Industry fact sheet on the NSF Engines program

Jumpstart your region's innovation ecosystem with up to $160 million over 10+ years.

The U.S. National Science Foundation's Regional Innovation Engines (NSF Engines) program supports the development of diverse, regional coalitions to catalyze and foster innovation ecosystems across the U.S. Each NSF Engine focuses on use-inspired research and development that creates new technologies, jobs and economic opportunities for national, societal and geostrategic impact. The program was launched in May 2022 by NSF's Directorate for Technology, Innovation and Partnerships (TIP) and established in the "CHIPS and Science Act of 2022."

Pending congressional appropriations, the NSF Engines program aims to add additional regions to the 10 inaugural awardees announced earlier this year, expanding innovation potential across the U.S.

The program encourages regional teams of innovators and ecosystem builders, including those from industry working in partnership with others, to submit proposals aimed at building innovation ecosystems across the U.S. Higher education institutions, non-profit organizations, tribal nations and state and local governments are also eligible to lead NSF Engine applications and receive funding from this competition.

NSF Engines funding amount:

Up to $160 million in funding for up to 10 years.

Funding eligibility:

For-profit institutions of all sizes are eligible to apply for funding as lead organizations or core partners. In round 1, more than 150 industry partners were active participants in successful NSF Engines proposals. Six of the ten inaugural NSF Engines include partners who are new to NSF funding, demonstrating NSF's openness to new, creative partnerships.

Check out our website:

https://new.nsf.gov/funding/initiatives/regional-innovation-engines

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U.S. National Science Foundation
Regional Innovation Engines

Email us questions:
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Why should industry join an application team?

- The NSF Engines program has the potential to be the largest regional innovation ecosystem building effort in the history of NSF and the federal government.

- The program explicitly focuses on use-inspired research, technology translation and workforce development for industries of the future.

- NSF Engines de-risk, prototype and scale technologies in areas of U.S. economic and industrial competitiveness.

How is this different from other federal innovation programs?

- The amount and length of program funding per investment (up to $160 million per region for up to 10 years) an order of magnitude greater than traditional NSF awards demonstrates NSF's commitment to driving transformative economic growth throughout the U.S.

- Compared to other NSF innovation programs, NSF Engines support extends beyond basic and use-inspired and translational research, focusing on creating the research and translation spine of a regional innovation ecosystem. NSF Engines runs the gamut of basic research to economic growth, including activities around startup firm creation, job creation and cultivating the talent pool to fill jobs in industries of the future.

- This program is being run in close collaboration with other federal agencies, most notably the Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration programs, including Regional Technology and Innovation Hubs and the Build Back Better Regional Challenge. While some regions receive funding from both agencies, the NSF Engines program is unique in that NSF is willing to fund earlier-stage research and assume more technical and commercial risk than some of the aforementioned programs, recognizing the need to create the translational and research pathway to move technologies from lab to market.

What are some examples of engagement pathways for industry?

- Apply as a lead applicant or core partner.
- Build on NSF's funding to co-invest in fundamental and translational research, startup company creation, innovation ecosystem infrastructure building and workforce development programs.
- License technologies and co-invest in startups emerging from NSF Engines.
- Loan executives to serve in NSF Engines leadership roles or as entrepreneurs-in-residence and mentors.
- Partner on talent initiatives; recruit and co-design workforce development programs that fit industry needs.

Take action

- Convene relevant sectors and organizational types within your region.
- Sign up for upcoming events.
- Consider leading or joining your region's application.
- For additional ways to get involved, see the engagement opportunities section above.