

Call for Indications of Interest NSF Major Research Instrumentation (MRI) Program

Arkansas State will hold an internal competition to select projects for submission to the National Science Foundation's 2025-26 Major Research Instrumentation (MRI) program competition.

About NSF's MRI Program

The MRI Program serves to increase access to multi-user scientific and engineering instrumentation for research and student research training. MRI provides support to acquire critical research instrumentation and to develop next-generation research instruments that open new opportunities to advance the frontiers in science and engineering research. Additionally, an MRI award is expected to enhance research training of students who will become the next generation of instrument users, designers and builders.

A MRI proposal may request up to \$4 million for either acquisition or development of a research instrument. Each institution may submit in "Tracks" as defined below, *with no more than two submissions in Track 1 and no more than one submission in Track 2.*

- Track 1: proposals that request funds greater than or equal to \$100,000 and less than \$1.4 M.
- Track 2: proposals that request funds greater than or equal to \$1.4 M and up to and including \$4 M.
- Track 3: proposals are those that request funds from NSF greater than or equal to \$100,000 and less than or equal to \$4 M for the purchase, installation, operation, and maintenance of equipment and instrumentation to reduce consumption of helium.

Proposals are due to NSF on November 14, 2025. See details at: [nsf.gov/funding/pgm_summ.jsp?pins_id=5260](https://www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm_summ.jsp?pins_id=5260). Note: these guidelines are current at the writing of this internal award competition; any changes NSF might make to these guidelines will be posted during the fall semester.

Arkansas State's MRI Submission

To put forth the strongest proposals from our campus, an internal competition will be held to select applicants to submit a proposal to the NSF. This internal competition is announced in June with an August submission date to give PIs time to: 1) assemble a strong team of faculty whose research the instrument will enable; and 2) secure written commitment from their college dean for required ongoing instrument expenses.

To apply, submit an **Indication of Interest** consisting of a two-page project summary including details on: 1) whether the request is for an acquisition or development project; 2) the proposed instrument and why it is needed; 3) the estimated cost and cost breakdown; 4) the faculty research activities that will be enabled with the instrument; 5) student research training the instrument will support; 6) any preparatory activities you have completed to write the MRI proposal; and 7) the intellectual merit and broader impacts of the proposed research activities. In addition, please provide a letter from your dean indicating their commitment to support the instrument's operating and maintenance costs over its lifetime, and any supporting equipment and renovation costs if required. Applicants proposing to revise and resubmit a previously submitted proposal must also provide a copy of the reviewers' comments and a summary of a conversation held with their Program Officer regarding how to improve the proposal. All documents are due by 12 pm (noon) on **FRIDAY, August 1, 2025** to research@astate.edu.

The review process for **Indications of Interest** consists of two steps: 1) eligibility review; and 2) full proposal review. To determine eligibility, RTT will use the MRI guidelines to ensure all Indications of Interest meet NSF's program requirements including those pertaining to allowable/unallowable requests.

Applicants are expected to read the MRI guidelines before submitting, and to devote as much attention to their two page summary as they would if submitting the same to the NSF.

Should you have any questions, feel free to contact research@astate.edu.