

2024 - 2025 ARIADNE LABS SPARK GRANT PROGRAM

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

DATE OF ISSUE: March 1, 2024

Ariadne Labs is pleased to announce the application process for the Ariadne Labs Spark Grant Program for 2024 - 2025. Ariadne Labs is committed to the pursuit of innovative healthcare solutions that save lives and reduce suffering, and our Spark Grant program is an important generator of new ideas and projects that enable expansion of our mission. Spark Grants support the design and testing of innovative solutions to solvable problems in health care delivery.

The application process consists of two rounds: letter of interest (LOI) and full application (see timeline below). LOIs are due by Friday, March 29, 2024 and selected candidates will be invited by Thursday, May 9th to submit a formal application due by Friday, June 14th. Spark Grant projects will kick off on October 1, 2024.

If you are interested, please submit a 2-3 page LOI using the template enclosed by Friday, March 29, 2024 at 5pm ET. Please email all LOIs or questions to sparkgrants@ariadnelabs.org.

TIMELINE:

Activity	Date
Letter of Interest Due	Friday, March 29, 2024 at 5pm ET
Full Application Candidates Chosen By	Thursday, May 9, 2024
Full Application Due	Friday, June 14, 2024 at 5pm ET
Interviews (as needed)	July 2024
Award Notification (Acceptance/Rejection)	August 2024
Project Kick-off	October 1, 2024

ABOUT THE ARIADNE LABS SPARK GRANT PROGRAM:

OUR PURPOSE

Health systems should equitably deliver the best possible care for every patient, everywhere, every time.

As one of the world's top innovation hubs for health care, we strive to continuously grow our portfolio of impactful solutions. Designing innovative solutions requires an understanding of not only what's needed now but "what's next" in health care.

Solving failures in health care requires a committed, knowledgeable community of leaders who can address health care failures in their own work.

WHAT WE DO

The Ariadne Labs Spark Grant Program is an incubator grant program for Ariadne staff and faculty to design and test innovative solutions to solvable problems in health care delivery.

HOW WE DO IT

Priorities: The Spark Program prioritizes funding projects that are focused on the most important current and future know-do-gaps in health care delivery.

People: The Spark Program staffs projects with expert support in research, design, implementation, project management and measurement to create a highly skilled, multidisciplinary team. See the "Team Resources" section below for more details.

Process: The Spark Program guides grantees through a structured innovation pathway known as the Ariadne Arc. Projects are guided through this process to ensure the design and test of impactful solutions ready for scalable systems-level change. Those projects that show evidence of feasibility, tractability, and impact may be chosen to proceed with future funding and support after the initial Spark grant's end.

CONTENT FOCUS:

Ariadne Labs prioritizes funding projects that focus on closing specific "know-do" care delivery gaps - narrowing the gap between what we know we should do versus what we actually do. In the past, Spark Grants have supported a variety of project areas, ranging from investigating new methods of communicating in clinical settings to developing new ways to measure health system functioning. Successful projects are novel, feasible, scaleable, and improve lives of patients, families, and communities.

SPOTLIGHT ON SPARK SUCCESS: DELIVERY DECISIONS INITIATIVE

A Spark Grant led by Dr. Neel Shah set out to develop a simple solution to decrease maternal mortality. This grant has served as the foundation for what is now one of Ariadne Labs' flagship programs: the Delivery Decisions Initiative.

With initial grant funding, Dr. Shah and his research team were able to more deeply understand the problem and identify opportunities for solution design. The team started by investigating everything from payment structures to maternal age to identify possible causes of the rising mortality rates. Ultimately, they found that variation in rates of cesarean deliveries across hospitals provided an opportunity to learn and improve, and designed a solution for decision-making that incorporated both clinical knowledge and family preferences.

Today, the [Delivery Decisions Initiative](#) at Ariadne Labs, led by Amber Weiseth, DNP, MSN, RN, comprises multiple projects aimed at designing systems that measurably improve the well-being of people with growing families. The portfolio includes efforts to elevate the role of nurses, measure maternal health in cities, and improve communication and teamwork in labor and delivery.

OTHER SUCCESSFUL SPARKS

RURAL HOME HOSPITAL

This project started as a Spark Grant with the goal to develop models of care at home in rural settings. The team embarked on a design process with mock admissions to understand the care gaps needed to be closed in order for the model to work. They set up new streams of data collection and partnerships to proceed to further testing. The team is now currently testing a Rural Home Hospital model in a randomized controlled trial in 3 locations in partnership with foundations, health care systems, and communities. The team is also working to build new models of care at home in a variety of settings.

STROKE PROJECT

Stroke is a leading cause of long-term disability and death worldwide. Endovascular thrombectomy (EVT) has been shown to be effective for enhancing recovery from acute ischemic strokes. However, a lack of timely access in community health settings deprives its benefits to a large number of stroke patients, thereby decreasing its effectiveness in real-world settings. In 2021 a Spark Grant funded initial work to develop a checklist to triage potential candidates for EVT. In their second year of funding, the team conducted an early implementation study to test the acceptability and feasibility of the tool at community hospitals in Massachusetts.

ELIGIBILITY:

Ariadne Labs Core Faculty, appointed Associate Faculty and staff are eligible to apply for this grant.

For Associate Faculty applicants only: Please note, Spark grants can only cover current institutional base salary up to the NIH cap. Funded projects will work with Ariadne Labs finance team to determine final salary agreement. If funded the average spark award supports 10-15% of the PI/Project Lead's time.

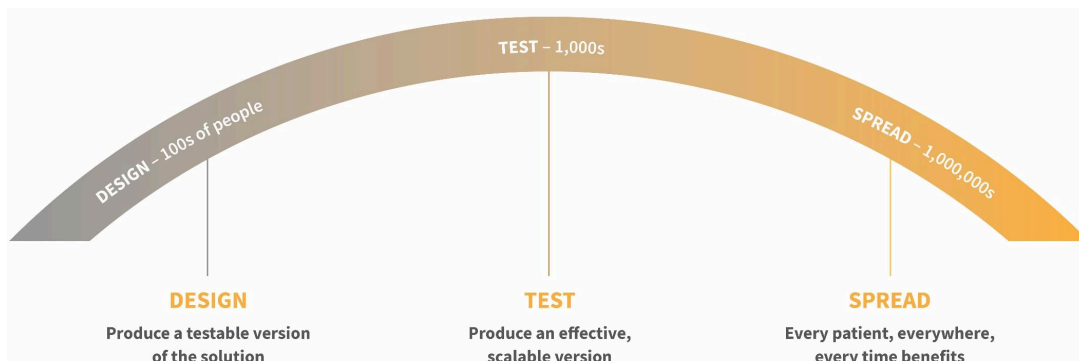
A note for those faculty who are already working with the Lab: this funding opportunity should focus on **new innovations** in your field or for the organization. Projects focused on your core work or adjacent to core work [adaptations or additions to the core] should be directed to the internal funding mechanism through finance partners.

PROCESS - ARIADNE ARC

To ensure that our solutions are effective, useful and implemented widely, we utilize our [Ariadne Labs Arc](#), a three-stage innovation pathway to design, test and spread scalable systems-level solutions. The Arc has been used to produce transformative, globally scalable solutions to some of health care's biggest problems.

Funded teams are guided through the Arc, which begins with understanding the context and problem, prioritizing the desired outcomes, generating solution options, prioritizing prototype(s) for testing, collecting rapid-cycle and implementation feedback, and then iterating on solution design and implementation elements. It is important to articulate in your application alignment between your proposed solution and the Ariadne Arc in order to ensure alignment and synergy.

Integrated throughout the Arc are Human Centered Design (HCD) methods which ensure that solution development is focused around the needs and desires of end users and target populations. Ariadne's approach and methodology accelerates the ability of project teams to successfully design, test, and spread interventions that have the highest level of impact to meet the diverse and expansive needs of the many.



TEAM RESOURCES

The Innovation Platform manages and oversees the Spark Grant Program and staffs funded projects with technical expertise from across the Lab. Funded projects will be assigned a multidisciplinary team with expertise in research, design, implementation, and project management. See below for details on typical team composition and roles and responsibilities while noting that projects in different tracks/stages may require alternative staffing:

- **Project Investigator (PI) or Project Lead:** This role leads the strategic direction of all project endeavors, provides deep content and subject matter expertise, and acts as the primary custodian of external relationship management. The PI/Project Lead and PM together are responsible for overall team management and support.
- **Project Manager (PM):** This role makes sure the project is on time, within budget, and in alignment with the Ariadne Arc. The PM is a master juggler who helps keep everyone informed, organized, and on track, from engaging the right resources to coordinating meetings and ensuring IRB guidelines are followed. The PI and PM together are responsible for overall team management and support.
- **Human Centered Design Specialist:** This role leads the overall strategy for human centered design activities. The Design Specialist leverages empathy and design research to craft user-centric solutions that prioritize user-friendly form and function, positive user experience, and meaningful impact. They act as champions of the user voice and advise the team on how to ensure design decisions are driven by deep understanding of needs, behaviors, and aspirations.
- **Implementation Specialist:** For projects in earlier stages of prototype development, this role provides consultation on designing for successful implementation and spread. For testing projects this role leads the overall strategy for project implementation plans and activities, including guiding external teams to seamlessly adopt new solutions and processes. Examples include leading external staff training to ensure smooth integration with existing workflows, identifying process, outcome and balance measures for the implementation of the program, and working directly with an implementing site to conduct Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycles.
- **Qualitative Specialist:** This role leads qualitative research design, conducts user interviews, analyzes interviews, and translates data into narratives that inform design and implementation decision-making.
- **Executive Sponsor:** Meets with the PI/Project Lead and PM quarterly as part of Project Health Meetings. Provides regular mentorship and guidance to the project team on the content and strategy of the work.

TRACKS FOR STRUCTURING YOUR PROJECT:

The Ariadne Labs Spark Grant Program offers three track options for structuring your Spark Grant project. These tracks align with the steps of our Ariadne Arc (see above). See below details on each track option. Note that we have included suggested milestones/approach and example resources/staffing based on successful projects in the past. Specific resources/staffing will be determined in coordination with the Spark Program team based on the project scope, as well as the skills, experience and expertise of the applicant. Please read the options carefully to determine which track best fits your proposed project.

Track	Time	Total Cost	Suggested Milestones/Approach	Example Team Resources	Required Output
*Track A: Understanding the Problem	6 mo	\$65,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Context building utilizing literature review, qualitative interviews, and/or surveys Learning from others by understanding current solutions in the field Define user needs by hosting discovery interviews or conducting observations with users who directly experience the problem space of interest Synthesis of insights for design, including early ideation for solution development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal Investigator and/or Project Lead Project Manager or Project Coordinator Qualitative Specialist Human Centered Design Specialist Writing/Research Specialist 	Paper with clear articulation of the problem, know-do-gap, users needs, and opportunities for tool development with clear articulation of anticipated impact
*Track B: Designing the Tool	6 mo	\$65,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued context mapping and iterating on the problem, know-do-gap, and user needs Ideation and prioritization of new solutions Alignment on prototype user profile, form, and content Development and design of initial prototype(s) Rapid cycle user feedback and iteration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal Investigator and/or Project Lead Project Manager or Project Coordinator Human Centered Design Specialist Qualitative Specialist 	Prototype we have confidence in based on rapid cycle user feedback that is ready for small scale implementation testing
**Track C: Small Scale Implementation Testing of the Tool	12 mo	\$125,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Site Context Assessment (Atlas Initiative) Develop and test a family of meaningful measures (process, outcome, and balance) to achieve learning goals Train identified pilot sites and conduct ongoing PDSA cycles Conduct surveys and/or interviews to assess usability, feasibility, and perceived utility Develop initial implementation guidance for use in future work Data analysis and writing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal Investigator and/or Project Lead Project Manager or Project Coordinator Implementation Specialist Data Analyst Writing Specialist Qualitative Specialist Design Specialist 	Updated prototype and initial implementation guidance based on data indicating usability and feasibility of the solution.

Given the timeline and budget, proposals under Track A and Track B **cannot include human subjects research and therefore require institutional review board approval. If you are unsure whether your proposal includes human subjects research consider using [this tool](#) developed by the Harvard Longwood Campus Institutional Review Board.*

***Given the timeline and budget, PIs should aim to have pilot sites identified and initial commitment at the time of grant award.*

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LETTER OF INTEREST TEMPLATE

DIRECTIONS:

Please use the template on the following page for your LOI template. Please limit your LOI response to three pages; anything beyond three pages will not be considered. Submit the completed LOI, as well as any questions, to sparkgrants@ariadnelabs.org.

SPARK GRANT ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Ariadne Labs Spark Grant applicants are assessed along four primary criteria. Please consider these criteria as you develop your Spark Grant application and participate in our selection process.

<p><u>Project Clarity</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Identifiable know-do-gap● Understanding of the context and barriers● Understanding of the users and their pains/gains● Logical, high level project approach	<p><u>Potential Impact</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Aligned with Ariadne Labs' mission● Potential for scale and spread● Clear short-term and long-term impact● Potential for paradigm shift in patient care outcomes
<p><u>Feasibility</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Degree of change needed to improve patient outcome● Potential for stakeholder support● Resources required for project● Potential for additional funding	<p><u>Leadership</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Depth of content expertise● Ability to lead and manage projects collaboratively● Alignment and excitement to learn Ariadne Labs' innovation approach and methodology● Curiosity and comfortability with ambiguity

Project Title	
Proposed By	
Home Institution	
Track (A*, B*, C**)	

Given the timeline and budget, proposals under Track A and Track B **can not include human subjects research and therefore require institutional review board approval. If you are unsure whether your proposal includes human subjects research consider using [this tool](#) developed by the Harvard Longwood Campus Institutional Review Board.*

***Given the timeline and budget, Pls should aim to have pilot sites identified and initial commitment at the time of grant award.*

Question 1: Problem: What is the major problem in health care delivery you plan to explore (including patient population that will be affected)?

Question 2: Describe your current understanding of the **specific** know-do gap and the care context.

Question 3: What do you specifically need to learn in order to define a path forward for a solution?

Question 4: What do we know already about existing solutions to the problem you are trying to solve? Has anyone attempted to solve this problem?

Question 5: Who are the key stakeholders that are affected by the problem you are trying to solve and what are their motivations and needs? How will you access these stakeholders to better understand their needs in this project?

Question 6: Briefly share a summary of your professional history and focus of your work and how it informs the project you plan to accomplish at Ariadne Labs. How are you hoping to build on your medical / research experience by participating in a human centered design process? What are you most excited to learn / practice in the human centered design process?

Question 7: Detailed in the table above are suggested milestones/approaches for achieving project goals. Are there other milestones/approaches you would like to consider adding to achieve project goals?

Question 8: Detailed in the table above are suggested staff/resources for achieving project goals. Are there other resources you expect to need to achieve project goals? e.g., you will need to purchase access to a dataset, licenses for software, etc.

Question 9: Risks/Challenges: What do you foresee as being the biggest obstacle(s) that could affect your project?

Question 10: Explain why you chose the track you are applying for. If you are applying for Track B or C, please share evidence of milestones that have already been completed (whether by yourself or others).