



TO: South Dakota Institutions of Higher Education

FROM: Liza Clark, Director of Gov't Affairs and Economic Development
Kinchel Doerner, SD EPSCoR Director

SUBJECT: Competitive Research Grant Program FY26

DATE: December 6, 2024

The South Dakota Board of Regents is sponsoring the Competitive Research Grant Program. This program supports early career faculty to develop their research portfolio by generating preliminary data to support submission to external funding opportunities. Through this FY26 Request for Proposals (RFP), the South Dakota Board of Regents solicits applications for research grants from untenured faculty at the time of application from any of the six institutions in the Regental System.

This RFP, the Cover Page, and Budget Template is at: <https://sdbor.edu/research-data/>

- **Proposal Due Date:** February 3, 2025
- **Announcement of Awards:** Early-Mid April, 2025

All communications regarding this program should be sent to:

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**South Dakota Board of Regents
Competitive Research Grant Program
Request for Proposals**

1. Purpose of the Competitive Research Grant Program

The Competitive Research Grant (CRG) Program supports early career faculty to develop their research and educational career by enhancing their ability to pursue and secure external funding to support their scholarly activities. The awards will allow researchers to generate preliminary data to 1) increase the level of externally supported university research in South Dakota's technology based economic development; 2) expand academic research; 3) build additional statewide research and STEM education capacity; and 4) exploit new commercial development opportunities.

2. Eligibility

Applicants must be untenured and employed in a full-time, tenure-track position at the time of application. Faculty receiving >25% of their salary from the Governor Research Center Program, NSF EPSCoR Track 1 project or the Agricultural Experiment Station are ineligible.

3. Research Focus Areas

Preference will be given to proposals in STEM education and workforce development as well as the research and development areas identified in the South Dakota Science and Innovation Strategy¹. These include: 1) value-added agriculture and agribusiness; 2) energy and environment; 3) human health and nutrition; 4) information technology and cybersecurity; and 5) materials and advanced manufacturing.

4. Review Process

Proposals will be reviewed by an external review panel with expertise within the discipline. The panel will forward their evaluations to SD EPSCoR Director who will forward to the Executive Director of the South Dakota Board of Regents who will make all funding decisions. In the event a proposal from a research institution and a primarily undergraduate institution are viewed to have equal merit, preference will be given to the primarily undergraduate institution. All decisions are final. Narrative feedback from two (2) reviewers will be provided for all proposals.

5. Review Criteria

The proposal will be assessed based on the quality of the narrative (i.e. proper grammar, concision, clarity, etc) and the intellectual merit. The likelihood of garnering external funding after the conclusion of the award as well as the broader effects on the university, the state, and related communities will also be assessed. Funded CRG projects are expected to help position the lead PI for successful competitive extramural funding; the specificity of plans to leverage CRG project results into other competitive funding will be considered in the review. Review criteria include: significance of proposed research, scientific/ methodological approach, capability of PI and Co-PIs (if included), sustainability (potential for external funding), and alignment with strategic priorities (<https://sdepscor.org/who-we-are/science-and-innovation-strategic-plan/>).

6. Administrative and Financial Requirements

- A. Funding & Project Duration: The amount of available funds is \$450,000; maximum award amount is \$90,000. CRP projects are expected to be one year in duration. Ideally, project personnel are in place on the start date or soon thereafter, however, past researchers have experienced delays in enrolling the necessary graduate students thereby compressing the effective length of time available to complete the project. To remedy this, projects may now be either 12-months or 18-months. Researchers must clearly indicate in the project timeline and budget sections which duration they

¹ [The South Dakota Science and Innovation Strategic Plan approved by the South Dakota EPSCoR REACH Committee April 2022](#)

have chosen. If an 18-month award length is chosen, justification must be provided in the project description and two budget forms, one for each fiscal year, must be submitted. Funds may be used to cover salaries, undergraduate and graduate student support, equipment, supplies and infrastructure-related costs.

- B. Indirect costs are not allowed. Fringe benefit costs are allowable and should be included in the budget.
- C. Proposals may be joint proposals from two or more faculty members within or among BOR institutions. Budgets should be constructed to show the proportionate share of the budget allocated to each researcher. All team members must meet eligibility requirements. Faculty members who do not meet eligibility requirements, or who are employed by an institution outside the BOR institutions, may be included in the proposal (e.g. collaborator, mentor, advisor) but can not receive salary or other material support.
- D. Interim & Final Reports: All required reports must be filed by the deadline. These reports should be 3 pages maximum and describe the progress made to-date based on the goals/objectives described in the proposal. Use formatting requirements described here.
- E. Compliance, Submission & Intellectual Property: Normal regulatory compliance requirements (human subjects, biohazards, animal welfare, etc.) of the home institution apply and appropriate approvals must be granted before work can commence. These approvals may be obtained during the review process. Proposals should be submitted using the institutional proposal submission process. Proposals submitted directly by the PI will not be reviewed. Intellectual property derived from research associated with this grant is subject to Board of Regents Policy No. 4:34 (Intellectual Property).
- F. Faculty members who leave the university system prior to completion of the project will be required to reimburse the Board of Regents up to 100% of the state's portion of the grant, or at minimum reimburse any compensation dollars awarded during the performance period.

7. Proposal Format and Components

- A. Font and Format: Proposals should be in font size 12, font style Times New Roman, single-spaced, 1-inch margins on all sides with all pages numbered, MS Word or PDF. PDF preferred.
- B. Project Summary: 1 page. A summary of the proposal including project description, sustainability plan, and budget.
- C. Project Description: 6 page maximum. The project description is the centerpiece of the proposal and must describe the project's intellectual merit and broader impacts. This section should present the proposed activities in a clear, detailed, compelling way and describe how the activities will lead to long-lasting impacts to the PI's research career. The project description should specify the expected outcomes and include a timeline for meeting the goals and presented in sufficient detail to facilitate the reviewers' assessment of the proposal. Additionally, the proposal should describe how the project will benefit the PI's home institution and other stakeholder groups.
- D. Sustainability Plan: 1 page. This section describes how the research will be sustained following the conclusion of the award. Anticipated external proposal submissions during the award and for a 12-month period following the conclusion of the award should be described in detail (title of proposal, funding agency and directorate, anticipated date of submission, requested amount, etc.). Any additional plans to submit external proposals should also be included. To aid in developing plans to submit

external proposals, researchers are encouraged to consult with the program officers of the funding agencies prior to submission of this CRG.

- E. Budget: Use the supplied form. The budget should be consistent with and appropriate to the scope of the proposed activities presented in the Project Description. Prepare a budget page for each of the fiscal years requested. The fiscal year is from July 1 to June 31. <https://sdbor.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/FY24-Competitive-Research-Grant-RFP-Budget-Proposal.xlsx>
- F. Budget Narrative: 3 pages maximum. The text should provide sufficient, detailed documentation to justify the requested expenses.
- G. References Cited: No page limit. Include citations to relevant literature in a consistent style throughout the document.
- H. Letter of Support: 2 page maximum. A single letter of support for the proposal signed by the researcher’s academic supervisor (e.g. department head/chair) or academic Dean is required.
- I. Biosketch: No page limit. Use NSF format. <https://www.nsf.gov/bfa/dias/policy/biosketch.jsp>
- J. Current and Pending Current Support: Use NSF format. <https://www.nsf.gov/bfa/dias/policy/cps.jsp>
- K. Order of Assembly
 - a. Cover Page (1 page)
 - b. Project Summary (1 page)
 - c. Project Description (6 page maximum)
 - d. Sustainability Plan (1 page)
 - e. Budget (use form)
 - f. Budget Justification (3 page maximum)
 - g. References Cited (no page limit)
 - h. Support Letter (2 page maximum)
 - i. NSF format Biosketch (no page limit)
 - j. NSF format Current and Pending Support (no page limit)

8. Program Calendar:

Action	Date
Deadline for proposal submission	February 3, 2025 (5:00 PM CST) Marcy Olsen at Marcy.Olsen@sdbor.edu, MS Word or PDF documents are acceptable; PDF is preferred.
Anticipated announcement of awards	Early - Mid April 2025
Start of Award	July 1, 2025

Deadline	12-month Award Duration	18-month Award Duration
1 st Interim Progress Report	December 30, 2025	December 30, 2025
2nd Interim Progress Report	N/A	July 31, 2026
Final Report	July 31, 2026	December 31, 2026