Texas A&M University System Research Excellence Fund (REF)
Strategic Research Initiatives

The Texas A&M University System REF Strategic Research Initiatives support System-wide participation in high-impact research themes that align with state and national research priorities, to increase competitiveness for large-scale external funding from federal, state, and private sponsors. Proposals must include at least two A&M System member institutions as substantive partners to the lead institution. The lead principal investigator (PI) and other PIs and co-PIs must be PI-eligible and hold a full-time faculty or research staff appointment at an A&M System member university or agency. Proposals may request up to $100,000 (no less than $25,000) over 12 months. The program limits proposal submission to five per A&M System member university submitted by the Vice President for Research (VPR). Detailed program requirements and application instructions can be found on the final page below.

Texas A&M University (TAMU) Internal Selection Process
1. Eligible PI uploads their proposals (with the required elements) to InfoReady by February 23, 2026.
2. The VPR Office is notified and reviews the proposals for compliance check (if any issues, the proposal will be declined).
3. VPR assigns proposals from each college/unit to their respective URC Dean (i.e., Associate Dean for Research or equivalent) for college/unit-level review and selection.
4. After completing their reviews, each college/unit (URC Dean or equivalent) will need to,
    o Log in to InfoReady and click the "Reviews" link in the top header
    o Search for the proposals they want to approve and click the application title link
    o Select "I Approve" and click the Submit Review button
   Only approve the recommended number of proposals (up to 2 for colleges/units with ≥250 Tenured/Tenure Track faculty and 1 for <250 Tenured/Tenure Track faculty) by March 27, 2026, for further consideration by the VPR. *Note: No need to select "I do not approve" for those internal applications not moving forward.*
5. VPR organizes a review committee for the nominations based on the review criteria. The review committee may include representatives of University Research Council (URC), Council of Principal Investigators (CPI), as well as faculty experts.
6. Based on the review committee's recommendation, VPR prepares a Memo of Support for the three selected proposals based on the draft Memo of Support prepared by the PI.
7. VPR creates a single PDF version for each selected proposal for submission to the System via email (ref@tamus.edu) by May 1, 2026.
8. For nominations not selected for submission to the System, InfoReady will notify the relevant URC Deans and PI of the status of their nominations.
9. For nominations submitted to the System, VPR will notify the relevant URC Deans of the outcome of the nominations as soon as a notification is received from the System.

Important Deadlines:
- February 23, 2026: Deadline for Eligible PIs to Submit their Proposal to InfoReady.
- March 27, 2026: Deadline for URC Deans to Review, Select, and Nominate the recommended number of proposals for their college/unit to VPR, for further consideration.
- May 1, 2026: Deadline for Submission of Proposals (by VPR) to the System.

The following information will be requested in InfoReady.

Collaborative Discovery Grants - Page 1
- PI First Name
- PI Last Name
- PI Primary Title
- PI Email Address
- PI Primary Organization
- PI Department
- Co-PI Information (Name, College, Department, University)

Collaborative Discovery Grants - Page 2 (See RFP for Additional Details)
- Application Title
- Cover Page *(1 page - Word File Only)*
- Project Summary *(1 page - Word File Only)*
- Project Description *(up to 3 pages - Word File Only)*
- Collaboration Plan *(1 page - Word File Only)*
- Milestones and Deliverables (1 page - Word File Only)
- Budget Details including Cost Share *(1 page - Word File Only).* <u>*Note:*</u> *Cost Share is encouraged but not required.*
- Biographical Sketches (PIs and co-PIs - PDF Only)
- Letters of Commitment *(5 letters, 1 page each - Word or PDF)*
  - A maximum of 5 letters may be submitted, each limited to 1 page, from collaborating A&M System member institutions.
- Draft Memo of Support from VPR *(1 page - Word File Only, to be drafted by PI)*