STAC
RI SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY
ADVISORY COUNCIL

Collaborative Research Grant Program Guidelines

Submission Due Dates

Letter of Intent Period Opens: October 26, 2026
Letters of Intent Due: November 23, 2026, 5:00 PM
Full Proposal Period Opens (Invitation Only): January 6, 2027
Full Proposals Due: February 12, 2027, 5:00 PM

STAC Research Alliance
315 Iron Horse Way, Suite 101
Providence, RI 02908
riresearchalliance@commerceri.com

Contact
Helen Leffers, Innovation Initiatives Manager
helen.leffers@commerceri.com
T: 401.278.9130
www.stac.ri.gov

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction
- About the Rhode Island Science & Technology Advisory Council (STAC)
- About Rhode Island NSF EPSCoR
- About the STAC Research Alliance
- About the Collaborative Research Grant Awards
- Research Priorities
- Who May Apply
- Submission Deadlines
- Amount of Award and Length of Award
- Letter of Intent
- Full Proposal Review and Evaluation
- Award Announcement
- Intellectual Property

Letter of Intent Instructions
- Format
- Submission
- Review

Full Proposal Instructions
- Conformance with Instructions
- Format
- Sections of the Proposal
  - Face Page
  - Project Overview
  - Table of Contents
  - Project Summary
  - Project Description
  - References
  - Biographical Sketches
  - Budget
  - Letters of Commitment
  - Unfunded Collaborations
- Proprietary or Privileged Information
- Submission

Processing and Review
- Review Criteria
- Award Notification

Post Award
- Grant Agreement
- Progress and Final Reports
- Financial Report and Residual Funds
- RI NSF EPSCoR Data Collection
- Post-Award Follow-up

Appendix
- Sample Face Page
- Sample Project Overview Page

INTRODUCTION

About the Rhode Island Science and Technology Advisory Council (STAC)
The Rhode Island Science and Technology Advisory Council (STAC) is a legislative council comprised of business, academic, industry and government leaders with the purpose to recommend and initiate strategic investments that drive economic development and job creation by maximizing the economic impact of research, technology and innovation. STAC initiatives support the state's research and development activities by promoting collaboration across institutions and encouraging entrepreneurship and new company creation through the transfer of new technologies and discoveries into the marketplace. STAC is the Jurisdictional Steering Committee for RI NSF EPSCoR and leads development and implementation of Rhode Island's Science & Technology Plan.

About Rhode Island NSF EPSCoR
The National Science Foundation (NSF) founded the Established Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR) as a mechanism to foster research and economic development. Rhode Island became an EPSCoR jurisdiction in 2004. By supporting research infrastructure statewide, RI NSF EPSCoR aims to: increase competitiveness for future funding; stimulate collaborative research; enhance public understanding of scientific research; establish STEM professional development pathways; and broaden participation of diverse groups in STEM. Rhode Island NSF EPSCoR partners with academic institutions across the state as well as with government and industry, and supports Core Research Centers in Marine Life Sciences, Genomics, Computational Visualization, and Nanotechnology that provide analytical, biological, computational, and microscopy facilities to researchers and students statewide.

About the STAC Research Alliance
To create stronger connections across the state's research organizations, STAC created the Research Alliance to serve as a platform for promoting collaboration, maximizing state and federal investment in research and enhancing the state's R&D-related economic development opportunities. By promoting collaboration among the state's research universities, research hospitals, corporations and government agencies, the Alliance supports current research activities, strengthens the ability of Rhode Island investigators to attract federal and corporate research investment and spurs economic development and job growth.

About the Collaborative Research Grant Awards
As part of STAC's role in the Rhode Island NSF EPSCoR, the Research Alliance provides grants to support a catalytic stage of inter-organizational, interdisciplinary, collaborative research projects that are well positioned to attract substantial follow-on investment or have significant potential for technology development and commercialization. Funding from the Research Alliance provides a mechanism for teams of individuals to work together on important and promising research projects across Rhode Island's research colleges and universities, research hospitals, businesses and government agencies. To receive funding, proposals must clearly show how the combined efforts of the institutions can lead to results that could not be achieved by any individual institution alone. STAC Research Alliance funding is also used to support research infrastructure development and proposals may include small scale equipment.

A total of $500,000 in competitive funding is available in this round.

- Proposals that support the organizational infrastructure for science teams managing or competing for NSF EPSCoR E-RISE proposals are encouraged.

- Proposals that enhance Rhode Island's competitiveness in ocean technology and coastal sciences are encouraged, including projects aimed at accelerating discoveries that catalyze the transition to commercialization and user application of novel advances in ocean sensors, ecosystem modeling, and marine science.

  Within this area, proposals addressing the following topics are encouraged:

  - Creating novel approaches to understand the quantity, composition, and impact of nano and/or microplastics and other pollutants in complex marine environments, as well as developing innovative approaches to model the fate and transport of nano and microplastics and other pollutants within the Narragansett Bay ecosystem.
  - Advancement of sediment transport models that simulate erosion-accretion and inform coastal resilience.

- In addition, projects that enhance Rhode Island's competitiveness in science and technology and align with key growth opportunity areas identified in Rhode Island's Science & Technology Plan are encouraged.

  Areas of particular interest include:

  - *Maritime & Naval Systems:* Maritime autonomy and sensing
  - *Life Sciences:* Medtech for neuropsychiatric conditions
  - *Resilience & Risk Management Technologies*: Resilient coastal engineering
  - *AG & Food Innovations:* "Smart" agriculture/food systems innovation, such as controlled environment agriculture and precision/traceability solutions

Who May Apply

Rhode Island research institutions, including higher education, academic, or business and government organizations may collaborate in applying for collaborative research grant funding.

Project teams must be collaborative in nature and include investigators from at least two distinct Rhode Island institutions. At least one of these collaborators must be an Institute of Higher Education. The lead Research Institution shall serve as the prime grantee and the Co-Research Institution shall serve as the sub-recipient(s). The lead Research Institution must enter into a subcontract agreement with the Co-Research Institution. Proposals must include a plan for collaboration. Reviewers will carefully consider what mechanisms will be in place to engage all members and the level of research integration across institutions.

Persons are limited to serving as Principal Investigator (PI) on only one Collaborative Research proposal. The Lead PI must be tenure track or research faculty at an Institution of Higher Education. The Co-PI must be tenure track or research faculty or the equivalent. Projects currently funded by the Research Alliance are not eligible for continuation funding. Submission of a revised proposal that was not previously selected for funding is acceptable with an explanation of how the project has been revised.

Submission Deadlines

Letter of Intent Period Opens*	October 26, 2026
Letters of Intent Due	November 23, 2026, 5:00 PM ET
Full Proposal Period Opens (Invitation Only)*	January 6, 2027
Full Proposals Due	February 12, 2027, 5:00 PM ET

*Anticipated

Award Amounts and Application Process

Amount of Award & Length of Award

The maximum amount of any given Collaborative Research award is $83,000. The award period is twelve months, with commencement and ending dates specified in the Grant Agreement.

Letter of Intent Review

Letters of Intent are required for all proposed projects. The Letters of Intent will be reviewed for eligibility of the proposed team and responsiveness to the research priorities described in these guidelines. If there is a concern with a proposed project, the Principal Investigator will be contacted to discuss the concerns. Applicants will either be invited to submit a full proposal, or notified that the project is not invited to submit a full proposal.

Full Proposal Review and Evaluation

Funds will be awarded through a competitive review process conducted by a committee organized by the RI NSF EPSCoR leadership team. The competitive granting process will embrace review and evaluation criteria similar to those used by the NSF including intellectual merit and broader impacts of the proposal. The catalytic and collaborative nature of the proposed research activity will also be considered. STAC will review the recommendation by the review panel and determine the awards. Selection of awardees will consider the quality of the research and its alignment with the research priorities and the State's Science and Technology Plan, and the ability of the activity to support the development of competitive research infrastructure in Rhode Island.

Award Announcement

Awards are anticipated to be announced in late April 2027.

Intellectual Property

Acceptance of this grant does not transfer any intellectual property rights. All information and findings derived from activities funded by RIRA grants remain the property of the grantees.

LETTER OF INTENT INSTRUCTIONS

Format

A one to two-page Letter of Intent should include:

1) the name of the PI and a list of the team of investigators involved, including names, titles, affiliated research organizations and area of expertise contributed to the project;
2) the project title;

3) research question(s) addressed by project;
4) a clear and concise concept statement of the project including rationale, goals and relation to the research priorities described in these guidelines;
5) a description of how the project will produce data or other results that can lead to new research opportunities that can be supported by federal agencies, corporations and/or foundations; advance the project's potential for technology development; advance or leverage Rhode Island's core capacity for visualization of science.

Letters of Intent should be typed, font size no smaller than 10 point, with standard margins (at least one inch). Submissions will be accepted as a single Word or PDF file.

Submission

All applicants are required to submit a Letter of Intent through the application portal by November 23, 2026, at 5:00 PM.

All applicants will receive a system generated email confirming receipt of their submission. Late or incomplete submissions will not be reviewed.

Review

Letters of Intent will be reviewed for eligibility of the proposed team and responsiveness to the stated research themes. If there is a concern, the Principal Investigator will be contacted to discuss the concern.

FULL PROPOSAL INSTRUCTIONS

Conformance with Instructions

Proposals should provide a concise, complete and clear description of the applicants' ability to meet the requirements set forth in the guidelines. It is important that all proposals conform to instructions and be complete. Incomplete or late applications will be ineligible and will not be reviewed.

Format

Proposals should be typed, font size no smaller than 10 point, with clearly marked pagination. Standard margins should be used (at least one inch). Sections to be included are listed below with an estimated length of each section provided for the PI's reference:

- Face Page (one page)
- Project Overview (one page)
- Table of Contents (one page)
- Project Summary (not to exceed one page)
- Project Description (not to exceed five pages)
- References (as needed)
- NSF formatted Biographical Sketch (from SciENcv)
- Budget (one page per institution) and Budget Justifications (not to exceed two pages per institution)
- Letters of Commitment
- Unfunded Collaborations (Letters of Support as needed)

Section Content

1. **Face Page** as supplied in the Appendix of these guidelines listing:
    - project title, name, contact information and affiliated Rhode Island research institution for each principal investigator and co-principal investigator(s);
    - name and contact information for administrative official to be notified if award is made;
    - name and signature of the institutional office submitting the proposal. **This Sheet must have the authorizing signature of the lead institution proposing the work.**
2. **Project Overview** as supplied in the Appendix of the guidelines clearly stating
    - budget summaries (for each individual institution and aggregate);
    - catalytic nature of proposal;
    - relation to the research priorities described in these guidelines;
    - title and narrative description of the proposal suitable for use in the public press.
3. **Table of Contents (one page**) listing all sections and pagination.
4. **Project Summary (one page)** listing the intellectual merit and broader impacts of the project as well as the anticipated resulting activity related to follow-on funding or technology development.
5. **Project Description (not to exceed 5 pages).** Brevity will assist the reviewers and STAC staff in evaluating proposals. The Project Description should provide a clear statement of the work to be undertaken and must include:
    - objectives for the period of the proposed work and expected significance;
    - relation to the present state of knowledge in the field, to work in progress by the PI under other support and to work in progress elsewhere;
    - an outline of the general plan of work, including the broad design of activities to be undertaken, and, where appropriate, a clear description of experimental methods and procedures and plans for preservation, documentation, and sharing of data, samples, physical collections, curriculum materials and other related research and education products;
    - how the activity meets the specific collaborative and catalytic requirements of this grant and how the combined efforts of the institutions can lead to results that could not be achieved by one institution alone;
    - how the activity is catalytic in nature and will lead to new research opportunities that can be supported by federal agencies, corporations and/or foundations;
    - how the activity can contribute towards current or future economic development of the state through workforce and technology development;
    - how the activity significantly advances the research competitiveness of scientists in Rhode Island for federal and/or other funding;
    - how the activity advances state-wide research capacity;
    - a plan for inclusive collaboration describing the responsibilities of each investigator and how they will be engaged across institutions.
6. **Reference information (as needed).** Each reference must include the names of all authors (in the same sequence in which they appear in the publication), the article and journal title, book title, volume number, page numbers, and year of publication. If the

document is available electronically, the full URL also should be identified. Proposers must be especially careful to follow accepted scholarly practices in providing citations for source materials relied upon when preparing any section of the proposal. While there is no established page limitation for the references, this section must include bibliographic citations only and must not be used to provide parenthetical information outside of the five-page project description.

7. **NSF standard biographical sketches**. Biographical information for the principal investigator and all co-principal investigator(s) should include professional preparation, appointments and positions, products and certification as required in SciENcv. ***Note:*** The biographical sketches should follow the most recent formats in effect for NSF.
8. **Budgets** for each participating institution for the duration of the research activities detailing all expenses including, when applicable, salaries and wages, equipment, travel and all direct costs. Budget items should follow standard NSF budget categories. **No indirect cost charges are allowed**; **funds may not be used for any indirect cost charges at any institutional partner in these grants.** The budget must include a justification narrative of expenses. The justification narrative must stipulate a total budget figure for the project not to exceed $83,000.
9. **Letter(s) of Commitment** signed by an Authorized Official of the Research Institution and each Co-Research Institution must be provided.
10. **Unfunded Collaborations** with individuals not included in the budget should be described and documented with a letter of support from each collaborator.

Proprietary or Privileged Information

Patentable ideas, trade secrets, privileged or confidential commercial or financial information, disclosure of which may harm the proposer, should be included in proposals only when such information is necessary to convey an understanding of the project. Such information must be clearly marked and appropriately labeled. STAC does not guarantee protection of this information

Submission

Invitation-only Full Proposal submissions must be submitted through the application portal by February 12, 2027, at 5:00 PM

All applicants will receive a system generated email confirming receipt of their submission. Late or incomplete submissions will not be reviewed.

PROCESSING AND REVIEW

Review Criteria

Each proposal will be reviewed by a panel of individuals representing Rhode Island NSF EPSCoR initiatives. Proposal review criteria will follow the National Science Board approved merit criteria: the intellectual merit and the broader impact of the proposed activity. The catalytic and collaborative nature of the proposed research activity will also be considered.

For intellectual merit, the proposal evaluation will consider i) the importance of the activity to advancing knowledge or understanding within its own field or across different fields; ii) the qualifications of the proposer (individual & team) to conduct the project, iii) the extent that the

proposed activity suggests and explores creative and original concepts, and iv) how well the proposed activity is conceived and organized.

For broader impacts, the proposal evaluation will consider the potential for the proposed activity to benefit society and lead to the achievement of desired societal outcomes. These benefits and outcomes could include promoting education and training, broadening participation of under-represented groups, or enhancing infrastructure for research and education, among others.

For catalytic nature, the proposal evaluation will consider i) the degree to which the proposed activity is catalytic in nature; ii) the degree to which the proposed activity has the potential to lead to major research opportunities that can be supported by federal agencies, corporations and/or foundations; and iii) whether the proposed activity has significant potential to attract follow-on investment and/or technological development/commercialization.

Funded projects will represent an extremely well-organized and well-constructed activity submitted by an experienced and competitive team, that is catalytic and collaborative in nature, provides a clearly identified plan for follow-on funding or technology development, demonstrates outstanding potential to increase research capacity and infrastructure, and contributes to the enhancement of Rhode Island's R&D stature.

Award Notification

Awards are anticipated to be announced in late April 2027. Proposers will be notified by email of the outcome of their grant request; notification timing may vary.

POST AWARD

Grant Agreement

The lead Research Institution ("Recipient") will be required to execute a Grant Agreement with STAC and agree to all conditions regarding acceptance of the award, including submission of required progress and financial reports. The lead Research Institution must enter into a subcontract agreement with the Co-Research Institution and provide a copy to STAC within ninety (90) days of the date of the Grant Agreement.

STAC will pay the award to the lead Research Institution following receipt of the executed Grant Agreement and appropriate invoice, but not before the start of the Grant Period.

Progress and Final Reports

Progress and final reports will be required to assist the grantor in measuring how the expenditure of the grant: 1) advances the research competitiveness of scientists in Rhode Island for federal funding technology development and/or commercialization potential; 2) advances collaboration across the state's academic and commercial research institutions; and 3) promotes current or future economic development.

A brief narrative progress report prepared by the Principal Investigator shall be submitted to STAC by the lead Research Institution six (6) months after the effective date of the Grant Agreement.

A final report prepared by the Principal Investigator shall be submitted to STAC by the lead Research Institution within sixty (60) days of the end of the Grant Period and shall include, but is not limited to, the following:

- how the research answered the goals stated in the proposal;
- a description of next steps for the research;
- all follow-on funding the Principal Investigator and/or Recipient has applied for or plans to apply for with data gathered during the Research Project;
- any progress made towards commercialization of a product including clinical trials or production of prototypes and any patents, licenses, job creation or new company creation stimulated by the Award.

Financial Report and Residual Funds

Recipient will submit to STAC within ninety (90) days of the end of the Grant Period a report comparing the budget set forth in the Proposal to the actual costs incurred in administering the Award.

Recipient shall remit any unspent funds from the Award to STAC within ninety (90) days of the end of the Grant Period.

RI NSF EPSCoR Data Collection

All awardees will be required to assist STAC and RI NSF EPSCoR in capturing key reporting data. Data will be collected through a reporting tool from each participant. Participants include PIs, faculty, staff, and students that receive support through the Collaborative Research Grant

Post-Award Follow-Up

Upon request, within one year following submission of the final report, the lead Research Institution shall provide STAC with information on research and development activities that are the direct result of the funding, including grants that are reapplied for and continued efforts to transfer technology from the laboratory to the market.

A P P E N D I X

Face Page

Project Title:

Principal Investigator (PI) Name & Title

Research Institution
Address

Phone/Email
Signature

Co-PI Name & Title

Research Institution
Address

Phone/Email
Signature

Co-PI Name & Title

Research Institution
Address

Phone/Email
Signature

Co-PI Name & Title

Research Institution
Address

Phone/Email
Signature

– Additional Co-PI as needed -

Lead Institution

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICIAL TO BE NOTIFIED IF AWARD IS MADE

OFFICIAL SIGNING FOR APPLICANT ORGANIZATION

SIGNATURE & DATE

Assurances
The institution certifies that this proposal meets all eligibility requirements listed in the General Guidelines, and that all information contained in this application is true and correct to the best of its knowledge. The institution further certifies that it is in compliance with all applicable Federal, state and institutional regulations and policies relevant to the conduct of this project

Project Overview

Project P.I. and Institution:

Project Title*:

Brief Description:

Catalytic Nature of the Project:

Budgetary Information:

A. Primary Grantee:	**Requested Funds**
1. Personnel	
Professional	
Student	
2. Equipment	
3. Supplies/Materials	
4. Travel/Meetings/Other	
Primary Grantee Total	
B. Subcontract I:	
1. Personnel	
Professional	
Student	
2. Equipment	
3. Supplies/Materials	
4. Travel/Meetings/Other	
Subcontract I Total	
C. Subcontract II:	*(if present)*
1. Personnel	
Professional	
Student	
2. Equipment	
3. Supplies/Materials	
4. Travel/Meetings/Other	
Subcontract II Total	
TOTAL	

***The title of the project must be brief, scientifically or technically valid, intelligible to a scientifically or technically literate reader. Information on this sheet should be suitable for use in the public press.**