

UNM Limited Competition Announcement

Dear UNM Researchers,

Amendment (8/29/26): The program description below has been updated to reflect the Capacity Building-specific goals and scope of the DEPSCoR program. No other aspects of the announcement have changed.

The Office of the Vice President for Research is requesting pre-proposals for the **DoD Defense Established Program to Stimulate Competitive Major Research (DEPSCoR)-Capacity Building** limited competition. The aim of DEPSCoR – Capacity Building is to improve the research capabilities at institutions of higher education (IHEs) in eligible States/Territories to perform competitive basic research in science and engineering that is relevant to the DoD mission and reflect national security priorities. The intent of this DEPSCoR-Capacity Building effort is to foster new, strategic, multi-thrust efforts to increase basic research capacity in DoD-relevant research areas at the applicant institution.

DoD requires the institutional application to be led by a member of the institution's executive staff, such as the Vice President for Research, who will serve as the Team Lead.

Sponsor: DoD (Air Force Office of Scientific Research)

Opportunity Title: FY26 Defense Established Program to Stimulate Competitive Major Research (DEPSCoR)-Capacity Building

Opportunity Number: NOFOAFRLAFOSR2026003

Sponsor Due Date(s): Required white paper due 10/12/2026 by 9:59 pm MT; Invited full proposals due 04/05/2027

Award Range: up to \$1.5 million (\$750,000/year for two years)

Number of Submissions Allowed from UNM: One (1) per institution

Solicitation: <https://www.grants.gov/search-results-detail/363530>

Limited Comp. Instructions: Please submit your 3-page pre-proposal, abbreviated budget, and CVs for key personnel via UNM's [InfoReady Review portal](#). No late submissions will be considered.

Limited Comp. Pre-Proposal Due Date: **NOON on September 9, 2026**

The 3-page pre-proposal must include high-level discussion of the following:

1. **Project Team and Research Area:** A list of all key personnel names (including institutional affiliations), and the specific basic technical research area/s addressed.
2. **Capacity Building Narrative:**
 - Existing seed research capacity;
 - Strategic vision for building basic research capacity at UNM, including programmatic, academic, educational, and technical gaps and the specific thrusts that will be pursued to fill those gaps to build the competitive research capability;
 - Management plan for implementing the multi-thrust effort at UNM;
 - The potential for long-term sustainment of the desired research capability; and
 - Brief overview of estimated budget, showing anticipated allocation of funds among different categories of expenditures for the proposed capacity building project. These categories could include, but are not limited to: potential faculty hires; research projects; departmental or programmatic educational or academic initiatives; equipment; institutional outreach to regional partners; or activities to sustain the proposed increased research capacity at the applicant institution (UNM).

Pre-proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria, with the first four being of equal importance and the fifth being of least importance in accordance with the NOFO:

1. Demonstration of initial seed capability and identification of your institution's gap(s) in basic research capacity, including leading experts /researchers, existing projects, infrastructure, industry access, etc., as well as the gap(s) in basic research capacity you plan to fill.
2. Demonstration of the potential for the effort to build academic research capacity, improve basic research capability, and enhance educational outcomes in DoD relevant fields. Your plan should indicate and justify how the proposed project would significantly improve basic research capacity at UNM, including an innovative multi-thrust strategy addressing key basic research capacity gaps at UNM and our region; note technical, management, and programmatic details to justify the proposed thrusts and to support their feasibility.
3. Demonstration of regional interest to support the need for capacity building; describe existing as well as planned interactions with regional DoD and commercial entities in the proposed research area.
4. Demonstration of a long-term plan for sustainability of the enhanced capacity with non-DEPSCoR funding; include clear and supported goals and clear paths to sustainability.
5. Realism and reasonableness of proposed costs.

Applicant selections will be published on the [UNM Limited Competitions website](#). Should you have any questions please feel free to contact us at limited@unm.edu. *If you are affiliated with HSC, please contact HSC Limited Competition at HSC-LimitedComps@salud.unm.edu for more information.*