INTRODUCTION
Ball State University offers a variety of internal grant programs that support student projects. The University Research and Creative Arts Committees would like to encourage students to consider applying for a Student ASPiRE Grant. Funds can be provided to assist in project costs such as travel or supplies.

ELIGIBILITY
Applicants must be enrolled for the entirety of the funding period at Ball State University, Burris Laboratory School or the Indiana Academy as one of the following:

- Graduate Student
- Undergraduate Student
- Burris High School Student - grades 11 or 12 (follow instructions/deadlines for Undergraduate Students)
- Indiana Academy High School Student - grades 11 or 12 (follow instructions/deadlines for Undergraduate Students)
  - While the instructions/deadlines are the same for Undergraduates and Burris/Academy students, it should be noted that they are reviewed separately and are not in competition with each other.

- Students may not hold this award for the same project as, or within the same fiscal year as an ASPiRE Student Travel award, a Tucker Autism Research or Travel Grant, or a Hollis Award.

RESEARCH PROGRAM DESCRIPTION
In general, projects submitted to the research competition involve a process of study or discovery that will produce new insights, theories, or will apply such knowledge to problem-solving within the discipline or in society. Results of research should be worthy of submission for publication in refereed journals and could serve as the foundation for an external funding application.

TYPES OF FUNDING AVAILABLE FOR THE RESEARCH COMPETITION
There are two competition pools for this program, the Graduate and the Undergraduate. Proposals are capped at $1,000 for Graduate students and $300 for Undergraduate, Burris, and Indiana Academy Students. Funds can be used for Supplies, Equipment, Expenses and Travel (S.E.E.T.) costs associated with research. Costs need to be itemized and justified and must follow accepted university accounting policies and procedures. Funding is not for the purpose of attending conferences or solely
for dissemination. It is anticipated that 40 total Graduate awards will be made between the creative arts and research competitions.

Graduate awardees may not hold this award concurrently with an ASpiRE Travel award, a Tucker Autism Research or Travel Grant, or a Hollis Award.

ROLE OF THE MENTOR
All ASpiRE student projects require the support of a faculty mentor or advisor.
- Ball State students must ask a BSU faculty member to serve as a mentor and to provide assistance in preparing the project application.
- Burris and Academy students must ask a school faculty member to serve as a project advisor. A BSU faculty member may also serve in conjunction with the school faculty member.

The mentor is someone who will be involved in the project as a teacher and guide. He or she can provide assistance with defining the scope of the project, determining the best research or creative methods to achieve the desired goals of the project, and suggest or help obtain resources to complete the project. In fact, many faculty mentors welcome students into their research laboratories and programs, and are willing to provide personal day-to-day guidance in the progress of research or creative activity.

TO THE STUDENT
- Discuss the project with your mentor.
  - If your research is an extension of your mentor’s, be sure to make a clear distinction on the unique contribution that your project proposes.
- Ask your mentor to review and proofread your proposal before you submit it.
- Ask your mentor what institutional resources are available to help complete your project.
- Request your required letter of support from your mentor during the initial project meetings with your mentor.

TO THE MENTOR
- Be an active participant in the student’s project.
- Review the guidelines for the required letter of support for the student (see Proposal Attachments).
- Request that you be allowed to review and proofread the proposal prior to submission.
- Complete final report on behalf of the student should student be unavailable.

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR PROPOSALS
Proposals are due no later than 11:59 pm on the submission deadline date listed on the website. Proposals must be submitted via Submittable. PLEASE NOTE: Applications missing information or not adhering to the guidelines will be returned without review, no exceptions.

- PROJECT DESIGN
Proposal Narrative: Limited to two Pages; double-space the text using no smaller than a size 11 font, New Times Roman or Arial, suggested type font, with at least 1 inch margins in all directions. Label the required sections as stated below and address each topic completely but concisely. Because review committees are comprised of members from a variety of disciplines, all proposals should be written in clear, non-technical language readily understood by an educated layperson. Material should be
organized in such a way that a clear outcome of the project is readily discernable.

This section is intended to introduce the background and methodology of the project. Keeping within the two page limit, please address the following topics:

1. **Executive summary** - An overview of the proposed project and its significance.

2. **Background information** - The history of the idea, the current status of the research in this area, and a definition of terms needed to facilitate a lay reader’s understanding of the project. Note: if your project is an extension of your mentor’s research, you must make a clear distinction between your project and the unique and innovative contribution your research proposes.

3. **Goals, objectives, and significance** - A discussion of the scope of the project, focusing on the overall goals and specific objectives of the research. Material should be organized in such a way that a clear outcome of the project is readily discernable. Project significance should clearly delineate the anticipated impact in the field or on one’s research agenda. Plans for dissemination, publication, or presentation must be described in this section.

4. **Research Methods & Timeline** - An identification of research questions and a detailed description of the proposed project. Describe in detail the methods, procedures, steps or activities to be undertaken, and a timetable for completing the work. Overall, the goal of the research methods section is to outline what will happen during the course of the research and how it will lead to an outcome. The research methodology description should provide a reader with a clear mental picture of the proposed work.

Regardless of whether the research involves quantitative or qualitative methodology, a good description contains the following information:

- What research question(s) will the data propose to answer, or how will the defined inquiry be described?
- How will the data be collected and analyzed?
- If human subjects are to be involved, how will they be selected and why?
- What is the expected outcome or what further research questions may be prompted by the results?

**BUDGET & BUDGET NARRATIVE**

The goal of the budget section of the proposal is to identify the type and amount of funds required to carry out the project. There should be a clear connection between the budget items and their contribution to the proposed project. Funding is not for the purpose of dissemination only.

**Budget Form** is a separate section of the Submittable application.
Budget Form Category Definitions

Supplies, Materials, Minor Equipment—Any supplies needed to complete the project. Supplies include: Office supplies, postage, software, laboratory supplies, books, etc.

Travel—Any expenses incurred during or directly related to travel: Airfare, lodging, mileage, per diem, etc.

Other:

Participant Costs—Stipend to research subjects or project participants
NOTE: Participant Incentives must be in line with the Controller’s Office policy on awards, prizes, and stipends. For details please see the latest policy. Per this policy, Ball State faculty and staff are not eligible to serve as paid participants on Aspire-funded projects.

Contractual—Non BSU agreements (including software licenses) and non BSU project consultants.

Budget Narrative is limited to 1 page, double spaced; serves as a text description of items denoted in the Budget Form. Do not include a table within the budget narrative. Use the budget narrative section to:

- Give a complete explanation of the amounts listed on the Budget Form.
- Explain rationale for figures in budget itemization.
- Name the source of the contribution for the “BSU-Other” column (e.g. Department, College, External Grant, personal funds, etc.)

Please keep in mind the following when preparing the Budget and Budget Narrative.

- Student Awards may NOT pay salaries or wages.
- Provide sufficient detail regarding how various budget items were calculated and proposed budget amounts are justified.
- All equipment, tangible materials, and books purchased on a grant are property of the University.
- ASPIRE funds not encumbered or spent by the end of the project period will revert back to the ASPIRE Program.
  - Mileage is based on current University rates: BSU Travel Regulations and Procedures Manual

PROPOSAL ATTACHMENTS

Please include the following required and optional materials as attachments to your proposal.

- Required:
  - Literature references (1 page maximum; use the format that is standard for publishing in your field.)
  - Letter of support from your faculty mentor. The letter of support should address the following issues:
    - The viability of the project
    - Innovative contributions of the project
    - How the project fits with the student’s academic progress
    - Student’s ability to complete the project
    - What role, if any, the student’s project plays in your own research
  - 1 page Curriculum Vitae for student applicant and co-applicants
• Optional:
  o If available at the time of application, include approved IRB or IACUC letter.
  o Appendix of related materials (e.g., survey questions)
  o Additional letter(s) of support from collaborators or other agencies. (It is recommended that a letter of support be obtained if an outside agency is involved in any capacity.)
  o Glossary of Terms (1 page maximum). It is recommended that even though your proposal should be written for the educated lay person, it may be beneficial to the reviewer to refer to a glossary of terms used in the narrative or methodology.

FAQ Additional Support Materials
Occasionally, a proposal can be strengthened by the inclusion of Additional Support Materials. These include, but are not limited to, the following types of information.

- Examples of artwork, photographs, etc.
- Examples of previously published material.
- Anything else the review committee could use to evaluate the proposal.

Submission
A complete proposal submission includes:

- Proposal narrative, budget narrative, required appendices (curriculum vitae and letter of support, and optional appendices. These items should be clearly labeled (i.e., Application Cover Sheet, Budget Narrative, etc.).
- Optional Additional Support Materials.

Review Criteria for Competitions
All proposals are reviewed by the appropriate research subcommittee. Reviewers assign points and an overall rating (fund, possibly fund, do not fund) to the proposals prior to the review meeting. At the review meeting, those proposals that fall into the “possibly fund” category are discussed. Those that are clearly fund or do not fund are not discussed unless there is a specific issue raised by a member of the (sub)committee. Proposals are scored out of a possible 30 points - see below for exact criteria.

Proposal Background (maximum of 5 points)
Origin of idea or project
Literature review

Significance of Project (maximum of 10 points)
Goal of proposal is clearly stated
Benefits to discipline and practice
Impact of expected outcome of the project

Research Methods (maximum of 10 points)
Project plan (e.g., development of creative design, or data collection and analytical procedure)
Feasibility of project within time frame
Use of resources and budget
Dissemination (maximum of 5 points)
Clear and specific plans for dissemination, publication, commercialization, or presentation
Appropriate to the field, applicant and/or project

REVIEW PROCESS
The University Research Committee is comprised of faculty members and students nominated by the University Senate. The Research Committee reviews the proposals submitted for the research program. The University Research Committee is divided into two subcommittees according to discipline:

Subcommittee #1: Humanities, Arts, Music, and Architecture
Subcommittee #2: Education, Business, and Social Sciences
Subcommittee #3: Mathematical, Biological, Physical, Health & Applied Sciences

All proposals submitted will undergo the same review process.

• Administrative review by SPA, for:
  o Previous internal award documentation
  o Adherence to proposal submission guidelines
• Subcommittee Review against Review Criteria (see below)
• Funding Recommendation – Subcommittees make suggestions for funding to the Director of SPA, who then makes the final funding decision based on availability of funds.

AWARD DECISIONS
After a funding decision is made, the applicant will receive an email indicating that a decision has been made. If the project is not recommended for funding, the decision letter may suggest ways to strengthen or improve the proposal, or suggest other funding sources. If the committee feels the proposal could be strengthened with minor changes, the applicant will be asked to revise and resubmit to the next round of the competition.

PROJECT PERIOD
The project period for graduate and undergraduate competitions are as follows:

Graduate Students:
  Fall Submission: January 1 – December 31
  Spring Submission: May 1 – April 30

Undergraduate Students:
  Fall Submission: January 1 – December 31
  Spring Submission: May 1 – April 30
FUNDING AWARD STIPULATIONS

- All awards must comply with the ASpiRE Post Award Guidelines.
- Ball State students are limited to one Research or Creative Arts award per student classification level (Burris/Indiana Academy, undergraduate, graduate).
- **Awarded funds cannot be used outside of the Project Period.** Any remaining funds will be returned to the program.
- Students may not hold this award for the same project as, or within the same fiscal year as an ASpiRE Student Travel award, a Tucker Autism Research or Travel Grant, or a Hollis Award.
- For projects that involve co-directors, the award is per project, not per student.
- Funding requests may be reduced based on funding limitations; however students are still only eligible for one Research or Creative Arts award per degree, no matter the amount awarded.
- Projects involving the use of human subjects, animals, radioactive or other biohazardous material must receive approval from the appropriate research compliance review committee to ensure compliance with federal regulations and established university guidelines. See the Office of Research Integrity (ORI) for forms and submission requirements. **Note:** Applications that require review from ORI need not be submitted prior to submitting an ASpiRE application. However, approval must be obtained **before** the project can begin or grant funds can be released.
- Students are highly encouraged to participate in the annual SPA Student Symposium, occurring each Spring.
- All equipment and materials purchased on a grant will remain the property of Ball State University.

FINAL REPORT

The final report deadline is April 30 following the project period for fall competitions and December 31 following the project period for spring competitions.

The Final Report Form can be submitted via this link or through the link on the Aspire website. Grant recipients and /or their mentors failing to submit acceptable final reports will be declared ineligible for further support under programs supervised by the ASpiRE Program. If reports cannot be submitted by the date specified in the program guidelines, the ASpiRE Program Manager will consider written requests for an extension by email to aspire@bsu.edu.