

UNM JOINT HSC+Main Limited Competition Announcement

Dear UNM Researchers,

The Office of the Vice President for Research is requesting statements of interest and one-page concept papers for the **W.M. Keck Foundation Research Program** limited competition in the Science and Engineering program area or the Medical Research program area. The Keck Foundation is focused on funding **basic, exploratory, distinctive and novel** science and engineering research initiatives. They are particularly interested in pioneering discoveries and applications that propose **“high-risk endeavors with high potential for transformative impact.”** Thus, they are looking to support research on questions that **“push the edge of the field, present unconventional approaches to intractable problems, or challenge the prevailing paradigm.”**

Webinar hosted by FRDO and UNMF

Title: “Is This a Keck Idea? What the Foundation Wants and What We Learned at UNM”

When: Thursday, April 9 at 1pm via Zoom

Who should attend: UNM PIs who are considering whether a W. M. Keck Foundation Science & Engineering or Medical Research grant is the right fit to support your groundbreaking work.

The session will briefly outline the bold, early stage, basic, high-risk/high reward ideas the Keck Foundation looks for, followed by an informal discussion with UNM faculty who have applied to Keck in past cycles.

Panelists will share insights, lessons learned, and how the process influenced their research.

Join the session here: <https://unm.zoom.us/j/91091291779>. Registration not required.

Sponsor: W.M. Keck Foundation

Award Range: \$1 million to \$1.3 million over 3 years (typical)

Number of Submissions Allowed from UNM: up to 8: 4 in Science and Engineering, 4 in Medical Research for “pre-application counseling”

Sponsor Deadline: June 15 (for concept call scheduling)

Program information: <https://www.wmkeck.org/research-overview/>

The concept counseling period takes place from July 1 through August 15. The Foundation will review and discuss each of the concepts to indicate whether they may be receptive to a proposal for that project. Based on that feedback, UNM may choose one concept in each program area to submit as a Phase I application for a November 1, 2026 deadline.

Limited Competition Instructions for both Main Campus and HSC applicants: We will be conducting a two-step internal competition to ensure we have a review committee in place by the concept paper deadline. **You must complete both steps if you are interested in participating.**

STEP ONE: Please submit a 200-word **statement of interest** by **NOON on April 16, 2026** via UNM’s [InfoReady Review portal](#). This is a required step and no late submissions will be considered.

STEP TWO: Submit a **one-page concept paper using the attached template** by **NOON on May 1, 2026** via UNM’s [InfoReady Review portal](#). The paper must be in 12-point font with 1-inch margins and include:

- **Overview:** an overview of the proposed project emphasizing any unique aspects and pilot studies for Research Program concepts. **The Keck Foundation funds basic, exploratory science, and is looking for transformational, not incremental, research.** If your concept does not have the potential to transform your field of research, it is unlikely to be competitive
- **Methodologies and Key Personnel:** a description of the methodologies and key personnel
- **Knowledge Gap:** a description of the fundamental knowledge gap being addressed and how the work is distinctly innovative
- **Impact:** a description of the impact, if the project is successful (what will be enabled? who will benefit?)
- **Innovation:** describe how the proposed work is distinctive and innovative, field-expanding, or paradigm-shifting.

- **Fit:** a brief justification of the need for Keck support, including justification that the ***work would not be funded by another agency***; and
- **Budget:** an estimated budget broken down by major areas, e.g., personnel, equipment, consumable supplies, etc. (budgets can be rough approximations at this stage). Please note the following:
 - PI salary cannot exceed more than 10% of annual.
 - Keck will not pay any F&A, but these costs can be imputed as cost share.
 - Keck will not pay tuition.
 - Keck will not pay any costs for government/national laboratory salaries.
- If there's room, applicants may add other details (e.g., background to put the research into perspective, description of the institution's prominence in the field, etc.).

You will receive an email when the InfoReady competition has been converted from the SOI application to the concept paper application, but you can work on your documents outside the system before that. No late submissions will be considered.

Additional information:

Keck Foundation website: <http://www.wmkeck.org/>

Application process: <https://www.wmkeck.org/research-application-process/>

Program Overview: <https://www.wmkeck.org/research-overview/>

Funded grant abstracts: <https://www.wmkeck.org/our-focus-research/#focus-abstracts-research>

Should you have any questions please feel free to contact us at limited@unm.edu or HSC-LimitedComps@salud.unm.edu for more information.

You may also contact Jim O'Brien, Sr. Director of Development for Corporate and Foundation Relations Research at the UNM Foundation at (505) 313-7633 or jim.obrien@unmfund.org with any questions about the Keck Foundation.