

Junior Faculty DC Trip Grant Application

Fall 2026 Competition · Trip Window 1 March 2027 – 15 June 2027

An initiative of the Division of Research and Innovation. The Junior Faculty DC Trip Grant funds eight TAMUSA junior faculty traveler to Washington, D.C. to meet Federal Program Officers and University Government Relations. Two faculty mentors accompany the traveler for pre-trip training and daily on-site debrief.

COMPETITION SNAPSHOT

Maximum award: \$2,000 · Trip window: Summer

Application due: Friday, 6 November 2026, 11:59 p.m. Central · Notification: 1 December 2026

Required party: one TAMUSA junior faculty traveler (fiscal lead) and two faculty mentors.

Required products: briefing packet; documented PO and GovRel meetings; daily debrief notes; post-trip action plan; and a final report to DRI within 30 days of return.

1. TRIP

Working title of the trip / research development focus

Primary disciplinary area

Amount requested (\$; max 2,000)

Target federal agencies / programs for PO meetings

Proposed travel dates (within trip window)

Departure airport / city

Nights in Washington, D.C. (typically 2–4)

2. JUNIOR FACULTY TRAVELER (APPLICANT AND FISCAL LEAD)

Legal last name

Legal first name

M.I.

Rank

Title with discipline (e.g., Assistant Professor of Biology)

Department

College

Terminal degree / year

Official email

Campus phone / extension

TAMUSA start year

3. FACULTY MENTOR 1 (LEAD MENTOR FOR TRAINING AND DAILY DEBRIEF)

Legal last name

Legal first name

Rank / title

Department / unit

Institution (if not TAMUSA)

Official email

Phone

Prior relationship with traveler (none / new / existing — describe)

4. FACULTY MENTOR 2

Legal last name

Legal first name

Rank / title

Department / unit

Institution (if not TAMUSA)

Official email

Phone

Prior relationship with traveler (none / new / existing — describe)

FOR DIVISION USE ONLY

Date received

Proposal no.

Complete?

Reviewers

5. TRAVELER ELIGIBILITY (CHECK EACH ITEM THAT IS TRUE)

- ☐ I am a full-time TAMUSA faculty member (tenured, tenure-track, or research/clinical faculty with a multi-year appointment).
- ☐ I am junior faculty for the purpose of this program: at the assistant-professor rank, or within six years of my first tenure-track or equivalent appointment at TAMUSA.
- ☐ I hold the highest earned terminal degree in my discipline.
- ☐ I am seeking structured mentoring to engage Federal Program Officers and University Government Relations in a line of work that is new to me, new to this campus, or not yet competitive.
- ☐ This is my only Junior Faculty DC Trip Grant proposal this cycle. I do not currently hold an active DC Trip award.
- ☐ I am in good standing with the university currently, and will be for the summer.
- ☐ If awarded, I will complete pre-trip training with both mentors, attend scheduled PO and GovRel meetings, participate in daily debrief, produce a post-trip action plan, present at a DRI venue such as JAG RISE, and file a final report within 30 days of return.

6. MENTOR ELIGIBILITY AND COMMITMENT

- ☐ Each mentor is a faculty member at TAMUSA or another accredited university (A&M System faculty are preferred when expertise exists on campus).
- ☐ At least one mentor has a record of externally funded research or sponsored programs relevant to the agencies the traveler will visit.
- ☐ Both mentors have agreed to a written mentoring plan: pre-trip training, accompaniment (or designated on-site coverage), and a daily debrief during the travel period.
- ☐ Neither mentor is serving solely as the traveler's department chair in a supervisory capacity; a chair may serve only if scholarly or sponsor-facing expertise, not administrative role, is the basis.
- ☐ Both mentors can participate in pre-trip preparation and daily debrief on the proposed travel dates (in person in D.C. or by a DRI-approved hybrid arrangement documented in the mentoring plan).

7. WHY THIS TRIP AND THIS MENTORING TEAM

In 4–6 sentences: why these two mentors, what the traveler will learn about federal engagement, and why the team can complete training, meetings, and debrief within the trip window.

8. COMPLIANCE, ETHICS, AND CONTACTS

Meetings with federal program officers to discuss research ideas and solicitations are a permitted professional activity. This award does not authorize lobbying of Congress or agency officials on pending legislation. Export control: Rani.Muthukrishnan@tamusa.edu. Conflict of interest: University Compliance Office, (210) 784-2028. Government Relations coordination: DRI will introduce the traveler to University Government Relations before travel is booked.

- ☐ Human subjects will be discussed or data shared with a federal official — IRB status must be current
- ☐ Export controls (foreign collaboration, foreign nationals, sanctioned countries, or controlled technology) may arise in briefings
- ☐ An outside interest that may present a conflict of interest has been or will be disclosed
- ☐ None of the above apply to this trip

Protocol / disclosure status or tracking number (if submitted or approved)

9. TARGET FEDERAL AND UNIVERSITY MEETINGS

Sponsor / agency (NSF, NIH, USDA, DOD, NEH, foundation, other)

Directorate, institute, or office

Working list of program officers / offices to request

Target travel week

Why these agencies and officers are the right next step, and what one-pager / preliminary evidence they will expect

Proposed meeting roster (add rows in the narrative if needed)

Agency / office	Program officer or host (if known)	Purpose of the meeting	Priority

10. MENTORING AND TRAINING PLAN SUMMARY (EXPAND IN THE 2-PAGE NARRATIVE)

Pre-trip training cadence

Daily debrief mode (in person / hybrid)

Combined mentor effort (hours)

Mentor responsibilities (one-pager coaching, PO strategy, introductions, daily debrief facilitation, post-trip action plan)

Traveler responsibilities (agency map, one-pagers, scheduling with DRI/GovRel, meeting notes, action plan, final report)

11. PREPARATION, TRIP, AND FOLLOW-THROUGH MILESTONES

Milestone	Target month	Evidence of completion
Mentoring compact signed; agency map and draft one-pagers begun		
Pre-trip training complete; briefing packet locked; travel booked		
PO and GovRel meetings held; daily debrief notes filed each day		
Post-trip action plan drafted; mentor review complete		
Proposal, white paper, or formal PO follow-up submitted or ready		
Final report and mentoring reflection filed (30 days of return)		

12. DEPARTMENT CHAIR ENDORSEMENT (TRAVELER’S CHAIR)

By signing I confirm that I have read this proposal, that the traveler’s workload can accommodate the trip and pre-/post-work, and that I endorse the mentoring team.

Chair — printed name

Department

Signature (type full name or sign)

Date

13. CURRENT AND PENDING SUPPORT (TRAVELER)

List start-up, Research Council, college, and external current or pending support. Note overlap with this request. Mentor awards that will be used as infrastructure or introductions may be noted in Other resources.

Source	Project title	Dates	Amount \$	Status	Overlap

Other resources the team will use (mentor networks, core facilities, start-up, departmental match, DRI GovRel)

14. BUDGET REQUEST JUSTIFY EACH LINE IN THE ATTACHED 1-PAGE BUDGET NARRATIVE

ALLOWABLE (examples)

- Coach airfare to/from the D.C. area
- Lodging at the federal per-diem cap
- Local transit (Metro, rideshare, airport)
- M&IE per diem at the GSA D.C. rate
- Printing of one-pagers / leave-behinds
- Travel insurance required by University policy

NOT ALLOWABLE

- Academic-year salary for traveler or mentors
- Mentor honoraria, consulting, or mentor travel*
- First-class / business airfare; companion travel
- Conference registration unrelated to PO visits
- Alcohol, entertainment, personal side trips
- Spending outside the approved travel dates

* Mentor travel, if required on site, is arranged and funded separately by DRI and is not charged to the \$2,000 traveler award.

Category	Amount (\$)	Brief purpose / calculation
Airfare (coach)		
Lodging (nights × federal cap)		
M&IE per diem (GSA D.C. rate)		
Ground / local transit		
One-pagers, printing, briefing materials		
Other (specify in narrative)		
TOTAL REQUESTED (maximum \$2,000)		

15. REQUIRED ATTACHMENTS ONE PDF, THIS ORDER

- ☐ This completed fillable application (pages 1–4)
- ☐ Trip and Mentoring Narrative — maximum 2 pages (headings on page 5)
- ☐ One-page leave-behind / research one-pager in the format the primary target agency expects
- ☐ Traveler abbreviated CV — maximum 2 pages, focused on the proposed line of work
- ☐ Mentor abbreviated CVs — maximum 2 pages each, emphasizing funding record and federal engagement
- ☐ Budget narrative — maximum 1 page, with GSA lodging and M&IE citations
- ☐ Mentor letters of commitment (if the statements on this form are not used as the letter)
- ☐ Any additional access letters (cores, partners, data owners) if meetings depend on them

16. FORMAT CONFIRMATION

- ☐ Narrative attachments use 12-point font, single spacing, and 1-inch margins.
- ☐ Sections appear in the order listed above and do not exceed page caps.
- ☐ The narrative is written for reviewers outside the specialty; jargon is limited.

17. CERTIFICATIONS AND SIGNATURES

- ☐ This application is submitted by a defined traveler–mentor team. The traveler is the fiscal lead.
- ☐ The team will complete pre-trip training, hold the stated federal and GovRel meetings, and run a daily debrief.
- ☐ Both mentors will meet the traveler at the stated cadence and confirm readiness before travel is booked.
- ☐ Every budget line is allowable under these guidelines and is justified in the one-page budget narrative.
- ☐ The information in this application is true, complete, and accurate to the best of our knowledge.

Traveler / applicant — typed name

Signature (type full name or sign)

Date

Faculty mentor 1 — typed name

Signature (type full name or sign)

Date

Faculty mentor 2 — typed name

Signature (type full name or sign)

Date

HOW TO SUBMIT

Combine this form and all attachments into one PDF named DCTrip_Fall2026_TravelerLast_Mentor1Last.pdf.

Email to DRI@tamusa.edu by 11:59 p.m. Central on Friday, 6 November 2026. Copy both mentors.

Subject line: DC Trip Fall 2026 — [Traveler Last Name]. Questions: DRI@tamusa.edu.

TRIP AND MENTORING NARRATIVE MAXIMUM 2 PAGES

Use 12-point font, single spacing, and 1-inch margins. Write for campus reviewers outside your specialty. Required headings:

1. Opportunity and gap

What federal opportunity will the traveler pursue? What is already known about the relevant solicitations or program officer portfolios, and why is the traveler not yet competitive for those programs without this trip?

2. Meeting and leave-behind plan

Which agencies, offices, and (if known) program officers will be requested? What one-pager, pilot result, or proof-of-concept will be left behind? What would count as a successful meeting.

3. Mentoring compact

Pre-trip training calendar, on-site daily debrief ritual, how drafts of one-pagers will be reviewed, how disagreement will be handled, and how mentor expertise will be used without converting the traveler into a staffer on a mentor's existing award.

4. Follow-through and risk

The 90-day action plan after return (proposal, white paper, or formal PO follow-up). Access to space, cores, or partners the meetings will reference. What could slip (closed PO calendars, weather, delayed bookings) and the fallback that still yields documented federal engagement and a submission-ready next step.

REVIEW CRITERIA

- Team quality — mentor fit, traveler readiness, and a compact that will actually operate before, during, and after the trip.
- Meeting plan — specific agencies and offices, feasible in a 2–4 night window, and matched to what those program officers will expect in a first conversation.
- Federal-engagement strategy — real solicitations or programs, realistic calendar, clear traveler intellectual leadership.
- Budget — every dollar tied to travel, lodging, per diem, or leave-behind materials; no mentor honorarium.
- Institutional return — documented PO and GovRel meetings, a mentoring relationship that can continue, and a concrete next proposal or follow-up.

ADMINISTRATION AFTER AWARD

DRI will contact teams near 11 December 2026. Allow at least two weeks after notice for the traveler's departmental account and University travel authorization.

The traveler is the fiscal lead. Awards are not transferable to another traveler. Unused funds revert unless a single reschedule within the trip window is granted in writing.

Pre-award purchases cannot be reimbursed. All travel must follow University travel policy. Substantive itinerary changes go in writing to DRI at least five business days before departure.

Required end-of-award package: (1) briefing packet and leave-behind, (2) meeting log with dates and offices, (3) daily debrief notes, (4) post-trip action plan, (5) one-page mentoring reflection signed by all three parties, (6) final report to DRI within 30 days of return.

Missing reports bar the traveler from DC Trip reapplication for three years and may require repayment.