The Corridor's Matching Grants Research Program
- University of South Florida -
Program Guidelines

[The Florida High Tech Corridor's](#) Matching Grants Research Program (MGRP) fosters applied research between the region's high-tech industry partners, and top-rate faculty and student researchers at the University of Central Florida (UCF) and the University of South Florida (USF).

Since the program started in 1996 to grow the region's talent and technological capabilities, its signature public-private partnership approach has generated an estimated $1 billion in downstream economic impacts. Countless successes include the hiring of student research participants, commercialization of new products with life-changing capabilities, groundbreaking patents and stronger company positioning to attract federal funds.

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Overview

The Matching Grant Research Program at the University of South Florida can provide up to $150,000 in matching funds for applied research projects between local industry partners and USF researchers, including [Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) / Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR)](#) funded projects. These funds match the industry partner's investment in the project and are used to expand the project's scope of work and allow our students to participate in cutting-edge, applied research.

Program staff will help to pair interested companies with appropriate USF researchers to take advantage of this program. Please contact program staff to discuss the project and potential collaboration.

Eligibility

To be eligible, projects must:
- Involve a local industry partner collaborating with a USF Principal Investigator (PI) on sponsored research
  Please Note: Industry partner does not receive any direct funding
- Focus on applied research that supports the development and commercialization of new technologies
- Include support for at least one USF student researcher for the duration of the project

The industry partner must have a significant presence in the 23-county Corridor region to be considered a local partner eligible to apply:
- Alachua, Brevard, Citrus, De Soto, Flagler, Hardee, Hernando, Highlands, Hillsborough, Lake, Levy, Manatee, Marion, Orange, Osceola, Pasco, Pinellas, Polk, Putnam, Sarasota, Seminole, Sumter, Volusia
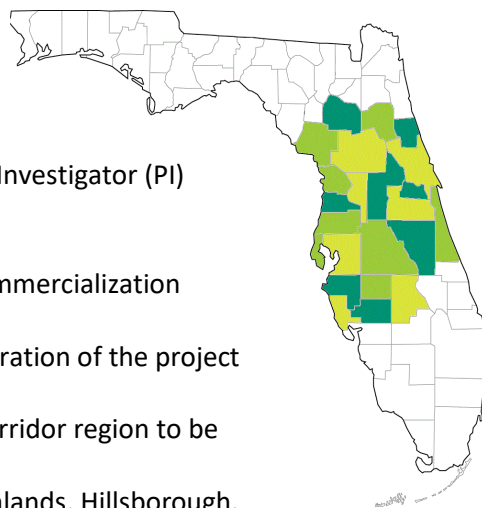
If awarded, the industry sponsor and PI must work directly with [USF Sponsored Research](#) and appropriate College staff to finalize and execute a research agreement. The project will not officially begin until the sponsored research agreement is in place.

Priorities

Participation in the Matching Grants Research Program has become increasingly competitive. The program prioritizes funding for projects that:
- Generate new intellectual property or technology
- Develop and commercialize existing USF technology
- Leverage federally funding through the SBIR/STTR or other programs
- Align with [Corridor's key industry clusters](#)
- Engage new participants in the program (industry or faculty)
- Encourage research across colleges and/or across Corridor Universities
- Provide a tangible impact for the industry partner in terms of revenue, sales, workforce expansion, etc.

- Provide high-level, hands-on research experiences for our students and fellows

By focusing on these priorities, the program supports high-impact research benefiting local industry, the university, and our region.

Application Process

There is no annual deadline to apply. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis.

Before beginning the application, the project team should contact program staff to discuss the proposal and review the required documents and application process.

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A complete application consists of the following documents:
1. **Application Cover Sheet**: Provides basic project details
2. **Scope of Work**: Summarizes the project, company background, student participation, and economic impact
3. **Budget:** Details industry cash, Corridor matching funds, and industry in-kind support
4. **Industry Commitment Letter:** Confirms the industry partner's intention to provide cash and in-kind support for the project

Program staff will provide electronic application templates. The application documents should be completed collaboratively by the PI and industry partner. Program staff is available to review document drafts and provide feedback throughout the application process.

Please Note: Matching funding is provided for one year. Past awards do not guarantee future funding. A new application is required for each new project or additional funding request. In determining future awards, the review team will consider the successful completion and stewardship of past projects.

Required Budget Overview

Applicants may request $1 in matching funds for every $2 provided by the industry partner (sponsor) ($1 cash/$1 in-kind).

Industry Partner (Sponsor)		Corridor
Cash	In-Kind*	Matching Funds
$1	$1	$1

Using the provided budget form, applicants will allocate the industry cash, in-kind support, and requested matching funds by budget item (salary, supplies, equipment, etc.). PIs should work with their College's research administrative staff to develop the project budget in accordance with any College-specific policies. Approval of the budget from the PI's College's research administrative staff is required and should be noted in the space provided in the budget template.

Any significant changes or adjustments to the approved budget should be reviewed with program staff in advance.

*Industry partners are required to provide quantifiable in-kind (non-monetary) support such as staff time, travel, the use of supplies, equipment and/or space. The value and relevance of in-kind support must be reasonable and justified.

Required & Eligible Expenses

Required Student Support:
- Matching funds *must* be allocated to support at least one USF student for the duration of the project in the form of tuition and/or salary.

Other Eligible Expenses:
- Principal Investigator and Co-PI Salaries (Including a fringe of 32.2%)
- Staff Salaries (Including a fringe rate of 49.6%)
- Postdoctoral Salaries
- Laboratory Supplies
- Publication Costs
- Patent Costs
    - Patent costs for USF technologies associated with the project are an eligible expense according to the table below, as recommended by the USF Technology Transfer Office.

Corridor Match Request Range	Maximum Patent Costs Allowed
Up to $39,999	20% of the match request
$40,000-49,999	25% of the match request
$50,000-59,999	40% of the match request
$60,000-100,000	50% of the match request
Above $100,000	Not to exceed $50,000

Budget Notes:
- Any equipment costs must be covered by the industry cash, not Corridor matching funds.
- Corridor matching funds are Education & General funds and therefore cannot be used for entertainment or food. Please reference USF's expenditure guide for other non-allowable expenses.
- Other expenses may be allowable with proper justification. Please discuss these proposed expenses with program staff before applying.

Review & Award Process

Once the application is complete, it will be reviewed by program leadership and a review committee of business, economic development, science, and technology professionals from across Tampa Bay and the Corridor. The application will be evaluated against the program priorities. Program staff may request changes to the application based on feedback from the review committee. Matching funds are awarded based on the priorities outlined

above. ***Full funding is not guaranteed.*** Following review, a formal award notice will be sent to the industry partner and PI.

Post Award Process

Sponsored Research Agreement

If Corridor matching funds are awarded, a sponsored research agreement must be executed within three months of the Corridor award letter to ensure the availability of Corridor matching funds. The sponsored research agreement is the contract between the industry partner and University outlining the payment and legal terms of the research project.

The industry sponsor and PI must work directly with [USF Sponsored Research](#) and appropriate College staff to finalize and execute a research agreement. The Corridor project will not officially open until the sponsored research agreement is in place.

To initiate the research agreement, Project PI and appropriate College/department contacts will need to submit a funding proposal in Bulls iResearch. While Corridor staff are not involved in this process, please indicate the proposal is associated with a Corridor award to ease in tracking and data collection. For step-by-step instructions on how to make that indication, please refer to this [guide](#).

Recommended Industry Payment Schedule: **Corridor matching funds are provided to the PI to match the industry sponsor's payments. For that reason,** a full upfront payment is ideal **for projects receiving Corridor matching funds. If this is not possible, a partial upfront payment with subsequent** regular invoicing is strongly recommended**. This ensures Corridor matching funds are provided to the PI regularly and with minimal delay.**

Project Set Up

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Corridor program staff will coordinate with the PI's team to setup the Corridor project. The following items are required before Corridor matching funds can be released:

1. **Sponsored Research Award/Project Number:** This number is used to track industry payments to USF, which determines the release of Corridor matching funds. Please provide this number to program staff. Notify them of any changes to the project number of related sub-projects to ensure accurate payment monitoring.
2. **Fully Executed Research Agreement:** Submit a copy of the signed research agreement.
3. **Chartfield String for Fund Transfers**: Corridor matching funds are Education & General (Funds 10000/10009 carryforward). A dedicated chartfield string must be established to receive the Corridor

matching funds. Corridor matching funds should not be co-mingled with other research funding to ensure consistent tracking, reporting, and fiscal year roll-over. Find the Controller's Office new chartfield request form [here.](#)

Payment Process

Matching funds are provided to the project's PI in accordance with the account provided by the appropriate USF team and in-line with the approved budget. ***The industry partner does not receive any direct funding.***

An initial transfer of up to 25% of the full Corridor matching funds award will be completed once the project is set up. From thereon, Corridor matching funds are transferred upon confirmed receipt of the industry partner's cash payment. Program staff will closely monitor the industry partner's payments in USF systems to ensure timely transfers. Please alert program staff of any known funding interruptions, delays or other deviations from the standard payment process.

For questions relating to invoicing to the industry partner please contact the appropriate Sponsored Research Grant Financial Administrator which can be found by department [here](#).

Please Note: If the industry partner does not provide the full investment as outlined in the budget, the Corridor matching funds will be reduced accordingly. The Corridor matching fund award will not exceed the industry's cash investment in the project.

Patent Costs: Payment of patent costs is provided directly to the University Research Foundation and does not follow the standard payment process. Patent costs are held throughout payment of the Corridor matching funds in line with the approved budget and upon confirmed receipt of industry partner's cash payment. The funds for the associated technology costs are released upon receipt of an invoice from the Technology Transfer Office and Research Foundation for accrued costs. If a project ends and there will be no further associated patent costs, remaining funds may be transferred following the normal payment process back toward research expenses.

Crediting Requirement

Awardees must acknowledge funding from the Florida High Tech Corridor in any resulting publications, news releases, or publicity specific to the funded project. Proper acknowledgement helps highlight the Corridor's positive economic impact in Florida and ensure the continuation of state funding.

> *Suggested Language:* This research was supported in part by the Florida High Tech Corridor's Matching Grant Research Program.

Note to Faculty: If any new technology or intellectual property results from this project, please note the Corridor as a funding source on [USF's Invention Disclosure Form.](#)

Note to Industry Partners: In accordance with USF's sponsored research agreement, neither party may use the name of the other party or its employees in any publicity, advertising, or news release without the prior written approval of an authorized representative of that party. Prior to release, please share any such publicity citing USF or Corridor with program staff for review and approval.

Reporting Requirements

The final Corridor report consists of a ***budget reconciliation*** and a ***qualitative report***. Final reports are due within one month of the project close.

> **Budget Reconciliation:** Accounts for how industry and Corridor matching funds were spent compared to the approved budget. Any significant deviations will require justification. Captures spending from entirety of Corridor project period which may cross fiscal years and fund 10000 and 10009 carryforward. Budget Reconciliation Template

> **Qualitative Report:** Captures information on the successes of the project and impact of Corridor matching funding. This document should include input from the industry sponsor to capture the holistic benefits of the project. Qualitative Report Template

Corridor representatives may also survey industry partners and PIs following the project close (up to seven years) to track the downstream impact of the Matching Grants Research Program. The information collected helps to demonstrate the program's positive economic impact and ensure the continuation of state funding. We appreciate your cooperation.

> ***Future awards will be contingent upon the receipt and approval of final reports for previous projects***.

Extension Requests may be submitted to program staff at any time during project period. Contact program staff by email with the request including justification and the requested new end date. Interim reports may be requested at time of extension.