Summer/Semester Undergraduate Research Experience Program (SURE)

Program Announcement and Request for Proposals

Program Announcement	Proposal Deadline
WVSR.SURE.2024 (replaces SURE.2020.WV.03)	October 16, 2023 (due by 5 p.m.)

Eligibility

Organization: All regionally accredited public and private baccalaureate colleges and universities in West Virginia.

Principal Investigator (PI) Eligibility: President, Provost, or other senior academic official. If another individual or agent is making the application, the endorsement of the Provost will be required to signify official approval of the plan.

Limit on Proposals: One from any eligible institution.

Award Information

Type of Award: Cost reimburseable

Anticipated Award Date: December 15, 2023

Award Period: Up to 3 years dependent on funding availability

Estimated Number of Awards: 5-6

Maximum Annual Funding Per Award: $75,000

Anticipated Total Annual Funding: $300,000

Cost Share Requirement: None

Program Description

Providing substantive research experiences in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields to undergraduate students is a crucial step in preparing the next generation of STEM researchers and faculty. Undergraduates attending West Virginia colleges and universities have limited opportunities to engage in STEM research, and this lack of opportunity results in fewer students pursuing graduate study and careers in STEM fields. To address this lack of opportunity, West Virginia Science, Technology and Research (STaR) created the Summer/Semester Undergraduate Research Experience Program (SURE) to help colleges and universities in West Virginia provide research experiences to undergraduates in STEM fields. Eligible undergraduates should be substantially involved in on-going research programs at the home institution, other institutions of higher education, or private and federal research organizations. Grants will be awarded to selected institutions for the purpose of providing ($500-$2,000) stipends to undergraduate students. These institutions will be responsible for administering the grants to individual undergraduate students.

A strategic plan for SURE on the institution's campus will provide STaR with insights to potentially successful programs. The institutional plan should be the centerpiece of an application to provide a block grant to that institution. Applicants may propose a single-year project or a continuing program for up to three years. Each interested institution must submit an application, endorsed by its Provost, President, or senior academic official, which addresses the following questions:

Current student STEM demographics

- What current undergraduate STEM programs are sponsored by your institution?
- In what STEM fields are the students majoring?
- How many undergraduates will participate in the SURE program?

SURE Implementation Plan

- With what specific research projects will the students be working?
- What are the duties/tasks students will be performing?
- Which faculty will serve as research mentors?
- What are the qualifications of the mentor faculty?
- What is the duration of the SURE program (summer, single semester, full year)?
- What opportunities will the students have to present the results of their research work (e.g., campus events, professional conferences, appropriate journals, undergraduate research competitions)?
- How will the institution create an on-campus network of SURE participants (e.g., weekly brown-bag lunches, monthly cross-project meetings, mentoring sessions)?

Meeting SURE program goals

- If the applicant is a baccalaureate four-year institution, how will it make SURE participants aware of STEM graduate opportunities in West Virginia (e.g. STEM Fellowships)? How will the institution encourage SURE participants to pursue graduate study in STEM fields?
- Are there direct linkages to strategic graduate programs at West Virginia University or Marshall University?
- What efforts will the institution make to increase the number of undergraduates who apply for and receive nationally competitive scholarships and fellowships in STEM fields (e.g., Goldwater, Howard Hughes, National Science Foundation, Udall)?
- How will the institution increase the diversity of undergraduate students in STEM fields (diversity includes URG and first-generation college students)? What milestones are being used?

Management of SURE

- How will SURE be initiated and how will the plan differ in future years?
- How is the institution equipped to ensure a successful, meaningful SURE program?
- How much total funding is requested? Will the SURE grant be augmented with institutional or other external funds? If so, how?
- Describe methods for communicating, coordinating and managing activities, including identification of the leadership team and chain of command.

- Describe the evaluation process that will be used to monitor progress under the project and discuss the personnel involved

Given STaR's emphasis on infrastructure growth in promising cluster areas, strategic plans should pay special attention to existing research growth strategies in the state research infrastructure improvement program. Proposals that link with the thematic research areas at state research universities are encouraged.

Applications for SURE Grants must be submitted by the specified due date and should include a detailed budget for each year (and a cumulative budget) inclusive of the funds, numbers of students and specific expenditures in each discipline or research area.

Application

Competition for funds is strong, and STaR receives far more proposals than can be supported. Proposals must be submitted via the Grant Opportunity (GO!) system. Instructions will be posted to our website.

Project Summary: Provide a one-page summary that includes a heading and the project abstract. The heading should include the title of the proposed endeavor and the names of the submitting institution and Principal Investigator. The abstract should briefly describe the project goals, content, and expected outcomes.

Project Description: Refer to the Program Description section of this solicitation, which clearly outlines the requirements for the project description section of the proposal. The project description narrative is limited to 15 pages with 2.5-cm margins on all sides and should be single-spaced and use a legible 10-point Arial or 12-point proportional font (such as Times New Roman).

NOTE: The entire proposal including the Project Summary and Project Description needs to be uploaded as a single word processing or PDF document using the upload button (up-arrow icon) in the Action column on the far right.

Biographical Sketches: Include a biographical sketch of no more than two (2) pages for each key personnel member. Each sketch should be sufficiently detailed to show that necessary expertise is available to conduct the project. Biosketches should be submitted for all research mentors as well as project leaders. Biosketches should include academic credentials, external funding received in the last five years, refereed publications in the last five years, and the students for whom the mentor or leader served as a thesis advisor or other research sponsor.

Budget: Show all estimated costs and cost sharing from the institution (if applicable). A budget spreadsheet template can be downloaded from the GO! website using the Download Budget Template button in the menu panel on the left. When you have completed your budget, upload it to GO! by clicking on the View, Submit Budget button in the menu panel on the left, locating your proposal in the table, and then then clicking on the upload button (up-arrow icon) in the Action column on the far right . If you need to make changes to the budget, upload a new budget sheet which will replace the original upload. You may make changes until the close of the application period.

Budgetary Information:

Cost Sharing

- No matching is required; however, STaR will consider the positive impact of leveraging internal and external support in the overall consideration of each proposal.

Indirect Cost Limitations

- Overhead costs are not allowed.

Other Budgetary Limitations:

- Supplies and equipment costs are not allowed except that the student may elect to purchase supplies with his or her stipend. A reasonable travel budget for student and mentor participation in research related events may be considered.

Review and Award Procedures

STaR will review the applications and plans submitted by the institutions, provide feedback on their contents, and recommend the amount of the SURE grants to be awarded to each applicant. Upon approval by the Director for STaR, these awards will be approved and processed by the Higher Education Policy Commission. The time from submission to award is generally less than 8 weeks.

Reporting Requirements

All recipients of STaR funding are required to provide a written report to STaR on an annual basis. Data must be provided in the report that includes standard demographics of the student population served and success of students pursuing STEM degrees and graduate programs. Evidence of student engagement, including publications, participation in other competitions, academic achievement, and research accomplishments, should be included. Financial reporting and invoicing should be done no more than monthly and no less than quarterly and shall be on a reimbursement basis. Invoice should reflect expenses by budget item. For multi-year awards, annual reports are due 60 days prior to the current grant reporting period. Final reports are due 60 days after the grant ending date must be filed using the GO! system reporting function.

Contact Information

For questions, please contact the program officer:

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