Accelerating Research Translation
Seed Translational Research Projects
Call for Proposals

George Mason University's **Office of Research, Innovation, and Economic Impact (ORIEI)** is inviting faculty to submit proposals for **Seed Translational Research Projects (STRP).** These projects aim to turn research into real-world solutions that make a difference by applying and scaling research outcomes in practical ways, such as:

- Developing tools, services, or programs that solve real problems;
- Partnering with high-impact organizations or businesses to co-design, co-refine, implement, and/or scale innovative solutions;
- Creating university programs that offer data, science-based services or training to communities, organizations, or individuals;
- Starting a business or nonprofit.

Both market-oriented (e.g., commercial products, social ventures) and non-market-oriented (e.g., community programs, high-impact partnerships) translation projects are welcome.

STRP funds may be used by faculty members seeking to take the first steps in turning their research outcomes into real-world solutions, by those who are working to scale the impact of their solution or innovation, and those seeking to secure additional funding to grow and sustain a venture or effort.

STRP awards can support work that will help faculty:

- Determine who will benefit from their solution (such as users, customers, or partners);
- Test and improve their solution with feedback from users or partners;
- Develop a strategy to bring their solution into use on a larger scale.
- Assess the market and/or ecosystem for their solution;
- Identify and reduce translation risks through pilot or demonstration projects;
- Develop and validate a plan (e.g. a business or sustainability plan) to support increased implementation of the solution and continued impact; and/or

- Develop partnerships essential to scale impact.

Funding requirements and priorities

Funding for this program is provided through George Mason University's cooperative agreement with the National Science Foundation's (NSF) Accelerating Research Translation (ART) program.

Additionally, a generous gift of $75,000 from the Technatomy Corporation has been provided to support research translation efforts that specifically enable the prevention of suicide among military veterans.

Accordingly, **all project proposals must meet at least one of the following requirements:**

1. Alignment with the National Science Foundation's (NSF) funding priorities and focus-areas

   OR

2. Advance solutions focused on preventing suicide among military veterans.

High-quality proposals that also align with George Mason's Grand Challenge Initiative (GCI) Solutions will be given priority.

Who Can Apply?
Standard proposals may only be submitted by George Mason University faculty members with one of the following appointments*:

1. Tenured faculty
2. Tenure-track faculty
3. Full-time, fixed-term instructional, research, or clinical faculty

* *Proposals focused specifically on veteran suicide prevention may also be submitted by administrative/professional faculty or staff members.*

Submitting faculty are *strongly encouraged* to include graduate students on their team.

Faculty members who have previously received STRP funding may re-apply but need to demonstrate that they successfully advanced the translation of their innovation or solution with their prior support and discuss how additional funding will help them hit new milestones toward achieving scaled translation.

APPLICATION PROCESS

SUMMARY of KEY DATES

Concept Paper Due	Wednesday, September 30, 2026
Full Proposals Invited	Friday, October 23, 2026
Full Proposal Due	Friday, November 20, 2026
Decision Notification	February 2027
Funds Issue	Target March 2027

STEP 1: Concept Paper

Faculty interested must first submit a concept paper via email to Jessica Zelt (jzelt@gmu.edu) with the subject-line 'STRP Concept Paper' by **Wednesday, September 30, 2026**

The concept paper (up to 3 pages – 12-point font, single-spaced, 1-inch margins) must include the following information:

1. **Title.** Provide a short title for your solution or innovation.

2. **Team.** Provide the name, affiliations, contact information for the Project Lead, and all other participating collaborators.

3. **Solution or innovation.** Describe the science-based product, service, program, or idea you've developed from your research outcomes. What problem does it solve? What value does your solution or innovation provide to whom? Who is your target user or beneficiary? How is your solution better or different from what already exists? Include an estimate of the number of people who could benefit from your solution or innovation if scaled.

3. **A discussion of readiness.** Have potential users been involved in co-designing, testing, or improving the solution? How far along is the solution or innovation in its development? How ready is your solution for implementation? E.g. Do you have a

proof-of-concept that has been experimentally validated? Have you tested your solution in relevant real-world contexts? Do you have existing partnerships to advance translation?

4. **Translation pathway.** What translation pathway are you interested in pursuing (commercial licensing, spin-off startup or nonprofit, community program, public policy change, strategic partnerships, etc.)? Do not include a full work plan at this time. This information will help the STRP program match teams invited to submit a full proposal with an Impact Mentor (see Step 2 below).

5. **Publications.** List up to 5 publications that you have (co)authored – if any – that underpin your solution or innovation. (Proposals may also cite additional publications authored by others.)

6. **Funding.** List any current or previous grants used to develop the solution or innovation. If previous STRP funding has been used to develop this solution or innovation, please briefly discuss prior results.

7. **Intellectual property.** If any, list any relevant patents (including title, status, and date of filing or issue) and/or any other formal forms of intellectual property protection in place for your innovation or solution.

STEP 2: Concept Paper Review and Selection

A panel of reviewers will assess the **significance and likely impact** of the proposed solution or innovation in each submitted concept paper using the following criteria:

- Is the proposed innovation or solution grounded in research?
- Does the proposed innovation or solution address a clearly defined problem or unmet need?
- Is there a plausible pathway for the proposed innovation to reach intended users, beneficiaries, customers, partners, or communities?
- What is the potential impact of proposed innovation on the targeted field, industry, or community?
- What is the growth potential of the proposed innovation or solution to scale benefit?

Submitting PIs will be notified by Friday, October 23, 2026, if they have been invited to submit a full proposal. Each team will also be matched with an Impact Mentor who can

provide up to **4 hours** of advice to support the development of a strong research translation work plan for the full proposal.

STEP 3: Full proposal

Faculty who have been asked to submit a full proposal must submit their application materials via email to Jessica Zelt (jzelt@gmu.edu) with the subject-line 'STRP Application 2026' by **Friday, November 20, 2026.**

PIs are strongly encouraged to engage with their Impact Mentor while developing their work plan.

Proposals must include the following components.

1. A **project description** (up to 6 pages – 12-point font, single-spaced, 1-inch margins) that includes:

    a. All information provided in the original Concept Paper. This section can be refined, and changes can be made to the proposing team if needed to strengthen the proposed plan.

    b. A detailed workplan that includes:
    - **Goals and objectives.** Describe what work will be accomplished using STRP funds and how the proposed work will contribute toward translating your innovation or solution into impact.
    - **Methods.** Describe the methods and activities that will be used to accomplish your proposed goals.
    - **Timeline.** Provide a timeline with clear milestones and deliverables. **All work on these STRP awards must be completed by January 31, 2028** (unless the NSF approves a no-cost extension for the overarching ART cooperative agreement).

2. **Budget and Budget Justification**
    - Proposals can request up to **$40,000 for direct project expenses**.

(Proposals related to veteran suicide prevention are encouraged to consider budgets closer to $25,000 but can be higher with sufficient justification).

- Proposals must include an Excel file that includes a budget prepared using the Office of Sponsored Projects budget tool.
- Include a 1-page explanation of how the money will be used.
- Submitting faculty are strongly encouraged to include students on their team.
- Funds may be used for faculty summer salary, within the limits allowed by NSF policy.
- Funds may be used for travel in direct support of research translation activities (e.g. for collaborating with partners, for customer or beneficiary discovery), but funds may not be used for travel to academic conferences.
- Funds may not be used for publication fees.

3. **Biographical Statements**
   - Include a brief biographical statement for all individuals named in the proposal (up to 200 words for each person).

Review Criteria

A panel of reviewers will assess the **feasibility and readiness** of the full proposal using the following criteria:

- Is the proposed innovation sufficiently mature or at an appropriate readiness level for the proposed translation activities?
- Are the proposed research translation activities to be undertaken with awarded funds clearly defined?
- How well will the proposed activities advance the innovation and project team toward achieving scaled impact?
- How well does the proposed budget align with the potential impact?

POST AWARD CONSIDERATIONS

ARTISAN Undergraduate Interns

ARTISAN (Accelerating Research Translation Integrated Student Ambassador Network) is an initiative developed within the first cohort of universities supported by the NSF ART program. The initiative aims to connect and involve undergraduate students in research

translation, raising the awareness of undergraduate students about the importance of research and technology translation to enable use-inspired applications of high societal and economic impact, and enhancing the undergraduate educational experience through innovation, community engagement, and research.

Mason's ARTISAN Intern program is an optional opportunity that will be offered to STRP awardees. Each Project Lead may add one ARTISAN intern to their team to support additional research translation work. ARTISAN interns are funded separately from the STRP award. For projects receiving funding from the NSF ART award, ARTISAN interns will receive compensation for up to 6 months. For projects on veteran suicide prevention that receive funding from the Technatomy gift, intern support will be contingent on award sizes. More details will be provided upon receipt of a STRP award, but the Project Lead will determine which undergraduate student to hire, their term dates, and work responsibilities.

Project Reporting Requirements

For projects receiving funds from Mason's NSF ART award, STRP Leads will need to do the following to ensure compliance with the reporting and evaluative requirements of the NSF cooperative agreement:

- Meet with the ART PI on a quarterly basis throughout the project's period of performance to discuss project progress;
- Provide a brief interim report that provides summative information about the project's activities and accomplishments to date in October or November 2027 (for inclusion in the ART Team's annual report to the NSF) and brief final report at the conclusion of the project that provides summative information about the activities, accomplishments, and outcomes of the project.
- Engage with the ART project's external evaluator and/or respond to additional requests for information from the ART PI as needed.

For projects receiving funds from the Technatomy Corporation donation, STRP Leads will be required to do the following to support reporting back to the donor.

- Meet with the veteran suicide subject matter expert on a quarterly basis throughout the project's period of performance to discuss project progress;
- Provide a brief final report at the conclusion of the project that provides summative information about the activities, accomplishments, and outcomes of the project.
- Engage with veteran suicide subject matter expert for evaluation purposes as needed.