

University Internal Funding Mechanisms: Microfinancing Core Facility Operations to Spur Innovation

Core Administration

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The Core Facility Assistance Grant Program (CFAGP) is a new internal funding mechanism at the University of Colorado Boulder (CU Boulder) created to address the critical \$5K to \$50K gap in available funding for core facilities. Federal agencies have programs to fund the purchase of high end equipment, including the NSF's Major Research Instrumentation Program (\$100K to \$2.5M range) and the NIH's S10 Instrumentation Programs (\$50K to \$600K range). However, the \$5K to \$50K range for equipment purchases is too small for federal agencies to create funding mechanisms. At the same time, this range is but too large for most departments to fund. An internal core facility small grant program can address this need, providing a transformative benefit to core operations, such as by and serving enabling the development of new methods, improving remote monitoring and operations of facilities, and supporting software, computer, and instrumentation upgrades by .

CU Boulder's CFAGP unlocked opportunities for remote training and building infrastructure. Remote access training and remote user support were instrumental in implementing safe operational procedures, enhancing necessary training sessions, producing training to successfully train and onboard new users. These remote training efforts resulted in restoring approximately 75% of one core facility's typical revenue. CFAGP funding also enabled key infrastructure such as water purification systems. CU-Boulder's CFAGP shows that an internal grant program to address the \$5K-\$50K can have a huge impact in supporting core facilities and fostering research across campus.