

Texas Space Commission (TSC) Space Exploration and Aeronautics Research Fund (SEARF) Application FAQs

1. How can the public learn about TSC Board of Directors (Board) meetings?

All agendas will be posted on <https://space.texas.gov> once they are accepted by the *Texas Register*. All previous meeting recordings and minutes are posted as well. You can also sign up for email updates from the agency [here](#).

2. What is the deadline to apply?

There is no deadline to apply. Applications will be received and reviewed on a rolling basis.

3. Is there a maximum dollar amount that may be requested?

No, there is no maximum, and the amount to request is up to each applicant. However, the Board is not obligated to fund a grant at the amount requested by the grant applicant.

4. What project types are eligible to receive grant funding from the SEARF?

Applicants may choose one or several options outlined in the application as categories that the Board may provide grants for specific purposes:

- Development of emerging technologies required for any aspect of human spaceflight;
- Research involving any aspect of space exploration and spaceflight;
- Workforce training to promote space exploration and spaceflight;
- Curation of post-mission materials involved in space exploration and spaceflight; and
- Development of infrastructure useful or necessary for the establishment or maintenance of a spaceport.

5. May grants from the Space Exploration and Aeronautics Research Fund be used to pay for indirect costs or maintenance and operations costs?

No. The Commission will direct its limited resources to specific costs rather than estimated costs associated with a proposal. As such, costs related to operations or overhead are estimates that cannot be easily controlled or accounted for. Therefore, only funds applied toward cost objectives which specifically align with the purposes of the Commission—as set forth in its enabling statute, Chapter 482, Texas Government Code—will be approved.

6. May funds be awarded directly to a business or non-profit for its proposed project?

Yes, the Board may award grants directly to businesses and non-profits. Grant recipients must enter a grant agreement with the TSC that details recipients' duties regarding use of funds as well as reporting requirements and other responsibilities.

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7. What entities are eligible to receive SEARF funding?

The SEARF was established to provide grants for businesses or non-profits involved in the space exploration, research, or aeronautics industry, and a governmental entity with which TSC has entered an intergovernmental agreement for that purpose.

8. Can TSC tell me if my project is eligible for a SEARF grant?

TSC staff is unable to determine whether a specific project falls within the scope of the grant program without a full review of the application. If you think the project, research, or application of the research would fall under the statutorily permissible uses, you may apply. In your application, please provide sufficient information about the endeavor for which you are applying and describe how it will satisfy at least one of the five aforementioned purposes. TSC will not review a grant request without first receiving a completed application.

9. Do governmental entities, including all public institutions of higher education, need to enter into an intergovernmental agreement with TSC prior to applying for an SEARF grant?

No. Governmental entities may apply without first entering an agreement with the TSC. If TSC deems the application complete, then TSC staff will follow up with the applicant to discuss next steps.

10. May a private or independent institution of higher education apply for a SEARF grant?

Yes, a private or independent institution of higher education may apply if it is a business or nonprofit entity with an established presence in this state and is involved in the space exploration, research, or aeronautics industry.

11. Is a local economic development incentive required to receive SEARF funding?

No. An incentive from a local economic development organization or local government is not required to apply, but a local incentive would demonstrate local support of a proposed project.

12. How may an entity determine whether it has an “established presence” in Texas, in accordance with Texas Government Code § 482.107(c)(6)?

To be eligible to receive a grant, an applicant must engage in business in the state of Texas. An entity has an established presence if it (1) maintains employees in the state of Texas, (2) has a fixed place of business in the state of Texas, or (3) provides any service in the state of Texas, whether or not the individuals performing the services are residents of the state. Applicants may be located outside the state of Texas when the application is submitted and reviewed; however, the applicant must demonstrate that it engages in business in the state of Texas as a condition of the award of grant funds.

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13. Is there a maximum number of applications that can be submitted from the same eligible entity?

No. An eligible entity may submit more than one SEARF proposal for different funding requests.

14. Will the total SEARF program be equally split between the two defined types of eligible entities?

The Board has not pre-determined what amount of SEARF dollars will be awarded to which type of eligible entities.

15. Can independent school districts, community colleges, universities, health science centers, and state agencies defined as institutions of higher education submit a SEARF application?

Yes. Those are defined as governmental entities.

16. Is there a maximum length of time as the project's duration period?

No. If an applicant submits a proposal as a multiyear project, regardless of the total length of time, then the applicant should explain that in the "phases" portion on SEARF application.

17. If an applicant does not have "three consecutive years of independent, audited financial statements" for their business, will that immediately disqualify its SEARF application?

No. However, an applicant should be prepared to receive extensive follow-up questions from TSC staff during the internal application vetting process—led by the Chief Compliance Officer—before a proposal can be reviewed by the Board.