



# Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research

## Background

EPSCoR focuses on those states that have historically received lesser amounts of Federal R&D funding and have demonstrated a commitment to develop their research bases by improving the quality of science and engineering research conducted at their universities and colleges. The program currently operates in 21 states: Alabama, Alaska, Arkansas, Hawaii, Idaho, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Mississippi, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, Nevada, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Carolina, South Dakota, Vermont, West Virginia, and Wyoming, as well as the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

## Mission

EPSCoR operates under the following basic premise:

- *Universities and their science and engineering faculty and students are valuable resources that have the potential to influence a state's development in the twenty-first century much the same way that agricultural, industrial, and natural resources did in the twentieth century.*

EPSCoR identifies, develops, and utilizes a state's academic science and technology resources in ways that ultimately will support wealth creation and a more productive and fulfilling way of life for its citizens. To achieve this end the NSF cooperates with state leaders in government, higher education, and business to establish productive long-term partnerships in support of common goals. Such partnerships are designed to stimulate local action that will result in lasting improvements to the state's academic research infrastructure and increased national R&D competitiveness.

NSF EPSCoR works with six other agencies with EPSCoR-like programs, sharing information on different strategies to enhance the R&D competitiveness of EPSCoR states and institutions.

## Outcome Goals

EPSCoR increases the R&D competitiveness of an eligible state through the development and utilization of the science and technology (S&T) resources residing in its major research universities. EPSCoR expects the following as outcomes from its investments, taken in the aggregate and observed over time.

- *sustainable S&T infrastructure improvements at the state and institutional levels that significantly increase the movement of EPSCoR researchers into the mainstream of federal and private sector R&D support.*

## Key Investment Strategies

Improvements in R&D competitiveness are achieved through the investment of fiscal and human resources by both the NSF and participating states via three types of R&D investments and an outreach program to provide personal contact between NSF staff and EPSCoR researchers.

- **Research Infrastructure Improvement Grants:** 36-month grants of up to \$9 million to support infrastructure improvements in S&T areas selected by the state's EPSCoR governing committee as being critical to its future R&D competitiveness. A 50% non-federal matching share, up to a maximum of \$4.5 million over the term of the award is required.
- **Co-Funding Initiative:** Joint support of proposals submitted to the Foundation's ongoing grant programs and special competitions.
- **Outreach Initiative:** Financial support for outreach visits of NSF staff to acquaint EPSCoR researchers with NSF priorities, programs, and policies and to more fully acquaint NSF staff with the R&D resources residing within EPSCoR states.

## Performance Goals

EPSCoR's performance goals are directly related for the program's fundamental outcome goal: "sustainable S&T infrastructure improvements at the state and institutional levels that significantly increase the movement of EPSCoR researchers and institutions into the mainstream of federal and private sector R&D support." The relationships between EPSCoR's key investment strategies, action plan, and expected program impact are shown in the diagram.

## Performance Outcome

EPSCoR's performance towards this outcome will be successful if the aggregate success rate of proposals from EPSCoR jurisdictions matches that of NSF as a whole.

