

Call for Proposals: TAMUS Research Excellence Fund

Overview

The Texas A&M University System has launched several competitive funding opportunities under the new Research Excellence Fund (REF) program. The REF program is a system-wide initiative designed to elevate the research enterprise across all system member institutions. The program aims to accelerate discovery, strengthen cross-institutional collaboration, and enhance national competitiveness. Details about the REF opportunities can be found [here](#).

Internal Limited Submission Process

Each strategic funding opportunity is limited in the number of proposals that may be submitted by Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi as the lead institution. Therefore, an internal review process is required.

Faculty interested in applying to any of the opportunities listed below must submit an internal application for review by the Office of Research Development. Faculty will be notified by **February 18, 2026** if their application was selected to move forward.

The internal application must be no more than three (3) pages in length and include the following sections:

- Names and Affiliations of PI and Co-PIs
- Title of Project
- Project Plan
 - *significance of the effort*
 - *project goals*
 - *cross-institutional collaboration plan*
 - *potential for external funding*
- Anticipated Broader Impact

Please submit the internal application as a single pdf to researchdevelopment@tamucc.edu by **February 2, 2026**, with the subject line **REF: [initiative title]**.

Strategic Initiative Programs

1. Collaborative Discovery Grants

- **Limit:** 3 submissions
- **Award:** Up to \$250,000 for 12 months
- **Internal Application Deadline:** February 2, 2026
- **Full Proposal Deadline:** April 1, 2026
- **Overview:** Supports transformative, multi-institutional research collaborations with strong potential to achieve major research breakthroughs and secure large-scale funding from external sponsors. Proposals must include **at least two (2) TAMUS member institutions**.

2. Research Equipment Grants

- **Limit:** 5 submissions
- **Award:** Up to \$100,000 for 12 months
- **Internal Application Deadline:** February 2, 2026
- **Full Proposal Deadline:** June 1, 2026
- **Overview:** Provides funding to acquire cutting-edge research instrumentation or technology that will be shared across the TAMUS. Proposals must include **at least two (2) TAMUS member institutions**.

3. Early-State Research Development Grants

- **Limit:** 5 submissions
- **Award:** Up to \$100,000 for 12 months
- **Internal Application Deadline:** February 2, 2026
- **Full Proposal Deadline:** May 1, 2026
- **Overview:** Supports idea development, team formation, pilot work, and proposal preparation for major future research opportunities. Proposals must involve **at least two (2) TAMUS member institutions**.

4. Strategic Research Initiatives

- **Limit:** 5 submissions
- **Award:** Up to \$100,000 for 12 months
- **Internal Application Deadline:** February 2, 2026
- **Full Proposal Deadline:** May 1, 2026
- **Overview:** Supports System-wide participation in high impact research themes that align with state and national priorities that significantly impact societal, economic, and scientific impact. Proposals require involvement of **at least two (2) TAMUS member institutions**.

5. Faculty Fellowship Program

- **Limit:** 3 submissions
 - **Award:** Up to \$100,000 for 12 months
 - **Internal Application Deadline:** February 2, 2026
 - **Full Proposal Deadline:** Rolling acceptance
 - **Overview:** Supports short-term research fellowships for faculty to engage in collaborative research at another TAMUS campus. The program aims to expand collaboration and knowledge exchange across the system that can lead to major external funding and high-impact outcomes.
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Evaluation Criteria for Review of Internal Applications

1. Alignment & Impact

- a. How well does the proposed project align with state and national priorities and what impact will this have on state or national levels?*
- b. Scale 1-5; 1 = weak or unclear; 5 = direct, compelling alignment*

2. Intellectual Merit & Innovation

- a. Is the project plan clearly articulated and coherent? Is it innovative?*
- b. Scale 1-5: 1 = unclear or unrealistic plan; 5 = well-articulated with solid objectives*

3. Strength of Cross-Institutional Collaboration

- a. How well defined is the inter-institutional collaboration?*
- b. Scale 1-5: 1 = weak or token collaboration; 5 = strong, well-defined collaboration*

4. Potential for External Funding and/or Sustainability

- a. How likely is it that the project will receive external funding and/or be sustained past the period of performance?*
- b. Scale 1-5: 1 = no identified future ways for support; 5 = strong external funding trajectory*