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**Planning Grants for NSF EPSCoR
\$20 million State of Nebraska
Track-1 Proposal**

January 17, 2023

TO: Research Administrators, Deans and Department Chairs/Heads
(please notify appropriate faculty)

FROM: Matthew T. Andrews, Director, Nebraska EPSCoR

RE: Call for \$20,000 Planning Grants to assemble research teams and
develop pre-proposals for NSF EPSCoR \$20 million State of
Nebraska Track-1 Proposal

Submission Deadline: 5:00 PM, Monday, April 3, 2023

Nebraska will submit its next \$20 million EPSCoR Track-1 Research Infrastructure Improvement grant proposal to the National Science Foundation (NSF) in July 2025. The multi-investigator Track-1 program is a joint investment of the state, participating universities, and NSF. The anticipated funding period for this grant is June 1, 2026 to May 31, 2031. This five-year grant, if funded, will assist Nebraska EPSCoR in fulfilling its mission of enhancing the state's research competitiveness while broadening the diversity and participation of underrepresented groups. A Track-1 research team must be multi-institutional and focus on an **integrated scientific theme**.

In preparation for the next Track-1 grant submission, Nebraska EPSCoR will be funding Planning Grants of up to \$20,000 to support the assembly of thematic research teams from faculty groups at Nebraska's research institutions. In 2024 the Nebraska EPSCoR State Committee will conduct an internal competition based on pre-proposals from research teams to determine Nebraska's single Track-1 application in 2025. The call for Track-1 pre-proposals will be on December 1, 2023, and pre-proposals will be due to Nebraska EPSCoR on May 1, 2024.

Important points

- Applying for a Planning Grant is NOT a prerequisite to submit a Track-1 pre-proposal in 2024.
- The results of Planning Grant evaluations have NO BEARING on the evaluation of Track-1 pre-proposals in 2024.
- Awarding of a Planning Grant does NOT obligate the funded researcher(s) to submit a Track-1 pre-proposal in 2024.

Important dates

- April 3, 2023 – Planning grant applications due
- May 1, 2023, to April 30, 2024 – Planning grant award period
- December 1, 2023 – Call for Track-1 pre-proposals
- May 1, 2024 – Track-1 pre-proposal applications due
- August-September 2024 – EPSCoR State Committee selects single Nebraska Track-1 project to advance
- July 2025 – Selected Nebraska Track-1 grant proposal is submitted to NSF

Team leader qualifications: The research team leader must be a senior tenured faculty member at one of Nebraska's four research institutions (Creighton, UNL, UNMC, UNO) with established funding and scholarship records suitable to be the principal investigator (PI) of a major NSF grant. The Planning Grant applicant must be the research team leader.

Funding limit and duration: A Planning Grant application may request up to \$20,000 for the award period of May 1, 2023, to April 30, 2024.

Examples of appropriate Planning Grant activities

Examples of activities appropriate during the Planning Grant award are provided below. This is not intended as a comprehensive list. Proposals may include activities like those described here, or different activities more suitable for the proposed research.

- Critically reviewing the existing research infrastructure in Nebraska that is needed to address the chosen research topic, including an analysis of the personnel and equipment currently available, and what personnel and equipment would need to be acquired to do the future work.
- Assembling the required team members from Nebraska institutions.
- Developing a detailed schematic illustrating how the future project would involve a coordinated, collaborative, team-science approach to the proposed problem, including using multiple investigators and organizations.
- Adapting and integrating the best practices of "team science" with available personnel and preparing to extend those practices to the larger team of the future project.
- Ascertaining resources available at institutions across Nebraska, including research-intensive universities, primarily undergraduate institutions, community colleges, minority-serving institutions, and tribal colleges and universities, indicating how the chosen institutions could best fit into a five-year project as full-time, part-time, or seasonal research partners and/or sites of workforce development in the topic area of the project.
- Determining the baseline demographics (gender, race, ethnicity, disability, etc.) of science, technology, education, and mathematics (STEM) participation in the jurisdiction, characterizing the underserved groups in the jurisdiction (e.g., economically disadvantaged persons, groups traditionally underrepresented in STEM, etc.), and planning for increasing the participation of those individuals in STEM in the future project.

Example use of Planning Grant funds

- Cost of meeting(s) for key participants to work together toward envisioning a future Track-1 project.
- Preliminary data collection.
- Symposium or seminar with guest speaker(s) addressing important questions and/or developing areas in the chosen research topic.
- Course release or 2023 summer salary for the research team leader to organize planning activities.

Application content: The Planning Grant application must be prepared using **font size 11 or greater with 1-inch margins**. A complete application must include Parts A, B, and C as described below.

A. Budget form and budget justification

Complete the Nebraska EPSCoR Proposal Budget and Approval Form available from our website <https://epscor.nebraska.edu/programs/forms> and provide a maximum one-page budget justification. The budget and justification are not included in the page limit for the main body of the pre-proposal. The budget form will be the Planning Grant cover sheet. A single 1-year budget needs to be submitted.

B. Proposal main body

The main body of the Planning Grant application, including references, cannot exceed **5 pages**. The proposal main body includes the following 3 mandatory sections; additional sections may be added when necessary.

1. A section titled “**Introduction**” must provide a general description of the research theme and should establish the basis and importance of the proposed research.
2. A section titled “**Current Status**” must describe the current status and strength of topic-related team research activities within the state of Nebraska.
3. A section titled “**Major Outcomes and Activities**” must describe planning activities and the anticipated outcomes, their significance, and how these activities will enhance competitiveness of the research team.

C. Curriculum vita

Provide a two-page CV for the research team leader. Do not append full CVs. This CV should indicate your position, degrees, and reflect your research experience (grants and publications in general terms, but also in specific terms as related to the proposed research project or recent efforts).

Planning Grant applications not conforming to the above specifications will be returned without review. If you have any questions or wish any assistance, please call the Nebraska EPSCoR Office at 402-472-8946 or e-mail: epscor@nebraska.edu.

Evaluation criteria

Planning Grants will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- a. How important is the proposed project to advancing knowledge and understanding within its own field and across different fields?

- b. To what extent do the planning activities and proposed research project suggest and explore creative and original concepts and approaches?
- c. What is the potential economic impact of the proposed research for Nebraska (workforce development, patents, partnership with current state companies, spin-off companies)?

Project Reporting Requirements

Faculty awardees are required to submit a final report describing their Planning Grant accomplishments and expenditures no later than May 31, 2024.

Proposal Submission Instructions and Due Dates

Planning Grant applications must be submitted electronically no later than **5:00 p.m. (CDT), Monday, April 3, 2023**. Proposals will be submitted through a link on the Nebraska EPSCoR web site (<https://epscor.nebraska.edu/proposals>) for the *Track-1 Planning Grant* application. This link will take you to a web site for our proposal collection provider (Cvent). **Please note: Your budget, budget justification, proposal main body, and CV must be submitted as one PDF file not exceeding a maximum of 10 MB.** Contact the EPSCoR Office (epscor@nebraska.edu or 402-472-8946) if you have any problems or questions. All electronic signatures submitted on the application form will be treated as original signatures.

Important: It is the responsibility of the PI to check with their campus's Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP) or senior campus administrator to inquire about their institution's pre-submission requirements.