

Supervised Undergraduate Research Experiences (SURE)

A Program for Undergraduate Students in STEM Disciplines

Request for Applications

DEADLINE DATES:

RFP ISSUE DATE: (**August 8, 2025**)

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

Proposals due: (**September 5, 2025, 4:30 PM Central Time**)



LOUISIANA
NSF EPSCoR
ADVANCING GEOGRAPHIC DIVERSITY IN STEM



LOUISIANA ESTABLISHED PROGRAM TO STIMULATE COMPETITIVE RESEARCH (EPSCoR)

Sponsored By:

**The National Science Foundation and the
Louisiana Board of Regents**

1201 North Third Street, Suite 6-200

Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70802

(225) 342-4253

<https://laregents.edu>

A. Program Overview

One of the goals of the Louisiana Established Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (LA-EPSCoR) project, funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF), is to increase the participation of undergraduates in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) fields.

The LA EPSCoR Supervised Undergraduate Research Experiences (SURE) program seeks to further this goal by fostering opportunities for students to conduct supervised research under the mentorship of a faculty member, supported by a four-year project (2025-2029) funded by the US National Science Foundation (see Section A.1). Students will have the opportunity to become engaged in a professional researcher's work, to learn how he or she formulates a hypothesis, develops a plan to investigate it, obtains research funding and other resources, gathers and examines evidence, encounters obstacles, and evaluates and shares results with the scientific community. By participating in research, students have the chance to learn more about their chosen field of study and can use the experience to help them decide whether to pursue further education by attending graduate school.

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

The vision of the NSF E-CORE project, *Louisiana Networks of Excellence for Tomorrow (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 was a realization of the building block 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 Program Goals

- Motivate students toward advanced education and careers in STEM fields
- Give students a clearer idea of their options for a future in research
- Encourage students to attend graduate school
- Provide opportunities for students to learn modern research and laboratory techniques
- Provide mentors assistance to enhance their research programs
- Improve student written and oral communication skills

B.2 Eligibility

Students: The SURE program is available to full-time¹ undergraduate students who are matriculated at a Louisiana public institution of higher education, or in a higher education institution that is a member of the Louisiana Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (LAICU). Students who are not yet enrolled full-time may apply provided they will be enrolled full-time at the time the SURE research experience begins. Students who will have completed their bachelor's degree before the research experience begins are not eligible.

Faculty Mentors must hold a faculty position at a Louisiana public institution of higher education, or in a higher education institution that is a member of the Louisiana Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (LAICU), in a STEM discipline supported by NSF.

Students and Faculty Mentors must be from the same institution. Faculty mentors are limited to 2 applications in response to this solicitation.

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 S&T Plan: FIRST Louisiana 2030 \(UPDATED 1/24\) – LA Office of Sponsored Programs](#).

B.3 Award Amounts

Students accepted for the SURE program will receive a stipend/scholarship of \$4,500. This amount is based on a level of effort consistent with no less than 320 total hours of work. Faculty mentors will receive a supplemental grant of \$500 per student for the purchase of research supplies associated with mentoring students, travel by mentors/students to the LA-NEXT annual meeting, or other expenses directly related to the SURE project. The funds for both the stipend/scholarship and the Faculty Mentor supplemental grant will be made available to the Faculty Mentor's institution as a subcontract. Indirect costs (i.e., overhead) are not allowed under this program. The research experience must be completed within one year of the award date.

Prior to submission of a SURE grant application, campus grants administrators must confirm, to the best of their ability, that student applicants are eligible to receive SURE funding, and determine the impact of SURE funding on other sources of financial support received by the student applicants. Consistent with the purpose of the program, SURE funds must be provided supplementary to any other student financial support that student may be receiving, unless campus restrictions strictly prohibit it. Prior to accepting a SURE award, the campus will be asked to determine the terms upon which the student awardee will be paid and formally notify the Board of Regents. These provisions will be made a part of any subsequent contract from the Board of Regents. If a SURE student applicant holds a scholarship, fellowship, or other financial support from the campus, this should not be cancelled, suspended or replaced, in whole or in part, by SURE funds unless the student is notified in writing, prior to accepting the award, of the impact the SURE award will have on this support. If a student awardee is not fully informed of said impact, the Board of Regents will reserve the right to require return from the campus of any or all SURE funds provided for the student awardee.

¹ Students with disabilities that prevent them from enrolling full-time are exempted from this requirement.

B.4 Duration of Research Experience

Students are expected to complete the research experience over no more than three consecutive terms/semesters, which may include summer. For example, a research experience may be completed in one summer; over summer and the following (fall) semester/term; or over spring, summer and fall semesters/terms. The period of performance is to be October 1, 2025 – September 30, 2026.

B.5 Student Responsibilities

- Dedicate a level of effort consistent with no less than 320 hours of work over the course of the research experience.
- Participate in seminars, workshops, discussion groups, and other activities as required by the Faculty Mentor.
- Complete student SURE Final Report modules upon conclusion of the research experience for program evaluation purposes and reporting to NSF.

B.6 Mentor Responsibilities

- Assist 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 student regularly to discuss progress and offer suggestions, feedback, and constructive criticism.
- Complete faculty SURE Final Report modules upon conclusion of the research experience for program evaluation purposes and reporting to NSF.
- Mentor/student is required to attend the LA-NEXT annual meeting, tentatively scheduled to be held in Baton Rouge in January 2026.
- Mentor/student team is required to respond to data collection requests from Board of Regents.
- All presentations and publications resulting from this SURE grant should acknowledge the NSF support using the following statement:
 - This research was funded in part by US National Science Foundation under Grant Number OIA-2437963 and Louisiana Board of Regents.

B.7 Selection Criteria

Applications will be reviewed according to the criteria listed in the chart below and other information provided in the Application Form.

Criteria	Possible Points
Letter of recommendation from faculty member	40 points
Quality of proposed research	30 points
Alignment of proposed research with State S&T Plan	20 points
GPA	10 points

C. Proposal Submission

All online submissions must be uploaded as a single PDF document (**use Cover Page and SURE Student Application Form attached**) 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 applicant 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 SURE 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 RFA.

D. Reporting and Evaluation

At the conclusion of each SURE project, the principal investigator shall submit the SURE report modules via the Board of Regents' LOGAN system and must respond to the request within 30 days.

E. Questions about this RFA

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

F. Attachments

Cover Page

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR (PI) NAME:	EMAIL ADDRESS:
PI RANK:	<input type="checkbox"/> TENURED FACULTY <input type="checkbox"/> NON-TENURED FACULTY
INSTITUTION:	DEPARTMENT:
STUDENT NAME:	EMAIL ADDRESS:
STUDENT CLASSIFICATION (YEAR):	
TITLE OF PROJECT:	
<p>ELIGIBLE DISCIPLINE (See Science and Technology Plan):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Advanced Manufacturing<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture & Forestry<input type="checkbox"/> Biomedical<input type="checkbox"/> Cybersecurity<input type="checkbox"/> Coastal Restoration<input type="checkbox"/> Energy<input type="checkbox"/> Resilience & Disaster Recovery<input type="checkbox"/> Structural Integrity Assurance	

SURE Student Application Form

Last Name:

First Name:

Personal Information:

Gender:

Ethnic Background:

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

Do you have a disability that limits your activities?

Academic Information:

Current Undergraduate Institution:

Current Major/Minor:

Current Standing (Year)

When do you expect to receive your bachelor's degree?

Cumulative GPA (out of 4.00):

Do you have prior research experience?

Are you currently receiving any stipends or involved in another research experience for undergraduates (REU)? If yes, please mention title, funding source, and duration:

Future Educational Plans:

I plan to enter this school:

I am currently considering: (check all that apply)

- ☐ Graduate School
- ☐ Medical School
- ☐ Have not decided yet
- ☐ I don't plan to pursue further education

Proposed Research Project

Abstract of Proposed Research Project to be completed by student: (max 250 words)

Letter of Recommendation from Faculty Mentor

A letter of recommendation from the Faculty Mentor who has agreed to sponsor your research experience is required. This letter should address your potential as a researcher, and the potential benefits of the research experience to your education and career, as well as any other pertinent information. The letter should be included in the single PDF file that is uploaded to LOGAN. No other letters of recommendation are allowable.