



Maine EPSCoR at the University of Maine
5717 Corbett Hall, Room 444, Orono, ME 04469
(207)-581-3312 maineepscor@maine.edu
<https://umaine.edu/epscor/track-1-rii-development-process/>

National Science Foundation Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR) FY2024-2029 Research Infrastructure Improvement (RII) Track-1 Program

Maine EPSCoR RII Track-1 Proposal Development Process: To prepare for the next round of NSF EPSCoR RII Track-1 funding, Maine EPSCoR will conduct a proposal development process as follows:

- **Informational Presentation 1:00-2:00, November 30, 2021:** Maine EPSCoR will hold a virtual information session for interested parties. The session will be recorded with the resulting video posted online for public access.
- **Phase I - Concept Papers (due at 5:00 pm, January 7, 2022):** Interested parties may submit a three-page concept paper describing research that is commensurate with a NSF EPSCoR RII Track-1 project. These concept papers will be posted at the Maine EPSCoR website. NSF EPSCoR goals are to:
 - Catalyze the development of research capabilities and the creation of new knowledge that expands jurisdictions' contributions to scientific discovery, innovation, learning, and knowledge-based prosperity;
 - Establish sustainable Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) education, training, and professional development pathways that advance jurisdiction-identified research areas and workforce development;
 - Broaden direct participation of diverse individuals, institutions, and organizations in the project's science and engineering research and education initiatives;
 - Effect sustainable engagement of project participants and partners, the jurisdiction, the national research community, and the general public through data-sharing, communication, outreach, and dissemination; and
 - Impact research, education, and economic development beyond the project at academic, government, and private sector levels.

Research conducted as part of an RII Track-1 project should be hypothesis-and/or problem-driven.

- **Phase II - Concept Paper Evaluation (completed by January 21, 2022):** Concept papers will be evaluated by a Maine EPSCoR appointed review panel to determine their alignment with the following:
 - [Maine Economic Development Strategy 2020-2029](#) (see Opportunities section)
 - [White House 2021 R&D priorities memo](#)
 - NSF's [FY2022 budget request to Congress](#), which is based on three pillars:
 - Advancing the frontiers of research into the future
 - Ensuring accessibility and inclusivity
 - Securing global leadership in science and technology

How the proposed research relates to Maine's seven targeted technology sectors (see Appendix 1 of the [2017 Maine Innovation Economy Action Plan](#)) should also be clearly

established. A new Innovation Economy Action Plan is in development (aka Science and Technology Plan), considering the economic opportunities and strategies that are presented in 10-year Strategic Plan: [Maine Economic Development Strategy 2020-2029](#) and Maine's [Four-Year Plan for Climate Action](#).

Written evaluation summaries will be provided to all concept paper leaders by Monday, January 24, 2022. Leaders of the four highest ranked concept papers will be invited to advance a pre-proposal.

- **Phase III – Maine EPSCoR Facilitated Networking & Transdisciplinary Team Formation (January 24 – February 4, 2022):** Phase III serves to ensure that synergistic collaborations between concept paper contributors are fully considered before advancing to pre-proposal development. Networking will be facilitated by the Maine EPSCoR office to allow interested concept paper contributors (from Phase II) to engage in Q&A about the RII Track-1 program and to facilitate the consideration of collaborative opportunities between researchers, leading to the formation of no more than four trans-disciplinary research teams.

Trans-disciplinary teams may include academic, for-profit, and non-profit organizations, as well as individuals employed by such organizations. Multiple organizations collaborating on a single project team, in any combination of academic, for-profit, or non-profit types, is allowable and desirable.

- **Phase IV – Pre-proposals (commence on February 7 and due at 5:00 pm, March 16, 2022):** Up to 4 transdisciplinary research teams will develop and submit pre-proposals (12-page limit) for review and approval.
- **Phase V – External Review (completed by March 31, 2022):** The pre-proposals will be externally reviewed under contract to Maine EPSCoR to provide guidance on project selection and proposal development. Review comments will be made available to the research teams by April 1, 2022.
- **Phase VI – Review Panel Presentations (April 13 – April 22, 2022):** The research teams will present their proposed programs to a Maine EPSCoR appointed review panel (with inclusion of MIEAB members). The review panel will rank the proposed research programs considering the preproposal (from Phase IV), external reviewer feedback (from Phase V), and the oral presentation.
- **Phase VII – MIEAB Ratification of Topic Selection (completed by May 6, 2022):** MIEAB members will review pre-proposal scoring from Phase VI and ratify results, selecting one transdisciplinary research team to advance.
- **Phase VIII – Planning Grant Development (May 9 – June 30, 2022):** Working with the selected research team, Maine EPSCoR will lead the development of a 6-12 month [Track-1 planning grant](#) with anticipated submission to NSF on July 1, 2022.
- **Phase IX – Proposal Development (July 2022 – August 2023):** The Maine EPSCoR Office will work with the selected transdisciplinary team, statewide educational and research institutions, stakeholders, and other partners to develop a strong proposal that fully addresses the NSF EPSCoR RII Track-1 solicitation guidelines and intent.

- **Phase X – Proposal Submission (August 2023):** Submission of the State’s proposal to NSF.
- **Phase XI – Award notification (Summer 2024):** Preliminary feedback from NSF can be expected in spring 2024, with final determination of the application’s status in summer 2024.
- **Phase XII – Project begins (Fall 2024):** Anticipated project start in fall 2024.

About EPSCoR Research Infrastructure Improvement Program Track-1 Grants:

The Established Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR) is designed to fulfill the mandate of the National Science Foundation (NSF) to promote scientific progress nationwide. Jurisdictions are eligible to participate in the NSF EPSCoR Research Infrastructure Improvement (RII) Program based on their level of total NSF support over their most recent five years (see RII [eligibility](#)). Through this program, NSF facilitates the establishment of partnerships among academic institutions and organizations in governmental, non-profit, and commercial or industrial sectors that are designed to effect sustainable improvements in a jurisdiction's research infrastructure, Research and Development (R&D) capacity, and hence, its R&D competitiveness.

Research Infrastructure Improvement Track-1 (RII Track-1) awards provide up to \$20 million total over five years to support research-driven improvements to jurisdictions’ physical and cyber infrastructure and human capital development in topical areas selected by the jurisdiction's EPSCoR steering committee as having the best potential to improve future R&D competitiveness.

Source: https://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub_summ.jsp?WT.z_pims_id=503429&ods_key=nsf21586