



**Initiative for Food and AgriCultural Transformation (InFACT)
The Ohio State Discovery Themes**

**Linkage and Leverage Grants
Request for Proposals
2020-2021**

Key Dates:

Fall Cycle	
Submission Deadline	10/30/20
Review Committee Meeting	By 11/20/20
Executive Committee Vote	By 12/4/20
Response to Proposal Team	By 12/11/20
Winter Cycle	
Submission Deadline	1/15/21
Review Committee Meeting	By 2/12/21
Executive Committee Vote	By 3/12/21
Response to Proposal Team	By 3/19/21
Spring Cycle	
Submission Deadline	4/9/21
Review Committee Meeting	By 4/30/21
Executive Committee Vote	By 5/7/21
Response to Proposal Team	By 5/14/21

Section 1. Funding Opportunity Description

Background

The Initiative for Food and AgriCultural Transformation (InFACT) is a transdisciplinary program at The Ohio State University aimed at designing and implementing food systems that are sustainable, defined as achieving a balance of ecology, economy, technology, and culture, to promote the overall well-being of people, animals and the natural environment.

InFACT's mission is to transform the way we grow, process and distribute our food, leading to vibrant, sustainable and resilient agriculture that places nourishing food at the center of just and vital communities in Ohio and beyond.

While achieving unprecedented levels of productivity, the food system in Ohio and across the country faces some major challenges. This system leaves many people without access to safe, nutritious, and affordable food, while others struggle with preventable and diet-related chronic diseases. In addition, the production and distribution of food causes unintended environmental problems, including degradation of soil, air, and water quality. Farmers are increasingly open to implementing practices to assure long-term resilience but cannot bear the full costs of doing so alone. In brief, there is an urgent need for redesign and transformation throughout the food supply chain.

As one of the nation's largest universities, with collaborations throughout the world, Ohio State is poised to pioneer new conceptual and physical models of food systems that promote health, while balancing technological, ecological, economic and social justice issues. The InFACT research agenda is pulling together faculty from across Ohio State to address the challenges faced in our food system. These challenges have never been more apparent than during the well-publicized immediate impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the US food system, impacts that our research agenda is designed to mitigate (see <https://discovery.osu.edu/research-agenda-current-events>).

Through strategic investments that maximize **Linkage** and **Leverage**, InFACT will continue to build strengths within and among Ohio State areas of expertise, which are being connected and enhanced by InFACT Discovery Theme hiring¹.

Proposals will be expected to address one or more of the themes in the InFACT research agenda described in Section 2. Although we welcome all creative ideas, we aim to use these themes to guide InFACT's near-term research, as well as the focus of our seed grant investments. Project proposals should build teams and capacity with a direct route to extramural support for one or more of these themes in the next year. Workgroup proposals should describe a longer term and more comprehensive approach to

¹ InFACT hires and faculty affiliates can be searched here: <https://discovery.osu.edu/infact/directory>

organizing research efforts and extramural funding proposals to build Ohio State's leadership in one or more of these themes.

Purpose

InFACT aims to fund concepts that are bold, innovative, and transdisciplinary (integrating the sciences, humanities, and nonacademic experiential knowledge from beyond the University). These transformative ideas should create a compelling role for InFACT and Ohio State in addressing the challenge of food security, particularly in Ohio, but also regionally, nationally, and internationally.

The purpose of this solicitation is to fund activities that build connections and capacity for addressing critical food system issues in Ohio and beyond. Proposals should include activities that build connections across and outside of the University (i.e., create **Linkages**) and chart a path to sustain their projects moving forward (i.e., **Leverage** current resources for the future).

Linkage builds connections among Ohio State faculty, students, staff and external partners engaged directly with InFACT. We seek proposals that address our research agenda by building networks among potential partners, across multiple colleges, and with roles for new faculty hired through InFACT and other Discovery Themes initiatives, as well as faculty who comprise our existing areas of strength. Therefore, proposal teams must include faculty or staff from at least two Ohio State colleges. Proposals are encouraged where InFACT faculty hires play key roles in the planning and execution of the project, with clear opportunities for their career advancement through project output.

Leverage means that InFACT support is expected to be a relatively small percentage of what the group aims to attract to build and sustain their efforts. We will invest in concepts that focus on use of the InFACT support to lead directly to new grants, gifts, contracts, and/or access to other forms of capital (natural, built, social, in addition to financial) in support of InFACT's work to improve food security. Investment by InFACT can consist of either seed funding, staff time (program coordination and grant/gift development), or both. Proposals should describe explicit plans for how the results of the proposed project will be used to generate new support within a year of the conclusion of the project, for example at least one extramural grant proposal with a budget at least an order of magnitude larger than the InFACT grant, or equivalent.

Section 2. InFACT Research Agenda

InFACT Research Agenda to Transform Food Availability

InFACT is coordinating and supporting the work of faculty from at least 8 colleges to provide research-based transition pathways to new diversified agricultural landscapes that improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of both people and the land.

Specific Research Themes:

- Discover diversified farming systems that can contribute to economic, social and environmental benefits.
- Discover economies of scope that support diversification of agricultural landscapes.
- Discover landscape designs and policies that support diversified agricultural systems.

Key Research Questions:

- What field-scale landscape design strategies can support agricultural diversification and rural resilience in Ohio?
- What innovative approaches to participatory design can facilitate the development and adoption of these strategies?

InFACT Research Agenda to Transform Food Access

InFACT is coordinating and supporting the work of faculty from 10 colleges to provide research-based re-imagining and re-balancing of food supply and value chains from local to global scales to maintain food security for those who have it and attain food security for those who don't.

Specific Research Themes:

- Explore integrated supply chains that are balanced from local to global scales.
- Reduce & redirect food waste to improve food system sustainability.
- Measure and expose inequities in food access.

Key Research Questions:

- What can we discover in the way food supply chains currently function or could function at various scales from local to global that could pave the way to balance and integration across scales?
- What technologies and approaches can we either discover or adapt that either reduce food waste across the food supply chain or capture value in the waste as raw materials?
- What policies, incentives, or interventions can we discover and test that translate improvements in food supply chains to more equitable and widespread access to balanced and healthy diets?

InFACT Research Agenda for Transformation of Food Utilization

InFACT is coordinating and supporting the work of faculty from eight colleges to closely examine and better understand food environments and cultures and how they shape dietary patterns and public health, to develop research-based transition pathways to dietary patterns that make use of accessible foods in ways that improve health.

Specific Research Themes:

- Explore how food landscapes impact geographic patterns of food consumption.
- Discover the multiple values that influence transitions in food culture and use.
- Discover creative ways to facilitate dietary patterns that improve health and well-being in communities.

Key Research Questions:

- Why doesn't the widespread availability of food lead to more equitable consumption in dietary patterns that more consistently promote health?
- How can food policy and other social interventions and pathways toward food system change acknowledge the multiple values and cultural meanings around the use of food to promote well-being for more people?
- How can new and creative patterns of food use in communities contribute multiple benefits more equitably?

Grant Competition Categories

InFACT will support four categories of grants under the Linkage and Leverage grant program: **Planning, Project, Workgroup, and Conference levels.**

I. Planning level

- Funding of up to \$5,000 for one year.
- Support for the establishment of a research team for the initial planning and development of an application for larger funding prospects.
- Committed time of the InFACT Program Coordinator and Grants Administrator may be available in addition to funds offered.
- Although any bold and transformative ideas that address transformation of food systems for sustainable and resilient food security will be accepted for review, preference is for teams that align with the InFACT research agenda as outlined above.

II. Project level

- Funding of up to \$35,000 for one year.
- Support for teams of university collaborators and their external partners who engage in any strategic activities that are judged to build on InFACT faculty strengths and advance both linkage and leverage in furthering the InFACT research agenda.

III. Workgroup level

- Funding of up to \$100,000 for 2-5 years, capped at \$35,000 for each year.
- Support for teams of faculty and others for creative and far reaching work plans that:
 - Combine the expertise in one or more of our hiring cluster areas;
 - Clearly create synergy among faculty from at least 3 and preferably 5 or more Ohio State colleges;
 - Propel Ohio State into a position of academic leadership within 5 years; and
 - Advance the InFACT Strategic Plan and research agenda to transform the culture, science and technology of agriculture and food systems toward resilient, sustainable, just and equitable food security.
- Detailed work plans are expected to be comprehensive and strategic.
- Committed time of the InFACT Program Coordinator and Grants Administrator may be available in addition to funds offered.
- Preference is for workgroups that organize, combine, and catalyze the efforts of faculty, staff, students and partners to advance at least one of the themes described above in the InFACT research agenda.

IV. Conferences

- a. Funding of up to \$5,000 for an event, such as a conference or workshop.
- b. The event must support and advance the InFACT research agenda, encouraging both linkage and leverage within and amongst faculty, staff, students and/or external partners.
- c. Increasing the national profile and recognition of InFACT will be an expected outcome.
- d. Committed time of an InFACT Program Coordinator may be available in addition to funds offered.

Section 3. Application and Submission Information

Eligibility

Teams including faculty, staff, students, and external partners may apply, with one member of the team identified as the project director. If a project director does not hold an OSU appointment (faculty or staff), they must have an OSU faculty or staff member as a co-director, and that person will be responsible for fiscal management and coordination of InFACT resources.

Deadlines

InFACT will offer 3 grant cycles for the 2020-21 academic year. Grant proposals received by the following deadlines will be considered for funding, subject to the availability of remaining uncommitted funds:

- October 30, 2020 – Planning, Project, Workgroup and Conference Proposals
- January 15, 2021 – Planning, Project, Workgroup and Conference Proposals
- April 9, 2021 – Planning, Project, Workgroup and Conference Proposals

Rejected proposals may be resubmitted during a successive grant cycle, provided that the team has refined the proposal taking into consideration the recommendations offered by the InFACT Grant Review Committee and Executive Committee during the previous grant review cycle.

Use of Funds

There is no restriction on the use of funds except that funds may not be used for capital improvements (construction, renovation, etc.).

Submission Process

A single PDF of proposals should be emailed to Cheryl Fischnich (fischnich.1@osu.edu), InFACT Office Associate, by 11:59pm (Eastern Standard Time) of the day of deadline.

Proposal Format and Required Content

Planning Proposals:

Teams must submit a proposal, typed in 12-point font with 1-inch margins to ensure readability. The file must be submitted as a PDF document.

The proposal narrative may not exceed **2 pages** in length, including charts, tables and graphics. The narrative must document a compelling approach to developing a team that will lead a specific theme in the InFACT research agenda.

Narratives should include:

1. Descriptive Proposal Title
2. Proposal Type – **indicate “Planning”**
3. Concept and Background: Document the research theme that the planning team will address, including an overview of existing research and literature on the topic that is related to the expertise of the team members.
4. Rationale: Describe how the targeted approach will address the research theme, link OSU participants and partners, leverage new resources and produce useful results.
5. Proposed Investigative Team: Describe the researchers, organizations and communities to be involved in the proposed planning process. Include a description of the relevant experience of each member that will be involved, and any related project history. Proposals should demonstrate both cross-college and external partner linkages.
6. Goals, Objectives and Target: Describe specifically the goals, objectives and target of the proposed planning process, including a work plan that details how the research approach will be developed to address one or more InFACT research themes, and how InFACT resources will be used to plan in detail both the internal and extramural support that will be sought by the team.
7. Attachment A (excluded from page count): Team listing with roles, responsibilities and signatures. Each team member must sign indicating their willingness to accept their roles and responsibilities and disclose any conflict of interest ([COI](#) resource page). Following the list, describe the qualifications of the key team members, the capacity of the team to succeed, and how the project will achieve new linkage among the team members. Include lists for both Ohio State and external partners.
8. Attachment B - Budget (excluded from page count): Complete the excel budget spreadsheet and provide a narrative justification of why the requested amount of funds are needed to accomplish the project objectives.

Proposal teams are required to identify potential extramural funding resources and opportunities they plan to pursue using these development funds.

Preference will be given to planning proposals that either develop the team capacity for a specific workgroup proposal or extramural grant proposal that requires interdisciplinary multi-investigator collaboration for substantial (e.g. > \$500K) awards.

Project Proposals:

Teams must submit a proposal, typed in 12-point font with 1-inch margins to ensure readability. The file must be submitted as a PDF document.

The proposal narrative may not exceed **6 pages** in length, including charts, tables and graphics. The narrative must document a compelling challenge and describe how the team resources will be applied to address this challenge and create linkage and leverage toward transformational

progress in food security to meet InFACT’s strategic plan initiatives, goals and outcomes, in particular the research agenda described above.

Narratives should include:

1. Descriptive Proposal Title
2. Proposal Type – indicate “Project”
3. Lay Summary (250-character maximum): Brief and written for a general audience, to be published on the InFACT web page if the proposal is funded.²
4. Concept and Background: Document the significance of the compelling challenge or research question, including an overview of existing research and literature on the topic.
5. Rationale: Describe how the project will address the challenge or research question, link OSU participants and partners, leverage new resources, and produce useful results.
6. Objectives, Approach, and Expected Results: Describe specifically the approach to meeting project objectives, the expected deliverable outputs, and the expected short and long-term outcomes and impacts in narrative or Logic Model format (additional [evaluation resources](#)).
7. Attachment A (excluded from page count): Team listing with roles, responsibilities and signatures. Each team member must sign indicating their willingness to accept their roles and responsibilities and disclose any conflict of interest ([COI resource page](#)). Following the list, describe the qualifications of the key team members, the capacity of the team to succeed, and how the project will achieve new linkage among the team members. Include lists for both Ohio State and external partners.
8. Attachment B - Budget (excluded from page count): Complete the excel budget spreadsheet for year one only, and provide a narrative justification of why the requested amount of funds are needed to accomplish the project objectives for each line in the budget. Include the proposed source and schedule for all extramural resources that have been proposed for the project.

Matching funds or in-kind support are not required, particularly for small awards that accomplish significant linkage. The inclusion of matching funds will be part of the evaluation of proposals, and the expectation for matching will increase with the size of the award. Matching funds are encouraged from external or internal partners, which could include other Discovery Theme initiative seed grant programs, new faculty startup funds, colleges and departments, interdisciplinary center or institute program funds, or funding from external sources. Proposal teams are required to identify future extramural resources and opportunities as part of their plan to achieve leverage and sustain their work beyond the period covered by the award. Project proposals should not be contingent upon receiving matching resources. Our program aims to fund seed grants, or projects or ideas in their initial stages with good potential for addressing the

² For examples of past Linkage and Leverage grants, <https://discovery.osu.edu/infact/linkage-and-leverage-grants>.

InFACT research agenda. We do not aim to fund projects as part of the match for a larger grant that has been received prior to receiving Linkage and Leverage funding.

Workgroup Proposals:

Teams must submit a proposal, typed in 12-point font with 1-inch margins to ensure readability. The file must be submitted as a PDF document. The proposal narrative may not exceed **8 pages** in length, including charts, tables and graphics. The narrative must document a specific InFACT research theme as described above and describe how the team resources will be applied to create linkage and leverage toward transformational progress in advancing the chosen theme.

Narratives must include:

1. Descriptive Proposal Title
2. Proposal Type – **indicate “Workgroup”**
3. Lay Summary (250-character maximum): Brief and written for a general audience, to be published on the InFACT web page if the proposal is funded.³
4. Problem/Opportunity statement and baseline: Document a significant and compelling challenge or research question(s), including an overview of existing research and literature on the topic and current status.
5. Broad food and agricultural system drivers shaping change: Describe the set of system components and interactions that are currently influencing the issue being addressed.
6. Strategic Opportunity: Describe what this team could contribute that would influence system drivers in ways that put InFACT in a position of national leadership.
7. Desired Outcomes: Describe the expected status that would result from up to five years of concentrated effort by the project team.
8. Ohio State team: Identify the project director and up to 4 co-directors along with their departmental and college affiliations (additional team members may be listed in an attachment, see below).
9. External partner team: Identify up to 5 extramural partners who will be integral to leadership of the overall effort (additional partners may be listed in an attachment, see below).
10. Activities and process: Describe specifically the approach to meeting project objectives, the expected deliverable outputs, and the expected short and long-term outcomes and impacts in narrative or Logic Model format (see additional [evaluation resources](#)).
11. Management plan: Outline the network leadership approach and key roles and responsibilities.
12. Resources needed for at least two and up to five years:
 - a. From InFACT, including cash and potential staff support
 - b. From other University sources
 - c. From external funders

³ For examples of past Linkage and Leverage grants, <https://discovery.osu.edu/infact/linkage-and-leverage-grants>.

- d. Resources currently secured (grants contracts, etc.)
 - e. Additional resources needed and plan for securing them over the 5-year period, including specific extramural grant and industry contract sources and involvement of future InFACT hires in workgroup plans.
13. Attachment A (excluded from page count): Team listing with roles, responsibilities and signatures. Team members' roles and responsibilities must be described in detail, and each team member must sign indicating their willingness to accept those roles and responsibilities and disclose any conflict of interest ([COI](#) resource page). Following the list, describe the qualifications of the key team members, the capacity of the team to succeed, and how the project will achieve new linkage among the team members. Include lists for both Ohio State and external partners.
14. Attachment B - Budget (excluded from page count): Complete the excel budget spreadsheet template for at least 2 and up to 5 years (adding columns as necessary) and provide a narrative justification of why the requested amount of funds are needed to accomplish the project objectives for each category of the budget. Include the proposed source and schedule for all extramural resources that have been proposed for the project.

Matching funds or in-kind support are expected over the course of the 2-5 year period of support, will be part of the evaluation of proposals, and an initial source of matching funds will strengthen the case for the workgroup. Matching funds are encouraged from external or internal partners, which could include other Discovery Theme initiative seed grant programs, new faculty startup funds, colleges and departments, interdisciplinary center or institute program funds, or funding from external sources. Proposal teams are required to identify future extramural resources and opportunities as part of their plan to achieve leverage and sustain their work beyond the support provided by InFACT.

Conference Proposals:

Teams must submit a proposal, typed in 12-point font with 1-inch margins to ensure readability. The file must be submitted as a PDF document.

The proposal narrative may not exceed **2 pages** in length, including charts, tables and graphics. The narrative must document a compelling need for a conference or workshop that supports a specific theme in the InFACT research agenda.

Narratives should include:

1. Descriptive Proposal Title
2. Proposal Type – **indicate “Conference”**
3. Concept and Background: Document the event concept, and the research and associated activities that have led up to or will lead up to convening this event.
4. Rationale: Describe how this conference or workshop addresses an aspect of InFACT's research agenda, links OSU participants and partners, leverages new resources, produces

useful results, and raises the academic leadership profile of InFACT within OSU and regionally, nationally and/or internationally.

5. Proposed Investigative Team: Describe the researchers, organizations and communities to be involved in the proposed event. Include a description of the relevant experience of each member that will be involved. Proposals should demonstrate both cross-college and external partner linkages.
6. Goals, Objectives and Target: Describe specifically the goals, objectives and target of the proposed event, including a timeline for planning, event and post-event activities and how InFACT resources will be used.
7. Attachment A (excluded from page count): Team listing with roles, responsibilities and signatures. Each team member must sign indicating their willingness to accept their roles and responsibilities and disclose any conflict of interest ([COI](#) resource page). Following the list, describe the qualifications of the key team members, the capacity of the team to succeed, and how the project will achieve new linkage among the team members. Include lists for both Ohio State and external partners.
8. Attachment B - Budget (excluded from page count): Complete the excel budget spreadsheet and provide a narrative justification of why the requested amount of funds are needed to accomplish the event objectives.

Section 4. Application Review Information

Proposals will be reviewed according to the following criteria:

- Alignment with InFACT [strategic plan](#) initiatives, goals and outcomes and in particular the InFACT research agenda described in Section 2.
- Concept and Rationale: Potential to create transformational change in food security and/or address key priorities described in the InFACT Strategic Plan and Research Agenda, including potential for national leadership in the area of research described.
- Objectives, Approach, and Expected Results: Likelihood of team success in meeting their objectives, achieving substantial transformative impact and return on investment (defined broadly to include both resources for ongoing research and changes in food security in Ohio, the nation and the world).
- Linkage and Team Qualifications: Capacity to perform effectively, breadth and diversity in engagement of partners. Potential to create synergy among faculty from multiple Ohio State colleges. Potential to support professional networks and careers of InFACT faculty hires, InFACT affiliated faculty, and engage new InFACT affiliates.
- Leverage: Clear and demonstrated potential to acquire significant future extramural resources (at least an order of magnitude greater than the value of the initial linkage and leverage grant is a reasonable target) as a direct result of the project or the funded activity of the workgroup, based on the plans for leverage presented and the track records of the team members or the team. Matching support, as existing leverage, is not required but can provide evidence of current and potential future leverage.

Section 5. Award Administration Information

Selection

Our target for notification of proposal teams on the outcome of the review will be within six (6) weeks of submission. For all proposals, feedback will be provided that will aid in further development of the concept.

Annual Review

Grantees will receive negotiated funding amounts over the course of the project subject to a satisfactory annual progress report. A report template will be provided. At the conclusion of the project, grantees must submit a final report within 60 days before they will be eligible to submit a new proposal.

Communications Guidelines

The following guidelines are intended to help grant teams publicize InFACT funded projects:

- Terminology: In all materials (website, news releases, project documents, etc.), describe funding as “a grant from The Ohio State University’s Initiative for Food and AgriCultural Transformation (InFACT), a Discovery Themes program. Learn more at discovery.osu.edu/infact.”
- Logo: Grant teams are expected to use the InFACT branding element on materials about their projects. Please contact Cheryl Fischnich (Fischnich.1@osu.edu), InFACT Office Associate, to obtain the necessary images. Do not stretch, recolor or separate elements of the branding element which should only be used in reference to the funded project with appropriate acknowledgment.
- Sharing coverage: Please share any media coverage a project receives by emailing Cheryl Fischnich (fischnich.1@osu.edu), InFACT Office Associate. If grant teams post about projects in social media, please tag InFACT (Twitter: Twitter: @OhioStateInFACT, Facebook: @OhioStateInFACT and Instagram @OhioStateInFACT).

Team Member Requirements

If support is received, all team members must complete the InFACT Affiliates Form and will be listed on the InFACT website as a partner. All team members will be expected to report on their contributions to the project and to InFACT annually. Given the size and, in the case of workgroup proposals the relatively long-term nature of the investments envisioned, we expect diverse teams with participation from multiple OSU departments and colleges as well as external institutions and private and public sector organizations with these new network connections among faculty, students and partners creating synergy in achieving significant goals.

Section 6. Program Contacts

Questions regarding the proposal submission process should be directed to Cheryl Fischnich (fischnich.1@osu.edu), InFACT Office Associate.

Attachment A: InFACT 2020-21 Linkage and Leverage Grant Team List

Proposal Title:

List the team members, their roles and responsibilities. Please also include team member signatures. After the team listing, in narrative form, describe the capacity of the team to succeed, and how the project will achieve new linkage among the team members.

Team members name, affiliation	email	Roles, responsibilities	Signature
PI, team lead:			

(Add rows as needed)

Narrative

(Describe qualifications of members, capacity of team to succeed, and new linkages generated)

Attachment B: InFACT 2020-21 Linkage and Leverage Grant Budget Pages

Part 1: Budget Narrative: Provide a detailed narrative by budget category explaining why the requested amount of funds are needed to accomplish the project objectives for each line in the budget, the source of any matching resources that have been committed and are needed to complete the project, and the future funding and other resources that will be leveraged. Describe how the proposed project will result in new financial or other capital to continue the work and create a return on the InFACT investment. For Workgroup proposals, include estimates of needed program coordinator (support for team activities and communication) and grant administrator (support in proposal development, writing and submission) time over the timeframe of the proposed workgroup activities.

Part 2: Budget (attach excel spreadsheet using template provided)