NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
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NSF 23-148

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for the EPSCoR Collaborations for Optimizing Research Ecosystems Research Infrastructure Improvement (E-CORE RII) Program (NSF 23-587) and EPSCoR Research Incubators for STEM Excellence Research Infrastructure Improvement (E-RISE RII) Program (NSF 23-588)

The following set of questions and answers refer to frequently asked questions about the E-CORE RII and E-RISE RII Programs, but are not intended to be a modification of either solicitation NSF 23-587 or NSF 23-588.

A. COST SHARE AND OTHER BUDGET REQUIREMENTS

1. What are the cost share requirements for the E-CORE RII and E-RISE RII Programs?

2. Should all projects request the maximum allowed amount in the budget request?

B. JURISDICTIONAL EPSCOR STEERING COMMITTEE

3. What is the function of the Jurisdictional EPSCoR Steering Committee?

4. Should the jurisdictional EPSCoR Steering Committee be appointed by a government leader within the jurisdiction?

5. How should a jurisdiction financially support its EPSCoR Steering Committee?

C. JURISDICTION ELIGIBILITY

6. How many E-RISE RII and E-CORE RII projects may be submitted from institutions in a single jurisdiction?

7. Once eligible, can a jurisdiction be represented in a submission to E-RISE RII and/or E-CORE RII annually?

D. INSTITUTION ELIGIBILITY

E. PROJECT AND LEADERSHIP TEAM ELIGIBILITY

A. COST SHARE AND OTHER BUDGET REQUIREMENTS

1. **What are the cost share requirements for the E-CORE RII and E-RISE RII Programs?**

E-CORE RII and E-RISE RII awards may be funded for up to eight years, including initial funding for the first four years and possible renewal funding for three to four additional years. For both programs, awards granted a renewal will require cost share in the renewal period as an eligibility for renewal. Guidance on the cost share requirement will be detailed in separate renewal period guidance.

While cost share is not required for the first four years of an E-CORE RII or E-RISE RII award, because substantial advance efforts and preparations are needed for cost share inclusion in the renewal period, advance preparation for inclusion of cost share in a renewal period is encouraged. NSF Dear Colleague Letter NSF 23-147 provides additional notification of E-CORE RII and E-RISE RII cost share requirements in an

award's renewal period.

2. **Should all projects request the maximum allowed amount in the budget request?**

No. Projects are expected to carefully evaluate their needs in the research ecosystem and request only the resources needed to accomplish the goals of the project. Some projects may not require a budget at the maximum allowable amount.

B. JURISDICTIONAL EPSCOR STEERING COMMITTEE

3. **What is the function of the Jurisdictional EPSCoR Steering Committee?**

The jurisdictional EPSCoR Steering Committee is expected to help identify areas of scientific strength and opportunity in EPSCoR jurisdictions and R&D improvement strategies that will advance the development of the jurisdiction's Science and Technology nationally-competitive capabilities. The Steering Committee must work closely with diverse jurisdictional leaders in academia, government, and the private sector to: (i) aid in the assessment of the total jurisdictional research ecosystem present in a jurisdiction; (ii) provide reach into areas that may be beyond the sphere of influence of the E-CORE project(s) in the jurisdiction (e.g. other federal investments, state governments, industry); and (iii) co-produce, in collaboration with relevant entities in the jurisdiction (including funded E-CORE projects and leadership in other jurisdiction-wide federal research investments), the jurisdiction's State Science and Technology Plan.

4. **Should the jurisdictional EPSCoR Steering Committee be appointed by a government leader within the jurisdiction?**

The structure, composition, and appointing authority for the Steering Committees should be based on the specific needs and circumstances of the jurisdiction. As such, the jurisdictional EPSCoR Steering Committee membership should be reflective of the needs and scope of the jurisdiction, and must include the expertise to provide an inclusive, diverse, and balanced expertise to accomplish, at minimum, their three primary charges (as described in FAQ #3 above). To fulfill these charges in an equitable and consistent manner, each jurisdiction should have a single jurisdictional EPSCoR Steering Committee. An existing Steering Committee within a jurisdiction may keep its existing structure or restructure based on the evolving needs of the jurisdiction.

5. **How should a jurisdiction financially support its EPSCoR Steering Committee?**

Solicitations NSF 23-587 and NSF 23-588 state that a minimum of 5% of a project's total budget must be allocated to support requirements for Steering Committee activities. As needed, additional funding may also be allocated in a project's budget to support Steering Committee functions or activities. Moreover, funding external to an E-CORE RII or E-RISE RII project may also be used to support the Steering Committee in

its mission.

C. JURISDICTION ELIGIBILITY

6. **How many E-RISE RII and E-CORE RII projects may be submitted from institutions in a single jurisdiction?**

   NSF EPSCoR will complete merit review for all compliant proposals submitted. While a jurisdiction may have more than a single submission or award, it is critical that submissions respond to program requirements in building **jurisdiction-wide** research capacity. Single institution submissions are discouraged.

7. **Once eligible, can a jurisdiction be represented in a submission to E-RISE RII and/or E-CORE RII annually?**

   Yes. Once eligible and providing all other eligibility criteria are met, annual high-quality E-CORE RII and E-RISE RII proposals from institutions or organizations within the same jurisdiction are allowable. NSF EPSCoR strongly encourages submitters to carefully read the solicitation to ensure appropriate alignment of proposed projects with the criteria and intent of the program. Proposals that do not meet the solicitation requirements will be returned without review.

D. INSTITUTION ELIGIBILITY

8. **If an institution/organization is a funded collaborator on an active EPSCoR RII Track-1 award, can it also submit a proposal to the E-RISE RII or E-CORE RII Programs?**

   A funded collaborator in a RII Track-1 award is defined as having received funds from the award and being included on the "List of Participating Organizations" in the original RII Track-1 proposal submission. If an institution/organization is a funded collaborator on an awarded five-year EPSCoR RII Track-1 project, it is not eligible to submit to either the E-CORE RII or E-RISE RII Program unless the active RII Track-1 project is in its final year of the award (e.g., year five or a no cost extension year).

9. **If an institution/organization is a subaward on a currently awarded EPSCoR RII Track-1 project, can the institution/organization withdraw from the project to become eligible to apply for the E-CORE RII and E-RISE RII Programs?**

   No. An NSF RII Track-1 award is made based on the merit review of all elements of the project, including the subaward's substantive participation in the project. Withdrawal of a partner institution/organization could negatively impact the successful completion of the project.

10. **Can an institution/organization concurrently lead both an E-CORE RII project and an E-RISE RII project?**

    Yes. An institution/organization may concurrently serve as lead on both an E-CORE RII submission and E-RISE RII submission, including within the same competition year. The institution/organization may also collaborate in a non-lead role or as a subaward on any combination of E-CORE RII and E-RISE RII submissions or awards. However, an institution/organization may not concurrently lead more than one active E-CORE RII project and one active E-RISE RII project.

11. **What defines a "distinct academic campus," as referenced in NSF 23-587 and NSF 23-588?**

    A distinct academic campus is defined as a campus that awards its own degrees and has independent administrative structures, admissions policies, and alumni associations.

E. PROJECT AND LEADERSHIP TEAM ELIGIBILITY

12. **Can the same individual serve as a PI or Co-PI on an E-RISE RII submission and an E-CORE RII submission?**

    Yes. There are no restrictions around the same individual serving as a PI or Co-PI on both a single E-RISE RII and E-CORE RII submission.

13. **Can an individual serve as PI or co-PI on more than one submission in the same competition?**

    No. An individual may not serve as PI or co-PI on multiple E-CORE RII or E-RISE RII submissions in the same competition or award period, but may be senior personnel on any number of E-CORE RII or E-RISE RII submissions or awards.

14. **Should E-CORE RII and E-RISE RII projects within a jurisdiction focus on the same scientific question, discipline, topic, or thematic area?**

    No. However, irrespective of a submission's scientific question, discipline, or topical area, both E-CORE RII and E-RISE RII projects must align with priorities outlined in the jurisdiction's Science and Technology plan, along with EPSCoR programmatic goals. While an E-RISE RII submission requires an integrated approach within a chosen research topic, workforce development in that research area, and the use-inspired/societal benefit components, an E-CORE RII submission requires a catalyzed focus on the entire research ecosystem in the jurisdiction. E-CORE projects should support the leveraging of a jurisdiction's ongoing research projects and networks of research teams funded by other mechanisms, including but not limited to other NSF

investments; other federal, state, and local investments; and/or investments from the private or public sector.

15. **Can a previously declined submission to an infrastructure (or other) program at NSF or another funding source be resubmitted to the E-CORE RII or E-RISE RII Programs?**

    Proposers should submit high quality proposals responsive to the E-CORE RII and E-RISE RII program solicitations or will otherwise be returned without review. The *NSF Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide* (PAPPG) provides guidance on submitting proposals to NSF that are (or previously were) under review in other funding competitions.