Montana NASA EPSCoR FY 2027 Basic Research Opportunity

Call for pre-proposals

Pre-proposals are due July 15, 2026

NOTICE

Due to federal-level procedural requirements that were implemented after the EPSCoR Basic Research Notice Of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) NASA release review began, the national program office made changes in the timing of the release of the NOFO. NASA has decided to forgo the FY26 Basic Research Solicitation and are moving forward with the FY27 opportunity. The intent is to move as quickly as possible. NASA will release the solicitation in July 2026 and proposals (one per state/jurisdiction) will be due in October 2026.

Montana NASA EPSCoR (MNE) pre-proposals for this FY27 opportunity must be submitted by July 15, 2026. The shortened Montana review process will conclude such that decisions will be shared August 15 – 21, providing the selected team until October to prepare their final submission to NASA.

UPDATED TIMELINE

NASA EPSCoR Basic Research Award FY27 Release	July
MNE Internal Proposal Deadline	7/15/26
MNE Internal Decision Window	8/15/26 - 8/21/26
NASA EPSCoR Basic Research Award FY27 Deadline	October
NASA EPSCoR Basic Research Award FY27 Selection	January 2027
NASA EPSCoR Basic Research Award FY27 Funding Start	Spring 2027

PURPOSE

The purpose of this pre-proposal process is to determine which ***single Montana group*** will be selected to submit a full proposal to NASA for the federal FY 2027 NASA EPSCoR Basic Research opportunity. Montana NASA EPSCoR has been informed that **NASA will issue the solicitation on or near July 1, 2026, with proposals due in October 2026**. Basic Research awards are for three years and are up to $750,000 with a 50% non-federal cost share requirement. Funds do not need to be spent evenly over the life of the grant. Funded teams and their respective departments and colleges provide cost share, which is usually made up of a combination of faculty research time, graduate student tuition waivers, and actual additional funding.

All interested faculty groups at Montana institutions of higher education are invited to submit a pre-proposal. Pre-proposals are reviewed by external experts as well as a panel of Montana University administrative-level stakeholders. The final decision is made by the Montana University System research officials. We expect to notify the chosen group by mid-August 2026.

Research groups can include team members from more than one Montana campus. Groups can also include team members from other EPSCoR jurisdictions, but they cannot include team members from non-EPSCoR states. There is no US citizenship requirement for team members or funded students.

MONTANA NASA EPSCoR GOALS

Goal 1. Bring the capabilities of Montana's nationally competitive researchers to the attention of NASA.

Goal 2. Build infrastructure to enhance Montana's capabilities and expertise in areas of importance to NASA, focusing on institutions of higher learning.

Goal 3. Use EPSCoR sponsored research to strengthen partnerships with Montana's high-tech companies and drive the growth of Montana's aerospace-related economy.

Goal 4. Focus on building nationally prominent, competitive research groups at Montana's major universities while also providing collaborative opportunities to faculty members at smaller institutions.

KEYS TO SUCCESS

- The focus of NASA EPSCoR Basic Research awards is to fund research *that NASA currently wants performed*. Excellent science or engineering is not sufficient. Therefore, all Basic Research pre-proposals should include the strongest possible evidence that the group has active, well-established ties to researchers at NASA Centers. Involved NASA collaborators/colleagues will be expected to be knowledgeable about the proposed research program and should be willing to act as advocates for funding of the proposal. NASA's current areas of interested are available at: http://www.nasaepscor.montana.edu/interest.html.
- Pre-proposals should demonstrate multidisciplinary collaboration. Multidisciplinary research might look different in engineering vs. science but, within reason for the proposed work, teams with larger varieties in investigator areas of expertise are favored by NASA.
- Pre-proposals must show that sufficient cost share sources are available. Information about calculating cost share is available at https://spacegrant.montana.edu/opportunities/faculty-grants/cost_share.html.
- At the jurisdiction level, NASA's stated intention is to "contribute to the overall research infrastructure, science and technology capabilities, and economic development of the jurisdiction."

PRE-PROPOSAL FORMAT

All pre-proposal sections: 8.5x11" pages, at least 12-point font, one-inch margins.

PAGE LIMITS	
Pre-proposal section	**page limit**
Cover page	1
Table of contents	1
Abstract	1
Scientific/Technical/Impact	10
References	as needed
Biographical Sketches	2 for each investigator
Letters of support	as needed
Budget and cost share description	2

Pre-proposals will be reviewed based on the following key items.

- **Science/technical merit.** Describe the scientific and/or technical merit of the proposed research, unique and innovative methods, approaches, concepts, or advanced technologies.
- **NASA alignment**. Describe the current NASA mission(s) and NASA needs your research program addresses. List which recent NASA solicitations are relevant to your work, to indicate follow-on proposal options. Identify NASA personnel (names and locations) that are involved in your proposed research, including the level of existing and planned collaborations.
- **Montana impact**. Explain how the work will build new connections for NASA-related science and/or engineering research in the field and in Montana, positively impact Montana faculty, and develop competitiveness for follow-on NASA funding. Also include project impact on your institution's research goals, project contribution to the state's overall economic development [optional], and connections with Montana industry [optional].
- **Research Group membership**. Describe the role of each investigator. Highlight NASA involvement and connections.
- **Evaluation**. Describe intended outcomes and metrics. Use of milestones and timetables is recommended.
- **Budget.** Include a basic high-level budget and list of available cost share sources. Amount and stability of cost share will be taken into consideration in the review.

Letters of support from Department Head(s) or equivalent are required. These letters should include a statement about available cost share.

Letters of support from NASA collaborators/supporters are strongly encouraged.

PRE-PROPOSAL SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

All groups:

- Pre-proposals are due by **Wednesday, July 15, 2026**.
- Proposals must be uploaded online as a single unlocked PDF file via the Submittable link on

the Montana NASA EPSCoR website, http://nasaepscor.montana.edu.

***MSU-Bozeman groups only*:** In addition to submitting the pre-proposal on the MT NASA EPSCoR website, you must also submit the pre-proposal in the Office of Sponsored Programs electronic Proposal Clearance Form (ePCF) available at http://www.montana.edu/research/osp/. Prepare a "Pre-Proposal" and select the sponsor, "National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)." Type in the Program ID, "Montana NASA EPSCoR 2026 Research Group."

- Submit the full pre-proposal as an attachment to the form. The attachment must be in Microsoft Word (.doc or .docx) format.
- Pre-proposals are also due to MSU via the ePCF by Wednesday, July 15, 2026.

QUESTIONS?

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