Graduate Student Supplements (GRASS)

Recruiting and Retaining Outstanding Graduate Students in STEM Disciplines

Request for Proposals

DEADLINE DATES:

RFP ISSUE DATE: (**August 26, 2025)**

Last day for questions and answers about this RFP: **(September 22, 2025)**

Proposals due: (**October 27, 2025, 4:30 PM Central Time)**

LOUISIANA ESTABLISHED PROGRAM TO STIMULATE COMPETITIVE RESEARCH (EPSCoR)

Sponsored By:
The National Science Foundation and the Louisiana Board of Regents

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Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70802

(225) 342-4253

www.laregents.org

A. Program Overview

This funding opportunity is made possible through the *Louisiana Networks of Excellence for Tomorrow* (**LA-NEXT**) project funded by the US National Science Foundation's EPSCoR Collaborations for Optimizing Research Ecosystems (E-CORE) program through a four-year (2025-2029) grant to the Louisiana Board of Regents. The Graduate Student Supplement (GRASS) program will be administered through the BoR's Office of Research and Sponsored Initiatives and will operate under the guidance of the State's EPSCoR Committee.

The GRASS program seeks to contribute to the LA-NEXT vision (see Section A.1) by supplementing the funding provided to outstanding graduate students to conduct supervised research in STEM disciplines aligned with the State Science & Technology (S&T) plan, *FIRST Louisiana,* under the mentorship of a faculty member at one of the four-year institutions of higher education in Louisiana.

A.1. Louisiana Networks of Excellence for Tomorrow (LA-NEXT) Overview

The vision of **LA-NEXT** is to build and sustain strong networks of collaboration, communication, and partnership among the diverse institutions of higher education in the jurisdiction, thus transforming the STEM R&D enterprise of the State. These networks of excellence will extend to K-12 institutions and for-profit, non-profit, academic, and non-academic entities, resulting in a highly diverse research and education environment that will accelerate innovation and enhance economic development in Louisiana. This initiative is a realization of the framework laid out in the State Science & Technology (S&T) plan, *FIRST Louisiana*. *FIRST Louisiana* provides a comprehensive statewide approach to science and technology research, development, and innovation, and is a roadmap for future investments in the State. LA-NEXT is led by the Louisiana Board of Regents, which houses the Louisiana EPSCoR office and coordinates all public institutions of higher education in the State.

B. General Information

B.1 GRASS Goals

- Recruit and retain outstanding graduate students to pursue advanced degrees in STEM disciplines in Louisiana;
- Enhance the productivity and competitiveness of new tenure-track hires for federal grants by engaging superior graduate students in research; and
- Contribute to the State's workforce with advanced education and training in strategically important disciplines as outlined in Louisiana's S&T plan.

B.2 Eligibility

Students: Graduate students pursuing advanced degrees in STEM disciplines aligned with the *FIRST Louisiana* S&T plan are eligible to receive the supplements. Preference will be given to students in PhD programs.

Faculty Mentor (PI): The mentor, who is also the PI for the supplement, must hold a tenure-track or tenured faculty position at a four-year Louisiana public institution of higher education that offers graduate degrees in STEM disciplines. Preference will be given to new faculty members (in the first two years of their appointment).

Students and Faculty Mentors must be from the same institution. To maximize the statewide impact of the supplements, each PI is limited to 1 application.

Eligible Disciplines are those STEM fields that are aligned with the State S&T plan priority areas. For more information about the science and engineering disciplines that are identified as priority areas in FIRST Louisiana, please visit: State Science & Technology (S&T) plan.

B.3 Award Information

Students who hold fellowships with no work requirements are not eligible to receive these supplements. It is not the purpose of these funds to support students already fully funded by another federal/state agency.

It is expected that the recipients will not be assigned teaching duties so that their work hours can be devoted entirely to conducting research under the guidance of the mentor. The supplements are limited to $10,000 per year. An accomplishment-based renewal is possible in subsequent years. Up to $2,000 of the supplement may be used for the student to attend conferences or workshops which will enhance the student's learning experience and preparation for conducting research. Funds not allocated for travel must go directly to augment the compensation of the graduate student. Foreign travel and the purchase of equipment are not allowable expenses under this program. GRASS funds may not be used to cover tuition and fees, but it is expected that a competitive compensation package for the student—whether from institutional or grant funds—will include funds to cover tuition and fees. Institutions are encouraged to waive F&A costs to maximize the impact of the supplement.

The funds will be made available to the faculty mentor's institution as a subcontract. While the faculty mentor will be the PI on the contract, the graduate student will be identified as the recipient of the funds. The student must pursue their graduate degree on a full-time basis and be registered for each term during the proposed period of performance. If the approved student is unable to fulfill these requirements, the supplement is not transferrable to another student.

B.4 Performance Period

The performance period for GRASS is anticipated to be January 1, 2026 – December 31, 2026.

B.5 Renewal

The PI may apply for accomplishment-based renewal of the supplement in subsequent years.

B.6 Student Responsibilities

- Dedicate a level of effort consistent with no less than 20 hours per week of work dedicated to the research project.
- Participate in seminars, workshops, discussion groups, and other activities as required by the Faculty Mentor.
- Complete the graduate student reporting modules when requested, for program evaluation purposes and reporting to NSF.

B.7 Mentor Responsibilities

- Assist the student in defining project goals, timeline, and structure.
- Communicate expectations to the student regarding work hours, laboratory protocols, and evaluation of the student's performance.
- Meet with the student regularly to discuss progress and offer suggestions, feedback, and constructive criticism.
- Complete faculty report modules when requested, for program evaluation purposes and reporting to NSF.
- All presentations and publications resulting from GRASS should acknowledge the NSF support using the following statement:
    - This research was funded in part by U.S. National Science Foundation under Grant Number OIA-2437963 and Louisiana Board of Regents.

B.8 Proposal Structure

The following proposal requirements must be followed closely. Proposals that do not adhere to all of these guidelines and stipulations will be disqualified. All sections of the proposal must be formatted to a standard 8-1/2" x 11" page; all pages are to be numbered consecutively and have 1-inch top, bottom, and side margins.

Cover page and Student Information

The faculty mentor must be the PI on the GRASS application. Please use the forms provided.

Project Summary (250 words max.)

Project Description (2-page max.)

a. Outline of the proposed research topic, and its alignment with the State S&T plan.
b. Provide a description of the graduate student's background, accomplishments, anticipated graduation date, and future plans.
c. Anticipated deliverables in the 12-month period.

Budget and Budget Justification
A separate budget and budget justification must be completed by both the PI and mentor. Please use the budget form provided.

Biographical Sketch of the Principal Investigator
Biographical sketches of the PI could be submitted using the provided form, not to exceed two pages. The NSF (ScienCV) or NASA Biosketch forms are also acceptable. If one of these biosketches is used, the mentor should also provide a Current & Pending Support form.

C. Proposal Submission

All online submissions must be uploaded as a single PDF through the LOGAN system. Paper originals or copies will not be accepted. The submission system will automatically close at 4:30 p.m. Central on the deadline date.

After the applicant (i.e., faculty mentor) submits the completed proposal to his/her campus' OSP, Institutional Advancement, or Grants Office via LOGAN, confirmation of receipt of the electronic proposal will be e-mailed to the applicant and to the campus. If the confirmation email is not received within 12 hours, the application was not accepted into LOGAN. Please contact the LA EPSCoR office by phone at (225) 342-4253 or by email at rsi@laregents.edu.

NOTE: The PI is responsible for ensuring that the proposal is complete and correct upon submission to the Board, and no changes may be made to any proposal after the submission deadline. Disqualification of a proposal and/or any reviewer misunderstandings that occur because proposal contents (including all required forms) are incomplete, out of order, or contain incorrect information are solely the responsibility of the applicant.

The GRASS proposal must be submitted to the Board of Regents electronically by the authorized institutional representative (i.e., office of sponsored programs or office of sponsored research) of the mentoring faculty member's institution. Electronic submission by the authorized representative will signify institutional approval of the proposal and acceptance of the requirements outlined in this RFP.

D. Reporting and Evaluation

At the conclusion of the year, the principal investigator shall submit the GRASS final report via the Board of Regents' LOGAN system and must respond to the request within 30 days. PI and/or student may also be required to respond to brief evaluation surveys for reporting purposes to NSF. Failure to respond timely to all reporting and evaluation requests may result in declination of future proposals.

E. Questions about this RFP

Specific questions concerning this RFP and the requirements set forth herein should be directed **in writing** to jessica.patton@laregents.edu. Questions will be accepted and answered through **September 22, 2025**. A running compilation of all questions asked about this RFP and all answers provided in response to those questions will be periodically posted on the BoR website at https://rsi.laregents.edu.

GRASS Cover Page

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR (PI) NAME:	EMAIL ADDRESS:
PI RANK:	☐ TENURED FACULTY ☐ TENURE-TRACK FACULTY
INSTITUTION:	DEPARTMENT:
STUDENT NAME:	EMAIL ADDRESS:
STUDENT DEGREE PURSUED AND CLASSIFICATION (YEAR):	
TITLE OF PROJECT:	
RELEVANT *FIRST LOUISIANA 2030* PRIORITY AREAS (Check all that apply): ☐ Advanced Manufacturing ☐ Agriculture & Forestry ☐ Biomedical ☐ Cybersecurity ☐ Coastal Restoration ☐ Energy ☐ Resilience & Disaster Recovery ☐ Structural Integrity Assurance	
PROJECT SUMMARY (250 WORDS MAX):	

Student Information Form

Last Name:

First Name:

Academic Information:

Undergraduate Institution:

Undergraduate Major/Minor:

Date of Graduation (Month/Year):

Undergraduate cumulative GPA (out of 4.00):

Graduate cumulative GPA (out of 4.00, if applicable):

Do you have research experience as an undergraduate? If so, please provide a brief (250 words) description.

Did your undergraduate research result in peer-reviewed publications or conference presentations? If so, please list them.

Budget Form

ORGANIZATION						
PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR						
A. SENIOR PERSONNEL: List personnel separately. Indicate number & type of months for each. A.5-6 show total number Other in brackets.	CAL.	ACAD.	SUMR.	Funds Requested	Institutional Match	Total Costs
1						
2						
3						
4						
5 [ ] Other Senior Personnel						
6 [ ] Total Senior Personnel						
B. OTHER PERSONNEL (show #s)						
1 [ ] Post Doctoral Assoc.						
2 [ ] Other Professionals						
3 [ ] Graduate Students						
4 [ ] Undergraduate Students						
5 [ ] Secretarial/Clerical						
6 [ ] Other						
Total Salaries & Wages (A+B)						
C. FRINGE BENEFITS (if charged as direct costs)						
Total Salaries, Wages, & Fringe (A+B+C)						
D. PERMANENT EQUIPMENT (List item & dollar amount for each item exceeding $5000)						
Total Permanent Equipment						
E. TRAVEL						
1 Domestic (Incl. Canada & U. S. possessions.)						
2 Foreign						
F. PARTICIPANT SUPPORT COSTS						
1 Stipends						
2 Travel						
3 Subsistence						
4 Other						
Total Participant Costs						
G. OTHER DIRECT COSTS						
1 Materials and Supplies						
2 Publication Costs/Pages Charges						
3 Consultant Services						
4 Computer (ADPE) Services						
5 Subcontracts						
6 Other						
Total Other Direct Costs						
H. TOTAL DIRECT COSTS (A thru G)						
I. INDIRECT COSTS (Specify rates.)						
Total Indirect Costs						
J. TOTAL DIRECT & INDIRECT COSTS (H + I)						

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF THE PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR DO NOT EXCEED TWO PAGES.			
Name:		Position Title:	
EDUCATION (Begin with baccalaureate or other initial professional education and include postdoctoral training.)			
INSTITUTION AND LOCATION	DEGREE	YEAR CONFERRED	FIELD OF STUDY

A. Appointments

RESEARCH AND PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE: Starting with present position, list, in reverse chronological order, previous relevant employment.

B. Recent Publications or Research Products:

List, in reverse chronological order, the titles, all authors, and complete references for publications during the past five. Limit the list to 5 items total.

C. Recent Research Presentations:

List, in reverse chronological order, the titles, all authors, and complete references to research presentations (invited seminars or conference presentations) during the past five years. Limit the list to 5 items total.

D. Current and Pending Research Funding:

List research grants received within the past three years as PI or Co-PI. For each entry, please provide the title, PI, Co-PI(s), funding agency, amount, and performance period.

Personal Information

This information is used for reporting purposes to NSF only. All information remains confidential.
Provision of this information is voluntary.

PERSONAL INFORMATION	**PI**	**GRADUATE STUDENT**
Gender:		
Racial Background: (mark one or more boxes as applicable)	☐ American Indian or Alaska Native ☐ Asian ☐ Black or African American ☐ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander ☐ White ☐ Decline to answer	☐ American Indian or Alaska Native ☐ Asian ☐ Black or African American ☐ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander ☐ White ☐ Decline to answer
Do you have a disability that limits your activities?	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Decline to answer	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Decline to answer