

**University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign College of ACES**  
**Dudley Smith Initiative**  
**Request for Proposals: DSynergy Program**

**Introduction**

Dudley Smith, Jr., a landowner with family roots in Christian County, recognized the long-term economic challenges facing agriculture in Illinois and the social impacts of these challenges on rural communities. Mr. Smith's generous gift to the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign College of ACES includes a farm of ~220 acres located in Christian County and an endowment to support the Dudley Smith Initiative (DSI) in research and outreach activities.

The goal of the DSI is to embrace technological advancements while enhancing resource stewardship and sustainability in agricultural systems. Agricultural community systems include producers, manufacturers, laborers, distributors, retailers, consumers, economies, markets, financial institutions, natural resources, and conservation practices. By understanding the interactions among the components of the agricultural community, the DSI strives for integrated sustainability in Illinois agriculture.

Recognizing that agricultural systems are dynamic and evolve as new knowledge is acquired, the DSI supports research and outreach activities with potential to create new strategies and technological advances that invigorate agricultural systems and communities in Illinois.

More information about the DSI, grants, research projects and events can be found at: <https://dsi.aces.illinois.edu/>.

**Program Description**

The Dudley Smith Initiative invests in short-term (1-2 year) *DSynergy* and longer-term (2-4 year) *DSystems* applied research and outreach programs.

The scope of the research topics proposed for *DSynergy* projects must integrate applied agricultural systems and research meeting the general objectives of the DSI program. **Outreach activities are important elements in this funding program.** Innovative *DSynergy* research incorporates the synergies among the social, economic, biological, and natural resource components of the agricultural system and includes both a short-term focus and vision for longer-term applications. *DSynergy* projects are expected to take a "nontraditional" approach to solving important problems in applied agriculture.

Each proposal should clearly outline objectives, milestones, deliverables, and timelines. Include sufficient technical information and describe the contextual framework as it relates to the goals of the DSI program. Do not lapse into jargon and technical details not easily understood by informed non-specialists. Preference will be given to proposals that have a clearly defined plan for how

the *DSynergy* project can lead to future funding from external sources or contribute to a broader and more comprehensive *DSystems* project in the future

Investigators may integrate into their programs the use of resources located at the Dudley Smith Farm in Christian County, but they are not required to do so. Of the acreage at the Dudley Smith Farm, the northeastern corner of the farm is committed to water quality research that continues through 2023. Approximately 40-50 acres of row crop acreage and pasture paddocks are available to be incorporated into the research and outreach plans for this round of the *DSynergy* Program.

### **Award Information**

Anticipated Type of Award: Standard Grant

Estimated Number of Awards: 1

Duration: Projects up to 2 years in duration during calendar years 2023 and 2024 will be considered.

Anticipated Funding Amount: up to \$40,000 per year per project during calendar years 2023 and 2024. Projects with outreach components may be eligible for an additional \$5,000 per year.

### **Deadlines**

Submission Deadline	November 15, 2022 by 5 PM CT
Anticipated Award Notification	December 16, 2022
Anticipated Award Period	January 2023-December 2024

### **Eligibility Information**

Teams of academic personnel in the College of ACES, including faculty, campus-based and off-campus staff, and Extension educators and Extension specialists, are eligible to apply to this program. Additional stakeholders, contributors, and collaborators may be included in the research team.

### **Proposal Preparation and Submission Guidelines**

The proposal must conform to the following requirements:

1. Times New Roman at a font size of 11 points or larger. A font size of less than 10 points may be used for mathematical formulas/equations, figures, tables, or diagram captions. PIs are cautioned, however, that the text must still be readable.
2. Margins, in all directions, must be at least 1 inch.

3. The proposal narrative is limited to no more than 5 single-spaced pages. The narrative should describe:
  - a. opportunities for creative approaches to agricultural challenges within the framework of the DSI
  - b. address the strengths of the investigators
  - c. explain the long-term vision of the research team
  - d. describe potential synergies
4. Include a References and Bibliography document (no page limit) citing relevant published work.
5. Include a CV or resumé for each principal and collaborating investigator of no more than 2 pages per person.
6. Include an itemized budget with justification (no page limit).  
**NOTE:** because of its internal nature, DSI funding may not be used to cover summer salaries for personnel with less than a 12-month academic appointment or for indirect costs. Funding may be applied to reasonable departmental expenses associated with the research if the expenses are itemized and justified.

**An electronic copy of the proposal should be submitted as a single, combined pdf file to Megan Davis ([mbdavis3@illinois.edu](mailto:mbdavis3@illinois.edu)) by 5:00 PM CT on November 15, 2022.** Please include "DSynergy 2022" in the subject line.

### **Review Process**

The ACES Office of Research will consult with the following advisory bodies in evaluating proposals and awarding funding:

- An ad hoc committee of ACES department heads, faculty, and Extension administrators will provide the primary integrative and contextual reviews.
- An external Dudley Smith Advisory Committee will provide stakeholder review of impacts and outcomes.

### **Award Reporting Requirements**

Awarded projects will be required to:

1. Provide public-ready summary content for the DSI website within 30 days of award and within 30 days of project end.
2. Participate in Dudley Smith Engagement Activities.

The events are held at the Dudley Smith Farm in Christian County, the University of Illinois Extension Office in Taylorville, or the University of Illinois Campus in Urbana. These meetings highlight research activities funded by the DSI program.

Events in Christian County will address the interests of producers and community members while campus-based events will address interests of peer researchers. At least one member of the research team is required to participate in the event to present information and results from your research.

The DSI will cover the cost of transportation, meeting facilities, presentation materials, and other incidentals identified and agreed upon in advance. The project team will be responsible for the time to prepare and deliver the presentations. A representative in the ACES Office of Research will coordinate these events and assist teams in planning for their participation.

3. Participate in mid-year project meetings with DSI management representatives.

Micah Pope of Centrec Consulting Group, LLC will schedule meetings roughly mid-way through each year of the funding period. Collaborating researchers are encouraged to attend the mid-project meeting. The project team will be required to provide a brief update of recent and planned activities.

4. Submit a project final report.

Specific content of the report may vary depending on the nature of the research and the target audiences. A representative of the ACES Office of Research will work with the project teams to define these parameters.

### **Program Contacts**

- Program questions: Barbara Godlew ([godlew2@illinois.edu](mailto:godlew2@illinois.edu))
- Proposal submissions: Megan Davis ([mbdavis3@illinois.edu](mailto:mbdavis3@illinois.edu))