2007 REQUEST FOR EPSCoR SMALL BUSINESS INNOVATION RESEARCH (SBIR) PHASE (0) PROPOSALS
DUE DATE BY ELECTRONIC SUBMISSION – March 21, 2007 by 4:00 p.m.
WEB FORMS AVAILABLE – FEBRUARY 1, 2007

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

Vermont EPSCoR once again will provide the opportunity for Vermont small businesses to compete for grants to foster research and development projects which will lead to application to the federal Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) programs. The following features in this solicitation should be noted:

Program Overview:

- There must be a federal SBIR program to which the work is eventually targeted. Vermont EPSCoR's intent is to identify those pre-SBIR ideas that show promise for SBIR success, and that will benefit from a review and financial support.

- One award will also be made in areas of interest to NASA using NASA-EPSCoR 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 involve as a collaborator, a full-time faculty researcher at a Vermont college or university. Only NASA projects carry this requirement.

- Proposals in a wide variety of areas are appropriate, but we are strongly encouraging the submission of proposals related to Complex Systems Computation/Modeling, in keeping with our thematic approach required by NSF.

  Complex systems are not just complicated processes. They often are networks of interwoven and interconnected parts with individual functions or actions that interact with and respond to each other and with their environment. Complex systems analysis can provide very powerful computational tools that will allow us to approach important problems as systems and not as sums of individual parts, which will much better reflect how systems work in the real world. Some examples of Complex Systems include but are not limited to: Ecological Networks and Extinction; Neural networks; Electronic Circuits and Software; Biological systems, populations; Distributed Remote Sensing; Weather modeling; Social Networks

- The maximum amount of each grant is $10,000.
Multiple year Phase (0) awardees must take a 1 year break from submission after their third successful, consecutive award.

**Obligations Associated with Funding:**

- It is required that successful projects compete for subsequent funding through federal SBIR programs which provide grants of $50,000 - $100,000 in Phase I and up to $750,000 in Phase II. Future applications for Phase (0) funds from Phase (0) awardees will require evidence of submission of a Phase I or II application.
- An electronic final technical report and a paper copy of your financial report due to the EPSCoR office by the end of funding period.
- Annual reporting of progress, updates and follow-on funding to the EPSCoR office through 3/31/2012.
- Participation in annual VT EPSCoR Conference when appropriate.
- Notification of SBIR Phase I & II funding submissions and outcomes to VT EPSCoR Office.

**Period of Support:**
July – December

**Proposal Content:**

EPSCoR’s SBIR Phase (0) program is intended to be a preliminary proof-of-concept feasibility study, not a full-blown project. Past problems with Phase (0) proposals have included insufficient budget explanations, lack of clarity in describing the proposal and not identifying a federal agency SBIR program appropriate for the project. Non-research proposals, e.g. marketing, prototype construction, information collection from the Web, etc. are inappropriate. In cases of software development, a clear identification of a research component to the project is crucial.

- Describe in a paragraph or two, your past work.
- Indicate if you have previously submitted a Phase (0) proposal to Vermont EPSCoR, and the year(s) submitted. If previous Phase (0) support has been obtained, evidence of a Phase I submission must be included. The outcome from this submission should also be indicated.
- Specify Federal SBIR program to which you intend to submit a follow-up proposal.
- Describe in 4 pages the problem, and research plan in sufficient detail to allow for an evaluation.
- Identify the scientific disciplines involved.
- Describe data gathering methods, potential problems, equipment and other resources needed. Resources currently available for the project should be
described.

- 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/~ospuvm](http://www.uvm.edu/~ospuvm). If you have any additional questions about regulations regarding work involving human subjects, contact the Office of Sponsored Programs (802) 656-3360.

- Include a current resume for key personnel.

- Include an expenditure budget and a detailed budget justification/explanation. Indirect costs are not allowed on Phase (0) awards. (2 pages)

- A letter of intent is required from all potential collaborators, and must be included in the application package.

**Evaluation Criteria:**

A panel of local scientists and engineers, representing Vermont’s business, academic and government sectors will evaluate pilot grant proposals. The review will focus on **scientific and technical merit as well as potential for federal SBIR support**, and will consider the following criteria:

- Significance and Originality
- Appropriateness of the Methodology
- Potential for Generation of Federal SBIR Funds
- Qualifications and Experience of the Investigators
- Suitability of Facilities
- Relevance of the Budget including any Matching Funds
- Clarity of the Proposal

**How to Submit a Phase (0) Proposal to Vermont EPSCoR:**

Web based submissions are the only accepted form of submission. Please go to [www.uvm.edu/EPSCoR](http://www.uvm.edu/EPSCoR) and click on the SBIR link to access proposal form, budget form and cover page information. **Forms will be made available on the web on February 1, 2007.** You are encouraged to submit early to avoid any potential submission complications.

1. **Web submissions are due Wednesday March 21, 2007 by 4:00 p.m.**
2. **Cover Page* and Letters of Intent from potential collaborators are due by mail only (no FAX), by Thursday, March 22, 2006 at 4:00 p.m.** Send to Vermont EPSCoR, Cook Building, 82 University Place, Room 528, University of Vermont,
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 grant 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 grant 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, or 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. **Final awards will be announced in June, or sooner.**

Information, including proposal writing tips, can be found on the Vermont EPSCoR website: [http://www.uvm.edu/EPSCoR](http://www.uvm.edu/EPSCoR) where Phase (0) is described. For information on the Federal SBIR programs visit [http://www.zyn.com](http://www.zyn.com) and [http://www.thinkvermont.com](http://www.thinkvermont.com)

For more information about Vermont EPSCoR or the SBIR program, contact Lillian Gamache, Vermont EPSCoR Project Coordinator at [epscor@uvm.edu](mailto:epscor@uvm.edu)