DATE:

TO: University of Wyoming Faculty

FROM: Wyoming NSF EPSCoR

SUBJECT: Request for Proposals for Wyoming EPSCoR’s Seed Grants

I. GENERAL
The program’s objectives are to promote research, entrepreneurship, and outreach in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) disciplines that will improve research capacity, competitiveness for external funding, and lead to new extramural proposals or new businesses. As the seed grants will be supported with funds from our current Track 1 RII grant, “Water in Changing West,” we ask that research proposals be broadly related to water and work being carried out by Wyoming Center for Environmental Hydrology and Geophysics (WyCEHG) scientists. Seed grants are intended to jump-start a larger project and recipients will be required to submit a major grant proposal or incorporate and start a Wyoming business based on a completed business plan within one year of receipt of the funds. Each project should be for one year duration and may request up to $50,000 in funding support. A program maximum of $250,000 will be granted this year. Tentative start date for projects is April 1, 2016.

II. DEADLINE
5pm, April 1, 2016

III. ELIGIBILITY
All faculty, students, postdocs, and staff from UW and Wyoming Community Colleges are eligible to apply.

IV. APPLICATION TYPES
Research: These should be research projects of the type typically funded by NSF, and can be fundamental or applied research that will lead to future discoveries and scientific advancement.

Broader impacts: Innovative ideas that will develop new education, outreach, and diversity programs designed to increase participation of underrepresented groups (e.g., women, ethnic minorities, and/or people with disabilities) in STEM.

Entrepreneurship: New, independent ventures in the seed, start-up, or early growth stages that are focused on water technology, resource management, and/or innovation. All awardees in this category will become incubator clients of the Wyoming Technology Business Center (WTBC) and receive business development support and office or lab space (depending on availability) for the duration of the grant.

V. APPLICATION PROCEDURE
Individuals interested in Research or Broader impacts must submit the following in the form of a single pdf document to the EPSCoR Associate Project Director, Sarah Konrad, skonrad@uwyo.edu:

1) Abstract (1 page): Provide a brief, non-technical description of the problem, work to be performed, and expected outcome.
2) Narrative (2 pages): Describe the proposed research, outreach, or venture, including context and/or background. Present specific objectives and methods including a timeline for completion during the one year funding period.
3) Biographical Information of PI(s) (up to 2 pages)
4) Budget: The budget must be reasonable and well-justified; please use the attached spreadsheet to describe the resources needed to complete the project. This may include resources already available (e.g., laboratory equipment, computational resources, etc.) and resources to be funded by the Seed Grant. Allowable expenses include, for example, expendable supplies, capital outlay, and travel to conduct research. Funds may be used for partial support of undergraduate or graduate students. Up to one month of PI summer salary is allowed; appropriate fringe must be included on any salary requests. Travel to professional meetings must be justified as related to the project’s outcomes.
Individuals interested in Entrepreneurship must register and complete the application process to the EPSCoR Wyoming Entrepreneurship Competition through the Wyoming Technology Business Center (WTBC) website at http://www.uwyo.edu/wtbc. WTBC will provide business counseling and support to any individuals interested in applying to the EPSCOR Wyoming Entrepreneurship Competition and will work closely with all contestants to develop his or her business idea through all phases of the competition.

1) The initial registration and application period is open until April 1, 2016. During the open period, all individuals interested in applying are encouraged to contact the WTBC for business counseling and support. WTBC Chief Operating Officer, Christine Langley, can be reached at clangle1@uwyo.edu.
2) The first judging round of the competition is to select semi-finalists and will occur from April 4 – 7, 2016 based on initial applications submitted. The initial judges will be comprised of select WTBC and EPSCoR staff. All Semi-finalists will be announced on April 8, 2016.
3) The second round of judging for all Semi-Finalists will occur April 12 – 14, 2016. All Semi-Finalists will be asked to participate in a panel interview to review and discuss their initial application. The second round judges will be comprised of select WTBC and EPSCoR staff. All Finalists will be announced on April 15, 2015.
4) All Finalists will be directly assigned to a WTBC business counselor for the remainder of the competition and are required to attend regularly scheduled meetings. WTBC business counselors will work with all finalists to develop the final seed fund pitch presentation. The third round of judging will occur on June 10, 2016 at the EPSCoR Wyoming Entrepreneurship Competition Pitch Day. Each presentation will be 20 minutes in length with 10 minutes scheduled for judge’s questions. Judges will be comprised of select WTBC and EPSCoR staff along with select local business professionals or entrepreneurs. Up to three (3) Finalists will be selected on June 10, 2016 and will receive up to $50,000 in provisional seed funding contingent upon deliverables or milestones plus office space (based on availability) at a WTBC building. All finalists will be required to present the following:
   a. 20 minute presentation
   b. Business concept paper
   c. 5 year projected financials
   d. Budget narrative explaining the amount of Seed Funding requested and how it will be spent prior to June 30, 2017.
   e. Operating agreement (applicable for multiple member corporations or partnerships)

VI. EVALUATION

Proposals will be evaluated by reviewers from Wyoming EPSCoR, the WTBC, and select UW faculty. Because the review panel is diverse, proposers should write for a non-expert, but scientifically literate, audience. Reviewers will evaluate each proposal on the following:

1) The likelihood of significant growth of the project through future funding
2) The demonstration of cross-disciplinary collaboration
3) The potential of the proposed work to create synergy between research, broader impacts, and entrepreneurship
4) Overall quality and clarity of the proposal
5) Degree to which the budget is reasonable and well-justified

VII. AWARD CONDITIONS

1) Recipients of research or broader impact grants must submit a major NSF grant proposal within one year of the end of seed grant funding. Recipients of entrepreneurship awards must submit current Wyoming Articles of Incorporation and a 2-page business progress report including financials within one year of the end of seed grant funding.
2) If the proposed project will involve regulated activities (e.g., Human Subjects, Animals, biohazards), the PI will need to obtain appropriate assurances before the grant is awarded. All IRB approvals must be received before the funds can be awarded to those engaged in regulated activities.
3) All data generated with seed grant funds will be stored on the publicly accessible WyCEHG data server within a year of grant completion. An executive summary for the entrepreneurial business will likewise be stored on the publicly accessible WyCEHG data server by grant completion.

4) A final project report will be required; the due date and format of the report will be provided to PIs at the time award decisions are made.