



NSF EPSCoR
ADVANCING GEOGRAPHIC DIVERSITY IN STEM



**REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS
2026 – 2027 VERMONT EPSCoR
SMALL BUSINESS INNOVATION RESEARCH AND
SMALL BUSINESS TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER
PHASE (0) GRANT PROGRAM**

Application due February 20, 2026 by 5:00 p.m.

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 goal of the Vermont EPSCoR Phase (0) grant program is to support business or industry projects that have a strong potential for success in federal SBIR/STTR competitions. Specifically, the program is intended to support preliminary proof-of-concept feasibility studies in preparation for federal SBIR/STTR applications.

Applications to the Vermont EPSCoR Phase (0) grant program should describe innovative, business-related research, including how the proposed research is likely to support a potential follow-on grant application to a federal SBIR/STTR-awarding agency. The Vermont EPSCoR Office seeks applications that propose scientific research aligning with at least one federal agency offering SBIR/STTR funding opportunities, including the National Science Foundation (NSF, www.nsf.gov) and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA, www.nasa.gov). Specific areas of interest to Vermont EPSCoR include data science, computer science, and aerospace technology. Applications in these areas will receive priority consideration. A full listing of federal agencies SBIR/STTR funding opportunities may be found at www.sbir.gov/participating-agencies.

This grant program is jointly funded by NSF and NASA. The Vermont EPSCoR Office expects to award five (5) grants under this program for the 2026–2027 cycle, including one award in an area of interest to NASA.

Eligibility

Businesses registered and operating in Vermont are eligible to submit applications to this grant program. Prior awardees are eligible if they have received no more than three awards under this program over the previous four years and they have fulfilled all obligations of the prior awards. On April 4, 2022, the unique entity identifier used across the federal

government changed from the DUNS Number to the Unique Entity ID (generated by SAM.gov). Existing registered entities can find their Unique Entity ID by following the steps here https://www.fsd.gov/gsafsd_sp?id=kb_article_view&sysparm_article=KB0041254.

New entities can get their Unique Entity ID at SAM.gov and, if required, complete an entity registration. All applicants must register their Unique Entity ID number into the System for Award Management (SAM) at sam.gov prior to submitting an application.

Amount and Period of Support

The maximum amount of each SBIR/STTR Phase (0) award is \$15,000. The anticipated period of support is June 1, 2026 – May 31, 2027. No-cost extensions are not permitted. All awards are contingent on the availability of funding.

Funding Obligations and Restrictions

Vermont EPSCoR SBIR/STTR Phase (0) awards include the following obligations and restrictions on the expenditure of funds:

- Awardees will provide annual progress updates as requested by the Vermont EPSCoR office through May 31, 2028. All reports must be electronically submitted.
- A final financial report is due to the Vermont EPSCoR office within thirty (30) days of the end of the funding period.
- Awardees will attend the Vermont EPSCoR annual meeting to present their progress as requested through May 31, 2028.
- Vermont EPSCoR SBIR/STTR Phase (0) awards may not be used to support international travel.
- The primary work location must be in Vermont. Vermont EPSCoR awards may not be used to support work in non-EPSCoR jurisdictions.

Cost Sharing

Cost sharing is neither requested nor required under this grant program. Voluntary cost sharing is permitted, including in-kind cost matching. Examples of in-kind cost matching include personnel effort, materials, and supplies that are paid for by the applicant using funds from non-federal sources.

Application Information

Applications must be single-spaced using a page size of 8.5 by 11 inches with 1-inch margins on all sides. Text must appear in an easily readable, 12-point type face. The application materials must be combined into a single PDF file with bookmarks for the components listed below. Applications that do not adhere to these requirements will not be considered.

The application should include the following components:

- Cover page (1 page maximum)

Provide the project title, abstract, and up to three keywords. List key personnel (name, title and affiliation).

- Research project description (4 pages maximum)

Describe the problem the proposal is addressing and the research plan in sufficient detail to allow for evaluation by reviewers. Include a description of the project goals, research design and methods and the expected outcomes. If appropriate, provide a summary of preliminary studies and results. Describe how the results of the proposed research are expected to support a follow-on application for federal SBIR/STTR funding.

- NASA relevance (optional, 1 page maximum)

Applicants seeking NASA EPSCoR funds should include a narrative summary of the NASA relevance of the proposed research, including evidence that the proposed research is aligned with a new or continuing NASA research priority or technical need. Letters/emails of support from a NASA researcher may be included to demonstrate NASA interest.

- Resources available (1 page maximum)

Provide a summary of the resources that are available and necessary for the proposed project.

- References cited (additional pages as needed)

- Budget and justification (additional pages as needed)

Provide a budget table listing items and amounts as appropriate, including personnel effort (FTE and funds requested), supplies, travel, and other costs. Include a narrative justification of each cost estimate.

- Current resumes for key personnel (1 page per person)

- Letters of support (additional pages as needed)

Include a letter of support from collaborators who are not listed as key personnel or who will be providing resources in support of the project. Each letter should specify the nature and extent of commitment.

- A completed subrecipient form (additional pages as needed)

The subrecipient form may be accessed using the link below

https://www.uvm.edu/d10-files/documents/2025-06/subrecipientcommitmentform_updated.pdf

Additional Requirements for Human Subjects Research or Animal Research

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.

Submission Information

Applications must be submitted electronically as a single PDF file emailed to epscor@uvm.edu. Applications are due February 20, 2026 by 5:00 p.m.

Evaluation Criteria

A panel of local scientists and engineers representing Vermont's business, academic, and government sectors will be assembled to evaluate the proposals based on the topic areas of the proposals submitted. The following domains will be evaluated:

- Significance and innovation of the proposed research
- Appropriateness of the methodological approach
- Qualifications and experience of the investigative team
- Suitability of facilities
- Overall impact (potential for success in federal SBIR/STTR competitions)

The panel will evaluate each proposal in terms of the strengths and limitations within each of the above domains. The overall impact domain will be the main consideration driving selection for funding.

Intellectual Property Considerations

The Vermont EPSCoR Office will publish the following information for each award: company name, title of project, amount awarded, dates of award, project abstract.

All results of supported research under this grant program remain the property of the awardee unless there is an academic collaborator not acting as an independent consultant. If an academic collaborator performs work on a project awarded funding under this program, the parties (company and university/college) must negotiate a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that outlines the terms of the collaboration, including intellectual property ownership. The MOU must be completed prior to disbursement of award funds.

The title to any invention developed with EPSCoR support is retained by the awardee (with the exception described above). However, certain government use provisions and disclosures will apply pursuant to regulations regarding the use of federal funding. Specifically, awardees will be required to disclose inventions to the Vermont EPSCoR Office so that the University may make required disclosures to the federal sponsor. While the

inventor retains full ownership of their intellectual property, the federal government retains the right to a non-exclusive license to practice inventions which result from federal funding.

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.

Informational Webinar

The Vermont EPSCoR Office will hold an informational webinar on December 5, 2025 from 2:00 p.m. until 3:00 p.m. The purpose of the webinar is to review program requirements, recommend application strategies for success, and address questions. Advance registration is not required. The webinar may be accessed by following [this link](#) (MS Teams). The webinar will be recorded and may be accessed at <https://www.uvm.edu/socks/node/137>.

For More Information

For more information regarding this grant opportunity, please contact:

Bernard F. Cole, PhD
Director, Vermont EPSCoR
University of Vermont
bfcole@uvm.edu

For general questions about Vermont EPSCoR, please email epscor@uvm.edu.