

The Corridor's Matching Grants Research Program - University of South Florida - Program Guidelines

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 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

Program staff 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.

Program Priorities:

With USF's [Preeminence designation](#) and ongoing commitment to [partnering with industry](#), the Matching Grants Research Program at USF has become increasingly competitive in recent years. 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

Please Note: 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.

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 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. 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.

Please contact program staff before executing a sponsored research agreement to properly understand the program and budget development 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. **Corridor matching funds**

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.

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.

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.

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
 - 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.

Corridor Match Request Range	Maximum Patent Costs Allowed
Up to \$39,999	20% of the match request
\$40,000-49,999	25% of the match request
\$50,000-59,999	40% of the match request
\$60,000-100,000	50% of the match request
Above \$100,000	Not to exceed \$50,000

- If patent costs are included in the matching grant budget, please specify the applicable USF technology in the budget item description.
- 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 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 covered by the industry cash, not the matching grant.
- **Matching grant funds cannot be used for entertainment or food.**

Review Process:

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.

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 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.

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. 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.

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