SC-CAPS

South Carolina Collaborative Academic Pathways in STEM

SC-CAPS Equipment Development Program

SC-CAPS Solicitation Number 10-EDP2026

Proposals are due by 5:00 PM on Thursday, January 7, 2027

Introduction

The NSF EPSCoR Research Infrastructure Improvement E-CORE Award: South Carolina Collaborative Academic Pathways in STEM (SC-CAPS) aims to strengthen research capacity at South Carolina's Primarily Undergraduate Institutions (PUIs) and Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). Through investments in research infrastructure and faculty development, SC-CAPS seeks to enhance research competitiveness, expand STEM opportunities, increase external funding success, and support student engagement in research, contributing to South Carolina's research and workforce development.

The goal of the SC-CAPS Equipment Development Program is to assist in strengthening the research capacity at South Carolina's PUIs and HBCUs by providing funds to support the purchase of research equipment that expands STEM opportunity and contributes to the state's research and workforce competitiveness. **The equipment may have dual (research and teaching) use but must be used primarily for research.** For this program, equipment means tangible personal property having a useful life of more than one year and a per unit acquisition cost that equals or exceeds the lesser of the institution's capitalization level or $10,000, consistent with 2 CFR 200.1. In addition, this program requires that the requested equipment has an expected useful life of at least five years.

The acquisition cost that can be requested under this solicitation must not be less than $10,000 or more than $35,000. If the requested equipment costs more than $35,000, the institution must pay the balance, as described below under Proposal Content, item 8. The main deliverable of an award is the installation of the new equipment.

Proposals must focus on equipment that supports SC-CAPS vision of building a sustainable, connected statewide research and education ecosystem that strengthens the research capacity of South Carolina's PUIs and HBCUs, expands STEM opportunity, and contributes to the state's research and workforce competitiveness.

Award Information

Funding Amount Per Award:

- Proposals can request no less than $10,000 and no more than $35,000.

- Only one piece of equipment may be requested.
- Awards will reimburse actual allowable costs for the approved equipment, up to the awarded amount.
- For equipment that costs more than $35,000, a signed letter from the unit head(s) confirming that the institution will pay the balance must be included in the proposal. Institutional funds used to cover equipment costs exceeding the maximum SC-CAPS award amount are not required or reported as cost sharing under this program. See Proposal Content, item 8.

Award Period: February 7, 2027 - July 31, 2027

Maximum Number of Proposals per Institution: Two (2)

Number of Awards: Depends on quality of proposals and availability of funds.

Award Mechanism: Awards will be issued as cost reimbursement subawards under NSF Award OIA-2539219.

Who May Apply?

Tenured or tenure-track faculty from any South Carolina PUI or HBCU are eligible to serve as PIs and Co-PIs on proposals.

Deadline

Full Proposals are due by 5:00 PM on Thursday, January 7, 2027.

Proposal Content

The sections below represent the body of the proposal. Failure to submit the required sections and information will result in the proposal being declined.

1. **Proposal Cover (**2 Pages**)**

   Use the Proposal Cover form in Appendix A. This form must be signed.

2. **Letter from the Administration**

   Submit letter from the administration (provost or vice president for research level) indicating that the PI (and the equipment being proposed) has been selected to apply for the SC-CAPS Equipment Development Program.

3. **Project Description (**Not to Exceed 5 Pages**)**

   The following sections must be included:

   a. Introduction. A brief introduction may be used to provide an overall summary/overview of the proposal.

b. Equipment Identification. This section should include the name of the equipment, a brief description of the function of the equipment, what the equipment is used for, and any other identifiers (including a photo).

c. Description of Use and Impact. Describe the research, training, and other activities that will be made possible by the acquisition of the equipment. Explain how these activities will affect the productivity and competitiveness of the researchers and students who will use the equipment.

d. Alignment. Describe how the use of the equipment will enhance the research capacity of the institution and how it is aligned with the institution's research goals.

e. Equipment Location, operation, and maintenance. Explain where the equipment will be housed (department, building, and room), how it will be operated and maintained over its lifetime, and how the maintenance costs will be covered.

f. Equipment Users. Outline who will have access to the equipment and plans for sharing it among departments, centers, institutes, schools, and colleges, as appropriate.

g. Existing Relevant Equipment. Discuss whether similar equipment is currently available at the institution. If so, justify the need for the new equipment.

4. Biographical Sketches

A biographical sketch is required for the PI and Co-PI(s) in NSF format, prepared using SciENcv and must be certified within 60 days of proposal submission. For more information on the NSF format and certification, visit https://new.nsf.gov/funding/senior-personnel-documents#biographical-sketch-0bd.

5. Budget

Use the Budget form in Appendix B. The budget form must be signed by an institutional representative.

Allowable Costs

- Equipment acquisition
- Shipping and handling
- If applicable, software costs that are required to operate the equipment, when it is capitalized as part of the equipment's acquisition cost under the institution's policy
- If applicable, initial company technical support for setup.
- Taxes, unless the institution is exempt.
- All allowable costs must be part of the equipment's acquisition cost under the institution's capitalization policy and must be allowable under 2 CFR 200, Subpart E.

Costs not Supported with SC-CAPS Funds

- Equipment cost for the amount above $35,000 (must be paid by the institution)
- Service agreements
- Expenses for technical staff
- Facility upgrades required to house or operate the equipment
- Salary
- Materials and supplies
- Travel requests
- Indirect cost

6. Budget Justification

The budget justification must be composed of no more than two pages. The budget justification must also identify the source and amount of any funds the institution will use to pay costs above the award amount.

7. Vendor Quote(s)

- Provide three (3) vendor quotes for the equipment being requested.
- If the vendor quote is a sole-source quote, provide approval of the justification for a sole-source quote by the PI's institution. This replaces the requirement of three quotes.
- All quotes must only include those items allowed as listed under the Budget section (see 5 above). Purchases made under an award must follow the institution's procurement policies and procedures, consistent with 2 CFR 200.317 through 200.327.
- Funds may not be used to purchase equipment, systems, or services that use covered telecommunications or video surveillance equipment (including products of Huawei, ZTE, Hikvision, Dahua, Hytera, or their subsidiaries), per 2 CFR 200.216
- Quotes must include the vendor's estimated delivery time assuming the order is placed on April 1, 2027. Equipment that cannot be delivered, installed, operational, paid for, and SC-CAPS invoiced by July 31, 2027, is not eligible.

8. Documentation of Institutional Funds for Costs Above $35,000

- If the equipment costs more than $35,000, provide a signed letter from the source(s) of the institutional funds confirming that the institution will pay the balance.
- If the equipment cost is not above $35,000, upload a document for this section with the following statement: "No additional funds will be required for this equipment."

9. **Letter of Support**

   Provide a letter of support from the head of the unit that will house the equipment. The letter should include where the equipment will be housed, a commitment to allow access and use of the equipment as identified in the proposal, and a commitment to support maintenance costs after equipment installation.

Budget Information

- The total budget requested must be between $10,000 and $35,000 per proposal. This does not include any institutional funds used to pay costs above $35,000.
- The program is a cost-reimbursement program and SC-CAPS will reimburse paid expenses **NOT** incurred expenses.
- This program is supported through federal funds provided under NSF Award OIA-2539219. Allowable items for this solicitation will be limited to research equipment and apparatus not already available at the proposer's institution for the conduct of research.

Submission Instructions

Proposals must be submitted using **https://scepscor.inforeadv4.com/**.

Proposal Review Process

The proposal review process involves two stages. The first stage is administrative review to ensure proposals that advance to the next stage are compliant with all aspects of this solicitation. Proposals that are not compliant with all aspects of this solicitation will be declined. A proposal may be declined for missing signatures, missing information, missing sections, inaccurately uploaded PDFs, etc.

The second stage of the review process is conducted by external reviewers from outside South Carolina and involves an assessment of the proposal content and how the proposal addresses the following criteria (not in any order):

- Potential impact of the proposed equipment on institutional research capacity, faculty and student research opportunities, external funding competitiveness, and the broader research and workforce development goals of South Carolina
- Space, operation, and maintenance plan for the equipment
- Vendor quotes

Award and Reporting Requirements

- No-cost extensions will only be considered in extraordinary circumstances.
- The approved equipment must be ordered no later than April 1, 2027, and received, installed, operational, paid for, and SC-CAPS invoiced by July 31, 2027.

- A final report will be due no later than 60 days after the end of the award. More details will be included in the award documents.
- All publications (e.g., research publications, press releases, other publications or documents about the equipment funded by SC-CAPS) and presentations resulting from the SC-CAPS Equipment Development Program are required to include an acknowledgement of NSF and SC-CAPS support and a disclaimer: "This material is based upon work supported by the U.S. National Science Foundation under award OIA- 2539219." Materials other than scientific journal articles or papers must also include the NSF logo and the following disclaimer: "Any opinions, findings and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. National Science Foundation."
- The equipment will belong to the awardee institution, subject to applicable federal property requirements under 2 CFR 200.313 and NSF award conditions. The institution must maintain appropriate property records, conduct physical inventories at least every two years, and comply with applicable federal requirements regarding equipment use, management, and disposition. Institutions must contact SCRA/SC EPSCoR before transferring, selling, or disposing of equipment when required by the subaward terms and applicable federal regulations.
- SCRA/SC EPSCoR reserves the right to conduct site visits during the project period for evaluation and reporting purposes. Awardees are expected to provide required information and documentation to the SC-CAPS Program staff as needed.

Contact Information

General inquiries should be made to:

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