The Vermont Agricultural Experiment Station
Call for Proposals:

FY 2024 Competitive Hatch and Hatch Multistate Awards

Guidelines for Proposal Development and Submissions
For Projects Beginning 10/1/2023

1. Purpose and Intent

USDA "formula funds" are provided to each State Land Grant Institution for the purpose of building "capacity" to address USDA priorities.

As these federal funds must be matched at least 1:1 by funding from the State of Vermont, Vermont Agricultural Experiment Station (VT-AES) policy is that these projects must have some tangible application or relationship to Vermont state priority needs. In other words, they must address one or more of the following VT-AES priority areas:

Animal Health and Production: Research that improves animal production, well-being, and welfare as well as improves animal product utilization, such as animal diseases, sustainable animal production, animal nutrition and nutritional physiology, animal genome, milk product utilization, animal welfare and biosecurity.

Development and Sustainability of Communities: Support research that contributes to the development of resilient, inclusive, and just communities in an era of unprecedented change.

Foundational and Exploratory Research in Agriculture: Support science to help agricultural researchers to plan and make decisions in adapting to changing environments, sustaining economic vitality, and taking advantage of emerging economic opportunities.

Nutrition, Food Safety and Food Security: Research that supports and identifies effective measures to make informed, science-based decisions that will improve local and global capacity to meet nutritional and food security goals, including availability, acceptability, safety, and utilization of foods.

Quality of the Natural Environment: Research to improve the quality of the natural environment where Vermonters live, work and play, from basic research to application.

Sustainability of Vermont Agriculture: Research that improves the financial, environmental, and social sustainability of Vermont's agriculture, food, and forest sectors.

- VT-AES provides the opportunity for seed project funding through a competitive proposal process:

  a) Faculty members with an AES appointment are eligible to apply.
  b) Project proposals are scored on merit and the productivity record of the PI(s).
  c) Projects are intended as seed funding to aid the PI in establishing a new research direction, to augment dimensions of their current extramurally funded research program, or to obtain preliminary data to strengthen a future sponsored proposal.

d) Hatch project funds are intended to be leveraged by extramural funding and are expressly not intended to be the "sole source" of funding for research projects.

e) Hatch projects may not exceed a term of **three years**. Hatch Multistate projects may not exceed a term of **five years** and cannot exceed the funding term of the Multistate Research Project.

f) Projects are expected to result in peer-reviewed publications in journals appropriate for the discipline and/or intellectual property disclosures where appropriate. *PIs are encouraged to include costs of publication in their budgets.*

2. Types of VT-AES Hatch Projects

a) Development Hatch Project

    a. Project Investigator/Project Director (PI/PD):
- i. Writes a comprehensive project proposal which is reviewed and scored by a "Hatch Review Committee" composed of faculty from each CALS department. The expectation is that the proposal is of high quality and could form the basis of an application for sponsored funding (e.g., AFRI, NFS, NIH, a foundation, etc.). Projects should not exceed a term of three years.
- ii. If project is approved by the AES Director, PI completes Project Initiation in USDA's NIFA Reporting System and obtains USDA approval. Projects must receive NIFA approval before they begin.

    b. Vermont Agriculture Experiment Station (VT-AES):
- i. Provides operational support of up to $15,000 per investigator per year, or up to $20,000 per "new investigator" per year ("new investigators" are those who are pre-tenure or in their first six years of their appointment for non-tenure-track Experiment Station faculty).
- ii. Provides fractional FTE support for the PI.
- iii. Provides PI with access to the graduate student assistant pool, which provides 10 to 20 hours of **research** time per week toward a project. Hatch funds do not support TAs. The Department Chair is responsible for allocating Hatch assistantships and access does not guarantee an assignment will be made if the asks exceed the resource pool.

b) Hatch Multistate Project – defined as a project contributing to the goals and objectives of a USDA-approved Multistate Research Project as listed in NIMSS.

    a. Project Investigator/Project Director (PI/PD):
- i. Writes a comprehensive Hatch Multistate proposal which is reviewed and scored by the Hatch Review Committee composed of faculty from each CALS department. Projects may have a term no longer than five years but cannot exceed the term of the Multistate Research Project to which it contributes.
- ii. If approved by the VT-AES Director, PI must complete:
  1. a Project Initiation in USDA's NIFA Reporting System and obtains USDA approval. Projects must receive NIFA approval before they begin.
  2. an "Appendix E" in NIMSS to join the Multistate Research Project.

    b. Vermont Agriculture Experiment Station (VT-AES):
        i. Provides operational support of up to $20,000 per investigator per year or up to $25,000 per "new investigator" per year. "New investigators" are those who are pre-tenure or, for non-tenure-track Experiment Station faculty, are in their first six years of their appointment).
        ii. Provides an additional $1,500* per year to reimburse travel expenses for the PI to attend the annual meeting of the multi-state project (*PI must account for this expense in their budget and narrative).
        iii. Provides fractional FTE support for the PI.
        iv. Provides PI with access to the graduate student assistant pool, which provides 10 to 20 hours of research time per week toward a project. Hatch funds do not support TAs. The Department Chair is responsible for allocating Hatch assistantships and access does not guarantee an assignment will be made if the asks exceed the resource pool.

c) Thematic Hatch Projects - Appropriate for faculty who desire to keep their VT-AES appointment but do not require Hatch operational support due to current extramurally funded projects that address the priorities of VT-AES.

    a. Project Investigator (PI):
        i. Writes an abbreviated 2-page proposal summarizing current extramurally funded projects, stating how they address the priorities of VT-AES, and demonstrate a sustained record of research productivity.
        ii. If project is approved by the VT-AES Director, PI completes Project Initiation in USDA's New Reporting Portal and obtains USDA approval.

    b. Vermont Agriculture Experiment Station (VT-AES):
        i. Provides no operational support funding.
        ii. Provides fractional FTE support for the PI.
        iii. Provides PI with access to the graduate student pool.

Note: A PI/PD can be *involved* in more than one Hatch/Hatch Multistate project, but only PI/PD on one at a time. All projects combined cannot exceed the maximum allowable budget per PI.

3. Budget and Allocations

Annual Allocations:

    Hatch Development, Investigator $15,000
    Hatch Development, New Investigator $20,000

    Hatch Multistate, Investigator $20,000*
    Hatch Multistate, New Investigator $25,000*

*Hatch Multistate projects must include up to $1,500 per year over their allocation to accommodate travel expenses for the PI to attend the required annual meeting of the multistate project. These funds may only be used for this purpose and should be included in initial budget proposals.

PIs may now budget over an annual allocation amount, but no more than 60% of the total three-year budget may be spent in one year minus the travel allowance for Multistate projects, if applicable. A budget is required for each year of the project and its justification will be used as part of the review process.

Example 1: A PI proposes a three-year Hatch project (Investigator) and is allocated $15,000 per year for a total project budget of $45,000. The PI plans to distribute their funds in the following way: Year 1 - $10,000, Year 2 – $25,000, year 3 - $10,000. 60% of $45,000 is $27,000, so their budget for year 2 is allowable.

Example 2: A PI proposes a two-year Hatch Multistate project (New Investigator) and is allocated $25,000 per year for a total project budget of $50,000. The PI plans to distribute their funds in the following way: Year 1 - $30,000, Year 2 – $20,000. 60% of $50,000 is $30,000, so their budget for year 1 is allowable. Because the PI also plans to attend the multistate project's annual meeting each year, the final budget proposal would reflect the additional $1,500 annual allowance (Year 1 - $31,500, Year 2 - $21,500).

For Multistate Projects ONLY: if the original approved proposal was a four- or five-year Multistate project, VT-AES will release funds for the first 3 years, with the expectation that the PI "demonstrate progress towards objectives."

a) Funds for years four and/or five will be released pending successful submission and review of a three-year progress report (see guidance below).
b) Budgets should include projected numbers for those additional years.
c) If the PI is projecting funds for years four *and* five, they may use the same calculations (described above) to determine their annual and total allocation for the remainder of the project.

Hatch Multistate Progress Report Guidelines/Requests for Additional Funds:

In the project's third year, the PI will need to provide a narrative to the Hatch Review Committee (not to exceed five pages) that addresses:

a) The progress made relative to stated objectives in the original project,
b) A plan for the remaining two years of the project. Projects may not exceed a total of five years.

Along with the progress report/plan, please include a copy of your original proposal for the review committee and:

a) Cover page indicating it is the third-year progress report,
b) Demonstration of publications,
c) Demonstration of efforts to submit (and obtain) grant proposals relative to the project,
d) The usual budget page for each of the remaining two years,
e) PI's full CV (particularly illustrating publications and grant success in the past 5 years).

4. **Process for Proposal Application and Review:**

a) A call for Hatch proposals is issued early in the first quarter of the year.
b) Hatch proposals are due on the **last Thursday of April by 5pm**.
c) The Hatch Review Committee reviews all proposals during the month of May.

      a.   NOTE: Faculty who have not completed required reporting will not have funding released and their proposal will not be considered.

d) Scoring is based upon the following criteria:

Significance of the work and relevance to priority areas of VTAES (15 points)

- Is the project concept important, interesting, and compelling?
- Is the project concept applicable to Vermont issues and needs?

Scientific and technical feasibility (40 points)

- Is the proposed work described in sufficient detail to provide reviewers with the confidence that it will result in high quality, meaningful results?
- Is the work of high quality such that it will likely result in peer-reviewed publications?
- Is the work of sufficient quality that it is likely to result in leveraged funding by extramural sponsors?

Past progress of the PI and ability of the project to leverage extramural support (30 points)

- Has the PI shown substantial productivity through peer-reviewed publications and extramural grant support?
- Has the PI been productive with previous Hatch funding?

Innovation (15 point)

- Is the work going to shift current research paradigms by utilizing novel theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions?
- Is a refinement, improvement, or new application of theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, novel data, instrumentation, or interventions proposed?

Proposal Due Date: 5pm Thursday, April 27, 2023

Budgets must be reviewed and approved by the CALS Pre-Award team before submission; please involve them early in the process. The cover page must be SIGNED BY YOUR DEPARTMENT CHAIR. It is the responsibility of the Project Investigator to ensure that submissions are in the proper form and submitted by the deadline. Proposals are to be submitted electronically as <u>one PDF</u> (please reference guidance below) and <u>one Excel file</u> (budget) to stephanie.albaugh@uvm.edu.

NEW Research Integrity: PIs must be in compliance with Financial Conflict of Interest (FCOI) policy prior to award. As such, investigators are required to 1) Complete disclosures and 2) Complete FCOI Training. Please visit https://www.uvm.edu/ovpr/research-integrity-financial-conflict-interest-sponsored-research for further instruction.

6. Proposal Format and Instructions

Heading:

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VERMONT AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENT STATION
Burlington, Vermont
Department of _____

PROPOSAL FORMAT

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I. **Cover page.** Fill out the cover page and obtain signature from your department chair. Please use the 2023 Cover Page document for standard format. Be sure your chair has had the opportunity to review the complete proposal.

II. **Title.** A brief, clear, specific designation of the subject of the research. The title, used by itself, should give a good indication of what the project is about. Limit title to 80 characters, including letters, symbols, and spaces.

III. **Personnel Involved.** List names of PI/PD, co-PIs, and key research associates.

IV. **Proposed Duration.** Projects start on October 1st and terminate September 30th. Hatch projects may not exceed a term of three years. Hatch Multistate projects may not exceed five years and must align with the timeframe of the Multistate Research Project. For those Hatch Multistate projects exceeding three years, funding is contingent upon committee approval of a Progress Report, project plan, and actual budget request due in year three of the project.

V. **Non-Technical Summary/Abstract.** In lay terms, provide a description of the work proposed including: (1) the issue and why it is important, (2) your goal and objectives, (3) the target audience(s) and how they will benefit, and (4) how your activities lead to the outcomes described in the goal statement or objectives. [Limit to 250 words]. *If approved, this text will be used in your Project Initiation, submitted to NIFA via the NIFA Reporting System (NRS).*

VI. **Introduction.** Introduce the proposal in a compelling way. *If* your project was not successfully funded last time, a one-page introduction must address all previous critiques. Reviewers will look for these previous comments and check that you have revised accordingly.

VII. **Literature Review.** Provide relevant background information describing the problem, what is known about the field, and what needs to be done and why. The PI must conduct a review on REEport and NRS for similar projects and provide a statement of how the proposed project is distinct from or augments current REEport/NRS approved projects. PI's writing multistate projects should describe how this proposal fits into the existing multistate project. [~ 2-3 pages].

VIII. **Progress Report/Preliminary Results.** Describe work that you have done with Hatch/Hatch Multistate funding and any preliminary results that you may have obtained regarding the proposed project. [~ 2 pages].

IX. **Objectives.** List objectives with a sentence or two of clarification for each. [~ 1 page].

X. **Research Plan and Methodology.** Describe the experimental design, the essential working plan, and methods to be used in attaining each of the stated objectives. The procedures should correspond to the objectives and follow the same order. Phases of the work to be undertaken concurrently should be designated. The location of the work, facilities, and equipment needed should be indicated. Appropriate methods for statistical analysis of the data should be indicated. Discuss expected results, potential pitfalls, and potential alternative strategies. Statement on procedures should indicate that the research has been carefully planned and should provide for changes when they are necessary to improve the work. Please remember that you may be writing for a reviewer who does not share your level of expertise with the subject at hand. [~6-7 pages]. *Please note: if approved, the methodology section of NIFA's project initiation form (in NRS) is limited to 8,000 characters.*

XI. **Significance.** State the expected outcomes and their relevancy to one or more of the VT-AES priority areas. Describe how the results will be used or disseminated, stakeholder beneficiaries of the research results and the nature of the benefits. [~ 1 page].

XII. **Innovation.** Does the proposal seek to shift current research paradigms by utilizing novel theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions? Is a refinement, improvement, or new application of theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions proposed? [~ .5 page]

XIII. **Timetable for Proposed Work.** Provide a brief timeline for completing each of the objectives and sub-objectives. [~ .5 pages]

LIMIT BODY OF PROPOSAL TO 15 PAGES INCLUDING FIGURES
(excluding cover page and documents referenced below)

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The following documents (except the budget) should be included in the same in PDF as the body of the proposal but will not count toward the 15-page limit:

XIV. **Literature Cited.** Length as needed.

XV. **Current & Pending Support.** Please address any overlap between the proposal and any current or pending support. Faculty should work with their Pre-Award contact to access and update the most recent document on file.

XVI. **CV with Publications & Funding for Last 5 Years (long form C.V.)**

XVII. **Financial Support/Budget.** Prepare the Budget for each year of support requested. The budget request must be completely described as justified using the Excel form provided. All expenditures must follow VT-AES administration procedures. *Budgets must be reviewed and approved by the CALS Pre-Award team before submission; please involve them early in the process. The budget must be submitted as a separate Excel file.*