



**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
2018 - 2019 VERMONT EPSCOR
SMALL BUSINESS INNOVATION RESEARCH AND
SMALL BUSINESS TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER
PHASE (0)**

**Application due by web submission on February 7, 2018 by 4:00 p.m.
Web submission available on October 16, 2017**

Vermont EPSCoR (Established Program to Stimulate Competitive Research) has supported research at Vermont's colleges and universities with funds from the National Science Foundation and local sources since 1986. The impact of the EPSCoR program also includes the private sector – particularly small, technology-based businesses.

Vermont EPSCoR will once again provide the opportunity for Vermont small businesses to compete for awards to foster research and development projects which will lead to applications to federal Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) and Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) programs.

Program Overview

The main goal of the Vermont EPSCoR Phase (0) solicitation is to identify proposals that show promise for success in federal SBIR/STTR competitions and that would benefit from financial support and reviewer comments. As such, each proposal should identify at least one federal SBIR/STTR program to which the work is targeted.

- Business must be registered in Vermont.
- The maximum amount of each SBIR/STTR Phase (0) award is \$15,000.
- Funding may not be used to support master's students' salaries.
- Multiple-year Vermont EPSCoR Phase (0) awardees must take a 1 year break from submission after their third consecutive successful award.
- Awards contingent upon NSF funding for Vermont EPSCoR.
- One award will also be made in an area of interest to the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) using NASA EPSCoR funds contingent upon the availability of FY19 funds. To show that an area is of interest to NASA, the PI should identify their proposed project with a new or continuing NASA research priority or technology need. This can be done by reference to a URL on a NASA website or by including an email of support from a NASA contact. The project has to include a full-time faculty researcher at a Vermont college or university as a collaborator. Only NASA projects carry this requirement.

Period of Support

The period of support for this round of competition is **May 1, 2018 – April 30, 2019.**

Funding Obligations

- SBIR/STTR Phase (0) recipients are required to submit a follow-on SBIR/STTR Phase I or II proposal within 12 months of completion of the Phase (0) work. In addition, your company may only have one follow-on SBIR/STTR Phase I or II proposal outstanding before applying for additional Phase (0) funding. The Phase I or II proposal(s) do not have to be awarded, but they do need to be ranked (that is, not rejected for administrative reasons). A primary purpose of the Phase (0) funding is to assist with the preparation of SBIR/STTR Phase I and II proposals.
- Notification of federal SBIR/STTR Phase I and II funding submissions and outcomes to Vermont EPSCoR Office.
- Registration of your DUNS number into the System for Award Management (SAM) at sam.gov prior to submitting your application. If you do not have a DUNS number, please register for one at <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>. Dun & Bradstreet can create a DUNS number within one business day.
- Your final financial report is due to the EPSCoR office within thirty (30) days of the end of the funding period.
- Electronic annual reporting of progress, assessment surveys, demographic information, project updates, and follow-on funding to the EPSCoR office through May 31, 2021. All requests will be sent from the EPSCoR office by email.
- Attendance is required at the VT EPSCoR annual meeting, where you should present your work, however preliminary, in a poster or talk as requested through May 31, 2021.
- Award funds will begin by May 1, 2018, contingent upon continued NSF support, and *must* be expended by April 30, 2019.
- Identification of in-kind funding is not required, but is encouraged. Examples of in-kind matching include percent effort, materials, supplies, or space donated by others toward your SBIR/STTR Phase (0) efforts. For more information, please contact epscor@uvm.edu.
- If awarded, UVM affiliates must comply with University Policies and Procedures <http://www.uvm.edu/policies/?Page=alphalist.php> and have a contractual agreement with UVM if UVM space is utilized for this research.

Proposal Content

Vermont EPSCoR's Phase (0) program is intended to support **preliminary proof-of-concept feasibility studies in preparation for federal SBIR/STTR applications, not complete projects**. Please remember that there is a requirement to submit an SBIR/STTR application within 12 months of completion of your Phase (0) award, which means that, as you apply for the Phase (0) award, your research should generate feasibility data and not exploratory data. Previous Phase (0) proposals have reviewed poorly in the past due to insufficient budget explanations, a lack of detail in describing the proposal, and failure to clearly identify a federal agency SBIR/STTR program appropriate for the project. Thus, please pay particular attention to these components as they are described below. Non-research proposals, e.g. marketing, prototype construction, information collection from the Web, etc. are inappropriate. Proposals which focus on software development should be sure to clearly identify the research components of the project.

Proposals should include the following components:

- Title, Technical Abstract (1 page maximum), and Keywords
- If your project involves research on human subjects (e.g., work with human tissue, interviews or medical trials with human subjects, and collection or analysis of data and medical records, etc.), live vertebrate animals, or recombinant DNA, then your work must meet federal requirements for review and approval of these regulated activities. Please check details about protocol submission requirements and additional information at <http://www.uvm.edu/rpo/>. If you have any additional questions about regulations regarding work involving human subjects, contact the Research Protections Office at (802) 656-5040.
- List of Suggested Reviewers (Optional). Provide the first name, last name, and contact information for suggested reviewers who you believe are especially well qualified to review this proposal. You may also designate persons you would prefer not review this proposal and indicate why.
- A completed subrecipient form
- Current resumes for key personnel
- Letter(s) Of Support and UVM Resources (1 page maximum each)
 - A letter of support is required from all potential collaborators. This includes collaborators that are providing use of facilities as well as technical expertise.
 - If your project utilizes University of Vermont facilities or other resources, include documentation from the College Dean or Department Chair confirming that they are able to bill expenses directly to your company. UVM departments and other entities cannot directly bill Vermont EPSCoR. A faculty researcher, who has a laboratory at UVM, may not use that for Phase (0) work.

- Identify at least one specific federal SBIR/STTR program topic to which you intend to submit a follow-up proposal. Use the most recent *Release of Topics* from each agency. Example: Department of Energy, Office of Basic Energy Sciences, Instrumentation for Advanced Nanometer Scale Optical Spectroscopy, High Spatial Resolution Nanometer Scale Optical Spectroscopy (Topic 7a as listed in FY 2017 Phase I, Topic Release 1, August 19, 2016).
- Prior Work (1 page maximum)
 - If you have previously submitted Phase (0) proposals to Vermont EPSCoR, indicate the year(s) submitted, the proposal title, the outcome of the Phase (0) submission, and if funded, the result of your federal Phase I, II or III submission. A table may be a concise way to provide this information.
 - If previous Phase (0) support has been obtained, evidence of a Phase I, II or III submission must be included (evidence is not subject to the page limit). If you did not submit a Phase I, II or III for a previous Phase (0) award, be sure to justify this decision.
 - Include the research results from relevant prior awards and funding and the relevance of those results to the proposed activities.
- Research Project Description
 - Describe the problem the proposal is addressing and the research plan in sufficient detail to allow for a thorough evaluation by the reviewers. Include evidence of your expertise in the topic addressed, what your intended outcome will be, how this is relevant to the selected SBIR/STTR topic, and how this Phase (0) award would improve the competitiveness of the proposal for federal SBIR/STTR funding. (4 page maximum)
 - Describe data gathering methods, potential problems, equipment, and other resources needed. Resources currently available for the project should be described. (2 page maximum)
 - References / Works Cited (extra pages as needed)
 - Budget Justification (2 page maximum)
 - Include a detailed explanation of budget line items, including rationale for salary rates.
- Budget (online form)
 - Indirect costs are not allowed on Phase (0) awards. See OMB Circular A-122 (<http://goo.gl/6xiDYN>) or the NIH Grants Policy Statement Section 7.9 (<http://goo.gl/TCZJ9T>) for more information on allowable costs.

Evaluation Criteria

A panel of local scientists and engineers representing Vermont's business, academic, and government sectors will be selected to evaluate the proposals based on the topic areas of the proposals submitted. The review will focus on **scientific and technical merit as well as potential for federal SBIR/STTR support** and will consider the following criteria:

- Completeness and accuracy relative to the proposal submission guidelines
- Clarity
- Significance
- Innovation
- Appropriateness of the methodology
- Potential for success in federal SBIR/STTR competitions
- Qualifications and experience of the proposal personnel
- Suitability of facilities
- Appropriate use of budgetary resources

Submission Process

Web-based submissions are the only acceptable form of submission. Beginning **October 16, 2017**, you can access the application, along with the signature page, on the VT EPSCoR website at <http://www.uvm.edu/EPSCoR/redirect/sbir>. You are encouraged to submit early to avoid any potential submission complications.

1. **Web submissions are due February 7, 2018 by 4:00 p.m.**
2. **Signature Page is due by mail or in-person delivery (no FAX), by February 7, 2018 at 4:00 p.m.** Send to:

Vermont EPSCoR
University of Vermont
334 Marsh Life Science Building
109 Carrigan Drive
Burlington, VT 05405.

* Note that signing the cover page will indicate your willingness to publicly share the abstract.

If you do not wish your abstract made public, do not sign the cover page. Any proprietary information will be treated with strict confidence. All results of any supported research will remain the property of the award recipient unless there is an academic collaborator. In the case where an academic collaborator is not acting as an independent consultant paid through the company, or if the faculty member will use University/College facilities, there will need to be a Memorandum of Understanding negotiated with the appropriate institutional grants office (Office of Sponsored Program for UVM faculty). This must be done before any work on the project commences and funding is released.

With respect to any invention developed with EPSCoR support, the award recipient retains title (noting the exception described above). However, certain government use provisions and disclosures will apply due to the federal funding involved. Specifically, recipients will be required to disclose inventions to the University so that the University may make a disclosure to the federal sponsor. While the inventor retains full ownership of his/her intellectual property, the federal government retains the right to a non-exclusive license to practice inventions which result from federal funding. This requirement is rarely invoked and has never occurred in any disclosures from the University of Vermont.

Neither the State of Vermont, Vermont EPSCoR, nor the University of Vermont will make any claim to any product or process developed with this funding with the possible exception of intellectual property developed by an academic collaborator.

Based on the review of the proposals, more detailed documentation may be sought for projects which show promise.

Information, including proposal writing tips, can be found on the Vermont EPSCoR website - <http://www.uvm.edu/EPSCoR/redir/sbir> - where Phase (0) is described. For information on federal SBIR/STTR programs, visit <http://www.zyn.com>, <http://www.sbir.gov>, and <http://www.thinkvermont.com>.

Questions?

Email epscor@uvm.edu or phone (802) 656-7931

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