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**Request for Pre-proposals  
for Nebraska EPSCoR  
FIRST AWARDS**

July 26, 2016

**TO:** Science and Engineering Department Chairs/Heads and Research Administrators  
(**please notify appropriate faculty**)

**FROM:** F. Fred Choobineh, Director, Nebraska EPSCoR

**RE:** Call for pre-proposals for Nebraska EPSCoR FIRST Award grant program  
**Deadline: 5:00 p.m., Monday, September 19, 2016**

Nebraska EPSCoR has created a competitive FIRST Award grant program to help Nebraska early career faculty members initiate their research programs. This program is funded by an NSF infrastructure grant to Nebraska EPSCoR. The FIRST Award grant is limited to \$25,000 for one year with a 100% matching requirement. Nebraska EPSCoR anticipates awarding approximately six grants. Each grantee is required to submit a CAREER grant proposal to the National Science Foundation (NSF) during or immediately after the end of the award period.

NSF states:

*The CAREER program embodies NSF's commitment to encourage faculty and academic institutions to value and support the integration of research and education. Successful PIs will propose creative, integrative and effective research and education plans, developed within the context of the mission, goals and resources of their organizations, and which will build a firm foundation for a lifetime of contributions to research, education and their integration.*

*All proposals must have an integrated research and education plan at their core. NSF recognizes that there is no single approach to an integrated research and education plan. Rather, these plans should reflect both the proposer's own disciplinary and educational interests and goals, as well as the needs of his or her organization. Because there may be different expectations within different disciplinary fields and/or different organizations, a wide range of research and education activities may be appropriate for the CAREER program.*

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**Who may apply:** Assistant Professors in a tenure-leading position in any college/university in the state who are: a) in the first four years of their academic career; and b) eligible to apply for an NSF CAREER grant during the award period.

**Type of eligible project:** Any project that could qualify for support by a National Science Foundation standard research grant is eligible for a FIRST Award.

**Match requirement and duration:** An award amount is limited to \$25,000 and requires a one-for-one non-federal match (cash or in-kind). *No Indirect Costs are allowed.* FIRST Awards are granted for a period of one year, starting April 1, 2017, and ending February 30, 2018.

**Approval process:** All pre-proposals will be reviewed by a grant subcommittee. The grant subcommittee will be composed of members of Nebraska's scientific community but not necessarily experts in the field of each proposal; therefore, use language that is understandable to those with general knowledge of the area. It is anticipated that approximately ten applicants will be invited to prepare an NSF CAREER-like full proposal. Each full proposal will be reviewed using NSF proposal review criteria by approximately three external experts in the field. The Nebraska EPSCoR Committee will select FIRST Award recipients.

**Pre-proposal content:** The pre-proposal must be prepared using font size 11 or greater with one inch margins. NSF CAREER proposal criteria should be followed for this pre-proposal except insofar as specifically directed otherwise by this RFP (special attachments required by NSF should not be included in the pre-proposal). The pre-proposal should consist of the following:

**1. Budget:** Attach a completed *Nebraska EPSCoR Budget and Approval Form* available from our web site at <https://epscor.nebraska.edu/forms.shtml>. In the Federal Agency/Program space on the form, you must specify the NSF program to which your CAREER proposal is intended to be submitted. The pre-proposal budget should provide an expenditure plan for the one year budget (EPSCoR funds plus match) of the FIRST Award. Faculty salary should not be part of the FIRST Award budget submitted from the state's research universities. However, it will be allowed for the state's small universities or colleges whose main focus is teaching and who have an annual institutional research expenditure of less than \$8 million. Be sure that appropriate signatures and match account numbers appear on the form. *No indirect costs are allowed.*

**2. Body of the Pre-proposal:**

- a. the *main body* of the pre-proposal. The main body, including references, may not exceed **six pages**. It should have the following:
  - i) a section describing the research,
  - ii) a section stating its significance and intellectual merit,
  - iii) a section describing the educational plan and how research and education will be integrated,
  - iv) a section addressing the planned FIRST Award activities prior to submittal of the CAREER proposal, and

- v) a budget justification section for the FIRST Award activities. Other sections may be included as necessary. Any citations should be included in the six-page limit;
- b. *CV summary*: a **two-page CV** that has been prepared according to NSF instructions and also lists the PI's current grants;
- c. a *letter of endorsement* from the appropriate department chair or dean. The letter must attest that the PI meets the necessary qualifications for the FIRST Award and describe how this grant would enhance the competitiveness of the PI. It also must demonstrate an understanding of, and a commitment to, the PI's plan for the effective integration of research and education.

**Submission:** Pre-proposals must be submitted electronically and in print.

1. The pre-proposal must be submitted electronically via the Nebraska EPSCoR web site at <http://ucommxsrvt1.unl.edu/epscor/proposal.php> no later than **5 p.m., Monday, September 19, 2016**. Note that, per web-site instructions for electronic submission, the *Budget and Approval Form* must be submitted **as one file**. The *pre-proposal body* (consisting of the *main body*, *CV summary*, and *letter of endorsement*) must be submitted also **as one file** (separate from the budget file); it is preferable that these files be submitted in PDF format.
2. The original pre-proposal, **in print and with appropriate signatures**, also must be received no later than **5 p.m., Monday, September 19, 2016**, in the Nebraska EPSCoR office at W192 Nebraska Hall, Lincoln, NE 68588-0557.

Please check with your campus Sponsored Programs Office for any requirements they have for submission of your pre-proposal to this solicitation.

Faculty selected to develop CAREER-like full proposals will be notified by early October 2016. CAREER proposals will be due in the Nebraska EPSCoR office by early December 2016. More detailed instructions will be provided to the selected faculty members.