NSF EPSCoR
ADVANCING GEOGRAPHIC DIVERSITY IN STEM

EPSCoR Research Infrastructure Improvement Program: EPSCoR Collaborations for Optimizing Research Ecosystems (E-CORE)

NSF 25-523

EPSCoR Live! Webinar

January 22, 2025

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NSF Program Officer

Overview

- Program Announcements
- E-CORE Program Framework
- Solicitation Goals and Key Elements
- Noteworthy Solicitation Updates
- Current Awardees
- Closing Remarks

Congratulations to the Newest E-CORE Awardees!

Jurisdiction	Title
Delaware	E-CORE RII: Strengthening Partnerships for Advancing Research Capacity in Delaware
Guam	E-CORE RII: Optimizing Research Infrastructure in Guam
Kentucky	E-CORE RII: Technology for Innovative Visualization, Aggregation & Training in Environmental Preparedness and Resilience for Kentucky
Louisiana	E-CORE RII: Louisiana Networks of Excellence for Tomorrow
Vermont	E-CORE RII: The Science and Technology Research Initiative for the Vermont Economy

Press Release: https://new.nsf.gov/news/nsf-invests-40m-strengthen-stem-research-capacity-workforce

E-CORE supports jurisdictions in building research capacity and research infrastructure for targeted areas of focus, or “cores,” that underlie a jurisdiction's research ecosystem.

E-CORE Goals

1. Leverage the understanding of a jurisdiction’s needs, challenges, and opportunities to build significant and sustainable research infrastructure within a jurisdiction's research ecosystem;

2. Build capacity to scale expertise that will support jurisdiction-wide partnerships and increase the likelihood of follow-on funding from non-EPSCoR sources; and

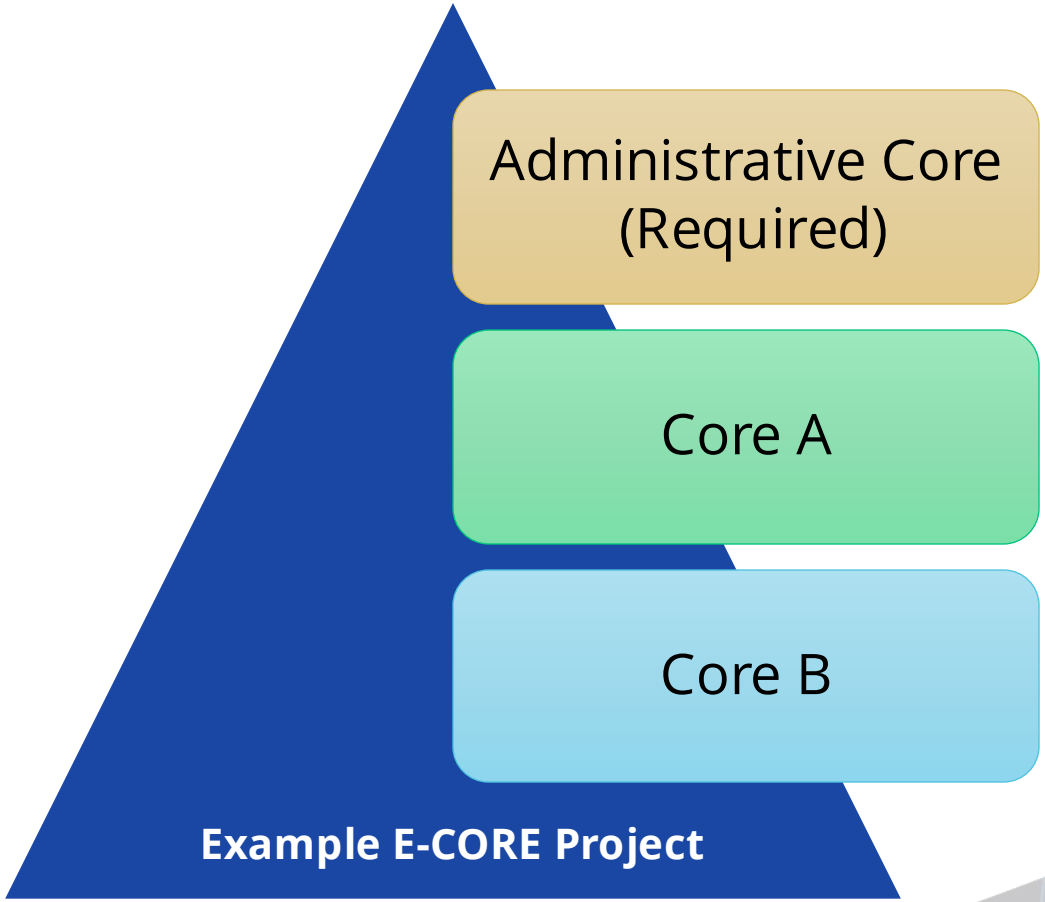
3. Develop sustainable pathways to broaden the participation of individuals and organizations that engage within a jurisdiction’s research ecosystem.

Critical Elements of Research Ecosystem

- A robust research ecosystem is an environment where research can thrive, leading to new discoveries, technological advancements, and solutions to complex problems.
- Every jurisdiction has unique challenges, needs and opportunities within its research ecosystem.

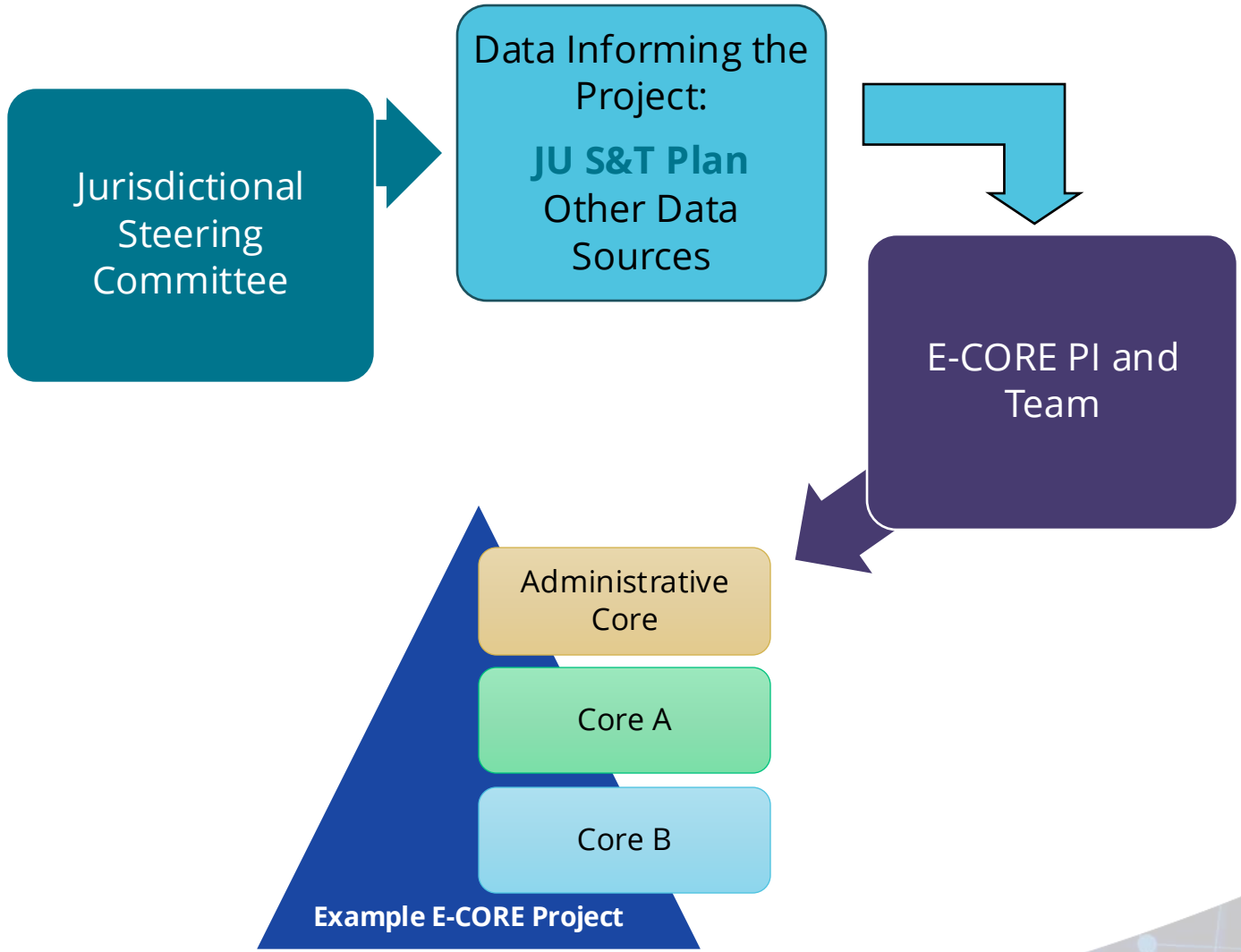
Structure of the E-CORE Program and Eligibility Updates

- Structure: Administrative Core (Required) in addition to other cores
- Budget Guidance:
  - Cooperative agreement, multi-institutional, budget requests up to $10 million for up to 4 years
  - Optional renewal project award maximum budget of $8 million total + 20% in cost-share for an additional four years
  - NSF's contribution can be $18 million over 8 years
- Deadline: July 15, 2025, by 5 PM submitting institution's local time.
- Eligibility Updates:
  - RII Track-1 PIs/co-PIs may participate as senior personnel
  - Institutions funded by RII Track-1 awards may participate as sub-awardees
- Renewal Site Visit: Year 3-4 for renewal project proposals
- Sister Program E-RISE: Supports hypothesis-driven or problem-driven research and workforce development to improve competitiveness in a selected STEM field



An E-CORE Project Plugs Into A Research Ecosystem Through An Assessment

- Jurisdictional Science and Technology Plan (living document)
  - Typically obtained from the Jurisdictional Steering Committee
  - Shows strengths, needs and challenges in the jurisdiction-wide research ecosystem
  - Identifies priorities
  - Fundamental research infrastructure (addressed by E-CORE)
  - Opportunities to build research strength (addressed by E-RISE)
- Other Data sources are allowed to contribute to the assessment (ie. Surveys, etc…)



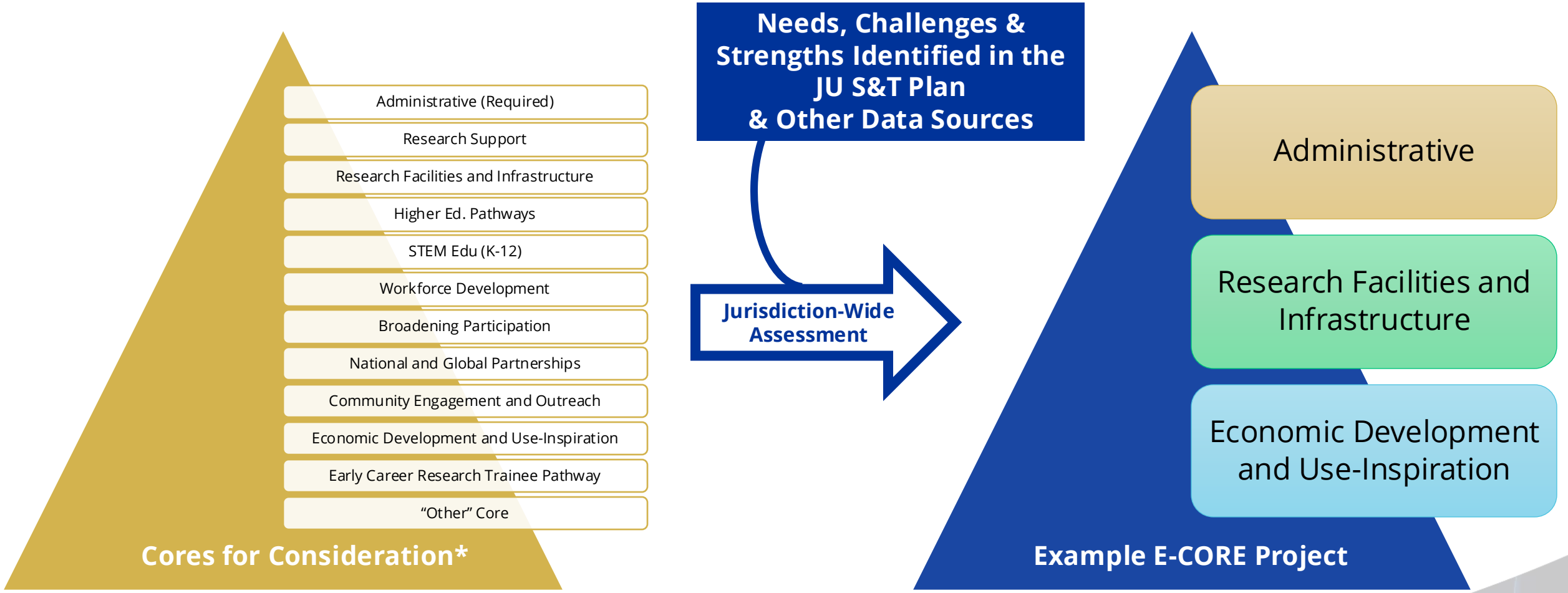
Activities of the Administrative Core

- Jurisdictional Development
- Research Ecosystem-Wide Connections
- Broadening Participation and Fostering a Culture of Reciprocal Collaboration
- Goals, Metrics, and Evaluation
- Intentional Communication

Administrative Core

The Administrative Core should coordinate with Jurisdictional State Office **and/or** transition office functions if desirable

E-CORE Structure: What Could a Project Look Like?



*Keep project depth and budget constraints in mind when considering the number of cores

Project Description Structure Within an E-CORE Proposal

- State of the Jurisdiction and E-CORE vision
- Strategic Plan, Assessment and Evaluation
- Leadership, organization, and Management
- Results from Relevant Prior Support

Solicitation-Specific Merit Review Criteria

- Connection and potential impact of E-CORE to address both jurisdictional needs and research capacity, and EPSCoR Mission and Goals.
- Support of broadening participation.
- Evidence that there is a culture of reciprocal collaboration and that there is mutually beneficial collaboration across different organization types and sectors.
- Plan for project management, leadership, and partnerships.

Noteworthy Solicitation Updates for NSF 25-523

Solicitation Updates
• Increased the total budget for the first four years from $8M to $10M
• Added requirement for leadership team to include a person responsible for coordinating networking and engagement across the jurisdiction and program management
• A requirement was added for notifying the Jurisdiction Steering Committee of an E-CORE proposal submission
• The requirement to allocate 5% of the budget to the Jurisdictional Steering Committee was removed.
• Stated NSF's expectation for the S&T plan to be publicly available
• Expanded limit to 10 letters of collaboration

What does an E-CORE Project Look Like In Real Life?

Jurisdiction	Title
Maine	E-CORE RII: Strengthening Maine's Research Ecosystem and Pathways Through Strategic Capacity Building
Mississippi	E-CORE RII: Mississippi Research Alliance
New Hampshire	E-CORE RII: New Hampshire Long-term Investment to Fuel Transformative Research (NH-LIFT)
New Mexico	E-CORE RII: Research Infrastructure Optimization for New Mexico
South Dakota	E-CORE RII: South Dakota Research Ecosystem Network: STEM Education, Community Engagement, and Broadening Participation
Rhode Island	E-CORE RII: Rhode Island Inclusive Network for Excellence in Science and Technology

Press Release: https://new.nsf.gov/news/nsf-awards-38m-strengthen-research-infrastructure-build

To be successful, projects must:

- Be focused on the **jurisdiction as a whole**, irrespective of scientific foci (or show a trajectory towards that over the potential 8 years of the award)
- **Build networks**, or networks of networks to bring folks together
- **Look within the jurisdiction** at the challenges and opportunities to building fundamental research infrastructure and capacity
- **Focus in on several key areas** (depth vs. breadth) to **create scalable impact (i.e. impact beyond individual teams or institutions)**
- Remember that these are designed to develop over eight years, you see the **first four, so you are really looking at potential**

For more information, stay in touch!

- Full Proposal Deadline: July 15, 2025
  - Due third Tuesday in July Thereafter
- Webinars available at nsf.gov/epscor
- Points of Contact:
  - Chinonye Nnakwe Whitley, (Program Lead)
    - Email: cwhitley@nsf.gov
  - Benjamin J. McCall, (Program co-Lead)
    - Email: bjmccall@nsf.gov

Office Hour Dates
([Register on the NSF EPSCoR Website]():

- ~~Tuesday, February 11, 2025~~
- Monday, March 3, 2025
- Tuesday, March 25, 2025
- Monday, April 14, 2025
- Thursday, May 8, 2025
- Thursday, May 29, 2025
- Tuesday, June 17, 2025
- Tuesday, July 8, 2025

Thank You!

Time for Q&A