



# Mid-South REACH Product Development Grants

## Request for Applications (RFA): Cycle 1

### Background:

The Mid-South REACH (Research Evaluation and Commercialization Hub) program is a National Institutes of Health (NIH) funded program that extends across four states: Kentucky, Mississippi, Tennessee, and Virginia. The primary goal of this grant program is to accelerate the real-world impact of biomedical and health related innovations through education, mentorship, and financial support for aspiring entrepreneurs. Led by Vanderbilt University in collaboration with University of Louisville, Jackson State University, and George Mason University, Mid-South REACH will administer over 20 awards in the first grant cycle to fund product development project grants across all four states. Beyond funding for technology development and translational research, Mid-South REACH will provide commercialization-related education and training for awardees, as well as coaching and strategic feedback from field experts, including the NIH and their partners (see <https://ncal.nih.gov/ncal/resources/other>).

The Mid-South REACH program is not a traditional grant program. It is focused on product development and requires milestone-based project management in six-month increments, renewable up to four times. Project Managers in each of the Mid-South REACH states are available to assist with preparation of pre-applications. Applicants invited to submit a full application will work with Project Managers and/or mentors on product development plans and project timelines.

### Important Dates:

Pre-applications due:	May 24, 2024 by 5:00 PM (CT)
Full application invitations sent:	June 2024*
Full applications due:	July 2024*
Full application pitch presentations:	August 2024*
Anticipated award start/end dates:	October 1, 2024 – March 31, 2025

*\*Exact dates to be determined*

### Eligibility:

- Open to faculty, staff, trainees, and students at universities and technical schools in the following mid-south states: Kentucky, Mississippi, Tennessee, and Virginia. Specific eligibility information by state is listed below. No prior experience with NIH funding is required.
- Applications must focus on the development of products/technologies that have **the potential to improve patient care or enhance human health**. There are no specific disease requirements, and all types of products (e.g., therapeutics, diagnostics, devices, tests, software) are eligible.
- Products, technologies, and/or ideas should **both**:
  - 1) originate from within an eligible university/community college in Kentucky, Mississippi, Tennessee, and Virginia.
  - 2) either (a) have existing intellectual property protection (e.g., patent, copyright, trademark) or (b) have potential to create new intellectual property. Technologies that are already licensed to a company are not eligible.



**Eligibility (continued):**

- Disclosure of projects/technologies to an applicant’s respective technology transfer office is not required to submit a pre-application; however, disclosure will be required prior to the submission of a Mid-South REACH full application (if invited).
- Multiple Principal Investigators are permitted, but all personnel (including faculty sponsors) who are listed on an application must agree to participate and submit the application.
- Non-faculty applicants must identify a faculty member who is willing to sponsor their application.
- Clinical trials ([by NIH definition](#)) are not allowed.
- Eligible institutions by state:

Kentucky	Mississippi	Tennessee	Virginia
Eastern Kentucky University	Alcorn State	Belmont University	Christopher Newport University
Kentucky Community & Technical College System*	Delta State University	Chattanooga State Community College	George Mason University
Kentucky State University	Hinds Community College	East Tennessee State University	James Madison University
Morehead State University	Jackson State University	Meharry Medical College	Longwood University
Murray State	Mississippi State University	Middle Tennessee State University	Norfolk State University
Northern Kentucky University	Mississippi Valley State University	Tennessee Board of Regents**	Old Dominion University
University of Kentucky	University of Mississippi	Tennessee State University	Radford University
University of Louisville	University of Mississippi Medical Center	Tennessee Tech University (Innov & Entrepr.)	University of Mary Washington
Western Kentucky University	University of Southern Mississippi	Union University	University of Virginia
		University of Memphis	Virginia Commonwealth University
		University of Tennessee-Chattanooga	Virginia Military Institute
		University of Tennessee-Knoxville	Virginia State University
		Vanderbilt University	Virginia Tech
		Vanderbilt University Medical Center	William & Mary

\*Represents 16 institutions across the state

\*\*Represents 37 institutions in Tennessee

Kentucky	Mississippi	Tennessee	Virginia
Eastern Kentucky University	Jackson State University	American Baptist College (Entrepreneurial Leadership)	Christopher Newport University
Morehead State University		Belmont University	George Mason University
Murray State		Chattanooga State Community College	James Madison University
Northern Kentucky University		Christian Brothers University	Longwood University
Kentucky Community & Technical College System*		East Tennessee State University	Norfolk State University
Kentucky State University		Meharry Medical College	Old Dominion University





University of Kentucky		Middle Tennessee State University	Radford University
University of Louisville		Northeast State Community College	University of Mary Washington
Western Kentucky University		Roane State Community College	University of Virginia
		Tennessee State University	Virginia Commonwealth University
		Tennessee Tech University (Innov & Entrepr.)	Virginia Military Institute
		Union University	Virginia State University
		University of Memphis	Virginia Tech
		University of Tennessee-Chattanooga	William & Mary
		University of Tennessee-Knoxville	
		Vanderbilt University	
		Vanderbilt University Medical Center	

\*Represents 16 institutions across the state

**Pre-application preparation and submission:**

**Mid-South REACH pre-applications require two components:**

1. **Pre-Application:** A short (2-page) description +of the problem you are trying to address and the solution you envision. This will be prepared offline and uploaded to the portal. The Pre-Application Questions template may be downloaded from the [Mid-South REACH website](#) or from the NIH Pre-Application portal (link below).
2. **Online submission portal:** Applicants will be asked to provide information about the project and investigators, including previous innovation-related experience and technology stage. You will also upload your completed Project Description Template.

**Submit your pre-application via the NIH Pre-Application portal:**

<https://redcapedc.rti.org/seed/surveys/?s=39WPKM3L99EXELJR&hub=KU86GD49M2SAE41&preapp=1>

**Questions and assistance:**

Mid-South REACH Project Managers can assist you with various aspects of the pre-application preparation, including the review of drafts prior to submission. We encourage informal inquiries about whether an idea or product would be suitable for this program. If needed, Mid-South REACH Project Managers may also be able to help identify a suitable collaborator(s) and/or faculty sponsor (for non-faculty applicants).

Please reach out with any questions related to the Mid-South REACH grant program or to schedule an appointment to discuss your project/idea or pre-application. You can email Project Managers directly:

<b>For investigators in:</b>	<b>Please contact:</b>
Kentucky	<a href="mailto:midsouthreach@louisville.edu">midsouthreach@louisville.edu</a>
Mississippi	<a href="mailto:technologytransfer@jsums.edu">technologytransfer@jsums.edu</a>





Tennessee - Universities	<a href="mailto:MidSouthREACH@vanderbilt.edu">MidSouthREACH@vanderbilt.edu</a>
Tennessee – Vanderbilt University Medical Center	<a href="mailto:brockcenter@vumc.org">brockcenter@vumc.org</a>
Virginia	<a href="mailto:muzbil@gmu.edu">muzbil@gmu.edu</a> <a href="mailto:orpsorrell@gmu.edu">orpsorrell@gmu.edu</a>

**Review of pre-applications:**

Pre-applications will be reviewed by the Mid-South REACH team in each state to verify if they are responsive to the RFA and may be excluded if not suitable for this grant program.

Responsive pre-applications will be reviewed by a panel consisting of the Mid-South REACH Internal Advisory Committee (IAC) and the Leadership Team based on criteria, including scientific merit, clinical relevance, intellectual property position, market potential, time to market, and portfolio diversity. The REACH IACs are made up of reviewers with scientific, clinical, entrepreneurial, technology transfer, and/or commercialization expertise from universities within each of the state partners. All applicants who submit a pre-application will be notified of the outcome (invited or not invited to submit a full application) and will receive written feedback from the Mid-South REACH IAC review.

**Next steps:**

Applicants who are not invited to submit a full application are encouraged to meet with Mid-South REACH Project Managers to discuss IAC feedback, areas in which the application could be strengthened, and/or strategies for alternative funding.

Applicants who are invited to submit a full application will receive further instructions and information regarding the preparation of their full application and pitch presentation. Submission of a full application will involve additional training in research commercialization and assistance in creating a detailed product development plan and project milestones. Final funding decisions will be made following review by the Mid-South REACH External Review Board (ERB) with input from the NIH Technology Guidance Committee (TGC).



# Mid-South REACH: State of Tennessee

*Where Inclusive Innovation Creates Shared Prosperity*

## **Vision:**

The state of Tennessee welcomes you to be part of our vision for the future of Tennessee and be an active part in building critical structures in our state and across the Mid-South. Join our esteemed multi-state team of innovators, who have been working for the past few years to galvanize an inclusive innovation ecosystem across the entire Mid-South, leveraging consortia of institutions of higher education to lead the development of entrepreneurial ecosystems in their local regions. This vision includes the formation and nurturance of mentor and capital networks, the launch of an increasing number of biomedical innovation workforce development programs, and the fostering of regional cross-sector partnerships and collaboration. When combined, these enable and foster shared prosperity across all locals, states, and regions. In Tennessee, there exists a rich convergence of innovative spirit, entrepreneurial mindset, and deep biomedical technology ready for translation, commercialization, and rollout into the market to alleviate the major pain points plaguing patient and medical stakeholders, equitably. The Mid-South REACH will help glean these biomedical innovations from the river of ideation and research into the ocean of the market valuability.

## **Budget and duration:**

In the first cycle, Mid-South REACH Tennessee will utilize federal NIH funds to administer awards from Tennessee institutions who have provided matching funds for projects, currently Vanderbilt University and Vanderbilt University Medical Center. These awards will be provided over two 6-month funding cycles per year. All Vanderbilt University Medical Center applicants should concurrently email the Brock Center at [Brockcenter@vumc.org](mailto:Brockcenter@vumc.org) for eligibility considerations.

During the first cycle, project awards will be made to institutions in Tennessee who have provided matching funds. In subsequent cycles, project awards will be made to institutions across the State of Tennessee, pending the availability of statewide matching funds. Award amounts will be up to \$50,000/6 months and teams will be eligible for competitive renewal.

- For **Cycle 1**, applicants should budget for up to **\$50,000** in direct costs for the 6-month award period (10/1/24 – 3/31/25). Applicants will be asked within the pre-application to outline how these funds will be used, but submission of an itemized budget is not required at this stage.
- **For Cycle 1**, awards are planned across Tennessee at institutions providing matching funds.
- **For Subsequent Cycles**, awards are planned across the State of Tennessee, pending the availability of statewide matching funds and institutional specific matching funds.
- All applicants across the State of Tennessee who have interest in applying for these future statewide funds, please complete the form at this link so that you will be directly notified when statewide funds become available: <https://airtable.com/appKPri4r2fL8CjCa/shrsFoHsd7KUne7lq>.
- Teams will be eligible for competitive renewal.