

Call For Proposals



Vermont Space Grant and Vermont NASA EPSCoR Program



2016 Faculty Research Competition

Proposal Deadline: March 18, 2016 @ 5:00 PM

BACKGROUND: Key goals of the Vermont Space Grant Consortium (VTSGC) and Vermont's NASA EPSCoR Program are to build research infrastructure and help Vermont's academic faculty establish ties to NASA and become nationally competitive for external research funding. To support these goals, VTSGC and VT-NASA EPSCoR Program will hold a competition to award Research Minigrants, Small-Scale Research Grants, and Travel Grants to visit NASA centers.¹ Proposed academic research projects must be strongly aligned with new or continuing NASA research priorities or technology needs and should have the potential to link Vermont faculty to NASA colleagues at Field Centers and/or Mission Directorates.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE: Eligible principal investigators are those persons who are full-time faculty members at any of Vermont's higher educational institutions. VTSGC-based funding is restricted to *US citizens only*.

AREAS OF INTEREST AND NASA LINKS: Proposed research projects must be in an area that is strongly aligned with a new or continuing NASA research priority or technology need, and the proposal packet must make an explicit connection with NASA. The proposal should also detail plans for establishing or strengthening links with NASA researchers. If contact has been established with colleagues at a NASA Center or Mission Directorate, a letter or email of support for the project from a NASA contact will significantly strengthen the case for funding. For Small-Scale Grants, a significant degree of NASA contact, including a NASA visit, is expected and should be fully detailed in the proposal package.

TYPES OF GRANTS AND OBLIGATIONS ASSOCIATED WITH FUNDING: Support may be requested for the following funding mechanisms:

- **Research Mini-Grants.** Awards of up to \$5,000 will provide seed money to explore a project in an area aligned with a new or continuing NASA research priority.
- **Travel Mini-Grants.** A smaller Research Mini-Grant may also be used as a Travel Grant to allow an investigator to visit a NASA Center to meet potential NASA collaborators and explore common interests.
- **Small-Scale Research Grants.** For more established projects, Small-Scale Grants **of up to \$25,000** are also available. Small-Scale Grants may include funding for project components such as, but not limited to, summer support of faculty, graduate and undergraduate student research support, supplies, and the purchase of small-scale equipment items directly related to the research project. Small-Scale Grant budgets will ordinarily include travel funds to visit a NASA Center, and Small-Scale Grant funding is expected to lead to the P.I. submitting a research grant proposal to NASA or another Federal agency for follow-on funding to sustain the project beyond the end of the award period.

¹ Note that the availability and number of these awards are subject to annual NASA funding allocations.

Funding awarded in this competition cannot be used to purchase general-purpose equipment, such as computers, and cannot be used to purchase items classified as capital equipment (i.e., exceeding \$5,000). Foreign travel is not permitted; note that NASA regards Canada as foreign travel.

For all types of awards, the PI will be required, upon request by the Space Grant Director, to provide Progress Reports to the Space Grant Office during the award period. A Final Report will be due within 30 days of the end of the award period. Awardees will also be expected to participate in the annual VTSGC/NASA EPSCoR Research Poster session, and any other research showcases for the Programs.

REVIEW CRITERIA: Projects chosen for awards will be in research areas that strongly align with new or continuing NASA research priorities and technology needs, should lead to the development of long-term research capabilities, will have a high potential to become nationally competitive for follow-on funding, and will also be aligned with state technological, economic, and educational goals. Successful proposals will have a clearly described plan to establish or strengthen links with potential NASA collaborators, and the proposal budget will include matching funds to demonstrate the commitment of the principal investigator's department or school to the proposed project. Faculty researchers requesting funding in this local competition to initiate or develop projects for possible submission to a future National NASA EPSCoR Research Group Competition should note this intention in the proposal narrative. *Priority consideration will be given meritorious proposals submitted by: (1) junior tenure-track faculty and (2) investigators who have not previously participated in the Vermont NASA programs.*

BUDGET AND MATCHING FUNDS: A detailed budget request should be part of the proposal package. All budget items should be fully explained. Lump sum dollar requests for expense categories are not acceptable, and detailed breakdowns must be provided to the extent possible. The budget request should contain only direct costs.

For projects that contain support graduate students, the salary rates must mirror the current guidelines set by the University of Vermont Graduate College and account for fringe costs. Similarly, undergraduate research support must follow University salary guidelines and account for fringe costs (if applicable).

Matching funds are required for proposals to be eligible for this competition. Funding requested from the VTSGC and VT-NASA EPSCoR must be matched 1:1 by local non-federal funding. Common sources of matching funds include in-kind cost-sharing, such as designated research effort during the academic year. If awarded, the investigator will be required to provide signed letters of commitment from the appropriate institutional official or source of the match.

PROPOSAL PACKET: The completed proposal packet should include the following items:

- Cover Page
- Project narrative (limit of five pages, exclusive of references)
- A short section explicitly detailing NASA alignment; and containing any letters or emails of support from NASA contacts
- A detailed budget request with detailed justification and matching plan
- Two-page CV's for any faculty participants and or other key project participants
- Current and pending support summary for PI (and any Co-PI's)
- Letters of support (electronic is acceptable) from NASA collaborators (optional, but strongly encouraged)

ELECTRONIC APPLICATION PROCEDURE: All proposal applications must be submitted *electronically* to the Space Grant Office. The electronic submission must be made no later than 5:00 pm on Friday, March 18, 2016. The proposal packet described above must be saved as a single PDF file and emailed to the Space Grant Office to Ms. Debra Fraser (dfraser1@uvm.edu) with CC to Director Darren Hitt (SG.Director@uvm.edu).

PROPOSAL REVIEW & NOTIFICATION: Proposals will be peer-reviewed by a panel of experts, and it is anticipated that awards will be announced sometime in mid to late May. Funding for successful projects will normally be for a one year period starting on September 1, 2016, although this start date is contingent on the status of NASA funding. Please contact VT Space Grant Director D.L.Hitt by email (SG.Director@uvm.edu) or phone (802.656.1429) if you have any questions.