

1. Introduction

The multidisciplinary Sherman Center for Early Learning in Urban Communities (Sherman Center) was established to advance George and Betsy Sherman's vision of improving learning experiences and outcomes for young children in Baltimore City. The Sherman Center Faculty Research Award was established as part of this mission. This award seeks to expand knowledge about policies and practices that enhance the learning of young children, ages three through eight, in urban communities like Baltimore. Research topics of interest include, but are not limited to:

- evaluation of new or existing school-based and out-of-school time learning interventions;
- school, teacher, family, and community factors associated with academic growth, socio-emotional well-being, and/or positive behavioral outcomes for young children; and
- the impact of school policies on family and community engagement in students' learning processes and outcomes.

The competition is open to all faculty who hold academic appointments at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC), including adjunct faculty, faculty of practice, and lecturers. Proposals for Sherman Center Faculty Research Awards may be made by *individuals (Principal Investigator; PI) or collaborative teams*. Co-investigators (Co-Is) may include individuals not affiliated with UMBC. All members of the research team must provide confirmation of CITI program certification for human subjects research.

2. Awards

Sherman Center Faculty Research Award recipients will be selected through the competitive review of proposals by members of the Sherman Center campus advisory committee. Awards of up to \$50,000 for funding between 12 and 24 months will be available. Award recipients will hold the

designation of Sherman Center Research Fellows during the timeframe of their study.

3. Proposal Narrative

The proposal narrative must include:

- a description of the project, the central research question(s), and the project's significance for early learning in urban communities;
- a summary of the conceptual framework and relevant literature, the relationship of the proposed research to that literature, and the new knowledge expected to result from the proposed research;
- a detailed description of the research design, methods, data collection instruments, and modes of analysis that the project will employ;
- a project timeline including plan for dissemination; and
- a clear identification of the role(s) the PI, Co-Is, and any supporting researcher(s) will play.

Formatting requirements: The proposal narrative may not exceed 3,000 words; at the conclusion of the narrative, please note the word count in parentheses. Your reference list should follow your narrative in the same PDF and will not count toward the word limit. The text should be double-spaced and use a standard, readable 12-point font.

Additional documents can be included in the proposal as appendices. Examples of accepted appendices include survey instruments, interview protocols, and letters of agreement. No more than 10 additional pages can be included as appendices.

4. Proposal Submission Format

Complete applications must include the following components: the checklist page (provided), cover page form (provided), budget template and narrative forms (provided), current curriculum

vitae (maximum, 10 pages) for each investigator, the proposal narrative, and CITI confirmation.

- a) The **checklist** provides a convenient way to verify that the proposal is complete.
- b) The **cover page form** captures essential information from the proposal narrative, including the project's goals and overall cost. The cover page requires a signature indicating endorsement of the entire proposal by the department chair(s) of the applicant(s).
- c) The **budget template** captures common categories of direct expenses. Budgets may include project expenses, such as Salaries, Benefits, Fees/Stipends, Supplies, Transcription, Equipment, Travel, etc. It is the Sherman Center's Policy not to pay indirect costs for any awards. Applicants should include a **narrative explaining each of their budget expenses**. All awardees are responsible for appropriate use and accounting for the funds provided. Any significant changes to the proposed budget concerning types or amounts of expenditures must be pre-approved by the director of the Sherman Center.
- d) A **current curriculum vitae (CV)** should be submitted for each investigator. Each CV should not exceed 10 pages and should include current position, recent publications, amounts, dates, PIs for funded grants, and other professional information deemed relevant by the applicant.
- e) The **proposal narrative** should clearly address the required content described in section three.
- f) The **confirmation of CITI program certification for human subjects research** should include a certificate of completed training for each member of the research team (see <https://research.umbc.edu/human-subjects-use-training-2/> for additional details).

5. Proposal Review

No fewer than three members of the Sherman Center Campus Advisory Committee, including faculty representatives from each of the campus' colleges, and the Center Director will review and rank the applications. The selection panel will assess the content described in section three for initial review of all applications. Additional

considerations used in the final selection of awards will include:

- **Setting and population** (Is the research conducted in Baltimore City?)
- **UMBC partnership development/expansion** (Does the research have the potential to establish or strengthen a school, community, or district-level partnership?)
- **Implications for practice** (Does the research have the potential to assist schools, districts, or community-based organizations in improving current practices?)
- **Research design** (Is the proposed research design—for example, case study, causal/experimental—consistent with and appropriate for the research questions?)
- **Feasibility** (Can the research be completed as described?)

6. Proposal Submission and Deadlines

For the AY23-24 competition, the proposal deadline is **January 29, 2024**. Applications received after the deadline will not be considered for this year's competition. Application materials (checklist, cover page form, budget and budget narrative, curriculum vitae for each PI, proposal narrative, and CITI confirmation) are to be submitted by e-mail to the director of the Sherman Center as a single PDF file. Hardcopy applications will not be accepted. Awards will be announced by March 25, 2024.

7. Expectations of All Awardees

All awardees will be featured as Sherman Center Research Fellows on the organization's website and in Center communications. Additional expectations of awardees include:

- At the project's mid-point, submission of a progress report, including the current status of the project and budget expenditures.
- Within three months of project completion, a budget summary for the full project and a written report about key outcomes will be shared on the Center's website.
- Attendance and a possible presentation at Sherman Center activities and events.

Sherman Center Faculty Research Award Cover Page

2023-24

Project Title:		
Name of Lead Investigator:	Department:	Date:
Project Start and End Dates:	Total Budget Request:	

Name of Co-Investigator(s)	Signature(s)	Date
Name of Dept. Chair(s) or Supervisor(s)	Signature(s)	Date

Abstract or Summary of Project: (include project goals, brief plan, and proposed assessment method in 250 words or less):

Sherman Center Faculty Research Award Proposal Checklist

2023-24

Please review the following list of elements and procedures required as part of the Sherman Center Faculty Research Award and check that your packet proposal is complete.

- I have obtained the approval and signature of my department chair or supervisor on the cover form.
- I have provided all requested information on the cover form page.
- I have included a detailed budget and budget narrative.
- I have included a current curriculum vitae for each PI.
- I have included a proposal narrative of no more than 3,000 words, excluding references and appendices.
- I have included a confirmation of CITI program certification for human subjects research for each member of the research team.
- I understand that, if awarded the research funding, I will be required to carry out activities as a Sherman Center Faculty Research Fellow.

Sherman Center Faculty Research Award Budget Template, 2023-24

PERSONNEL (e.g., summer salary, course buy-outs, hourly wages)	Year 1	Year 2	Total
Faculty			
Post-Doctoral Candidates			
Graduate Students			
Undergraduate Students			
Staff			
Total – Personnel			
MATERIALS AND SUPPLIES (e.g., computer software)			
Total – Material and Supplies			
EQUIPMENT (e.g., video and audio recording equipment)			
Total - Equipment			
TRAVEL (e.g., conferences, data collection)			
Total - Travel			
OTHER COSTS (e.g., consultants, participant stipends)			
Total - Other costs			
TOTAL BUDGET			

Sherman Center Faculty Research Award Budget Narrative, 2023-24

Below, please include a brief explanation for each budget item.

Budget Item	Explanation