LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE FOUNDATION

LAF Research Grant in Honor of Deb Mitchell
Application Instructions: Pre-proposal

The Landscape Architecture Foundation (LAF) is pleased to offer this grant opportunity, which was established by a generous bequest from Debra Mitchell, FASLA, with additional support from SmithGroup.

This document provides background information on the grant application process and instructions to submit a pre-proposal to be considered for the 12- or 18-month grant period that will begin in the summer of fall of 2025.

The full set of pre-proposal materials must be submitted **by 11:59pm EST on December 1, 2024**.

For more information about the research grant, visit: www.lafoundation.org/deb-mitchell-grant. Please contact Senior Program Manager Megan Barnes (mbarnes@lafoundation.org) with questions.

LAF Research Grant: Pre-proposals

Calling research-minded landscape architects from academic institutions, professional practice, and other research organizations. The $25,000 LAF Research Grant in Honor of Deb Mitchell supports research projects that are relevant and impactful for the professional practice of landscape architecture. The grant period begins in the summer or fall and runs for 12 or 18 months.

Pre-proposals require general information about the applicant, a short description of the proposed research, and a preliminary budget and schedule. Candidates who are short-listed in the pre-proposal stage will be invited to submit a full proposal by March 1.

The grant was established in memory of Debra Mitchell, FASLA, who was a champion for the value of research to landscape architecture practice.

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OVERVIEW

The *LAF Research Grant in Honor of Deb Mitchell* supports research projects that are relevant and impactful for the professional practice of landscape architecture.

Each year, one $25,000 grant is awarded to support a research project that can be completed in a 12- to 18-month period. The research must generate knowledge and insights relevant to the practice of design in order to increase landscape architecture's capacity and impact.

The Principal Investigator must be trained as a landscape architect and currently engaged in the field of landscape architecture as a professional practitioner, researcher, educator, or in some other capacity.

GRANT PURPOSE

The LAF Research Grant in Honor of Deb Mitchell was established to raise the profile of research within landscape architecture, to offer new opportunities for collaborative research, and above all to honor Deb, who was a champion for the value of research to the professional practice of landscape architecture.

ELIGIBILITY

Applicants are welcome from professional practice, academic institutions, and other research organizations. Preference will be given to research teams that represent partnerships between professional practice and academic institutions or research organizations.

At least one of the Principal Investigators must be:

- Currently engaged in the field of landscape architecture as a researcher, educator, professional practitioner, or in some other capacity.

- Have a bachelor's or master's degree in landscape architecture. For those with degrees from colleges/universities in the U.S. and Canada, the landscape architecture program must be LAAB- or LAAC-accredited. For those outside of the U.S. and Canada, in locations where landscape architecture is not a recognized degree or profession, a degree in a related discipline is acceptable, provided that the applicant works or teaches as a landscape architect.

  - People who have been recognized as a Fellow of the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) may also be considered regardless of their college degree. Contact LAF for instructions on how to respond to application questions in this scenario.

- Able to communicate in written and spoken English at an advanced/professional level and provide evidence of proficiency.

Current LAF staff, members of the LAF Board of Directors, and members of LAF committees are not eligible. Former staff and former members of the LAF Board of Directors and committees who meet the above requirements are eligible.

RESEARCH PROJECTS

Research projects must be relevant and impactful for the professional practice of landscape architecture. The projects must be completed in a 12- to 18-month period.

Proposed research should be related to landscape architecture in one or more of the following areas: sustainability, climate change mitigation or adaptation, resilience, social equity, health and well-being, urbanization, biodiversity, landscape performance, the economic case for sustainable landscapes, design advocacy, design as research, and design innovation.

FUNDING

Each year, LAF awards one $25,000 grant. The grant period begins in the summer or fall and runs for 12 or 18 months as specified in the proposal and final grant agreement. The grant cannot be renewed.

The award is distributed in three payments, based on mutually agreed-upon deliverables and milestones specified in the grant agreement.

Indirect costs are included in the $25,000 award. LAF will pay a maximum total Facilities & Administrative (F&A) cost rate of 12%. Therefore, for this grant award, the maximum F&A is $2,679 (with total direct costs of $22,321). See LAF's Indirect Cost Policy.

If the funds are received by an individual or a design firm, the individual or receiving entity is responsible for any tax implications of the award.

AWARDEE EXPECTATIONS

Grantees are required to submit quarterly progress reports and maintain regular contact with LAF to discuss any challenges. Deliverables and milestones must be completed/submitted as mutually agreed upon and specified in the grant agreement.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Each year, one $25,000 grant is awarded through an open, competitive process. The grant follows a two-stage application and selection process:

> **Pre-Proposal**
> Pre-proposals require general information about the applicant, a short description of the proposed research, and a preliminary budget and schedule.

> **Full Proposal**
> Candidates who are short-listed in the pre-proposal stage will be invited to submit a full proposal by March 1. These candidates will also participate in a web-based video conversation with jurors about the proposed research in late January/early February.

LAF uses SlideRoom as its online application platform and will only accept applications submitted through this system. All pre-proposal materials must be submitted **by 11:59pm EST December 1.**

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Visit http://lafoundation.slideroom.com to use the system. Once you have created an account, scroll through the "Programs" to the grant, and click "Begin" to start the application process. You may save, edit, and review your work prior to submitting. An application fee of $25 (USD) must be paid through SlideRoom when the application is submitted.

PRE-PROPOSAL CONTENTS

Applicants should submit materials that best highlight relevant work and the ability to complete the proposed research project. Refer to the Application Instructions for more specific information. All submissions must adhere to guidelines and deadlines in order to be considered. Additional materials will not be reviewed.

Required materials

1. **General Application Form**: Complete this online form with basic contact information and eligibility details. The General Application Form also requires basic information about proposed research including:

    - Project title

    - Research question

    - Three keywords to describe research topic(s)

    - Describe how you would disseminate the findings of your research if selected, and describe any previous experience (if any) in presenting research findings to an audience of practitioners

2. **Project Abstract** (500 word max): Upload a PDF with the title and abstract of your research project. It should include the project concept, its significance to the professional practice of landscape architecture, and a brief description of the research methodology.

3. **Potential Partners** (1 page max): Upload a PDF that describes potential partners and other relationships that can be leveraged to complete and disseminate the proposed research.

4. **Preliminary Project Budget and Schedule** (1 page max): Upload a PDF that shows the financial scope of the project and how grant funds will be used. Please include any existing funding and match or partner funds available.

5. **CVs of Principal Investigators** (no page limit): Upload a single PDF that outlines career and research history for each Principal Investigator, highlighting relevant experience that supports the ability to complete the research project. If there are 2 Principal Investigators, upload CVs as 2 separate PDFs.

Supplemental materials (if applicable)

6. **Proof of English Language Proficiency (for non-native speakers only):** Upload a PDF with recent Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) results or other evidence of English proficiency. This can also take the form of a written statement from the applicant

certifying completion of activities requiring English proficiency, such as degrees sought and/or teaching conducted at English-language universities.

7. **College/University Transcripts (for international applicants only)**: Transcripts are <u>not</u> required for applicants with a LAAB- or LAAC-accredited degree from a U.S. or Canadian school. Upload one PDF (in English, if possible) relative to applicant's degree type if applicable:

   - For applicants with a recognized landscape architecture degree from a school outside the U.S. or Canada, submit a copy of college/university transcripts showing completion of a landscape architecture program.

   - For applicants from countries where landscape architecture is not a recognized degree or profession, submit a copy of college/university transcripts showing completion of a degree in a related field, along with course descriptions for each of the landscape architecture-related courses completed.

In addition to the materials above, those applicants who are invited to submit a full proposal will be required to submit the following by March 1. These materials should NOT be submitted as part of the pre-proposal.

- Project Proposal
- Projected Outcomes and Dissemination Plan
- Detailed Project Budget and Schedule
- 2 Letters of Support
- Commitment Letters from Partners

SELECTION PROCESS

A jury of experts in landscape architecture and related fields will evaluate each proposal using the following criteria.

- **Research Topic** - The proposed research is relevant and impactful for landscape architecture practice. It fits within one or more of the grant's listed topic areas and is current (or emergent).

- **Quality of Research Design** - The research is well-grounded in relevant literature and case precedent. It poses a clear research question or questions. The investigative protocol is rigorous and methodical. Additional consideration is given for innovation in research design.

- **Researchers and Support** - The research team has the professional and technical background appropriate to the proposed study. Researchers have the support of their firm(s)/institution(s) to carry out and disseminate the research, including accommodation for time and workload.

- **Research Trajectory** - The research plan is grounded in previous experience and/or future promise. Additional consideration is given for research projects with potential scalability or

the likelihood of future phases/expansion through grants or corporate/institutional frameworks.

- **Team Composition** - The research team is appropriate to the research topic and design. Interdisciplinary teams are encouraged. Partners have been identified and are committed. Additional consideration is given for teams that bridge academia and practice.

- **Communication Plan** - There is a clearly defined audience for the research. The research team has identified opportunities to disseminate the research and key findings to public, professional, and/or scholarly communities.

Applicants who are short-listed are expected to be available for a web-based video conversation with jurors in late January/early February. Full proposals are due March 1. The applicant selected to receive the grant will be notified by April 1.