



Request for Applications (RFA) ***Rural STEM Network Grant VI***

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Objective: To support and fund innovative initiatives that move the Rural STEM Network closer to its ultimate objective: *There is a diverse workforce with the awareness, skills, and education that meets the needs of STEM industries in Rural Nevada.*

Successful projects will address one of the following intermediate outcomes for the region. See page three for more information.

- STEM Stakeholders employ evidence-based strategies that lead to increased participation in high-quality STEM programs from all groups, with a particular focus on students that are traditionally underserved.
- All Nevadans, especially families, students, and job seekers are aware of the benefits of STEM education and opportunities for STEM careers.
- High-quality STEM education programs with knowledgeable educators and engaged business partners exist in all counties, cities, and districts.

Applications Due: June 28, 2024 by 5:00 p.m. PST

Funding Available: \$50,000

Eligibility: Any organization that can meet the objectives of the grant described in Section I below.

Website: Information about past awardees can be found on the OSIT website:
<http://osit.nv.gov>

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Request for Applications Rural STEM Network Grant V

INTRODUCTION:

The Governor's Office of Science, Innovation and Technology (OSIT) of Nevada was established by the Legislature (NRS 223.600) to promote, coordinate and align education, workforce, and economic development and diversification efforts in the areas of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). OSIT created three regional STEM Networks to assist it in accomplishing this work on a local level.

A skilled workforce is critical to Nevada's continued economic development and diversification. Likewise, postsecondary education and skills training help students qualify for jobs that provide family-sustaining wages. Building interest, awareness, and skills in STEM must begin in early education and continue throughout secondary education to fill Nevada's pipeline to careers. Programs and efforts must be designed with an equity focus so that underrepresented groups enjoy the benefits of a STEM education. Agreement and collaboration to achieve this common vision for STEM in Rural Nevada is not the responsibility of any one sector alone; formal and informal education, business, and government sectors must work together if we are to be successful.

SECTION I: DESIRED OUTCOMES

This grant opportunity focuses on making progress toward the Rural STEM Network's Ultimate Outcome as articulated in the Rural STEM Network Strategic Direction. The Rural STEM Network Strategic Direction is included as Attachment A. The Rural STEM Network's ultimate outcome is: *There is a diverse workforce with the awareness, skills, and education that meets the needs of STEM industries in Rural Nevada.*

The Rural STEM Network Advisory Committee has identified three intermediate outcomes on the path to its ultimate objective:

- **Equity in STEM:** STEM Stakeholders employ evidence-based strategies that lead to increased participation in high-quality STEM programs from all groups, with a particular focus on students that are traditionally underserved.
- **Awareness of STEM:** All Nevadans, especially families, students, and job seekers are aware of the benefits of STEM education and opportunities for STEM careers.
- **High quality STEM:** High quality STEM education programs with knowledgeable educators and engaged business partners exist in all counties, cities, and districts.

Successful applicants for funding will clearly articulate how proposed projects and actions will contribute to the realization of one or more of the three intermediate outcomes identified above. Included in the Rural STEM Network Strategic Direction are six Action Steps that the Network's Advisory Committee will focus its efforts on over the next year. Applicants are invited to apply for funds to assist with these identified action steps.



SECTION II: GRANT INFORMATION

Project Structure:

Funds from a grant award must be used to support the region's ultimate outcome. Grant awards may be used to fund a variety of different projects and activities, settings, and audiences, including:

- in a formal, K-12 setting;
- in an informal, K-12 setting;
- in a postsecondary setting;
- targeting K-12 or postsecondary students or educators, including teachers and administrators;
- targeting regional STEM stakeholders such as families or industry.

Project Type:

Funding may be used:

- For a **Pilot Program** that will implement a new, innovative initiative that meets the needs of the region;
- To **Scale Up** an existing program with a track record of success to reach more beneficiaries within the Rural Region;
- To **Extend** an existing program with a track record of success from another region that does not exist in the Rural Region and that meets the needs of the Rural Region.

Project Examples:

Funding will be prioritized for innovative, research-based projects. In addition, the Rural STEM Network Committee is interested in funding projects such as the following, and encourages applicants to pursue such projects:

- Professional learning in STEM equity
- Develop sustainable professional learning platforms, programs, or courses
- Develop a video campaign to highlight local examples of STEM equity initiatives
- Develop or expand STEM or STEM school mentor programs
- Develop or expand programs to highlight local STEM educators working to further the region's equity, awareness and quality goals

Eligibility Information:

Any organization that can meet the objectives of the grant as outlined in Section I is eligible to apply.

Multi-Regional Applications:

The three Regional STEM Networks will not consider applications to fund the same project that has been submitted to multiple regions. Applicants must select a single Region in which to focus on and solicit funding for each project. Applicants with capacity or infrastructure in multiple Regions may submit applications to multiple Regions, but the applications must seek funding for different projects that uniquely meet the needs of each Region.

Allowable Uses of Funding:

Funding must be used exclusively for purposes related to the project the applicant is seeking to fund. **Grant funding should not supplant existing funding.** All funding must be used to support programming in the region.



Below are examples of possible expenses:

- Pay one-time expenses to develop the project, including salaries and benefits, stipends, or extra-duty pay;
- Pay salary and benefits, stipends, or extra-duty pay associated with administering the project¹;
- Develop or purchase new curricula or teaching materials;
- Design or accredit new industry-recognized credentials or certificates;
- Design a new apprenticeship or career development and training program that meets the guidelines and requirements of the Governor's Office of Workforce Innovation (GOWINN);
- Provide tuition expenses to program participants;
- Provide professional development to K-12 or postsecondary educators;
- Purchase supplies or equipment directly related to and exclusively used by the project's participants;
- Renovate classroom space;
- Develop work-based learning experiences for students participating in the project;
- Develop family or stakeholder outreach and engagement materials;
- Create resources to improve the existing efforts of other STEM stakeholders;
- Fund the creation or activities of committees; or
- Develop marketing strategies and materials.

Unallowable Uses of Funds

- Funding cannot be used to supplant existing funding (state, federal, private);
- Food, drink, or alcohol;
- Transportation expenses for project administrators;
- Equipment or supplies used exclusively by program administrators; or
- Indirect costs or the costs of complying with the grant reporting requirements.

SECTION III: AWARD INFORMATION

Awards Process:

A competitive process will be used to distribute a total of \$50,000. All responses that meet the minimum requirements outlined below in Section IV will be scored by a review team consisting of members of the Rural STEM Network Advisory Committee. Applicants are required to include a detailed scope of work and a detailed budget in their responses to this RFA. OSIT reserves the right to determine the number of awards for each grant cycle, based on funds available and projects selected.

Spending Timeframes:

Spending can begin with a fully executed award agreement. All funding awarded by the State must be spent by June 30, 2025. Please see the Reporting Requirements section below for more details.

¹ To the extent grant funds are exclusively used for the hours worked administering the program. Grant funds cannot be used to cover salary and benefit expenses associated with other duties.



SECTION IV: APPLICATION & SUBMISSION INFORMATION

A comprehensive, well-written application provides all the information necessary for a complete evaluation. The review committee will use the criteria summarized in Attachment B to evaluate applications. A complete application will include the following five (5) components listed below and described later in greater detail. Each section inside the grant should include headings and subheadings. Please number your pages. Attachments and links will not be accepted.

- 1) Cover Sheet; Pass/Fail** 1 page max
- 2) Project Abstract; Pass/Fail** 2 pages max
- 3) Budget Plan; 8 points**
 - 3.1 Budget Narrative 1 page max
 - 3.2 Budget Spreadsheet No page limit
- 4) Project Narrative; 92 points** 10 pages max
 - 4.1 Needs Assessment
 - 4.2 Work Plan
 - 4.3 Equity Action Plan
 - 4.4 Outcome Alignment
 - 4.5 Long-Term Impact
 - 4.6 Data Collection & Evaluation
- 5) Letters of Commitment. 5 points** No page limit

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

1. Cover Sheet (Pass/Fail)

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

Applicant Information

Organization name, full mailing and physical addresses, phone number, website, and State vendor ID number (Note: State Vendor IDs typically start with a T or D followed by eight digits. Visit <https://controller.nv.gov/VendorDB/VendorRegistrationReq/> to register for a State Vendor ID if needed.)

Project Information

Project title, location of project implementation, and proposed dollar amount

Project Type

Is this a pilot, scale-up, or extension? See Section II for more information.



Targeted Intermediate Outcome

Which intermediate outcome from the Rural STEM Network Strategic Direction does this project specifically work toward? See Section I for more information.

Project Director Information (overall project responsibility)

Full name, title, organization, mailing and physical address, phone number, email address

Project Contact (daily project contact – if different than director)

Full name, title, organization, mailing and physical address, phone number, email address

Fiscal Agent Contact (daily contact for fiscal matters– if different than Project Contact)

Full name, title, organization, mailing and physical address, phone number, email address

2. Project Abstract (Pass/Fail)

Format: The Project Abstract must not exceed two (2) 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 project abstract must succinctly summarize the proposed project and should include:

- The project title, requested dollar amount, and location of project implementation
- Describe the project type: If a pilot, describe how this project is innovative. If a scale-up, describe how this project has been successful in the past. If this is an extension, describe how this project has been successful in the past, why you're extending the project into this region, and how the project will be modified to meet the needs of this region.
- Explicitly identify the targeted intermediate outcome from the Rural STEM Network Strategic Direction and how you are addressing it. See Section I for more information;
- A brief summary of the project;
- Target audience; and
- Measurable goals and expected results or outcomes.

3. Budget Plan: Narrative & Detailed Spreadsheet (8 points possible)

Format: The budget narrative must not exceed one (1) page, 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. For the detailed budget spreadsheet, use the template located in Attachment C. The detailed budget spreadsheet does not have a page limit.

The applicant is required to submit a 1) budget narrative and a 2) budget spreadsheet.

3.1 Budget Narrative (5 points possible)

The budget narrative must demonstrate a clear and strong relationship between (1) the project's expenses, (2) the project's goals and activities, and (3) the targeted intermediate outcome from the Rural STEM Network Strategic Direction. The budget narrative should be detailed, reasonable and adequate, cost efficient, and should align with the proposed work plan. The narrative should focus on explaining expenses, not listing or summarizing them. From the budget narrative, the reviewer should be able to



assess how the budget expenditures relate directly to the targeted intermediate outcome from the Rural STEM Network Strategic Direction and how the successful project will reach those outcomes.

3.2 Budget Detailed Spreadsheet (3 points possible)

The budget spreadsheet should be completed using the template provided in Attachment C. Costs should be broken down into individual line items. All project costs should be accounted for. See Attachment C for additional instructions.

Matching funds (up to 5 additional bonus points possible): Matching funds are not required. However, applicants are encouraged to bring additional funding to the project. Matching funds may be cash or in-kind. Examples of cash matching funds include the organization's own funding, federal grants, state grant funding, private philanthropic funding, or funding from industry partners. Examples of in-kind matching funds include equipment, workspace, classroom space, the monetary value of time contributed by professional and technical personnel, or professional services valued at a fair market rate. NOTE: The value placed on loaned or donated equipment may not exceed its fair rental value. The value placed on donated time or services must be consistent with the rate of compensation paid for similar work in the organization or the labor market. Fringe benefits may be included. Please include documentation to back up the valuation of in-kind match. Applicants with one-to-one cash match will receive 10 bonus points.

4. Project Narrative (92 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: 4.1 Outcome Alignment, 4.2 Needs Assessment, 4.3 Work Plan, 4.4 Equity Action Plan, 4.5 Long-Term Impact, 4.6 Data Collection & Evaluation. Please respond to each component below and please number your response.

4.1 Outcome Alignment (20 points possible)

Identify which intermediate outcome from the Rural STEM Network Strategic Direction your project addresses and describe how your project addresses the intermediate outcome you've identified. Justify your response.

Your project should directly advance the region toward one of the following intermediate outcomes:

- STEM Stakeholders in Nevada have equity set as a priority in program design and implementation.
 - If your project claims to move the region toward this intermediate outcome, use this section 4.1 Outcome Alignment to describe how your project is designed around increasing equity in STEM, or how your project supports others in the region to set equity as a priority.
- All Nevadans, especially families, students, and job seekers are aware of the benefits of STEM education and opportunities for STEM careers.
 - If your project claims to move the region toward this intermediate outcome, use this section 4.1 Outcome Alignment to describe how your project increases awareness of STEM opportunities and careers in the region.



- High-quality STEM education programs with knowledgeable educators and engaged business partners exist in all counties, cities, and districts.
 - If your project claims to move the region toward this intermediate outcome, use this section 4.1 Outcome Alignment to describe how your project is high quality. Refer to either the [Nevada STEM Framework](#) or the [STEMList rubric](#).

4.2 Needs Assessment (12 points possible)

Provide data and analysis of why the proposed project is needed. Please respond to each component individually below and please number your response.

- 4.2.1 Provide an explanation of the need for your project. Address challenges or barriers funding from this grant program would address. Refer to the Rural STEM Network Strategic Direction (Attachment A) in your response.
- 4.2.2 Provide an overview of the population you plan to serve including the population's need for this project. Include data on race or ethnicity, socioeconomic status. Include numbers with justification. The population you intend to serve may or may not be the same as who you plan to work directly with (i.e. you propose a professional development for educators at Title 1 schools but the population is students at those schools).
- 4.2.3 Describe any existing efforts to serve this population, either by your organization or by others in the region. Reference the Nevada STEM Asset Map located: https://osit.nv.gov/STEM/Regional_STEM_Networks/

4.3 Work Plan (25 points possible)

Provide a detailed work plan with specific information that describes how the proposed project and grant activities address the needs identified in the Needs Assessment. In your work plan, please respond to each component below and please number your response.

Provide a detailed description of what the applicant will do that includes:

- 4.3.1 A timeline of project phases from award of funds to the completion of the project. Describe of each step of developing the project from start to finish, including who is responsible for each step;
- 4.3.2 How and when the project will be executed
 - i.e., if it is a professional development, describe who will facilitate, what will be taught
 - i.e., if it is a class, describe how students will enroll, where the class will take place, and what students will learn
- 4.3.3 How participants will participate
 - i.e., in-person or virtual?
- 4.3.4 A clearly justified description of the participants or beneficiaries in the project, including numbers
 - i.e., teachers, students, families, businesses
- 4.3.5 An outline of marketing or outreach efforts.



4.4 Equity Action Plan: (10 points possible)

Provide a detailed equity action plan that includes strategies to engage participants from traditionally underrepresented groups in STEM. Examples of underrepresented groups include racial or ethnic minorities, females, veterans, persons in poverty, and persons with disabilities.

- 4.4.1 What research-based strategies will you use to engage participants from traditionally underrepresented groups? For more information regarding equity strategies visit [NAPEquity.org](https://www.napequity.org).
- 4.4.2 Do the strategies outlined go beyond existing efforts by the organization/program? If not, explain why existing efforts are sufficient.

4.5 Long-term Impact (13 points possible)

Please answer the following items individually and number your response:

- 4.5.1 Will the project continue beyond the period of the grant or does this application seek to fund a one-time project?
- 4.5.2 Describe the long-term impact of the project in the context to the answer to question 1. Justify your response.
- 4.5.3 If the project will continue, please list all projected ongoing expenses, including dollar amounts, associated with this project (if applicable).
- 4.5.4 If the project will continue, please describe how the applicant will fund these ongoing expenses including the funding source (if applicable).
- 4.5.5 For organizations seeking to Scale Up or Extend existing programs, please provide detailed past outcomes data here.

4.6 Data Collection & Evaluation (10 points possible)

Provide details about your project's evaluation. Consider what you'll evaluate, what tools you'll use, and what success criteria you will seek. Your evaluation can include programmatic evaluation, such as enrollment and completion rates. Your evaluation should include measurement of participant growth, and must include measurement of the project's impact on the region's intermediate outcomes.

Refer to the [Informal STEM Learning Environments Evaluation Guide](#) for more information about evaluating STEM programs, participants, and impact.



4.6.1 Please describe the project’s goals and methods of evaluation using the following table:

Project Goal:	How will you know you’ve met this goal?
What performance measurements will be used as an ongoing process to monitor and report on program's progress and accomplishments? Note: performance measurements may include programmatic performance (such as enrollment data), learning outcomes (such as participant growth data), and progress toward the region’s intermediate outcomes (such as increased awareness of regional STEM opportunities). (List pre-selected performance measures, one per row.)	How will measurement and analysis be used to answer specific questions about how well the program is achieving its outcomes?

4.6.2 How will you share your evaluation with OSIT and the Rural STEM Network?

5. Letters of Commitment (5 points possible)

Format: Letterhead with signature.

Provide a letter of commitment from the leader of the applicant’s organization.

Provide a letter of commitment from any partners needed in the execution of the project.

Submission Timeline and Instructions

Submit one (1) electronic copy of the application in a single pdf by 5:00pm PST, June 28, 2024:

<https://forms.gle/QmyzadTuGdQzN1Kz8>

The application submission link can also be found on our website: [OSIT.nv.gov/grants/grants/](https://osit.nv.gov/grants/grants/)

Tips & Common Pitfalls to Avoid

- Ensure budget figures are mathematically correct, and the total of the budget summary matches the total on the title page.
- 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. 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. In cases where the ranked applications may “tie”, OSIT reserves the right to consider Section B “Work Plan” scoring independently to determine placement.

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, 2025. Grantees must specify in their application the length of the proposed project, including if some aspects of the project will continue or end after June 30, 2025 (see reporting requirements below). Projects must demonstrate sustainability or long-term impact beyond the initial reporting period. By submission of the grant application and acceptance of the award, the applicant is certifying its intention to continue and sustain the program beyond the initial grant implementation award. There is no expectation of funding beyond awarded grant funds.

Reimbursement Notice

The Rural STEM Network Grant is a reimbursement grant. Grantees are expected to pay for expenses up front from their budgets and will be reimbursed for eligible expenses listed in the approved award budget after a review of the expense request form and appropriate backup. Under certain limited circumstances, an advance of funds for specific, approved start-up costs may be requested by the grantee.

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, quarterly progress reports, and a final evaluation. Recipients have the option of submitting monthly reports in lieu of quarterly reports. The final evaluation is due within thirty (30) days after the conclusion of the reporting period. The reporting period is defined as the period of time from the day the grant is awarded to the conclusion of the training program for the first cohort of trainees. Grantees must specify the length of the program in their applications in order to calculate the reporting period. Grantees must continue to submit quarterly reports and a final evaluation even after all state funding has been spent. Fiscal reports must include an accounting of both State funding and match that has been expended. The quarterly reports and final evaluation must



include the performance measures proposed in the application. OSIT maintains the right to withhold payments if reporting requirements are not met in a timely and efficient manner.

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.

Reconsiderations

Any applicant whose application has been filed according to the rules governing the grant process and who is aggrieved by the awards made pursuant to these rules may request reconsideration.

Submit requests for appeal to OSIT within five days of the posting of the grant awards. Requests for reconsideration must be in writing and must clearly state how OSIT has erred in following the administrative rules governing the grant process or the procedure outlined in the program RFA. OSIT will schedule a public meeting to hear the reconsideration as expeditiously as possible so all funds can be distributed in a timely fashion, and a final decision will be rendered within 30 days subsequent to such meeting. Notice of the approval/denial of the appeal will be conducted by legal counsel. This procedure concludes the review process.

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.



Nevada Governor's
Office of Science,
Innovation and
Technology



NEVADA
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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.

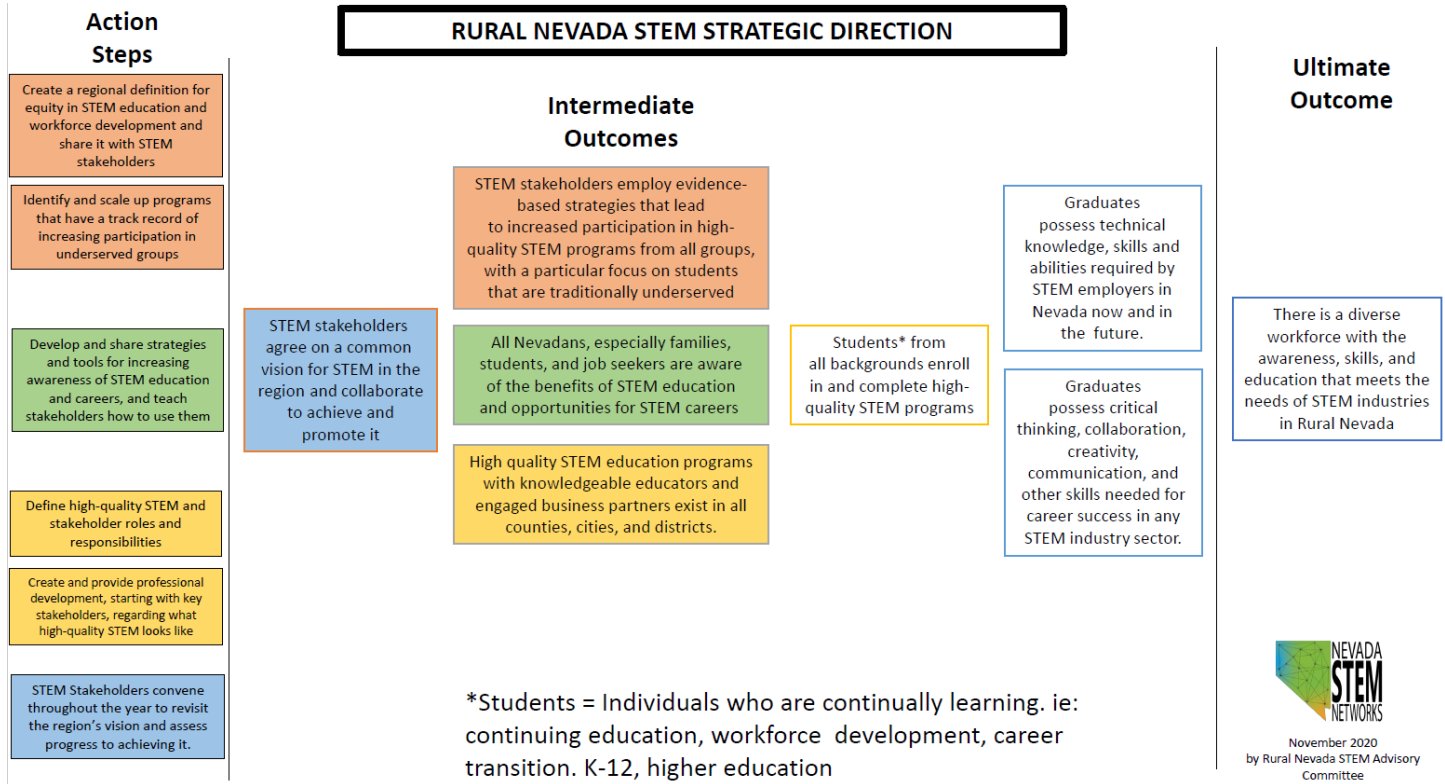
SECTION VI: OSIT CONTACTS

Tracey Howard
Governor's Office of Science, Innovation and Technology
775-687-0989
T.Howard@gov.nv.gov

Thank your interest in applying for the Rural STEM Network Grant. You will be contacted if further information is required. Do not begin your project or incur costs until you have received a fully executed grant award contract.



Attachment A: Rural STEM Network Strategic Direction





Attachment B: Scoring Rubric Summary

Each proposed project will be evaluated using the scoring matrix below.

Evaluation Criteria	Maximum Points Possible
Budget Plan	
> Budget Narrative	5
> Budget Detail Spreadsheet	3
Project Narrative	
> Needs Assessment	12
> Work Plan	25
> Equity Action Plan	10
> Outcome Alignment	20
> Long-Term Impact	10
> Data Collection and Evaluation	10
Letters of Commitment	5
Subtotal	105
Match	up to 5 bonus points
Total Points Possible	110



Attachment C: Detailed Budget Spreadsheet

Please submit a detailed budget spreadsheet, such as the one below, with your application. Your budget spreadsheet should include as much detail as reasonably possible. Break down costs into line items. All expenses and match should be accounted for.

Item	Quantity	Amount Paid with Grant Funding	Amount Paid with Match Funding	Description
	Totals			