 pages and must include the following:

6a. Specific Aims. List the specific aims for the proposed project and relate them to the broad, long-term goals of the project.

Specific aims should be approximately 1 page.

6b. Significance. Describe the rationale for the proposed study and state the overall objective. Review relevant prior work and identify the gaps that the project is intended to fill.

6c. Innovation. Discuss between one and three novel ideas or contributions that the project offers. Clearly state the importance and relevance of the proposed work (e.g., to test the stated hypothesis, create a novel design, solve a specific problem, challenge an existing paradigm,
address a critical barrier to progress in the field or develop a new intervention).

**Significance and innovation should be approximately 1 page, together.**

6d. **Preliminary Studies.** Preliminary data are allowed but not required when submitting a proposal. However, a description of how the PI’s preliminary studies inform the proposed research is helpful to the reviewers.

6e. **Research Design and Methods.** Describe the research design, conceptual framework, and procedures that will be used to accomplish the specific aims of the project. Describe the approach to be used for data analyses and interpretation. Justification for sample size (formal power calculations not necessary). Provide a tentative sequence or timetable for the project. Human Subjects Sections and IRB protocols do not have to be provided at this point, but may be requested if awarded.

6f. **Study Timeline & Future Plan.** This must include the significant benchmarks for your project, including a timetable for the identification of the specific funding opportunity and agency, and the expected submission date of your NIH proposal.

**The Preliminary studies, Research Design and Methods, and Study Timeline and Future Plan should be approximately 2 pages, together.**

**Section 7 References.** Use the NIH format to cite your literature. The references do not count toward the page limit for the research plan.

**Section 8 Appendix.** Letters of support from research collaborators, consultants, co-investigators, or other supporting documents as needed.

**Section 9 Departmental Chair Letter.** The PI’s department chair must submit a letter of support with regard to your eligibility for and participation in the SPH Springboard Grant Program.

We ask that chairs reflect on and address the following items in the letter:

1) Discuss the researcher’s current grant funding (approximation) and confirm that this project does not overlap with any other funded projects. Please state if new hires have existing start-up funds.

2) Explicitly state that the PI will commit 15% effort to successful completion of their Springboard Grant proposal-specific aims and NIH proposal development, attendance at grant workshops, monthly Springboard Grants Program meetings, and ongoing career development mentoring from May 2014 through December 2015.

3) Give your impression of the researcher’s long-term investment and longevity in your department; specifically, “Do you see this researcher as a promising contributor to your department 5 years from today?”

4) Provide an endorsement of the researcher’s work ethic, career planning, and ability to follow through on tasks within restricted time frames.

**POST AWARD REQUIREMENTS**

In order to remain in good standing with the Milken Institute SPH Springboard Grants Program, PIs must complete the activities as outlined in the timeline below. In addition, the following post-award tasks must be completed:

- The final report must be submitted to the Milken Institute SPH Office of Research Excellence (resprop@gwu.edu) within 30 days of the termination of the award period (July 31, 2015). Progress
reports must be provided at months 4 and 8. The Dean’s Office will provide a Springboard Reporting Form following the notice of award.

- All grantees must document that they have submitted a full proposal to the NIH within six months of completing their projects. Confirmation from grants.gov or eRA Commons is sufficient.
- Grant recipients are obligated to acknowledge receipt of support of work funded by the Springboard grant in any publication.

TIMELINE

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<th>Required tasks</th>
<th>12-Month Program</th>
<th>Post Program (1 to 6 months)</th>
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<td>Award notification</td>
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<td>Mentor assignment</td>
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<td>One-day kick off meeting</td>
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<td>Sequential preparation meetings</td>
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<td>Grant writing seminar</td>
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<td>First ‘beta’ draft proposal</td>
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<td>Second ‘beta’ draft proposal</td>
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<td>Springboard research pilot project</td>
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<td>Submit progress and final reports*</td>
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<td>Submit R01 or R21 to NIH**</td>
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*Final report must be submitted within 30 days of completing the project.
**Proposal must be submitted no later than 6 months after the 12-month program completion.

APPLICATION SUBMISSION DETAILS AND DEADLINES

- The submission deadline is May 2, 2014 at 5:00 pm EDT.
- Proposals, with all parts of Sections 1-9, should be collapsed into a single PDF.
- The PDF should be e-mailed to resprop@gwu.edu by 5:00 pm EDT.
- Awardees will be announced on or around June 1, 2014, with a start date of July 1, 2014.
- The funding period will be July 1, 2014-June 30, 2015. The program end date is December 31, 2015.
- Questions regarding the application or submission should be sent to resprop@gwu.edu.