Nevada Governor's
Office of Science,
Innovation and
Technology

Request for Applications

Nevada Regional STEM Networks

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Purpose: In order to increase business, family, and community engagement at the local level, The Office of Science, Innovation and Technology (OSIT) proposes to start and fund three regional STEM Networks: Southern Nevada, Northwest Nevada, and Rural Nevada. The Networks would be overseen by OSIT and the STEM Advisory Council. Each Network will have the following core responsibilities: 1) Identify on-the-ground programmatic gaps or implementation challenges in need of a state-level solution. 2) Grow interest, awareness, and achievement in STEM in the region. 3) Carry out on-the-ground implementation of state-level programs/goals. 4 Identify and build local programs and initiatives worthy of scaling statewide. 5) Create and facilitate partnerships and the sharing of resources among K-12, higher education, and business/industry within the region.

Proposals Due: December 6, 2019 at 5:00pm

Funding Available: $200,000 per Regional STEM Network

Bidder's Call: November 1, 2019 at 2:00pm.
Dial in Number: 775-687-0999 or 702-486-5260
Passcode: 70987#

Eligibility: Any organization with the expertise and capacity to carry out the requirements of this Request for Applications.

Website: Updates to the Frequently Asked Questions document will be posted at http://osit.nv.gov. Please check the website regularly for updates. Additionally, information about past awardees can be found on the OSIT website.

Contact: Brian Mitchell
775-687-0987 or blmitchell@gov.nv.gov

Request for Applications – Nevada Regional STEM Networks

Governor's Office of Science, Innovation and Technology

INTRODUCTION:

The Governor's Office of Science, Innovation and Technology (OSIT) of Nevada was established by the Legislature (NRS 223.600) to promote education, workforce, and economic development and diversification efforts in the areas of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM).

Providing students with the skills afforded by a high-quality STEM education has never been more important. STEM job growth in Nevada is projected to be 50% higher than non-STEM job growth over the next seven years and STEM jobs pay nearly twice as much as non-STEM jobs. Beyond wages and employment, STEM education endues creativity, problem solving, communication, and collaboration skills that are essential for students in any career field or civic endeavor.

In order to increase student, school, family, and business engagement in STEM in diverse communities throughout Nevada, OSIT proposes to start and fund three regional STEM Networks in Southern Nevada, Northwest Nevada, and Rural Nevada. The Networks will be overseen by OSIT and the Nevada STEM Advisory Council. Selected applicants will be responsible to share in the cost of the Network.

SECTION I: DESIRED OUTCOMES

The overarching goals of the three regional STEM Networks are to:
1) Increase the number and quality of formal and informal STEM-focused education programs in all communities in Nevada.
2) Increase student awareness, interest, enrollment, and achievement in formal and informal STEM-focused education programs.
3) Grow the number and depth of school-business-community STEM partnerships.

The three regional STEM Networks would have five important tasks:
1) Identify on-the-ground programmatic gaps or implementation challenges in need of a state-level solution.
2) Grow interest, awareness, and achievement in STEM in the region.
3) Carry out on-the-ground implementation of state-level programs/goals.
4) Identify and build local programs and initiatives worthy of scaling statewide.
5) Create and facilitate partnerships and the sharing of resources among K-12, higher education, and business/industry within the region.

SECTION II: ELIGIBILITY AND AWARD INFORMATION

Eligible Applicants:
Any organization with the expertise and capacity to carry out the requirements of this RFA is eligible to apply. Possible applicants could include institutions of higher education, school districts or charter schools, non-profit organizations, informal STEM educators, businesses, local governments, or museums.

Awards Process:

A competitive process will be used to fund Sponsor Organizations to direct and manage three regional STEM Networks. All responses that meet the minimum requirements laid out below in Section IV will be scored by a review team selected by OSIT. Applicants are required to provide detailed answers to the questions below. OSIT reserves the right to determine the number of awards for each grant cycle, based on funds available and projects selected.

OSIT will sign a grant agreement with each awarded applicant and designate it the Network Sponsor Organization. The grant agreement will terminate on June 30, 2021. Each Sponsor Organization will receive up to $100,000 in each fiscal year; up to $200,000 total. The first tranche of $100,000 will be distributed upon award and the second tranche will be distributed July, 2020.

SECTION III: REGIONAL STEM NETWORK LOCATIONS, STRUCTURE, ESSENTIAL ACTIVITIES, DELIVERABLES, AND FUNDING

Regional STEM Network Locations:

OSIT intends to fund Sponsor Organizations to direct and manage three regional STEM Networks. The three Networks will have responsibility for the following territories:
- Southern Nevada Regional STEM Network covering Clark County;
- Northwest Nevada Regional STEM Network covering Douglas, Carson City, Lyon, Storey, and Washoe Counties; and
- Rural Nevada Regional STEM Network covering Churchill, Elko, Esmeralda, Eureka, Humboldt, Lander, Lincoln, Nye, Mineral, Pershing, and White Pine Counties.

The Sponsor Organization for each Network must be located within one of the counties it serves.

Regional STEM Network Structure:

The Sponsor Organization must designate a Network Director to manage the day-to-day operations of the Network. The Network Director must spend at least 50 percent of her/his time on the Network and 100 percent of her/his time on the Network when funded by the grant[1]. See the section below on eligible uses of funding for additional details.

The Sponsor Organization must organize a Regional STEM Network Advisory Board made up of individuals outside the Sponsor Organization, that live in the counties that make up the Network and that are committed to advancing the Network's mission. Expenditures made by the Sponsor Organization must be approved by this Advisory Board.

Essential Activities

The following are examples of essential activities that the Regional STEM Network may undertake. Each Region's Network Advisory Board and the State STEM Advisory Council may assign other essential activities. Essential activities should be undertaken after consultation with the Network Advisory Board.

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[1] If 100 percent of the Network Director's salary and benefits come from the grant, 100 percent of the Network Director's time must be spent managing the Network. If the Sponsor Organization chooses to match salary and benefits, i.e. 50 percent grant funds and 50 percent match funds, the Network Director must spent at least 50 percent of her/his time on managing the Network. If the Sponsor Organization matches funding to a lesser amount, i.e. salary paid at 70 percent grant and 30 percent match, the Network Director must spend 70 percent of her/his time on the Network. If the Sponsor Organization matches at a greater rate than 50 percent, the Network Director must still spend at least 50 percent of her/his time on managing the Network.

- Assist OSIT and the STEM Advisory Council in creating a statewide asset map of STEM programs and activities.
- Identify Regional gaps in STEM education and convene essential stakeholders to develop initiatives to address those gaps.
- Develop Regional STEM goals that align to statewide STEM goals and develop data-driven action plans to address those goals.
- Fund initiatives and activities, in consultation with the Network Advisory Board, which will contribute to the successful completion of the identified goals.
- Track the progress and measure the success of funded initiatives and activities.
- Proactively seek out opportunities to promote STEM within the Region.
- Grow business engagement in the Region to support the growth of STEM activities and initiatives.
- Provide support and assistance to schools, postsecondary institutions, informal STEM educators, STEM partners, and other stakeholders within the Region as they implement STEM programs and activities.
- Assist OSIT and the STEM Advisory Council in growing promising programs statewide.
- Other duties as assigned by OSIT or the STEM Advisory Council.

Deliverables

The following are some of the expected deliverables of each Network Sponsor Organization and its Director. Other duties may be assigned by the Nevada State STEM Advisory Council.
- Open communication and sharing of resources and promising practices with the STEM Advisory Council and other Regional Networks.
- Network Director participates in twice-monthly conference calls with the other Regions and OSIT.
- Network Director attends STEM Advisory Council meetings and provides reports on activities within the Region.
- Submits quarterly and annual fiscal and progress reports to the Regional STEM Network Advisory Board, the STEM Advisory Council, and OSIT.

Allowable Uses of Funding:

Grant funding may be used for the following purposes. The Sponsor Organization may use up to 50 percent of the grant funds it receives for the Director's salary and benefits. It is expected that the winning applicant will match some of the costs of the Network, such as providing office space, office equipment, funding for travel, and other supports for the Network Director. The STEM Advisory Council will provide further guidance on use of some of the funds.

- Up to 50 percent of the grant funds for the Network Director's salary and benefits;
- At least 50 percent of the grant must be spent on projects and initiatives within the Network's region that increase interest, awareness, and achievement in STEM. Priority should be given to projects and initiatives that target underrepresented groups in STEM; and
- An indirect cost or F&A rate of up to 5% (which is equal to the rate allowed by networks in other states) is not required but may be applied prior to calculating the percentages for salary and grants.

Unallowable Uses of Funds

- Funding from the grant should not be used to supplant existing funding;
- Funding for salary and benefit expenses paid to the Network Director beyond the allowable amount;

- Equipment or supplies used primarily by the Network Director;
- Travel or other related expenses; or
- Funding for projects or activities that do not align with the State STEM vision.

SECTION IV: APPLICATION & SUBMISSION INFORMATION

A comprehensive, well-written application provides all the information necessary for a complete evaluation. The OSIT review committee will use the rubric located in Attachment A to evaluate applications. A complete application will include the following three components listed below and described later in greater detail. Each section inside the grant should include headings and subheadings:

    1) Cover Sheet;
    2) Project Narrative;
    3) Budget

Incomplete applications or applications that did not follow the submission requirements, including the formatting requirements described in detail below, as of the filing deadline, will be disqualified and will not be scored for STEM Regional STEM Network grant consideration.

1. Cover Sheet (Pass/Fail)

Format: The cover sheet must not exceed one (1) page, use Times New Roman 12-point font, is not included in the 10-page narrative limitation and must contain the following information:

- **Applicant Information**
  Applicant organization name, full mailing and physical addresses, phone number, and state vendor ID number
- **Region**
  List which of the three regional networks the applicant is applying to lead
- **Project Director Information** (overall project responsibility)
  Full name, title, organization, mailing and physical address, daytime & evening phone, email address
- **Project Contact** (daily project contact – if different than director)
  Full name, title, organization, mailing and physical address, daytime & evening phone, email address
- **Fiscal Agent Contact** (daily contact for fiscal matters– if different than Project Contact)
  Full name, title, organization, mailing and physical address, daytime & evening phone, email address

2. Project Narrative (50 points possible)

Format: The Project Narrative must not exceed ten (10) pages, it must be double-spaced, Times New Roman 12-point font with 1-inch margins on all sides of 8½ by 11 size (letter size) paper.

The following information must be contained within the Project Narrative. Please respond to each question or statement below and please number your response.

1) Provide your organization's mission and vision statement.
2) Propose a mission and vision statement for the STEM Region.
3) Describe your organization's expertise with STEM. What resources does your organization bring to the table? Why should the Regional STEM Network be located at your organization?
4) What support, including funding or organizational support, will your organization provide to the Regional STEM Network and its Director?
5) If you know who you will hire for Regional STEM Network Director, please provide her/his name and resume or CV. If not, please provide the qualifications you will look for in a Director.
6) Describe your Region's biggest challenges with STEM education. How would you propose to solve them?
7) Describe your Region's biggest successes with STEM education. How would you propose to scale them within the Region, especially to underrepresented students, and eventually statewide?
8) Describe one innovative idea you would like to see the Regional STEM Network pursue to increase interest, awareness, or achievement in STEM. What steps are needed to implement? What resources would your organization bring to bear to support funding from the grant leading to implementation?
9) Describe the relationships and partnerships you have with other essential stakeholders in the Region (education, business, non-profits, informal educators, workforce, government, etc.) Which individuals or organizations would you target to serve on the Regional STEM Network Advisory Board?
10) Are there essential stakeholders in the region that your organization does not yet have a relationship with? How would your organization seek to involve them in the work of the Network?

3. **Budget-** (Pass/Fail)

Format: Table

Please provide a table describing how you would allocate the $100,000 grant using the format below. Please refer to Section III, *Allowable Uses of Funding* above for further information.

Amount Director salary and benefits	Amount match (if applicable)	Amount grants	Amount F&A (if applicable)	Total (divided grant and match)

Submission Timeline and Instructions

Submit one (1) electronic copy of the application in a single pdf by 5:00 p.m., December 6, 2019, to:

Brian Mitchell
Governor's Office of Science, Innovation and Technology
100 North Stewart Street, Suite 220
Carson City, NV 89701
blmitchell@gov.nv.gov

Applications must be received, not postmarked, by the date above. Applications received after the date above will not be considered.

Tips & Common Pitfalls to Avoid

- Observe page limits (any pages over the page limit will not be reviewed).
- Follow stated formatting guidelines.
- Respond to all sections of the application; ensure the thread that ties the application sections together are related.
- Supplanting - Grant funds may not be used to replace federal, state, or local funds that are currently being used or are forthcoming.
- Spell out acronyms at initial use. Eliminate jargon whenever possible.
- Do not assume reviewers are familiar with existing projects.
- Read the Request for Application (RFA) carefully.
- Use local statistics rather than national statistics.
- Submit applications early in case revisions need to be made.

SECTION V: AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

Grant Review and Selection Process
Eligible applications are reviewed, evaluated, and competitively scored by a review committee using the scoring matrix located in Attachment A. Applications selected to receive a grant award will enter into a contract with OSIT in compliance with the State of Nevada regulations. OSIT reserves the right to award all, part or none of the available grant funding during this grant round. To avoid disqualification, all application areas must be concise, complete and follow all formatting rules. Denial letters will be sent to applicants that are not funded.

Grant Commencement and Duration
Project implementation must be initiated within thirty days (30) after funding is awarded. Requests for an exception to this rule must be justified and submitted in writing within thirty days of award. At the discretion of OSIT, the grantee risks losing the award if the project does not commence as required.

All grant funding must be spent by June 30, 2020.

Fiscal Responsibilities
All recipients of funding are required to identify a fiscal agent if the grantee is not its own fiscal agent. All recipients of funding are required to establish and maintain accounting systems and financial records to accurately account for awarded funds. All grant awards are subject to audits during and within three years after the grant award reporting period has concluded.

Reporting Requirements
All recipients of funding are required to submit quarterly fiscal reports and quarterly progress reports.

Additional Information

Financial obligations of the State payable after the current fiscal year are contingent upon funds for that purpose being appropriated, budgeted, and otherwise made available. In the event funds are not appropriated, any resulting contracts (grant awards) will become null and void, without penalty to the state of Nevada.

All materials submitted regarding this application for OSIT funds becomes the property of the state of Nevada. Upon the funding of the project, the contents of the application will become contractual obligations.

Bidding Process
The grantee must follow all applicable local, state and/or federal laws pertaining to the expenditure of funds. Proof of Invitation to Bid, contracts, and any other pertinent documentation must be retained by the grantee. Likewise, all local, state, and federal permits required for construction projects must be acquired by the grantee within 90 days after the contract is entered into.

Access for Persons with Disabilities
The grantee shall assure that persons with disabilities are not precluded from using OSIT grant funded facilities. Projects must meet requirements as set by the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Maintenance and Operation

The grantee is responsible for seeing that OSIT grant funded projects are maintained and operated in a condition equal to what existed when the project was completed; normal wear and tear is accepted. Maintenance and operations standards should be adopted upon completion of the project.

Signs

Grantee shall post and maintain appropriate permanent signs or decals upon project sites or equipment acknowledging funding assistance from the appropriate grant fund upon the start of the project or purchase of equipment.

Nondiscrimination

Projects funded with OSIT grant funds shall be available for public use, regardless of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, or national origin.

In any instance that the grant notice, award, rules, regulations, and procedures are silent – prior written approval is required.

SECTION VI: OSIT GRANT CONTACTS

Grant Administration Contact:

Tracey Gaffney

Governor's Office of Science, Innovation and Technology

100 North Stewart Street, Suite 220

Carson City, NV 89701

775-687-0989

tgaffney@gov.nv.gov

Thank your interest in applying for this grant. You will be contacted if further information is required. Do not begin your project or incur costs until you have received, signed and returned a grant award contract.

Attachment A- Regional STEM Network Applicant Evaluation Rubric

Applicant	Region	Mission and Alignment to STEM	Expertise, Resources, and Capacity	Commitment to Support the work of the Network	Current Relationships with Regional STEM Stakeholders and Capacity to Build New Relationships	Vision for STEM in the Region	Total Score (out of 50)	Comments
		10= strong existing STEM mission, work of the network compliments existing initiatives 1= poor fit, serving as the STEM Network would distract from current mission	10= significant past and current expertise, ample human and organizational assets at the Director's disposal, significant capacity to grow the Network and accomplish essential activities 1= little history or no current activity in STEM, few resources to grow STEM beyond the grant	10= pledged to dedicate additional resources and expertise to the operation of the Network 1= no cost sharing	10= strong relationships with K-12, higher education, business, non-profits, informal education, etc. throughout the region; able to leverage relationships to achieve goals 1= little evidence of history of working with other STEM stakeholders, relationships in the Region are weak or lacking	10= presents an inspiring and well-thought out vision for STEM in the region; understands both the current state of STEM and its importance, innovative and bold ideas 1= uninspiring, lacks a compelling vision for how STEM could be enhanced in the Region		