

## UWM Faculty-Industry Partnership Seed Grant Program Call for Proposals

**Deadline: March 20, 2026 by 5:00:00 pm**

### Program Overview

The internal Faculty-Industry Partnership Seed Grants (FIPS) program supports multi-disciplinary partnership development and the preparation of joint proposals that will lead to externally funded research, development, or translational projects. The program is designed to overcome the inertia of getting started with industry by providing funding for structured time, resources, and institutional support to align faculty academic expertise with industry needs and to co-develop competitive proposals for private industry, federal agencies, foundations, consortia, or direct sources of sponsorship.

Faculty are encouraged to explore bold, translational ideas with industry partners and to lay the groundwork for impactful, externally funded collaborations. Note that an applicant's own start-up company does not qualify as an industry partner.

#### **Supported program activities may include but are not limited to:**

- Catalyzing new or expanding current faculty-industry collaborations.
- Enabling joint scoping, feasibility analysis, and co-design of research agendas.
- Preparing competitive proposals for external funding.
- Accelerating pathways from research to application, commercialization, or societal impact.
- Strengthening long-term, strategic relationships with industry partners.
- Planning activities, supporting meetings, workshops.

The goal of the program is to provide resources to prepare grant submissions by December 31, 2026, which is the expectation of this funding. The maximum grant award is \$50,000 (final budget subject to negotiation). There is an expectation of external funding proposals that are at least three times the level of support provided by this program. As part of the grant award, the Industry Outreach Specialist in the Office of Research will provide administrative support to assist with partnership development and proposal preparation.

#### **Examples of external funding include but are not limited to:**

- Larger-scale R&D projects (not service contracts) sponsored by the industry partner.
- Federal funding, such as
  - NSF Grant Opportunities for Academic Liaison with Industry ([GOALI](#))
  - [NIH R01 Academic-Industrial Partnerships for Translation of Technologies for Diagnosis and Treatment](#)
  - NSF Industry/University Research Consortium ([IUCRC](#))
  - NSF Engineering Research Centers ([ERC](#)) and Materials Research Science and Engineering Centers ([MRSEC](#))
  - Small Business Innovation Grant and Technology Transfer ([SBIR/STTR](#))

### Program Contact

Melissa Burnett  
Industry Outreach Specialist, Office of Research  
[burnetm@uwm.edu](mailto:burnetm@uwm.edu) or 414-251-6604

## Program Details

### FIPS Program Calendar

Submission Deadline	Award Announcement	Funds Available	Faculty Summer Salary	Final Grant Expenditures
March 20, 2026	April 1, 2026	April 1, 2026	Must be spent by June 30, 2026	Dec 31, 2026

#### 1. Award Maximum

- Up to \$50,000 per project. (Includes fringe benefit costs.)

#### 2. Limit on Number of Proposal Submissions

- Principal Investigators may submit **only one proposal** to the FIPS program.

#### 3. Limit on the Number of Awards Per Person

- Only one award will be made per applicant or project team.

#### 4. Eligible Applicants

- Have or will have a tenure-track or tenured faculty appointment. Faculty who will be on sabbatical are eligible to apply. Staff with the designated Scientist job title are also eligible.
- Have Principal Investigator (PI) status.
- Have satisfied the terms and conditions of previous internal awards, including submission of final reports.
- Have less than \$100,000 in uncommitted start-up funding.

#### 5. Ineligible Collaborative Efforts

- Projects focused on product development, commercialization, or higher Technical Readiness Levels (TRLs).
- Curriculum development projects, including textbook development.

#### 6. Application Preferences

- Multidisciplinary proposals with Principal Investigators from different UWM schools/colleges. The Office of Research will fund at least one or two meritorious proposals that have multiple investigators.
- Applicants with no active internal grants, including Discovery & Innovation (DIG) awards, Advancing Research & Creativity (ARC) awards, Research Assistance Fund (RAF) awards, and Finish Line awards.
- Preference given to proposals with budgets that can be expended by June 30, 2026.

## Required Program Deliverables

By the end of the project period, teams are expected to produce:

- A well-defined project concept co-developed with the industry partner.
- At least one submitted or near-ready proposal for external funding (e.g., industry-sponsored agreement; proposal to federal agency, non-profit foundation, or consortium).
- A brief final report summarizing activities, outcomes, and next steps.

# Application Instructions

## 1. COVER PAGE

- **Project Title**
- **Principal Investigator:** Name, school/college, department, UWM email address
- **UWM Co-PIs:** School/college, department, UWM email address
- **Industry Collaborator:** Name, organization, contact information
- **Project Budget Total:** The total costs (including fringe) from the completed FIPS budget template
- **Sabbatical:** Indicate whether you will be requesting sabbatical leave during the funding period

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## 2. PROJECT NARRATIVE

The Project Narrative must not exceed four pages (excluding the Cover Sheet and Supporting Documents).

### A. Format Requirements

- Single-spaced and all margins (top, bottom, sides) must be at least one inch.
- Pages must be numbered continuously throughout the Project Narrative.
- Allowable fonts are Arial, Georgia, Calibri, Palatino Linotype, Times New Roman, Computer Modern; minimum font size is 11 points.
- The Project Narrative must be self-contained. Inclusion of URLs are not allowed.
- Figures, tables, graphs, and diagrams may be included and are subject to the page limit. Smaller text in figures, graphs, and diagrams is acceptable as long as it is legible when the page is viewed onscreen at 100%.

### B. Required Content

The Project Narrative must include the following sections, with exact headings as follows:

#### 1. Project Summary

- Overview of the proposed collaboration.
- Industry need or opportunity being addressed.
- Intended external funding target(s).

#### 2. Partnership Description

- Description of the industry partner(s).
- History of collaboration (if any).
- Roles and contributions of each partner.

#### 3. Planning Activities and Work Plan

- Specific planning, scoping, or feasibility activities.
- Timeline and milestones.
- Expected outcomes at the end of the award period.

#### 4. Pathway to Larger Funding

- Targeted funding programs or sponsors.
- Anticipated proposal submission timeline.
- Long-term vision for the partnership.

#### 5. Project Timeline

- Major steps toward completion and expected timeframe (tabular or bulleted format preferred)

#### 6. References Cited

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#### 4. BUDGET AND BUDGET JUSTIFICATION

##### *Budget Planning Template*

- You **MUST** use the template that will be provided, as it is customized for the FIPS program.
- Budget maximum: \$50,000 (includes fringe benefits).

##### 4. Eligible Project Expenses

- **Summer Salary:** Each UWM PI and Co-PI may request one summer salary supplement up to \$10,000 plus fringe benefits.
- **UWM Personnel:** Research assistants, academic or university staff, and hourly student appointments.
- Expenses for hosting or attending joint workshops and conferences with industry partners. Examples include per diem, travel, transportation, room rental.
- Travel for planning meetings with collaborators.
- Materials and supplies, purchase of services (e.g., grant-writing services)

##### 5. Ineligible Expenses

- Salary or other expenses for industry partners.
- Equipment including general-purpose computers.
- Publication costs.

##### *Budget Justification (Does not count towards four-page narrative)*

- Provide a description of and the rationale for each item requested in your budget.
- **Faculty Summer Salary:** Up to \$10,000 in summer salary may be requested if a portion of the work will take place outside of the academic year contractual period. Specify when (month/year) the work will occur.

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#### 4. PI AND CO-PI BIOSKETCHES

You may use any format permitted by federal agencies. Each biosketch must include professional preparation (undergraduate, graduate, and post-doctoral degrees), all appointments since your terminal degree, and up to ten publications that are representative of your research. Applicants may submit biosketches generated by SciENCv in the NSF or NIH format.

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#### 5. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

- **Letters of Interest or Support from Industry Partners (2 pages max.)**
  - Collaborators confirm participation in project and describe their expected engagement.

### Application Submission Process

#### **Submission Deadline: March 20, 2026 by 5:00:00pm**

Late applications and incomplete applications will not be accepted. Application sections that exceed the specified page limits will be truncated at the stated limit and reviewers will receive the truncated version.

##### **Submission Process:**

- Email the PDF of the complete application to Melissa Burnett, Industry Outreach Specialist, at [burnetm@uwm.edu](mailto:burnetm@uwm.edu).
- A RAMP record is not required.

## FIPS Review Process

The FIPS program employs a three-stage review and selection process. Proposals will be evaluated by leadership in the Office of Research, the UWM Research Foundation, and Associate Deans of Research at various UWM schools and colleges.

- Preference will be given to multidisciplinary proposals with multiple Principal Investigators from different UWM school/colleges. The Office of Research will fund at least one or two meritorious proposals that have multiple investigators.
- Preference will be given to applicants with no active internal grants, including Discovery & Innovation (DIG) awards, Advancing Research & Creativity (ARC) awards, Research Assistance Fund (RAF) awards, and Finish Line awards.
- Preference given to proposals with budgets that can be expended by June 30, 2026.

### Stage 1: Administrative Review

- Applications will be screened for completion and compliance with formatting requirements. Late, incomplete and/or non-compliant applications will not be accepted.

### Stage 2: Panel Review

- Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

Criterion	Description
<b>Significance/Impact</b>	Strength and clarity of the faculty-industry partnership
<b>Collaboration Plan</b>	Alignment with industry needs and opportunities
<b>Innovation</b>	Likelihood of leading to competitive, external funding
<b>Outcomes</b>	Feasibility and appropriateness of the planning activities
<b>Potential for External Funding</b>	Potential for long-term impact and sustained collaboration

### *Rating Scale for all criteria:*

<b>5: Excellent</b>	Very Strong with few or no minor (easily addressed) weaknesses; reserved for proposals of the highest quality
<b>4: Very Good</b>	Strong, with several minor weaknesses
<b>3: Good</b>	Strong, with moderate weakness
<b>2: Fair</b>	Some strengths, with at least one major weakness
<b>1: Poor</b>	Very few strengths and several major weaknesses

### Stage 3: Award Decision

Funding decisions are made by Office of Research leadership based on final ratings and review comments, program priorities, meetings with the potential awardees, and prior performance on internal awards (including submission of follow-on external proposals). Additional considerations:

- Proposed projects that significantly overlap any of the PI's externally supported projects will not be funded.
- Awards will not be given to applicants who are on notice of non-retention or who have accepted offers at other institutions.
- In deciding among proposals with equivalent ratings near the funding cutoff, consideration will be given to a balanced award portfolio across disciplines.
- Budgets may be negotiated.

## Terms and Conditions of FIPS Awards

1. The PI agrees to execute the project in compliance with all applicable federal and state laws and regulations and institutional policies, including but not limited to those concerning:
  - Rules and regulations governing research involving human subjects under the federal Common Rule (45 CFR 46) and U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations (21 CFR 50, 56, 312, 600, and 812)
  - Animal care and use
  - The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA)
  - Use of toxic, infectious, or carcinogenic/mutagenic materials, recombinant DNA, radioactive materials
  - Environmental impacts
  - Scuba diving
  - Remodeling or construction
  - Travel
  - Purchasing
  - Hiring
2. The PI and any relevant project personnel must complete all mandatory training, including responsible conduct of research, by the campus deadlines.
3. The final award amount is subject to negotiation with the Office of Research.
4. The PI agrees to participate in monthly progress reviews with the Office of Research.
5. The PI agrees to submit extramural funding requests to continue this research at a minimum of three times the total award value, including both project funds and additional project costs, as specified in the award budget.
6. In accordance with [UW System Patent Policy](#), the PI, any Co-PIs and other project personnel, including graduate student assistants, agree to assign ownership of all intellectual properties conceived or reduced to practice as a result of a FIPS award to the University for protection and development as the University deems appropriate.
7. Please acknowledge “UWM Faculty-Industry Partnership Seed Grants program” support in any publication resulting from your FIPS project.
8. The PI must notify Melissa Burnett, UWM Industry Outreach Specialist, if s/he will be leaving UWM before the project end date. The Office of Research reserves the right to determine the disposition of any remaining project funds.
9. The PI is expected to retain the research records for three years beyond the conclusion of the project. (“Records” include the raw data, as well as any tables or schedules derived from the data; any video, or audio recording tape; any project-related source documents; and any reports or publications resulting from the project.)
10. The PI must report on the outcomes of the FIPS funding within 30 days of project completion. A report template will be provided.
11. Upon invitation, all PIs and Co-PIs are expected to serve as reviewers for other internal award programs or limited submission selection decisions in the future.