

Project Year 5 NSF EPSCoR RII Track-1 Seed Grants Request for Proposals

South Dakota EPSCoR (SD EPSCoR) hereby solicits Seed Grant proposals from researchers at the NSF EPSCoR Track-1 partner institutions. A total of \$200,000 is available in project year 5. High-impact proposals supporting NSF EPSCoR Track-1 goals and objectives are solicited. Research proposals are solicited supporting transformative solutions or innovative uses of 2D materials and biofilms, innovative STEM education, outreach, and diversity activities, as well as pursuit of education research and support opportunities. Proposals for high-risk, high reward biofilm research at the intersection of biofilms, 2D materials and big data are solicited. Seed Grant funds are intended to 1) support innovative activities that will result in submission of proposals to federal agencies or private organizations, and 2) allow individuals not currently supported by Track-1 funding to become involved in the Track-1 activities. It is anticipated that at least 4 awards for up to 12 months, October 1, 2023-September 30, 2024, will be made.

Eligibility

Individuals working at one of the NSF Track-1 partner institutions not currently supported by NSF Track-1 funding are eligible to submit Seed Grant applications. Faculty, post docs, graduate and undergraduate students not currently supported by Track-1 funding may submit an application. If the NSF Track-1 project provides salary support to the applicant or post-doc, graduate or undergraduate student working with the applicant they are not eligible to submit a proposal as the principal investigator. They are eligible to collaborate with an eligible principal investigator but can't salary support as part of the project. Applicants must collaborate with an NSF Track-1 participant on the Seed Grant.

Use of Funds

Proposals may request up to \$50,000, direct and indirect costs. Seed Grants are to be used to support innovative activities related to Track-1 project goals and objectives. Allowable use of funds includes materials and supplies, testing and research activities, support for graduate and undergraduate students, faculty buy-out, and other activities directly supporting the proposed activity. Project outcomes must include submission of external proposal for funding.

Review

Proposals will be reviewed by the External Advisory Board and Research Executive Committee who will make recommendations to the Internal Advisory Board. The Internal Advisory Board will make final funding decisions. A project start date of October 1, 2023, is anticipated.

Review criteria will include the following:

- Quality of proposed activity and synergy with Track-1 goals and objectives (50%),
- Detailed plan to secure external funding (30%),
- Potential benefit of the research on the Track-1 project and the South Dakota Science and Innovation Strategic Plan (*found at sdepscor.org/vision*; 20%).

The proposal will be judged using the NSF review criteria of Intellectual Merit and Broader Impact and synergy with Track-1 project goals and objectives.

Reporting

A report summarizing the activity, outcomes and expenditures to date, is due May 31, 2024, and final report December 30, 2024. External proposals submitted to support continued research, education or outreach activities must be entered into the Track-1 reporting database (ER Core).

Submission of Proposals

Proposals must be submitted electronically by the institution's sponsored program office in .PDF format to Marcy Olsen at Marcy.Olsen@SDBOR.edu, in the SD EPSCoR office by 5:00 PM (MDT), July 28, 2023.¹ Materials must be single-spaced in Times New Roman 12-point font with one-inch margins. Proposals must include a signature page with the signature of the PI and the authorized institution's official. All proposals must contain:

- 1. Cover/Signature Page (1 page)**
- 2. Executive Summary (1 page)**
- 3. Research/Work Plan (5 pages)**
 - a. Identify Track-1 collaborator**
 - b. Describe linkages and benefits to Track-1 project**
- 4. Broader Impacts (1 page)**
 - a. Consider diversity, education, work force development and sustainability**
 - b. Describe intended publication and presentations**
- 5. External Funding (0.5 page)**
 - a. Include a table identifying specific proposals to be submitted and submission dates for specific agency request for proposals (RFPs)**
 - b. Describe why the proposed work will be competitive for external funding**
- 6. Budget and Budget Narrative (approved by your Sponsored Program Office)**
- 7. NSF format bio sketches**
- 8. NSF current and pending form**
- 9. Letter of collaboration from Track-1 collaborator**
- 10. Project Highlight written in non-technical language with the following sections:**
 - a. What is the anticipated outcome or accomplishment?**
 - b. What is the anticipated impact?**
 - c. What explanation/background does the lay reader need to understand the significance of this outcome?**
 - d. Photograph or image describing the project accomplishment or team.**

If applicable, letters of commitment from partners indicating their commitment of funding, equipment, time, etc. to the proposed project(s) should be included. Letters of support not making a specific commitment should not be included.

All proposals will be initially reviewed for compliance. Incomplete proposals, or proposals that do not follow the guidelines as specified will be returned for correction and must be resubmitted within 24 hours for full consideration. Proposals failing to meet established requirements after this timeframe will not be considered.

Cover/Signature Page

- **Title of Proposal**
- **Project Dates**
- **Amount of Funding Requested**
- **NSF EPSCoR Track-1 Partner/Mentor**
- **Submitting Institution**
- **PI (Signature)**
- **Authorized Official (Signature)**

Seed Grant FAQ

1) What should be the research focus of a Seed Grant?

ANS: It should align with T1 research, which is at the intersection of biofilms, 2D materials, big data, and STEM education — or support other Track-1 goals and objectives.

2) What non-research activities can Seed Grants support?

ANS: Non-research activities should build upon the Track-1 research themes, where possible. The following examples are not inclusive. Piloting teacher training experiences to support an NSF RET proposal, piloting a high school student research experience to support an REU, TCUP proposal or outreach activities with Native communities supporting external funding proposals, preparation for STEM pedagogy proposals, or educational support opportunities (e.g., NSF INCLUDES).

3) Are indirect costs required/allowed?

ANS: Indirect cost is allowed at your institutional rate.

4) Is the Seed Grant RFP posted on the SD EPSCoR website?

ANS: Yes; at sdepscor.org/seedgrants.

5) Is a plan required for external funding?

ANS: A convincing plan for external funding based on the Seed Grant results is required.

6) Are all participants involved in the Seed Grant required to be in the external grant?

ANS: No, you must decide what constitutes the most competitive team.

7) What is the intent of the Seed Grant?

ANS: The goal is to involve those “not currently supported by the T1 funding” and connect them to the T1 project to conduct preliminary activities to support future external funding proposals.

8) Will there be additional calls for Seed Grants?

ANS: No, this is the final call for the current NSF Track-1 award.

9) How can we learn who T1 participants are?

ANS: A list is posted on the SD EPSCoR website at sdepscor.org/aim. Also, ask your campus coordinator listed on the website.

10) Can budgets be less than \$50K?

ANS: Yes. Budgets should be at the level required by the proposed work.

11) Can successful Seed Grant PIs apply for another Seed Grant?

ANS: Yes, and they will be held to a higher standard, needing to demonstrate convincingly the use of their prior Seed Grant award.

12) Are non-T1 researchers who have non-research funding from the T1 grant eligible?

ANS: Yes

13) Can Seed Grant applicants be someone other than faculty?

ANS: Yes, for example as Research Scientist, Post Docs or grad students.

14) Is research that prevents biofilms eligible?

ANS: Yes

15) Is the T1 Project Description available for review?

ANS: Yes, it is a confidential document, request from your SD EPSCoR office, Kinchel.Doerner@sdbor.edu.

16) Is faculty salary allowed?

ANS: Yes, but it must be convincingly justified.

17) How many participants can be listed on a Seed Grant?

ANS: A minimum of two (Seed Grant PI and Current T1 Participant); no maximum, however they must be justified.

18) Is there priority regarding basic research versus applied research Seed Grants?

ANS: No priority

19) Is there priority regarding current collaborations and new collaborations?

ANS: No, must meet eligibility requirements.

20) Can collaborators be from outside of SD?

ANS: Yes, however no funding can flow outside of the state.

21) Can a Seed Grant PI be involved in the T1?

ANS: Yes, but it must meet the “not currently supported by the T1 funding” requirement. An example of current support includes salary for yourself or graduate student working with you.