

Request For Proposals:

O.N. Allen Soil and Environmental Microbiology Small-Grants Program 2024

We are pleased to announce the fifth year of a small-grant opportunity for UW-Madison graduate students and postdocs studying soil and environmental microbiology, supported by the O.N. Allen professorship in Soil Science and the Wisconsin Institute for Discovery. We are requesting proposals for up to \$3,500 to support research in soil and environmental microbiology. Proposals will be reviewed by an NSF-style panel of students and postdocs with broad scientific backgrounds, and we expect to make up to (5) awards in 2024.

These awards are intended to develop and support grant-writing, reviewing, and independent research skills in a broad range of early-career scientists and to connect researchers across colleges, bringing together diverse areas of environmental microbiology, including soil, water, animal, and plant microbiome research. Applicants who are selected to receive small grants will be required to participate in a campus-wide environmental microbiology symposium in the spring of 2025, where they will present talks on their research, and past grant recipients will present their research in short talks and a poster session.

All proposal materials MUST be received by **11:59 PM on Friday, February 9, 2024.**

We encourage applicants to attend our grant-writing and peer review workshops run in conjunction with the Writing Center:

Grant writing workshop

Wednesday, January 17th, 9-10 AM

Virtual over Zoom

<https://uwmadison.zoom.us/j/3027159839?pwd=OU5USU5peTIBVDF4WVIVbkhSKzhDUT09>

Meeting ID: 302 715 9839

Passcode: 4gUEDU

Peer review workshop

Please have a copy of your proposal draft – however far along it is – ready for the workshop

Monday, January 29, 12:00-1:30PM

King Hall 145

Graduate students and postdocs who are not submitting proposals but are interested in gaining hands-on NSF-style review panel experience are encouraged to join the review panel. Please contact Annalise Keaton at akeaton@wisc.edu with your name and field of research. Dr. Zac Freedman (Soil Science) and Dr. Erica Majumder (Bacteriology) serve as program officers for the grants.

Eligibility and Responsibilities

UW-Madison graduate students and postdocs from any field with research interests in soil and environmental microbiology are encouraged to apply. We encourage dual- or multi-investigator proposals, particularly when the investigators bridge two or more different fields. The program does not fund human/medical or model organism microbial research.

The O.N. Allen Soil and Environmental Microbiology Small-Grants Program will fund only research and travel costs associated with the proposed research. It cannot provide support for graduate student stipends, conference or workshop attendance/travel, computer purchases, or equipment typically available in the laboratories of associated faculty. Funds cannot be used to pay journal page charges. The expectation is that requested funds will be for projects designed by the applicant(s), allowing them to conduct independent research additional to that already supported by their advisor's program. Applicants are encouraged to use a hypothesis-driven approach and to include functional measurements where appropriate; applicants are discouraged from requesting funds solely for sequencing microbial communities.

All funds must be spent by June 30, 2025. We do not anticipate awarding extensions. As a condition of accepting this award it is expected that awardees will:

- Complete a short final report
- Participate in future review panels evaluating research proposals
- Participate fully in the Soil and Environmental Microbiology Symposium in the spring of 2025

2024 Applications:

Send a **single PDF document** (saved as Lastname_Firstname_SmallGrant_Spring2024, e.g., Smith_John_SmallGrant_Spring2024.pdf or Vasquez_Carlotta_Smith_John_SmallGrant_Spring2024.pdf) including the following:

- **Cover page:** Complete the attached cover page form, including signature of approval from major research advisor. (1 page per investigator)
- **Research interests:** Provide a brief description of your background, your current graduate or postdoctoral research project, and your long-term scientific goals. (1 page per investigator)
- **Research proposal:** Introduce the background and rationale for your project, describe your objectives/questions and your proposed experimental approach. *If you received a grant in a previous round of the program, include a section within the page limits of this section briefly outlining your progress on and outcomes from that proposal, including whether any funds remain, and how relates to the current proposal.* (3 pages)
- **References:** Use a standard citation format of your choosing. (no page limit)
- **CV:** (1 page per investigator)
- **Budget and justification:** Provide a budget for your proposal with clear justification and breakdown of expenses. (1 page total)
- **Current and pending funding:** Provide the title, amount, duration, and source for all grants that currently support your research. Demonstration of need and lack of other funding will be critical for success. (1 page per investigator)

Assemble one PDF file with all of these parts in the above order, each starting on a separate page. All text within the proposal must be either single-spaced or 1.5 spaced, in size 12 font, Times New Roman, and with all margins 1 inch. Figures or tables may be included but the page limits remain the same. (Proposals not compliant with this format will be returned without review.)

The single PDF should be emailed to akeaton@wisc.edu no later than **11:59 PM on Friday, February 9, 2024.**

Funding decisions will be made on the basis of overall scientific merit, relevance to the fields of soil and environmental microbiology, and availability of funds. A sample evaluation template is attached at the end of this document. We expect the review panel will be held late February, and funds should be made available by April 2024.

Questions?

Please contact Annalise Keaton (akeaton@wisc.edu) if you have any questions.

**O.N. Allen Soil and Environmental Microbiology Small-Grants Program
Cover page**

Applicant name:

E-mail address:

Project Title:

I am a: Graduate student Postdoc

Graduate Field / Department:

Degree sought (if student):

Start date (month/year) at UW-Madison:

Amount requested: \$

Co-Applicants, their affiliation, degree sought, and start dates at UW-Madison:

I have funds available for this project: Yes No (If Yes, explain)

My advisor has funds available for this project: Yes No (If Yes, explain)

I, [advisor name] _____, have read and approved this proposal submission.

Advisor Signature:

Advisor E-mail:

O.N. Allen Soil and Environmental Microbiology Small-Grants Program
Sample proposal evaluation form to be completed by review panel

Project:

Applicant Name:

Overall Ranking: Poor, Fair, Good, Very Good, Excellent

Comments on budget request:

NOTE: Provide comments for each section below, and rate each section Poor (P), Fair (F), Good (G), Very good (VG), or Excellent (E). Also provide an overall rating (above) using the same scale.

A) **Relevance to Program**, *i.e.*, extent to which proposed research is relevant to the field of soil and environmental microbiology, will advance understanding of the processes and mechanisms that govern environmental microbial communities and their functions, and/or will bridge or link different fields.

B) **Scientific Merit**, *i.e.*, clarity of hypotheses/questions; use of literature or preliminary results to argue likelihood of success; suitability of methods to address the stated hypotheses/questions; originality of ideas, experimental design, and methods; overall persuasiveness of the proposal, including organization, coherence and logic of the argument presented, and effective use of language.

C) **Broader Impacts**, *e.g.*, contribution of grant to advancing applicant's overall research goals, degree to which the proposed work encourages collaboration and interdisciplinary research, extent to which the grant would allow applicant to leverage other funds or otherwise promote effective use of award resources, inclusion of community outreach.