UWM Faculty-Industry Partnership Seed Grant Program
Call for Proposals
Deadline: January 15, 2027 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.

The FIPS program is intended to foster a community of practice around faculty-industry partnerships at UWM. Through progress reviews, research summits, and interactions among awardees, participants will have opportunities to share experiences, discuss successful partnership strategies, identify common challenges, and establish new interdisciplinary connections. The program seeks to support both individual projects and the broader growth of industry-engaged research across the university.

The maximum grant is $50,000 (final budget subject to negotiation). Awardees are expected to pursue external funding opportunities with a total anticipated value of at least three times the FIPS award amount. As part of the grant award, the Industry Outreach Specialist in the Division of Research will provide administrative support to assist with partnership development and proposal preparation.

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 may not serve as the primary industry partner fora FIPS application.** Any ownership interests, board memberships, consulting arrangements, or other financial relationships with the proposed industry partner must be disclosed.

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.

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), 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: burnetm@uwm.edu or 414-251-6604

Program Details

FIPS Program Calendar

Submission Deadline	Award Announcement	Funds Available	Final Grant Expenditures
January 15, 2027	May 1, 2027	July 1, 2027	June 15, 2028

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.
   - Projects where a conflict of interest cannot be appropriately managed under applicable university policies.
6. **Application Preferences**
   - Multidisciplinary proposals with Principal Investigators from different UWM schools/colleges. The Division 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, and Finish Line awards.

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).
- Awardees are expected to maintain reasonable engagement with program activities, including progress reviews, surveys, data collection requests, and participation in program assessment activities intended to measure the long-term outcomes and impact of the FIPS program.

- Applicants must disclose any actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest related to the proposed industry partner and comply with all applicable UWM and UW System conflict of interest policies
- Customer Discovery and Industry Engagement: Awardees will participate in a designated NSF I-Corps customer discovery program during the award period to engage relevant industry stakeholders, test key assumptions, and inform partnership development and future external funding opportunities.
- A mid-year progress update and participation in the DOR Research Summit.

Mid-Year Progress Update

- Submit a brief presentation (3-5 slides) summarizing:
- Activities completed to date.
- Partnership development progress.
- Major accomplishments and successes.
- Challenges encountered.
- Progress toward external funding.
- Planned activities for the remainder of the award period.

FIPS Research Summit

Research Summits provide opportunities for awardees to share progress, discuss partnership development strategies, identify common challenges, and strengthen connections across the FIPS community.

- Presentations should provide brief updates on project progress, partnership development, accomplishments, challenges, external funding plans, and future directions.
- Presentation assignments will be distributed across the Fall and Spring Research Summits at the discretion of the Division of Research.

Required Application Sections

The following chart summarizes the application sections and the process for developing the sections in the application. All sections are required unless otherwise noted. Detailed instructions for each section are provided in the "Application Instructions" section below. **Please include all Application sections in a single pdf file**.

Component	Requirement	Limit
Cover Page	Project and applicant information	1 page
Project Summary	Brief overview of the project, partnership, and funding opportunity	1 page
Project Narrative	Partnership, project activities, milestones, outcomes, and path to external funding	4 pages
References Cited	References used in the narrative	No limit
Budget	FIPS Budget Planning Template and budget justification	N/A

Biosketches	PI and Co-PI biosketches	No limit
Industry Letter	Letter of support/collaboration from industry partner	2 pages
COI Disclosure	Disclose conflicts of interest or commitment, if applicable	As applicable

Submission: Compile **all application materials into a single PDF, in the order listed above**, and submit by **January 15, 2027.**

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

2. PROJECT SUMMARY

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

3. PROJECT NARRATIVE

The Project Narrative must not exceed <u>four pages</u> (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. Planning Activities and Work Plan

- Specific planning, scoping, or feasibility activities.
- Timeline and milestones.
    a. Major steps toward completion and expected timeframe (tabular or bulleted format preferred

- Expected outcomes at the end of the award period.

2. Partnership Description

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

3. Partnership Governance, Intellectual Property, and Conflict Management

- Applicants must disclose any existing agreements that may affect ownership, use, publication, or commercialization of project results. Applicants are encouraged to engage the UWM Research Foundation early in the project period when intellectual property, licensing, or commercialization opportunities are anticipated.
- Describe any existing intellectual property, inventions, software, data, materials, know-how, or other assets that are relevant to the proposed collaboration.
- Explain whether new intellectual property is anticipated to result from the proposed activities.
- Describe any known intellectual property interests, restrictions, obligations, or expectations of the industry partner.
- Explain how intellectual property resulting from the project will be identified, disclosed, and managed throughout the collaboration.
- Disclose any actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest or conflicts of commitment related to the project team or industry partner.
- Describe how any identified conflicts will be managed to ensure the integrity and objectivity of the project.
- Applications that do not address intellectual property considerations or disclose known or potential conflicts, as applicable, will be considered incomplete.

4. Pathway to Larger Funding

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

5. References Cited

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4. BUDGET AND BUDGET JUSTIFICATION

Budget Planning Requirements

Applicants should develop budgets that accurately reflect the activities proposed in the work plan and timeline, with expenditures allowed up to **June 15.** Requested funds should be allocated to the budget categories that most closely align with their intended use.

Budgets should be developed carefully and will generally be considered **final** at the time of award.

Limited budget adjustments were permitted during the inaugural FIPS funding cycle due to compressed implementation timelines and the establishment of new program procedures. These accommodations were specific to that funding cycle and should not be considered standard program practice.

Except in extraordinary circumstances, rebudgeting between major budget categories after award will not be permitted without prior written approval from the Division of Research. Requests for budget modifications will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis and should not be assumed to be approved.

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).

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)

Ineligible Expenses

- Salary, consulting fees, honoraria, stipends, or other compensation for industry partner personnel.
- Equipment, including general-purpose computers.
- Publication costs.
- Subawards or direct financial transfers to industry partners.
- General-purpose computing devices, unless specifically justified and approved.
- Equipment purchases not directly related to partnership-development activities.
- Entertainment expenses.
- Membership fees or professional society dues.
- Costs incurred outside the approved project period.
- Expenditures inconsistent with the approved award budget.

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.

4. PI AND CO-PI BIOSKETCHES

You may use any format permitted by federal agencies, including biosketches generated by SciENcv in the NSF or NIH format.. If not using a predetermined format, 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.

5. LETTERS OF SUPPORT OR COLLABORATION FROM INDUSTRY (2 pages max.)

Collaborators should confirm participation in the project, describe their expected engagement, and indicate their interest in future sponsored research, external funding opportunities, technology development, or other collaborative activities resulting from the partnership.

Application Submission Process

Submission Deadline: January 15, 2027 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.
- 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 Division 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 Division 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, and Finish Line awards.

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

Criterion	Description
Partnership Readiness	Quality of industry engagement, intellectual property planning, conflict management, and likelihood of successful long-term collaboration.

Rating Scale for all criteria:

6: Excellent	Very Strong with few or no minor (easily addressed) weaknesses; reserved for proposals of the highest quality
5: Very Good	Strong, with several minor weaknesses
4: Good	Strong, with moderate weakness
3: Satisfactory	Adequate strengths to support the proposed activities, but several moderate weaknesses reduce the overall competitiveness of the proposal
2: Fair	Some strengths, with at least one major weakness
1: Poor	Very few strengths and several major weaknesses

Stage 3: Award Decision

Funding decisions are made by Division 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. **Customer Discovery and Industry Engagement Requirement**. Teams receiving FIPS grant will be required to participate in the **NSF I-Corps** regional program at the Lubar Entrepreneurship Center or recommended Great Lakes I-Corps Hub program during the grant period.
    a. Through structured customer discovery, teams will engage with industry partners, potential users, customers, and other relevant stakeholders to better understand the problem space, test key assumptions, and identify barriers and opportunities for research translation.
    b. This activity is intended to help teams build meaningful industry connections, refine the direction and potential applications of their research, and identify appropriate follow-on funding, partnership, and commercialization opportunities.
4. The final award amount is subject to negotiation with the Division of Research.
5. The PI agrees to participate in periodic progress reviews and program assessment activities organized by the Division of Research.
6. The PI agrees to pursue external funding opportunities with a total anticipated value of at least three times the FIPS award amount, including both project funds and additional project costs, as specified in the award budget.
7. Project personnel agree to comply with applicable UW System intellectual property policies and UWM Research Foundation procedures.

    Any inventions, discoveries, technologies, software, copyrightable works, materials, data, methods, or other intellectual property conceived, created, developed, or first reduced to practice through activities supported by FIPS funding must be disclosed to the UWM Research Foundation, regardless of whether commercialization is anticipated.

    Applicants should understand that intellectual property arising from FIPS-supported activities is subject to applicable UW System intellectual property policies and university ownership, protection, licensing, and commercialization procedures. Prior to public disclosure of potentially patentable inventions, investigators are encouraged to consult with the UWM Research Foundation regarding intellectual property protection strategies. Intellectual property disclosures should be submitted to the UWM Research Foundation as soon as practicable following discovery or development.

    Disclosure submissions may be made through the UWM Research Foundation Inventor Portal: https://uwm.inteum.com/uwm/inventorportal/login.aspx.
8. As a condition of receiving a FIPS award, PIs and any required project personnel may be required to execute award-related agreements and certifications, including intellectual property acknowledgement or assignment documents required under UW System and UWM Research Foundation policies.
9. The PI must notify Melissa Burnett, UWM Industry Outreach Specialist, if s/he will be leaving UWM before the project end date. The Division of Research reserves the right to determine the disposition of any remaining project funds.
10. 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.)
11. Submit brief reports to the Division of Research that describe the project activities during the award period, and outcomes attributable to the funding.
12. 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.