

The North Dakota Department of Agriculture is soliciting Bioscience Innovation Grant (BIG) Program Request for Grant Proposals

Grant Application Guidance

Application Due Date:

March 31, 2024 at 11:59 PM

No late submissions accepted.



Doug Goehring, Agriculture Commissioner
North Dakota Department of Agriculture

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1. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

a) LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

The Bioscience Innovation Grant (BIG) program is authorized under chapter 4.1-01-20.1 of the North Dakota Century Code. The Agriculture Commissioner shall administer the program with the advice of the BIG committee.

The BIG committee consists of three statutory members: one representative from the North Dakota Department of Agriculture (NDDA), one representative from the Bioscience Association of North Dakota, and one representative from the North Dakota Department of Commerce.

b) PURPOSE

The purpose of BIG is to foster growth of the North Dakota bioscience industry. Applicants applying should focus on:

- Supporting biotechnology innovation and commercialization in:
 - Crop genetics
 - Biofuels
 - Biomaterials
 - Biosensors and biotechnology in relation to food, nutrition, animals, humans, equipment, medical and health products, and services
 - Medical diagnostics
 - Medical therapeutics
 - Farm-based pharmaceuticals
- Promoting the creation of bioscience jobs in North Dakota to be filled by graduates from institutions under control of the North Dakota Board of Higher Education.
- Encouraging the development of new bioscience technologies and bioscience startup companies in North Dakota.
- Leveraging the North Dakota agriculture industry to support development of bioscience technologies impacting livestock operations and crop production.
- Promoting bioscience research and development at institutions under control of the North Dakota Board of Higher Education.
- Encouraging coordination and collaborations among other entities and programs in North Dakota to promote bioscience innovation goals.

2. AWARD INFORMATION

a) AVAILABLE FUNDING

The NDDA has been appropriated funds to be awarded for the promotion and development of the North Dakota bioscience industry for the 2023-2025 biennium.

b) FUNDING REQUIREMENT

Grants may be awarded only to companies registered with the North Dakota Secretary of State.

c) AWARD AMOUNT

Grant award amounts do not have a floor or a cap. The NDDA reserves the right to offer an award amount less than the amount requested.

d) MATCHING FUNDS REQUIREMENT

Applicants must have a minimum 50% match of the project's requested BIG funds.

e) PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE

Grant funds must be awarded, and all necessary documents signed prior to June 30, 2025. Performance can be less than the time allocated but cannot extend past the grant period end date.

3. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

a) ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Applicants must meet the following requirements to be considered eligible:

- Employee at least two employees
- Have documented sales less than \$2,500,000
- Be structured as a corporation, partnership, limited liability company, limited partnership, or limited liability partnership registered with the North Dakota Secretary of State

b) INELIGIBLE GRANT FUND USES

- Capital improvements
- Academic programming or curriculum
- Workforce training

4. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

a) APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

Applications must be submitted on or before the deadline via email to mbodine@nd.gov, or postmarked on or before the deadline and mailed to:

North Dakota Department of Agriculture
Bioscience Innovation Grant Program
600 E Boulevard Ave., Dept. 602
Bismarck, ND 58505-0020

All applicants must adhere to the following instructions, in addition to other requirements as stated in this request for proposals to be considered eligible for grant funds. The following information is addressed on the BIG application. Applications missing any of the subsequent information may be deemed ineligible.

- The name of the company or individual submitting the proposal, street address, mailing address, telephone number, email address, and the person(s) who will be responsible for the project.
- A detailed description of how the grant funds will be used in reference to the proposed project's scope of work.
- Who will be completing the work as described within the project's budget detail.
- Where the project will be located and completed.

Applicants may include any additional information that they consider pertinent and that will enhance the quality of their proposal.

Grant requests are not limited to a specific minimum or maximum project amount. The NDDA reserves the right to offer an award amount less than the amount requested.

b) APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

The NDDA will review grant applications to ensure all application criteria are fulfilled, the costs are allowable, and the statutory purpose of the program is met.

Once applications are reviewed for eligibility by the NDDA, the BIG committee will complete an evaluation for each grant project proposal. Below are the evaluation criteria:

POTENTIAL IMPACT Does the project have a positive impact on expanding the bioscience industry in North Dakota? How effective will the project be at enhancing the mission of the program?
EXPECTED MEASURABLE OUTCOMES Does the project include one or two measurable outcomes that directly support the project’s purpose? Are they of direct importance to beneficiaries? Does each measurable outcome include a specific goal, benchmarks, and performance measure? How clear, appropriate, and realistic are the goals and objectives?
WORK PLAN Is the work plan feasible? Is the timeline reasonable? Do the tasks relate to the project objectives and expected measurable outcomes?
MATCHING FUNDS & PROJECT COMMITMENT Is industry support for the project demonstrated? Do stakeholders have an active role in any activities outlined in the project work plan? Are industry stakeholders providing matching or in-kind contributions? Is the project matched at a higher than fifty percent rate?
PROJECT OVERSIGHT Is the scope of the project meeting the goals for broad geographic consideration and multiple product application? Does the project impact multiple sectors within the value chain?
MERIT Each committee member may award a proposal up to five (5) additional points.

c) REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

Applications are evaluated on the merits of the proposals based on the criteria listed above. Applicants will be notified during the review process if monetary adjustments to grant requests, project proposal scope of work and/or project budgets are necessary.

d) ANTICIPATED AWARD ANNOUNCEMENT

Successful and unsuccessful applicants will be notified regarding the status of their grant proposal by the NDDA.

5. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

a) AWARD NOTICE

Successful applicants will be sent a Notice of Grant Award (NOGA) contract and Notice of Grant Award Requirements to sign. Signature of the NOGA by a grantee indicates their intention to complete the proposed tasks as stated in their BIG committee approved application, report results, and authorize the NDDA to monitor the progress of the proposed project. The NOGA will not be considered fully executed until both the grantee and NDDA have signed.

Once the NOGA has been fully executed, grantees are able to work and expend funds on the project. **Work and expenditures incurred prior to the NOGA being fully executed are not eligible for BIG reimbursement nor match credit.**

NOGA's must be signed and returned to the NDDA within 30 days of receipt. Failure to submit an executed copy of the NOGA within 30 days of receipt may result in the loss of awarded grant funds unless the delay was caused by circumstances outside the control of the applicant.

b) POLICY REQUIREMENTS

General Compliance

All awarded grants must comply with all applicable state laws and regulations and the terms of the grant award as specified in the Notice of Grant Award Requirements.

Monitoring

The NDDA reserves the ability to perform site monitoring visits to all applicants to ensure that work is progressing within the required timeframe and that fiscal procedures are followed accurately and appropriately. Monitoring includes both financial and program information, as well as site visits.

Ineligible Costs

The NDDA will not reimburse for any costs incurred by any applicant for work performed in the preparation and production of a grant proposal, nor for any work performed prior to the formal execution of the NOGA.

Open Records

Requests for grant proposals submitted for funding, all related grant awards, and reports shall be subject to disclosure under the North Dakota open records law, N.D.C.C. chapter 44-04.

Under the North Dakota public records law and subject to the Confidentiality clause, certain records may be open to the public upon request. Public records may include: (a) records the NDDA receives from an applicant under the NOGA, (b) records obtained by either party under the NOGA, and (c) records generated by either party under the NOGA.

In submitting a BIG application, the applicant agrees to contact the NDDA immediately upon receiving a request for information under the public records law and to comply with the NDDA's instructions on how to respond to such request.

Information that the applicant views as proprietary, financial, commercial, and/or trade secret information as defined by N.D.C.C. chapter 44-04-18.4 may be requested to remain confidential by the applicant. A written request must be submitted to the NDDA detailing the relevant information and why it should remain confidential.

Other Considerations

All proposals submitted in response to this BIG request for grant proposals become property of the NDDA. The NDDA reserves a royalty-free, nonexclusive, and irrevocable license to reproduce, publish, otherwise use, and to authorize others to use materials produced under this grant agreement.

The NDDA also reserves the right to:

- Post funded proposals or final reports to the NDDA website
- Reject any or all proposals received
- Waive or modify minor irregularities in proposals received after prior notification and agreement of applicant
- Use any or all ideas submitted unless those ideas are covered by legal patent or proprietary rights
- Clarify the scope of this program, within the BIG Request for Grant Proposals and with appropriate notice to potential applicants, to best serve the interests of the State of North Dakota
- Amend program specifications after their release, with appropriate written notice to potential applicants
- Require a good faith effort on part of the applicant work with the NDDA subsequent to project completion to develop or implement project results
- Withhold any payments when grant award conditions are not met

C) REPORTING

The applicant will be responsible for setting up and maintaining a project file that contains all records of correspondence with the NDDA, receipts, invoices and copies of all reports and documents associated with the project. All records, regardless of physical form, and the accounting practices and procedures of applicant relevant to grant funded projects are subject to examination by the North Dakota State Auditor, the Auditor's designee, or Federal auditors, if required. Grantees shall maintain all these records for at least three (3) years following completion of the NOGA and be able to provide them upon reasonable notice.

The NDDA reserves the right to modify reporting requirements during the course of the project. Information submitted by report or otherwise to the NDDA will be a public record. Annual and final reports must be submitted using the required format.

Final Reports

A final performance report will be required by the applicant at the end of the performance period. The final report may be posted on the NDDA website and is important for sharing project findings with state agencies and the public. The final report must include the following:

- Project summary
- Project approach
- Goals and outcomes achieved
- Lessons learned
- Beneficiaries
- Contact person
- Necessary additional information

In addition to the final project report, the NDDA reserves the right to conduct a follow-up survey of funded projects to determine long-term impacts of the project.

Reporting Compliance

Applicants who do not submit the final report, or who submit unacceptable presentations may be required to return previously distributed BIG funds to the NDDA.

D) PAYMENT

Requests for reimbursements will be accepted on a quarterly basis. Each reimbursement request must include an itemized invoice and documentation of the work or expenses for which payment is requested. Itemization shall include the purpose, amount, and date incurred. Applicants must provide assurance that the work has been completed (i.e., include receipts, invoices) and clearly outline expenditures.

The final 10% of each awarded grant will be withheld until an acceptable final report is completed and approved by the NDDA with all required information as stated above.

E) BUDGET ADJUSTMENTS

Applicants agree that any changes in scope of service or budget during the project period need prior written approval from the NDDA. Budget revisions may only occur between categories approved for funding as decided by the BIG committee of the project's approved application.

F) CONTACT

For questions or assistance, please contact:
North Dakota Department of Agriculture
Attn: Madison Bodine
600 E. Boulevard Avenue Dept. 602
Bismarck, ND 58505-0020
Phone: (701) 955-0181
Email: mbodine@nd.gov