

# NASA KENTUCKY FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions about NASA KY  
Space Grant Consortium & EPSCoR Programs



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*NASA Kentucky Space Grant Consortium and EPSCoR Program partners with NASA to provide faculty and student opportunities, increase research capacity, and enhance workforce development statewide*

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## 1 – GENERAL QUESTIONS

### All Programs

#### 1. What is the mission of NASA Kentucky?

NASA Kentucky consists of two primary programs – NASA Space Grant and NASA EPSCoR (Established Program to Stimulate Competitive Research). [NASA Space Grant](#) is a workforce development grant program primarily focused on NASA-related opportunities for college students in the state. [NASA EPSCoR](#) is a research development grant program focused on supporting NASA-related research of early-career faculty within Kentucky and enhancing the state’s aerospace-related research infrastructure. Both programs are Federally funded with co-funding from the state of Kentucky and in-kind commitments from participating institutions. Requirements for eligibility vary significantly between the two programs (see below).

#### 2. As a researcher, how do I find a NASA Collaborator if I do not already have one?

The best way for a researcher to find a potential NASA collaborator is to survey conference or journal papers authored by NASA researchers in your area. Emailing or calling them to inquire about their research will introduce your related interests and can lead to possible collaboration or the support letter you need for a submission. Contacting them may also lead to productive referrals.

Another approach is to visit the NASA research announcement system (NSPIRES) and enter keywords from your research area to find NASA technical researchers who share similar interests. Again, when talking to NASA researchers – if the topic is not their particular area – they may recommend others who are more aligned with your work.

Each NASA Center has a University Affairs Officer (UAO) who is available to help connect faculty with NASA researchers. Descriptions of NASA Centers, their research areas and points of contact are available on the [NASA KY Space Grant](#) and [EPSCoR](#) webpages.

With an invitation to visit, Kentucky faculty can apply for a NASA Kentucky EPSCoR Research Faculty Travel award to visit a NASA facility and meet potential collaborators.

#### 3. As a Kentucky college student, how do I get involved?

Visit the NASA Kentucky [Space Grant Consortium](#) web page to determine the Affiliate Representative from your school and contact them for more information.

Review our website’s project list for faculty at your institution who have received NASA Kentucky awards and contact them for more information about their projects. Apply for NASA internships and additional student opportunities listed on our website.

#### 4. I am a Kentucky student interested in submitting a proposal for a Space Grant award. How do I do this?

Proposals for student awards are submitted by a faculty member from your school who will mentor/advise the student. The faculty mentor and the student will need to work together to assemble the required proposal package.

#### 5. How does my institution become an Affiliate of the NASA Kentucky Space Grant Consortium?

Kentucky entities interested in becoming Affiliates should contact NASA Kentucky. Eligible organizations include Kentucky institutions of higher learning (e.g., colleges, universities, and community colleges) as well as non-profits (e.g., museums, planetariums) and industry.

#### 6. What are NASA’s objectives for the Space Grant and EPSCoR Programs?

***NASA Space Grant national program objectives:***

- Establish and maintain a national network of universities with interests and capabilities in aeronautics, space and related fields.

- Encourage cooperative programs among universities, aerospace industry, and Federal, state and local governments.
- Encourage interdisciplinary training, research and public service programs related to aerospace.
- Recruit and train U.S. citizens, especially women, underrepresented minorities, and persons with disabilities, for careers in aerospace science and technology.
- Promote a strong science, technology, engineering, and mathematics education base from elementary through secondary levels while preparing teachers in these grade levels to become more effective at improving student academic outcomes.

***NASA EPSCoR national program objectives:***

- Contribute to and promote the development of research infrastructure in NASA EPSCoR jurisdictions in areas of strategic importance to the NASA mission.
- Improve the capabilities of the jurisdictions to gain support from sources outside the NASA EPSCoR program.
- Develop partnerships among NASA research assets, academic institutions, commercial space programs, and industry.
- Contribute to the overall research infrastructure, science and technology capabilities of higher education, and/or economic development of the jurisdiction.

## 2 – ELIGIBILITY

### Space Grant

#### **7. Are non-US citizens or Permanent Residents eligible for Space Grant funding?**

Funding from certain Space Grant programs requires US citizenship. NASA requires US citizenship for students receiving support under NASA KY GF and REU awards. Non-US citizens employed by Kentucky institutions may contribute cost-share on all NASA KY programs.

#### **8. Does my institution need to be an Affiliate of the NASA Kentucky Space Grant Consortium in order to submit a Space Grant proposal?**

Yes, your institution must be an affiliate member or partnered with an affiliate member to submit NASA Kentucky Space Grant proposals. The list of Consortium members is available on our website.

### EPSCoR

#### **9. Are non-US citizens or Permanent Residents eligible for NASA EPSCoR funding?**

Yes

#### **10. Does my institution need to be an Affiliate of the NASA Kentucky Space Grant Consortium in order to submit a NASA EPSCoR proposal?**

No, faculty at any higher education institution in the state of Kentucky can submit proposals to NASA Kentucky EPSCoR programs. Space Grant Consortium membership is not required for NASA EPSCoR programs.

## 3 – PROPOSALS

### All Programs

#### **11. What is the difference between a letter of endorsement and a letter of support from a NASA Collaborator?**

A letter of support from a NASA collaborator should include 1) a substantive commitment to participate in the proposed research project; 2) specific plans for regular communications; and 3) an invitation to visit the NASA center or facility or to meet at a conference.

Note: Letters of affirmation or endorsement – *“I am familiar with the Professor’s work and I think the proposed research is a great idea”* – are insufficient for NASA programs or for NASA KY programs that require a letter of support. Letters that express only affirmation may be counted against the page limitations of a proposal.

**12. How do we know which research topics are aligned with a particular Mission Directorate (MD)?**

Descriptions of the Mission Directorates and their areas of focus are available on the NASA KY [Space Grant](#) and [EPSCoR](#) webpages. Review each description and identify the NASA MD umbrella that includes the proposed research area. Research topics do not need to be aligned with a specific NASA mission or project.

**Space Grant**

**13. Is a letter from a NASA Collaborator required for a GF proposal?**

Yes, see above for description of a letter of support. A primary goal of all NASA Kentucky programs is to establish connections with NASA researchers. The graduate student fellowship proposal should include a plan to visit your collaborator at NASA or at a conference to discuss the project. The letter you include from them will confirm their interest in the research and commitment to such a visit/meeting.

**14. Is there a Space Grant Abstract word count limit?**

200-300 words.

**15. The RFP lists NASA KY Space Grant strategic themes and NASA areas of emphasis. Should submissions address how they will be aligned with these?**

The strategic themes and current areas of emphasis are provided as additional information, not requirements. Discussion of how the proposed activities align with these themes will strengthen a proposal and make it more competitive for selection (if the fit is naturally occurring as opposed to a forced fit).

**16. What type of projects are appropriate for a Mini-Grant?**

The Mini-Grant category is meant to be broad enough to cover many types of proposals, including teacher workshops and recruiting activities for higher education or STEM. For example, bringing a group of teachers and students to campus or to a NASA-related scientific site. Involve institution recruiters as needed. Another example might be an observatory upgrade combined with an outreach program. Current NASA emphasis is on reaching middle school students and teachers, but any K-12 outreach is eligible.

**EPSCoR**

**17. Is it allowable under NASA EPSCoR programs to have Co-PIs from other states?**

Co-PIs from outside Kentucky are allowed, as long as the project is primarily building the research capability of Kentucky, i.e. increasing the state's expertise to be competitive for future funding. Proposals that keep the majority of the funding inside the jurisdiction (KY) are more competitive.

**4 – BUDGETING**

**All Programs**

**18. What types of expenses are allowed?**

NASA Kentucky awards cover typical grant expenses such as personnel, travel, materials and supplies, and tuition. General restrictions include: no equipment on Space Grant or EPSCoR RIDG, domestic travel only, and cost-share must be from non-Federal sources. See RFP guidelines and Budget Form for details on specific programs. Please contact NASA KY with budget related questions: [nasa@uky.edu](mailto:nasa@uky.edu)

**19. What indirect cost rate will these grants allow?**

Please refer to the specific NASA KY RFP for guidance on indirect rates. PIs may negotiate reduced indirect costs with their institution and use any unrecovered portion of the full rate as cost-share. Indirect costs are not allowed on awards assigned for state funding, however, in this event, unless other overriding conditions exist, institutions may use unrecovered indirect costs on sub-recipient direct cost-share as cost-share. Indirect costs are not allowed on Space Grant fellowship programs – GF, REU (see #22 below).

## **20. Are pre-award costs allowed?**

Pre-award costs are possible, but are not automatic and must receive approval from NASA KY. Pre-award costs up to 90 days must be requested in advance and approved by the NASA Kentucky Director prior to the start of any pre-award expenditures. Institutions that incur pre-award costs/expenses are responsible for all costs/expenses if the proposal is not selected or if pre-award requests are not approved.

## **21. Does a match of 0.5:1 mean NASA Kentucky will fund \$0.50 for every \$1.00 my institution provides, or vice versa?**

0.5:1 (\$CS:\$Award) means that \$0.50 of cost-share (non-Federal funds, in-kind, etc.) will be provided by the proposing institution for every \$1.00 of funding awarded.

## **Space Grant**

### **22. Are any indirect costs allowed on student fellowship programs: GF, REU?**

Indirect costs are not allowed for Space Grant student fellowship programs. For these programs, the indirect costs are precluded by NASA and they may not be used as match by the sub-projects. However, unrecovered indirect costs on sub-recipient direct cost-share may be used as cost-share.

### **23. What if the GF fellowship is insufficient to include tuition and the usual annual PhD candidate stipend at my institution?**

An option would be to support the student for less than 12 months. Total GF funding from NASA KY may not exceed \$45,000.

### **24. Is equipment not allowed on any Space Grant programs as direct cost or cost share?**

Equipment is not allowed as direct cost on any Space Grant programs. It is possible that equipment could be used as cost share with prior approval from NASA KY. Submitted proposals must be consistent with the PI institution's policies and practices. PIs are encouraged to consult with their institution's research organization to determine the institution's definition of equipment vs materials/supplies.

## **5 – AWARDS**

### **All Programs**

### **25. How do I acknowledge NASA KY support on publications, posters and presentations?**

Determine your award year and please use the acknowledgement suggested below:

NASA KY Space Grant 2020-2024 (GF, REU, TP, RIA, MG, EMG): "The material is based upon work supported by NASA Kentucky under NASA award No: 80NSSC20M0047."

NASA KY Space Grant 2015-2020 (GF, UF, TF, RIA, MG, EMG): "The material is based upon work supported by NASA Kentucky under NASA award No: NNX15AR69H."

NASA KY Space Grant 2011-2015 (GF, US, TP, RIA, CDR, MG): "The material is based upon work supported by NASA Kentucky under NASA award No: NNX10AL96H."

NASA KY EPSCoR 2019-2021 (RIDG, WCS): "The material is based upon work supported by NASA Kentucky under NASA award No: 80NSSC19M0052."

NASA KY EPSCoR 2016-2019 (RIDG, WCS): "The material is based upon work supported by NASA Kentucky under NASA award No: NNX15AK28A."

NASA KY EPSCoR 2013-2015 (RIDG, WCS): "The material is based upon work supported by NASA Kentucky under NASA award No: NNX13AB12A."

NASA KY EPSCoR 2011-2012 (RIDG, WCS): "The material is based upon work supported by NASA Kentucky under NASA award No: NNX10AV39A."

## **26. How do I request a No Cost Extension (NCE) for my NASA KY grant?**

No-cost extensions for NASA Kentucky awards are not automatic. Requests for extensions must be received *no later than 30 days prior to the current end date* of the award. Requests must include detail of the programmatic justification for an extension:

- 1) Delays that prevented completion of the planned effort on time, along with a plan for completion; or
- 2) Details of new opportunities that can be realized by adding additional scope, along with a plan for completion.

*While having remaining funds may be necessary for an NCE, this alone is never a sufficient or appropriate justification for requesting a No-Cost Extension.*

Requests may be submitted via email to [nasa@uky.edu](mailto:nasa@uky.edu)

Note that the overarching goals of NASA Kentucky programs are to establish and build relationships with NASA partners and to train students and faculty for research supporting NASA's and Kentucky's priorities. Details of progress toward these goals are also important to include in any request for extension.

## **27. How do I request a re-budget of the funding categories for my NASA KY grant?**

Please contact NASA KY with any re-budget questions or requests at [nasa@uky.edu](mailto:nasa@uky.edu). PIs have flexibility to re-budget minor amounts without prior approval from NASA KY as needs of the project develop provided that the total budget still meets the budget guidelines described in the corresponding RFP. GF and REU grants are awarded for a specific student and may not be re-budgeted to reduce support for the student (for example increasing faculty support) or to support a different student.

## **28. How are renewal proposals processed?**

Current projects may be accepted for a renewal period and additional funding via the annual KYSGC RFP. This additional funding may be applied to their current funding account or subaward.

## **6 – NASA EPSCoR RESEARCH AWARD PROGRAM**

### **EPSCoR**

NASA EPSCoR RAs are chosen through a competitive review and selection process conducted by the national NASA EPSCoR office. First, pre-proposal selections are conducted within the state by NASA Kentucky using a process that mirrors the national selection approach. Once a candidate is selected, a proposal to the national program is then developed jointly by NASA Kentucky and the selected PI.

### **1. Would a project based around XYZ be viable as a pre-proposal to the NASA EPSCoR RA?**

Any research topic for an RA proposal is allowed as long as it is a priority to NASA and the PI already has a strong relationship with a NASA collaborator. Without an existing collaboration, it would be better to propose a NASA KY GF, RIA, or RIDG to build the partnership for a future RA pre-proposal submission.

### **2. Can we have multiple NASA researchers included in the pre-proposals? Does it give us any advantage?**

Yes, multiple NASA researchers can be included. Any advantage is in their relationship to strengthening and accomplishing the technical objectives, not in the number of collaborators.

### **3. Does NASA have additional guidelines regarding letters of support for the EPSCoR RA program?**

Proposers should refer to the current (or immediate past version, if prior to current release) NASA EPSCoR RA RFP and the current NASA Guidebook for Proposers.

From the *NASA EPSCoR RA RFP*: Statements of commitment and letters of support are important components of the proposal. NASA does not, however, solicit or evaluate letters of endorsement. Review the NASA Guidebook for Proposers for distinctions among statements of commitment, letters of support, and letters of endorsement.

From *NASA Guidebook for Proposers*: Letters of support do not include “letters of affirmation” (i.e., letters that endorse the value or merit of a proposal). NASA neither solicits nor evaluates such endorsements for proposals. The value of a proposal is determined by peer review. If endorsements are submitted, they may not be submitted as an appendix. They must be included as part of the proposal and must be included within the required page limitations even though they will not be considered in the evaluation of the proposal.

**4. The RA pre-proposal guidelines ask us to include info on prior NASA EPSCoR Research Support. Does this include NASA Kentucky EPSCoR funding (rather than the national NASA EPSCoR funds) as well?**

Yes.

**5. Under the RA 10-page limit, PIs are asked to provide info on “Partnerships and Interactions” and then on “Additional Pages” we are asked to provide “Team Management Summary” up to 2 pages. What is the difference? Can the first just be included in the second under additional pages?**

Partnerships and interactions are with your NASA collaborators, industry collaborators, PI, and Co-PIs. Team Management is how the work will be organized and coordinated among all team members including subawardees, subcontractors, staff, students, collaborators, etc.

**6. As stated in the RFP, we are not initially going to provide a detailed numerical approved budget for the RA pre-proposal. Instead, we will provide a budget narrative. Would you like to see any rough numbers in the budget narrative anyway?**

Rough numbers are helpful but not necessary to submit with the pre-proposal. The budget narrative should give reviewers enough information to decide if the proposed scope of work and budget allocations are reasonable within the total budget. Detailed budgets should be developed for the full budget proposal submission deadline. There will be opportunity to refine the budget again after the pre-proposal candidate is selected to be submitted to the national competition.

**7. What counts as equipment?**

Submitted proposals must be consistent with the PI institution’s policies and practices. PIs are encouraged to consult with their institution’s research organization to determine the institution’s definition of equipment vs materials/supplies.

**8. Does the \$3000 international travel limit include subawardee travel?**

The \$3K limit is for the entire award, therefore it includes the subawardees.

**9. Are international subawards allowed?**

International subawards are allowed for services (vendors). International subawards may not perform the proposed research.

**10. Is the KY Statewide EPSCoR Committee providing matching funds for RA proposals?**

The Statewide EPSCoR Committee typically allocates funds to match the NASA EPSCoR Research Area projects, should projects be selected by NASA. This may vary from year to year, so please consult the NASA Kentucky RFP for specifics. For the pre-proposal, Science-PIs can assume the following as a basis to construct their budget:

1) State match for the research portion of the award that provides a three-year total of \$225K. Note that these funds are awarded excluding indirect costs, so you should also include, as match, uncollected indirect costs associated with this element of cost-sharing. If the Science-PI institution’s F&A rate is 50%, then \$225K state match + 50% (of 225K) unrecovered indirect = \$337,500.

2) Federal funds totaling \$675K over 3 years including applicant’s full indirect costs. Unequal yearly allocations are allowable.



7 – APPENDIX: NASA KENTUCKY PROPOSAL REVIEW MATRIX

**NASA Kentucky Proposal Review Matrix**

NASA Kentucky Proposal Rating	NASA Summary Scores – Announcement of Opportunity (AO)		NSF Ratings (for comparison)
	Scientific and Implementation Merit	Technical Merit and Feasibility, including Cost Risk	
<b>Definitely Fund</b>  5	<b>Excellent</b> - A comprehensive, thorough, and compelling proposal of exceptional merit that fully responds to the objectives of the AO as documented by numerous and/or significant strengths and having no major weaknesses.	<b>Low Risk</b> – There are no problems evident in the proposal that cannot be normally solved within the time and cost proposed. Problems are not of sufficient magnitude to doubt the Proposer’s capability to accomplish the investigation well within the available resources.	<b>Excellent</b> – Outstanding proposal in all respects; deserves highest priority for support
<b>Fund if Possible</b>  4	<b>Very Good</b> - A fully competent proposal of very high merit that fully responds to the objectives of the AO, whose strengths fully outbalance any weaknesses.	<b>Medium Risk</b> – Problems have been identified, but are considered within the proposal team’s capabilities to correct within available resources with good management and application of effective engineering resources. Mission design may be complex and resources tight.	<b>Very Good</b> – High quality proposal in nearly all respects; should be supported if at all possible
	<b>3</b>  <b>Good</b> - A competent proposal that represents a credible response to the AO, having neither significant strengths nor weakness and/or whose strengths and weaknesses essentially balance.		<b>Good</b> – A quality proposal; worthy of support
<b>Do Not Fund</b>  2	<b>Fair</b> - A proposal that provides a nominal response to the AO, but whose weaknesses outweigh any perceived strengths.	<b>High Risk</b> – One or more problems are of sufficient magnitude and complexity as to be deemed unsolvable within the available resources.	<b>Fair</b> – Proposal lacking in one or more critical aspects; key issues need to be addressed
	<b>1</b>  <b>Poor</b> - A seriously flawed proposal having one or more major weaknesses (e.g., an inadequate or flawed plan of research or lack of focus on the objectives of the AO).		<b>Poor</b> – Proposal has serious deficiencies