The Florida High Tech Corridor’s Matching Grants Research Program is a state funded initiative that fosters the development of commercially applicable emerging technologies by encouraging applied research between the region’s high tech industry partners and the three Corridor universities: University of South Florida, University of Florida, and University of Central Florida.

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Program Overview:

The Matching Grant Research Program at the University of South Florida can provide up to $150,000 in matching grant funds for collaborative research projects between local industry partners and USF researchers, including Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) / Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) funded projects. Corridor funding is used to expand the project’s scope of work and support student involvement in cutting-edge research endeavors.

Program Eligibility:

To be eligible, projects must:
• Involve a local industry partner and a USF Principal Investigator (PI)
  ○ A sponsored research agreement between USF and the industry partner must be finalized before a matching grant can be approved. This process is facilitate by USF Sponsored Research.
• Include support for at least one USF student researcher for the duration of the project
• Support economic development in Tampa Bay, the Corridor region and the State of Florida

The industry partner must be a for-profit company located within 23-county Corridor region:
• Alachua, Brevard, Citrus, De Soto, Flagler, Hardee, Hernando, Highlands, Hillsborough, Lake, Levy, Manatee, Marion, Orange, Osceola, Pasco, Pinellas, Polk, Putnam, Sarasota, Seminole, Sumter, Volusia

While projects may be proposed in any discipline, proposals are particularly encouraged in areas contributing to the development of the Corridor’s key industries:
• Agritechnology; Aviation & Aerospace; Digital Media/Interactive Entertainment; Financial Services; Information Technology; Life Sciences/Medical Technology; Microelectronics/Nanotechnology; Modeling, Simulation & Training; Optics & Photonics; Sustainable Energy

USF CONNECT will help to pair interested companies with appropriate USF researchers to take advantage of this program. Please contact program staff to discuss the project and potential collaboration.

Application Process:

There is no annual deadline to apply. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis.

To begin the application process, interested industry partners or PIs should contact program staff to discuss project
eligibility and review the required application documents. Please contact program staff before executing a sponsored research agreement to properly understand the program and budget development process.

A complete application consists of the following documents:

1. **Executed Sponsored Research Agreement**: Legal agreement between the industry partner and University to conduct research.
2. **Application Checklist**: Outlines the basic details of the project.
3. **Scope of Work**: Summarizes the project (*in layman’s terms*), student participation and economic impact.
4. **Budget**: Details industry cash, matching grant funds and in-kind support.
5. **Letter of In-Kind Support**: Certifies in-kind support, provided by the industry partner.

Program staff will provide electronic application templates. The application documents should be completed collaboratively by the PI and industry partner. Program staff is available to review document drafts and provide feedback throughout the application process.

**Budget:**

The total project budget consists of three parts:

1. **Industry cash**
2. **Industry in-kind support (Non-monetary contribution)**
   a. All industry partners are required to provide quantifiable in-kind support such as staff time, travel, the use of supplies, equipment and/or space.
3. **Matching grant funds requested**

The total budget must adhere to the following ratio:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry Cash</th>
<th>In-Kind Support (Minimum)</th>
<th>Match Funds (Maximum)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$1</td>
<td>$1</td>
<td>$1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Using the provided budget form, applicants will allocate the industry cash, in-kind support and requested matching grant funds by budget item (salary, supplies, equipment, etc.).

Funding is provided for up to one year and the project period should match that of the sponsored research agreement. If a project is scheduled to last more than one year, additional applications can be submitted for subsequent funding years. Please contact program staff to discuss the best way to plan for a multi-year project.

**Please Note:** If the industry partner does not provide the full cash amount associated with the sponsored research agreement, the Corridor matching grant will be adjusted accordingly. The Corridor matching grant cannot exceed the industry cash invested in the project.

**Required & Eligible Expenses:**

**Required Student Support:**

- Matching grant funds *must* be allocated to support at least one USF student for the duration of the project in the form of tuition and/or salary.

**Other Eligible Expenses:**

- Principal Investigator (PI) and Co-PI Salaries
  - When including faculty salaries, the budget must also include fringe at a rate of 26%. Fringe must be listed as a separate budget item.
- Postdoctoral Salaries
• Laboratory Supplies
• Publication Costs
• Patent Costs
  o Patent costs for USF technologies associated with the project are an eligible expense according to the table below, as recommended by the USF Technology Transfer Office.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Corridor Match Request Range</th>
<th>Maximum Patent Costs Allowed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Up to $39,999</td>
<td>20% of the match request</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$40,000-49,999</td>
<td>25% of the match request</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$50,000-59,999</td>
<td>40% of the match request</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$60,000-100,000</td>
<td>50% of the match request</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above $100,000</td>
<td>Not to exceed $50,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

  o If patent costs are included in the matching grant budget, please specify the applicable USF technology in the budget item description.

  o If, at the end of the project’s third quarter, matching grant funds have not been spent as originally allocated, the team may request a budget revision to reallocate the remaining funds to patent costs. Faculty members must provide a justification detailing why funds were not spent as planned. Budget revisions are subject to approval. Please contact program staff for more information.

**Budget Notes:**
- Other expenses may be allowable with proper justification, including travel. Please discuss these proposed expenses with program staff before submitting an application.
- Any equipment costs must be placed on the industry cash budget, not the matching grant budget.
- **Matching grant funds cannot be used for entertainment or food.**

**Review Process:**

Once the application has been reviewed and deemed eligible and complete by program staff, it will be sent to an outside review committee of business, economic development, science and technology professionals from across Tampa Bay and the Corridor.

**Please Note:** An application will not be sent out for review until the sponsored research agreement has been finalized and the Research Award Notice issued.

The application will be evaluated on the following criteria:
- Does the project address an industry important to the economic development of the State of Florida?
- Does the project have the potential to leave a positive economic impact on the State of Florida?
- Does the project include a workforce development component and is a portion of the matching funds used for student support?
- Does the project address the Florida High Tech Corridor’s mission “to attract, retain and grow high tech industry in Florida and the workforce to support it”?

Program staff may request changes to the application based on feedback from the review committee. Once approved, the industry partner and PI will receive a formal award letter.

**Payment Process:**

All matching grants funds are provided to the project’s PI. The industry partner does not receive any direct funding. Award dollars are transferred upon confirmed receipt of the industry partner’s cash payment. Program staff will closely monitor the industry partner’s payments to ensure timely transfers. Please alert program staff of any known funding
interruptions, delays or other deviations from the standard payment process. If the project is extended, please contact program staff to discuss an extension of the Corridor funding.

Please Note: If the industry partner does not provide the full cash amount associated with the sponsored research agreement, the Corridor matching grant will be adjusted accordingly. The Corridor matching grant cannot exceed the industry cash invested in the project.

Reporting Requirements:

The Corridor final report consists of a **budget reconciliation** and a **qualitative report**. Final reports are due within one month of the project close. Program staff will request these reports at project close. If a project is extended, interim reports are due at the time of the extension.

**Budget Reconciliation**: Accounts for how industry and Corridor funds were spent compared to the approved budget. Any significant deviations will require justification. If any funds remain unspent at the end of the project, the PI must submit a plan for how funds will be spent in accordance with the Corridor’s mission.

[Budget Reconciliation Report Template](#)

**Qualitative Report**: Captures information on the successes of the project and impact of Corridor funding. Like the application, this document should include input from the industry sponsor to capture the holistic benefits of the project.

[Qualitative Report Template](#)

Corridor representatives will also survey industry partners and PIs following the project close (up to seven years) to track the downstream impact of the Matching Grants Research Program. The information collected helps to demonstrate the program’s positive economic impact and ensure the continuation of state funding. We appreciate your cooperation.

Additional interim reports may be requested to support legislative inquiries and presentations.

*Future matching grant funds will be contingent upon the receipt and approval of final reports for previous projects.*