



**TO:** South Dakota Institutions of Higher Education

**FROM:** Liza Clark, Director of Gov't Affairs and Economic Development  
Patrick Weber, Director of Research and Economic Development

**SUBJECT:** Competitive Research Grant Program FY27

**DATE:** February 13, 2026, Updated February 20, 2026

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 FY27 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:** March 20, 2026
- **Announcement of Awards:** End of May 2026

All communications regarding this program should be sent to:

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South Dakota Board of Regents  
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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 in their first four years of 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. An individual may only submit one (1) application as a principal investigator (PI). An individual may be listed as a co-PI on multiple applications.

**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 Strategy<sup>1</sup>. 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. 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 will be provided for all proposals submitted for external review.

**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

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<sup>1</sup> [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 cannot 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 must be submitted using the institutional proposal submission process. Intellectual property derived from research associated with this grant is subject to Board of Regents Policy No. 4:34 (Intellectual Property). All proposals must comply with the proposal preparation instructions contained within this document. Conformance will be strictly enforced. BOR will not accept or will return without reviewing proposals that are not consistent with proposal formatting and components.
- F. Faculty members who leave the university system prior to completion of the project may 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: Maximum 6 pages. 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 pages 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
<b>Deadline for proposal submission</b>	<b>March 20, 2026 (5:00 PM CST)</b> <b>Marcy Olsen at Marcy.Olsen@sdbor.edu, MS Word or PDF documents are acceptable; PDF is preferred.</b>
Anticipated announcement of awards	End of May 2026
Start of Award	July 1, 2026

  

Deadline	12-month Award Duration	18-month Award Duration
1 <sup>st</sup> Interim Progress Report	December 30, 2026	December 30, 2026
2nd Interim Progress Report	N/A	July 31, 2027
Final Report	July 31, 2027	December 31, 2027