THE ACI FOUNDATION’S CONCRETE RESEARCH COUNCIL

GRANT PROPOSAL GUIDE

This guide outlines requirements for the preparation and submission of proposals to the Concrete Research Council (CRC) of the ACI Foundation. Members of the CRC are not allowed to submit proposals.

CRC Mission Statement
Advance the knowledge and sustainable aspects of concrete materials, construction, and structures by soliciting and selecting research proposals, assisting in financing them, and publishing results, in coordination with ACI technical committees.

Funding Policy
The ACI Foundation will impose a limit of 15% to indirect costs (overhead) by research organizations to any research it funds. The organization must waive the remainder of the indirect costs.

Award Amount
- The ACI Foundation will fund up to $50,000 per project for direct costs.
- The ACI Foundation will also cover up to an additional 15% of the direct cost for institution overhead. Thus, the total amount awarded could be a maximum of $57,500. [Example A: $50,000 project + $7,500 IDC (15% of $50,000) = $57,500 awarded. Example B: $45,000 project + $6,750 IDC (15% of $45,000) = $51,750 awarded.]

PROPOSAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

CRC research proposals will be evaluated using the weighted criteria below:

1. **Relevancy and Potential Impact of Research** (10-point weight): Is there potential for this research to advance ACI standards, advance the state of the science of the concrete industry, improve current industry products or systems, or provide thrust into new markets? Is it innovative?

2. **Supplemental Support** (5-point weight): Are there significant co-funding sources identified for the proposed research and/or what is the potential for additional external funding beyond the proposed research?

3. **Overall Quality** (5-point weight): Are the objectives and scope clearly identified? Is there a research plan and a budget? Can the research plan be accomplished within the budget? Is the proposal well written?

4. **Researcher Capability** (5-point weight): Are the researchers experienced on the subject matter? Are there suitable facilities and equipment available to perform the proposed work? If principle investigators have received previous funding from the CRC, their past performance regarding timely communications and meeting established milestones & deliverables will also be considered.

5. **ACI Committee Engagement** (5-point weight): Will the committee form a task group or identify a champion to serve in an advisory capacity to the PI? Will the committee dedicate meeting time to hear status reports or discuss implementation of the results?
Awarded Proposals

- Principle investigators are permitted to hold intellectual property, but the final results of ACI Foundation funded research must be made available in the public domain without restriction.

- The ACI Foundation will enter into a contract with the researching entity. As part of the contract, it is mandated that the overhead or indirect return be set at no more than 15% of the direct cost of the research funding requested from the CRC. Any overhead over the maximum allowed 15% that is waived by the researching entity shall be considered as cost sharing and shall be indicated on the budget table as waived overhead, separate from other co-funding. Non-compliant proposals in this regard shall be returned without review.

- The schedule of payments contingent upon milestone deliverables will be contained in the contract and will include, at a minimum, a final report deliverable to the ACI Committee that has endorsed the research and to the CRC. Final approval of deliverable will include approval by the advisory team. Twice-per-year status reports are also required but may not be tied to a payment.

- If principal investigators from two organizations are collaborating on the research, the award must be to a single organization, which will then subcontract with the second organization.

- The ACI Foundation will only consider funding research that involves the use of proprietary products if the goal of the research is to advance knowledge in a particular area of study and not solely on a proprietary product. As noted above, all final research results must be made available in the public domain without restriction.

- Commitment letters from co-funding organizations are required before funds are dispersed from the ACI Foundation.

- Status reports to the CRC and to the supporting ACI technical committee are required.

Where and How to Submit Proposals

Submitted proposals will be evaluated by CRC members, ACI reviewers as well as ACI Foundation Staff or ACI Engineering Staff. Anyone who evaluates a proposal is required to agree and abide by CRC policies on confidentiality and conflict of interest.

Upload the proposal and supporting information to our Research Proposal Website by 11:59 pm Eastern on December 1 of the year in which the proposal is submitted. The following information is to help you prepare for entering the required data and forms to the website.

If you have any questions regarding the proposal requirements or process, please contact ACI Foundation Assistant Director, Tricia G. Ladely (Tricia.Ladely@acifoundation.org).

REQUIRED PROPOSAL CONTENTS

Proposals submitted to the CRC shall contain:

- Contact information of the Principle Investigator (PI), co-PI (if applicable) and administrative persons that may submit on behalf of the PI.
- Proposal Title.
- Executive summary to be used for promotion purposes:
  - Total project budget amount asked of the ACI Foundation;
  - Value of any co-funding, identified as monetary or in-kind (monetary value of donated materials, consulting or testing services);
Main body of the document (maximum of 5 pages in 12-point font) must include:

- Objectives;
- Significance/Impact;
- How the ACI committee will use the intended results;
- Project description to include enough detail to understand how the research will be performed;
- Matrix of tasks and schedule of completion, including reports;
- List of anticipated products; such as potential ACI document or code changes, published papers, presentations, or conference proceedings.
- Identified advisory team members, who shall be at a minimum, a primary champion or task group from the ACI technical committee that supports the research, and an industry liaison. If additional ACI committees will support the research, also list the committee representatives as members of the advisory group.
- Table of funding that includes all support such as:
  - Total budget;
  - Any co-funding from organizations other than the institution;
  - Net value of waived institution overhead or planned co-funding (if not in place yet).

Supporting information must include:

- A completed and signed support form from the ACI technical committee(s) that support the research (primary committee supporter and any supplemental committees) and a copy of the committee’s administrative ballot results and comments;
- References cited;
- Qualifications of the investigator(s) and/or institution(s). Biographical sketches are limited to two pages per investigator, and should include professional preparation, appointments, publications (up to five relevant), synergistic activities, and collaborators and other affiliations.

Additional support letters from industry are optional, but strongly encouraged, and can be uploaded as part of the proposal package.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION TO AUTHORS**

**Presentation Opportunity**
The CRC has a collaborative arrangement with ACI Committee 123, who sponsors at each convention a *Research in Progress Session* where researchers can present their ongoing research. Each fall, a spot will be held for a CRC sponsored project. Consider applying to present at this session; mention that the project is being sponsored by the CRC when applying.

**Duration of the Proposed Research**
Reviewers of CRC research proposals compare the total project scope against the cost. If the money is leveraged well to a large project, a 3-year duration may be reasonable. If the budget is limited to $50,000, a one-year to 1.5-year duration is reasonable.