



2026 Research Innovation Fund (RIF) Request for Proposals – Student Summer Research Project Awards

Revised – March 4, 2026

Cornell University, with outstanding faculty, staff, and students in agriculture and life sciences, computing and information science, engineering, veterinary medicine, social science, and other fields are exceptionally well-positioned to advance the concepts and tools of digital agriculture. To foster the collaborations needed for such endeavors, and to catalyze the development of digital agriculture tools for New York and regions beyond, CIDA seeks student proposals for summer research projects that will advance digital agriculture.

Stipulations for student RIF summer research project awards

- Graduate (Masters, professional degrees, and PhDs) and undergraduate students currently enrolled in a degree program at Cornell University are eligible to participate.
- Students must have at least two Cornell faculty members in different CIDA supporting colleges who agree to serve as mentors of their research. Eligible colleges include: the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, the College of Engineering, the Bowers College of Computing and Information Science, or the College of Veterinary Medicine.
- Students should feel comfortable asking a primary mentor for help identifying a secondary mentor. The proposed project should address an important real-world issue, problem, or opportunity and contribute to advancing the use of digital tools and concepts in agriculture and food systems. Any research methodology is acceptable.
- Students who receive RIF funding agree to
 - acknowledge CIDA on all publications and presentations related to the funded research with wording such as “This work benefited from the support of the Cornell Institute for Digital Agriculture (CIDA).”
 - submit annual /final reports to CIDA.
 - present their findings in the CIDA-sponsored seminar series, retreats, and/or workshops, and to contribute to other CIDA events and activities where possible (such as giving a Zoom presentation in the fall semester for the "AI for Digital Agriculture")

Two categories of student funding are available

1. Summer funding for a graduate student (full summer \$11,500 or half summer \$5,750 per award) – Graduate Student application, Primary Faculty mentor application, Secondary Faculty mentor application



2. Summer funding for an undergraduate student (full summer \$8,500 or half summer \$4,250 per award) – Undergraduate Student application, Primary Faculty mentor application, Secondary Faculty mentor application

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Submission deadline

Applications for both graduate and undergraduate summer research project awards are **due Friday, March 27th, 2026**. Awards will be announced by May 1st, with funding distributed approximately May 15th. Final Reports are due by Monday, September 15th, 2026.

Submission procedure

All proposals must be submitted online through Qualtrics. *Emailed proposals, figures and/or other content will not be accepted.*

- [Student Application](#) – graduate and undergraduate
- [Primary Faculty Mentor Application](#)
- [Secondary Faculty Mentor Application](#)

Review criteria

[Review Criteria for Student Summer Research Project Proposals](#)

Please contact Gabriela Cestero, CIDA Managing Director, at gc423@cornell.edu with any comments or questions.