

MEIF SMALL CAMPUS INITIATIVE

Request For Applications (RFA) – FY 2020

OVERVIEW

In 2009, the University of Maine System created the Small Campus Initiative (SCI) to provide Maine Economic Improvement Funds to the five smaller campuses of the University of Maine System. Funds must be used in accordance with the Statutes that govern the Maine Economic Improvement Fund (MEIF).

The key component of the statutory language passed by the Legislature was as follows:

- Invest in applied research and development in the target areas within; and
- Support the development of private enterprise based upon research and development performed within the University of Maine System and Maine Maritime Academy;

The following goals were established for the program:

- Generate measurable economic benefits for the State of Maine through financing high-impact innovation projects, with an emphasis on growing good quality technology jobs;
- Encourage stronger linkages among Maine's research, development and commercialization organizations that will yield sustained gains in the future;
- Increase the level of economic activity in the State, through nurturing technology development entities here in Maine as well as attracting new activity from outside Maine.

The MEIF SCI is a competitive award program. SCI awards must be used to fund direct expenditures supporting research, development and commercialization projects that will lead to significant economic benefits in Maine. These expenses can include purchase equipment or renovate facilities to make universities eligible or competitive for federal or private-sector funding.

FY20 FUNDING CYCLE

Please read below for details. In addition, there are now two (2) separate levels of funding that may be awarded – Seed Grants and Research Grants.

ELIGIBILITY

The projects must fall within the following seven technology sectors:

- Biotechnology
- Aquaculture and Marine Technology
- Composite Materials Technology
- Environmental Technology
- Advanced Technologies for Forestry and Agriculture
- Information Technology
- Precision Manufacturing Technology

The following institutions may be the primary applicant:

- University of Maine at Augusta
- University of Maine at Farmington

- University of Maine at Fort Kent
- University of Maine at Machias
- University of Maine at Presque Isle
- Maine Maritime Academy

Any primary applicant is encouraged to collaborate with other partner organizations including non-profit research organizations and private companies. MEIF-SCI funds may be used to support partner organization expenses through sub-awards as long as all other awards criteria are met (eligible expenses, technology sectors, match, etc.) and sub-awards include necessary provisions to support intellectual property protections and commercialization. The University of Maine and the University of Southern Maine may be partners in projects, however MEIF-SCI funds may not be used to fund any expenses at these two institutions.

State agencies that carry out research or other related activities can be a collaborating partner on a project, but cannot apply for nor receive award funds.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

In FY2020, the University of Maine System has allocated approximately \$559,500 to support the Small Campus Initiative (SCI).

- I. Seed Grants
 - a. A smaller funding mechanism for faculty members who have not conducted research or have not conducted research for some time, but would like to restart a research project or collaborate with a colleague or Maine business.
 - b. Funding Level: \$25,000 - \$50,000 over a maximum of 3 (three) years. The maximum single year award for the Seed Grants may not exceed \$50,000.
 - c. Application summary

Section	Page Limit
I. Coversheet	1 page
II. Executive Summary - Clearly summarize the significance, objectives, and methods of the proposed project for a general audience. State impact on Maine's economy.	Up to 250 words
III. Scope of Work	
A. Background – Provide information necessary to understand the proposed research and technologies being developed in the project.	3 pages
B. Project Description – Clearly describe goals, impact, and feasibility of proposed research or technology specifically being catalyzed through Seed Grant funding. As much scientific and technical detail should be included in order for reviewers to make an informed evaluation of the quality of the project.	

C. Team/Institutional Merit and Commitment – Explain the experience, skills, and capability of the personnel conducting work on the project and the quality of the participating organization’s commitment to the project.	
D. Nature of Collaboration – Discuss collaborative nature of proposed project. Include discussion of linkages between research, development, and commercialization.	
E. Relevance to Maine’s Innovation Economy Needs – Describe project’s relevance to research, development or commercialization needs and opportunities identified as priorities for State of Maine; discuss why funds are needed and appropriate for this project.	
F. Economic Impact and Measurable Outcomes – Explain potential positive economic impact of proposed project. Applicants are encouraged to include data to support economic impact assertions (new jobs, new businesses, new products, etc.)	
G. Project Milestones Schedule	0.5 page
IV. Budget and Justification	Up to 1 page
V. Application Attachments	
A. Curriculum Vitae - PI	2 pages
B. Curriculum Vitae - others	2 pages/collaborator
C. Letters of Collaboration	As needed

II. Research Grants

- a. A larger funding mechanism for more advanced scientific or engineering research that would lead to significant national funding from a federal agency.
- b. Funding Level: \$100,000 - \$300,000 over a maximum of 3 (three) years. The maximum single year award for the Research Grants may not exceed \$300,000.
- c. Application summary

Section	Page Limit
I. Coversheet	1 page
II. Executive Summary - Clearly summarize the significance, objectives, and methods of the proposed project for a general audience. State impact on Maine’s economy.	Up to 250 words
III. Scope of Work	
H. Background - Provide information necessary to understand the proposed research and technologies being developed in the project.	5 pages
I. Project Description - Clearly explain how the goals and impact of the proposed research or technology to be developed are nationally competitive and will likely lead to	

additional funding. As much scientific and technical detail should be included in order for reviewers to make an informed evaluation of the quality of the project and potential for federal or other follow-on funding.	
J. Team/Institutional Merit and Commitment - Explain the experience, skills, and capability of the personnel conducting work on the project and the likelihood the project will meet its objectives. The quality of the participating organization's innovation program and record should also be described.	
K. Nature of Collaboration - Discuss collaborative nature of proposed project. Include discussion of linkages between research, development, and commercialization.	
L. Relevance to Maine's Innovation Economy Needs - Describe project's relevance to research, development or commercialization needs and opportunities identified as priorities for State of Maine; discuss why funds are needed and appropriate for this project.	
M. Economic Impact and Measurable Outcomes - Explain potential positive economic impact of proposed project. Applicants are encouraged to include data to support economic impact assertions (new jobs, new businesses, new products, etc.)	
N. Project Milestones Schedule	0.5 page
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APPLICATIONS FROM PREVIOUS ROUNDS

Current award recipients may apply in this round for different projects. Current recipients may apply for additional funding for substantially similar projects as those previous rounds where they can demonstrate a strong need and significant economic impact. Applications relating to the same project will be held to the highest standard, must have clear justification for additional funding and demonstrate significant economic impact.

APPLICATION, REVIEW, AWARD PROCESS AND TIMELINE*

The application and review process consists of the steps listed below:

<u>FY2020 Award Cycle</u>	<u>Activity</u>
Oct 28, 2019	Release of MEIF-SCI guidelines
Dec 20, 2019	Applications due
Mar 2, 2020	External reviews completed
Mar 9, 2020	Final selection
Mar 12, 2020	Award start dates

* Timeline subject to slight change, depending on volume of requests sent for review.

Final applications must comply with all the requirements of this RFA. Applications must be received **by 5:00 PM on December 20, 2019** at the University of Maine System, Chief Financial Officer, 15 Estabrooke Drive, Room 254, Orono, ME 04469 or **by email** at ryan.low@maine.edu. Late or incomplete applications will not be accepted. All applications will be subjected to an administrative review where applications will be reviewed for compliance with RFA requirements and guidelines. Applications found incomplete or not in compliance with requirements will not be reviewed. Applicants will receive acknowledgement of receipt of their application via email within two business days.

REVIEW OF PROPOSALS

All applications will undergo an independent review by AAAS or an equivalent in a standard written format. Applications will be scored and ranked according to of the criteria described in Evaluation Criteria: Scientific or Engineering Merit and Feasibility (25 points), Team and Institutional Merit and Commitment (25 points), Relevance Maine's Innovation Economy Needs (25 points) and Collaboration (25 points). Expert reviewers will be recruited from outside of Maine by AAAS. Completed reviews from AAAS will be confidential information and may be disclosed only to the applicant. All applicants will receive their written review scores and comments by mail.

The Written Review phase will conclude with a report by AAAS to the UMS of its grouping of applications as Highly Recommended, Worthy of Consideration, and Not Recommended, based on the consensus review of each application. Because any competitive application must have solid technical and scientific merit, strong institutional commitment and clear economic benefit to Maine, only the highest ranked applications will be recommended to move forward to the next stage of consideration.

AWARD CONTRACT EXECUTION

Following award notification, UMS staff will prepare the final terms of the award contract for each project. The contract may include changes to the application and/or budget due to evaluation findings or funding availability. Award recipients are expected to complete the project as described in the application as funded and as amended, and the contract will bind the award recipient to a scope of work. MEIF SCI award will be for projects of three years or less in length. All award agreements will require:

1. Reporting requirements. Reporting requirements will be finalized in the award agreement, but will include at a minimum:
 - a. Quarterly or milestone Reports including progress and economic impact measures, and milestones met
 - b. Final Reports, including financial information
 - c. Proprietary Information: If a report contains proprietary information, the information must be identified by asterisks and bold brackets on the page on which it appears.
2. Intellectual Property information. Applicant institutions must comply with the University of Maine System Policy Governing Patents and Copyrights. For awards involving partners with the primary applicants, all technology developed prior to the award will

continue to be owned by the party that developed the technology. Improvements or new inventions developed during the course of the award will continue to be owned by the discoverer/developer of the technology. In situations where another party owns the technology, the participating company may enter into a licensing agreement to use the technology. In some cases, a pre-existing ownership agreement may be in place between the parties. The existence of such an agreement must be stated in the applicant's application. In a collaboration of researchers or institutions, where intellectual property might be an issue, parties are encouraged to enter into an intellectual property agreement and indicate this in the application.

- a. Intellectual Property Plan: Where applicable, awardees are required to submit an intellectual property plan as part of the award contract process.

In addition, contracts will require, where appropriate, provisions such as, language governing human subjects and animal use, required disclosures, and changes in project personnel, team, scope, and budget.

AWARD PAYMENTS

Payments will be made upon receipt of quarterly and milestone reports and back up financial information demonstrating the use of funds as detailed in the approved application and budget. Payment will be made within 30 (thirty) days of receipt of quarterly narrative and financial reports that meet UMS's approval. Funds should be expended within 1 year, although campuses may request unspent money be carried forward.