

Call for Proposals – FY 2022

The Maryland Agricultural Experiment Station Equipment Grant Program

SUBMISSION DEADLINE – Midnight (Eastern), September 30, 2021

Background and Purpose

The Maryland Agricultural Experiment Station (MAES) in the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources (AGNR) at the University of Maryland was first established in 1888. Currently, it fosters research at all scales (e.g., molecular, cellular, organismic, and ecosystem) related to economically and environmentally sustainable food and fiber production. MAES operations are supported by the USDA-NIFA Hatch funding program and the State of Maryland. MAES researchers conduct innovative basic, applied (mission-oriented), and/or combination of basic & applied research on a wide array of topics including plant and animal genomics, infectious diseases, animal health, vaccine development, plant and animal physiology, basic biology, human health and nutrition, food processing and food safety, animal nutrition, environmental and ecosystem health, water quality, soil and watershed sciences, bioenergy, horticulture and landscape design, and the interface between agroecosystems and aquatic environment. The research conducted by MAES researchers is aligned with AGNR's Strategic Initiatives (<https://agnr.umd.edu/about/strategic-initiatives>). The purpose of the MAES Equipment Grant Program is to improve research infrastructure and facilities by providing funding for high-priority equipment and instruments used to support Hatch and Hatch/Multistate projects. Equipment that benefits more than one project will be given priority.

Eligibility

- Tenured/tenure-track and Professional track (PTK) faculty whose full-time position (tenure home) is in AGNR are eligible to apply.
- The principal investigator (PI) and co-investigators (Co-Is) receiving MAES Equipment Grant funds must have a MAES appointment and an active USDA-approved Hatch or Hatch/Multistate project in REEport and/or the new NIFA Reporting System (NRS) (membership in a multistate project is NOT sufficient). Also, PIs and Co-Is must have met, and continue to meet, their Hatch or Hatch/Multistate project reporting obligations in a timely manner. The requirement of having a Hatch project can be waived upon the approval of AGNR Associate Dean for Research & Associate Director of MAES (ADR/AD) only for the first round of funding (FY 2022) or if a faculty member was hired within the last 12 months before the submission deadline. The PI should email a request for a waiver to the ADR/AD before a proposal is submitted. Note that a waiver of the requirement of having a Hatch project is only for the consideration of the proposal for funding by the evaluation panel. If recommended for funding, the PI and Co-Is must have an approved Hatch or Hatch/Multistate project in REEport/NRS before awarded funds will be released to that project.
- A faculty member can be a PI on only one proposal but can be a Co-I on multiple proposals. Although recipients, as a PI, of a MAES Equipment Grant in the prior year are eligible and encouraged to submit proposals to this program, those who have not received an award in the prior year will be given priority. Similar to the MAES Competitive Grant, the MAES Equipment Grant is considered a seed grant, and faculty members who previously received a

MAES Equipment Grant as a PI are expected to submit a competitively reviewed research proposal for extramural funding.

Funding Award

A PI can request equipment funding in the range of \$5,000 to \$100,000 toward the purchase of a single piece or a cluster of equipment/instruments. The total cost of purchase can be more than \$100,000, however, MAES will provide funding up to \$100,000. A minimum of 50% cost share is required. The cost share can be a combination of funds from the PI, Co-I(s), or the department(s). The required 50% cost share can be waived for core equipment proposed by a group/team of faculty that will benefit multiple faculty members or facilitate collaborations among MAES faculty. Requests for farm equipment and machinery purchase (e.g., those typically requested by REC staff) are not eligible for this program. Such equipment and machinery purchases are funded through separate funds. The total amount of funding allocated for the MAES Equipment Grant Program will vary from year to year.

Application Requirements and Format

12 font – single-spaced. Name your electronic file using the format: Last name of PI-First Initial-PI's Department acronym-20XX-MAES-Equipment (Example: Srivastava-P-ENST-20XX-MAES-Equipment). Files not using this format will be disqualified.

Limit the first six elements to 2 pages.

1. Title – brief, clear, and concise that would give a clear indication of the equipment being requested. Limit to 100 characters, including symbols and spaces.
2. AGNR Strategic Initiative(s) addressed by the research program(s) of the PI and Co-Is.
3. PI name and address, including phone, email, and department or research center.
4. If applicable, Co-Is names and addresses, including phone, email, and department or research center for each.
5. Name of the equipment. Include brand and model if available. A brief description and purpose of the equipment being requested (limit to a short paragraph).
6. PI and Co-I's Hatch or Hatch/Multistate project number and accession number in REEport.
7. Description/merit of the PI's/team's research program (limit to 1 page): Please provide a brief description of the Hatch or Hatch/Multistate project's objectives and expected outcomes. How will the equipment requested be used specifically in this project?
8. Need and justification for the equipment (limit to 1 page): Justify the need for the equipment, describe how the equipment will be used to enhance PI and Co-Is research and complement or enhance interdisciplinary research in MAES, and allow the PI/team to become more competitive for future extramural funding. Is the equipment a new purchase, or replacing an old (more than 20 years) equipment?
9. Vendor Quote: Attach an official vendor quote and indicate if this is considered special-purpose equipment.
10. Expected life span of the equipment in years.

11. Cost share amount and sources: Please provide details on cost share (i.e., PI/Co-I share, department share, etc.). Note that funds from federal sources including MAES Hatch grants cannot be used as part of the match.
12. For core equipment proposed by a group of faculty, please provide a list of faculty championing for the equipment and justify how the equipment will promote innovative research and collaboration (limit to 2 pages excluding the support letter). Please include a signed letter of support from the faculty champions (i.e., one support letter that includes all the signatures). Include Hatch or Hatch/Multistate project(s) to tie your request for the core equipment proposed. Please include research area, major technology or techniques used in the research, long-term research goals, research productivity, competitiveness of the research program, and the strategic direction of the research program. Please include how the team has collaborated or will collaborate on interdisciplinary research projects.
13. A letter signed by the PI's department chair(s) certifying that the requested equipment is not available in the department for the PI's and/or Co-Is' use. For PIs hired in the last five years, the letter should confirm that the requested equipment was not included in the PI's start-up package. The letter should also include the cost share provided by the department and the PI/Co-Is. This should match with the details contained in the proposal description.

Proposal Submission Process

Please submit/upload all the requested information in one PDF file at URL--<https://umd.infoready4.com/>

Proposals are due by midnight September 30, 2021. Proposals arriving after this time will not be accepted, and proposals submitted with incomplete information will be returned and declined.

All proposals should be submitted online using the University of Maryland Limited Submission and Seed Grant Portal at <https://umd.infoready4.com/> using your UMD Username and Password to login. Please contact Rubie G. Mize at rgmize@umd.edu (301-405-4049) if you have questions about the InfoReady system and this RFA.

Proposal Evaluation

Each application will be first screened to ensure that it meets the eligibility and cost-share requirements of this RFA. Applications that do not meet the guidelines will be returned to the applicant without review. An internal panel of ANGR faculty will be convened to evaluate proposals that meet the eligibility and cost-share requirements. The proposals will be reviewed based on the merit of the PI's/team's research program (50 points) and the need and justification for the equipment (50 points). The final decision on the equipment (cluster of equipment/instruments) being selected for funding will be made by the ADR/AD in consultation with the AGNR Dean and Director of MAES considering the fair distribution of funding among departments.

Award Announcement

Upon the completion of the application review process, the PI will be notified of funding decisions by October 31, 2021. All purchases are contingent upon prior approval of USDA-NIFA. Once prior approval is received from USDA-NIFA, the PI will be notified to complete the purchase. The funds must be expended within six months of notification. Note that no-cost extensions will not be approved unless an emergency or force majeure event caused a delay in purchasing the approved

equipment. “No-Cost Extensions” are detrimental to the continuation of the MAES Equipment Grant Program because funds not used during the specified project period do not carry forward, thus forcing us to use funds from the “new” Fiscal Year. PI and their department are responsible for preparing the necessary paperwork to purchase and pay for the equipment. The Dean’s Fiscal Office will provide a KFS number for the awarded portion of the funds.

Contact

Questions related to this call for proposals can be directed to either Dr. Puneet Srivastava (srivapu@umd.edu) or Rubie G. Mize (rgmize@umd.edu).