The Corridor's Matching Grants Research Program
- University of South Florida -
Frequently Asked Questions

General Information

1. What is the Corridor's Matching Grant Research Program?

The Florida High Tech Corridor's Matching Grants Research Program is a state fund 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.

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.

2. What are the basic requirements of the program?

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 facilitated 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 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

Through this program, USF and the Corridor aim to support high-impact research that will benefit the company, the university, and our region. The Matching Grants Research Program supports the following priorities:
- Generation of new technology and intellectual property
- Further development and commercialization of USF technologies
- SBIR/STTR and other federally funded research

- Investment in USF's strategic research areas and the Corridor's key industries
- High-level, hands-on research experiences for our students and fellows

4. **How much funding can my project receive?**

The Matching Grant Research Program at the University of South Florida may provide *up to $150,000* in matching grant funds to collaborative research projects between local industry and USF researchers.

Applicants may request $1 in match funds for every $2 provided by the industry partner ($1 cash/$1 in-kind). Program staff will determine the final funding level based on the project's alignment with the MGRP priorities, available funds, and the successful completion and stewardship of past projects.

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 supplies, equipment and/or space.
3. **Matching grant funds requested**

5. **How many grants are awarded each year?**

Typically 25-35 grants are awarded each year. Grants are awarded until the year's funds have been exhausted. The program's fiscal year runs from July 1 to June 30.

6. **I'm with a company interested in working with a USF researcher on a project, but I have not yet identified the appropriate faculty member. How can I participate in this program?**

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

7. **What are the Intellectual Property requirements for the agreement?**

The intellectual property terms in the corresponding sponsored research agreement must be in accordance with University policy; intellectual property ownership follows inventorship. Agreements that do not coincide with University policy will not be considered for a match. When finalizing the sponsored research agreement, please let the administrator know you plan to apply for a Corridor matching grant. This will help to ensure that the agreement aligns with University policy.

Application Process

8. **How do I apply?**

To begin the application process, interested industry partners or PIs must complete the **online interest form**. This will collect basic information about the project and its alignment with the program's priorities. This information will be used to determine the appropriate funding level. Upon completion and review of

the interest form, program staff will contact the research team to discuss the project and funding level and assist in the preparing the complete application.

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. **Scope of Work**: Summarizes the project *(in layman's terms)*, student participation and economic impact
3. **Budget:** Details industry cash, matching grant funds and in-kind support
4. **Letter of In-Kind Support:** Certifies in-kind support, provided by the industry partner

Program staff will provide electronic application templates. Program staff is available to review document drafts and provide feedback throughout the application process.

Please contact program staff before executing a sponsored research agreement to properly understand the program and budget development process.

9. **When are applications due?**

There is no annual deadline to apply for the Corridor's Matching Grant Research Program. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis.

10. **How long can a project last?**

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.

Past awards do not guarantee future funding. A new application is required for each new project or additional funding request and any outstanding final reports must be completed. In determining future awards, the review team will consider the successful completion and stewardship of past projects.

11. **Who should complete the application?**

The application documents should be completed collaboratively by the PI and industry partner. The budget and the scope of work forms require input from both parties.

12. **The sponsored research agreement hasn't yet been finalized. Can I begin the matching grant application process?**

We encourage PIs and industry partner to complete the online interest form as soon as possible. The application process can be concurrent with sponsored research negotiations. This will help to ensure only eligible expenses are included on the matching grant budget and that the application is ready for the Corridor review committee as soon as the sponsored research agreement is finalized.

13. How will the project be evaluated for funding?

Once the application is complete, it will be sent to an outside review committee of business, economic development, science and technology professionals from across Tampa Bay and the Corridor.

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"*?

Budget

14. What are the requirements for the matching grant budget?

The budget **must** include support for at least one USF student for the duration of the project in the form of tuition and/or salary. It may also include faculty salaries and fringe, supplies and patent costs for applicable USF technologies. Equipment, food and entertainment may not be included. Please see the guidelines for more details.

Program staff is available to review document drafts, including the budget, and provide feedback throughout the application process.

15. Can PI or Co-PI salaries be included on the matching grant budget?

Yes, PI and Co-PI salaries can be included on the matching grant budget. If included, fringe must also be included as a separate budget line at a rate of 26%.
    For Example: PI Salary = $1,000; PI Fringe = $260

16. Does the Matching Grant budget require indirect costs (aka Overhead or F&A)?

No, the matching grant funds are exempt from indirect costs. Only industry cash is subject to overhead according to University policy. Please address all questions on indirect costs to your Sponsored Research Administrator.

17. What is considered 'in-kind support'?

In-kind support is the industry partner's non-monetary contribution in the project. This can be staff time, travel, the use supplies, equipment and/or space, or other goods and services the industry partner provides to the project outside of its cash investment. This requirement ensures the industry partner is significantly involved in the project, providing students with the opportunity to work closely with local industry.

Award & Payment

18. How long does it take for a matching grant to be awarded?

Once all the required application documents have received and finalized, it takes between two to three weeks for Committee review, approval and notification. Please plan accordingly.

19. How will I know if the matching grant has been awarded?

When a project is approved for a Corridor matching grant, the industry partner will receive an official award letter. The PI and key faculty from the College will be copied on the letter.

20. When will the PI receive the matching grant funds?

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 investment as outlined in the budget, the Corridor matching grant will be adjusted accordingly. The Corridor matching grant will not exceed the industry investment in the project.

21. The project received a no cost extension. Can we continue to use the matching grant funds past the original project period?

If the project is extended, the matching grant project period can also be extended. Interim reports are due at the time of the extension. Please contact program staff to discuss an extension of the Corridor funding.

22. The industry partner has provided additional funding to the project. Can the project receive additional matching grant funds?

If the industry partner provides additional funding for the project, a subsequent application can be submitted for additional matching grant funds. Past awards do not guarantee future funding. A new application is required for each new project or additional funding request, and any outstanding final reports must be completed. In determining future awards, the review team will consider the successful completion and stewardship of past projects

23. The project has closed and we did not spend all of the matching grant funds. What now?

As part of the final report, the PI must provide a budget reconciliation detailing how the funds were spent compared to the approved budget. If any funds remain unspent at the end of the project, the PI must submit a plan outlining how funds will be spent in accordance with the Corridor's mission. With program staff approval, the funds can be transferred as needed to serve those purposes.

2/15/19

Reporting

24. What are the reporting requirements for the Corridor's Matching Grant Program?

The Corridor final report consists of a ***budget reconciliation*** and a ***qualitative report***. Final reports are due within one month of the 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 receive input from the industry sponsor to capture the holistic benefits of the project.
Qualitative Report Template

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