

FY 2021 AAES EQUIPMENT FUNDING PROGRAM

SUBMISSION DEADLINE

March 31, 2021

PURPOSE AND PRIORITIES

The Alabama Agricultural Experiment Station (AAES) at Auburn University was established in 1883 by an act of the Alabama Legislature to conduct scientific research that would advance Alabama's agricultural and forestry industries. AAES operations are supported with funding support from the USDA NIFA Hatch funding program and the State of Alabama. AAES researchers conduct innovative fundamental and applied (mission-oriented) research that supports the advancement of Alabama's agriculture and forestry industries, for the purpose of improving quality of life and well-being of citizens and communities of Alabama and beyond. Research conducted by AAES faculty are broadly categorized under the following focus areas: i) Plant Production and Management Systems; ii) Food Animal Systems; iii) Integrated Food and Human Health Systems; and iv) Sustainable Ecosystems and Renewable Resource Management. **The AAES Equipment Funding Program is designed to improve AAES research infrastructure and facilities by providing seed funding to acquire high priority equipment or instrumentation.**

ELIGIBILITY

- The lead principal investigator (P.I.) and other co-investigators receiving AAES funds (Co-P.I.s) must have an AAES appointment and a USDA-approved (or pending USDA approval) Hatch or Hatch/Multistate project (membership in multistate project only is NOT sufficient for this requirement). The P.I. and Co-P.I.s must also have submitted their 2020 Hatch or Hatch/Multistate project report in the REEport system in a timely fashion. For faculty members hired within the last 12 months, the requirement of having a Hatch project can be waived upon the approval of the department head. The department head should email their request for waiver to the Associate Dean for Research & Associate Director of AAES (Henry Fadamiro) before a proposal is submitted. Note that a waiver of the requirement for Hatch projects for faculty hired within the last 12 months will only ensure consideration of their proposal by the evaluation panel. If recommended for funding, the P.I. and Co-P.I.s must submit a Hatch project in REEport before release of awarded funds.
- Investigators can only be the lead P.I. on one proposal. Faculty members who received an AAES Equipment grant in 2020 (as lead P.I.) are not eligible to apply this year. Faculty members who previously received (as lead P.I.) an AAES grant (i.e., PAR, AgRSEED, AIR or Equipment funding), but have not submitted competitively reviewed proposal(s) for extramural funding as lead P.I. or Co-P.I. (excluding internal and commodity funding) since their last AAES funding are not eligible for this competition.

AWARD

Equipment funding of \$5,000 to \$100,000 may be requested toward the purchase of a single piece or a cluster of equipment. The total cost of the equipment is unlimited, but AAES may provide funding up to \$100,000. A minimum of 50% cost share is required. 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 AAES faculty. Note that fixed farm equipment and machineries are not eligible for this program.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS AND FORMAT

Each proposal must include the following elements:

1. Alabama Agricultural Experiment Station Grant Proposal Cover Form.
2. Description/merit of the P.I.'s/team's research program (limit to 2 pages).
3. Need and justification for the equipment: Present written justification for the need of the equipment. Address how the equipment will be used to enhance your research or interdisciplinary research in the AAES (limit to 2 pages).
4. Cost share amount and sources. A minimum of 50% cost share is required. Funds from federal sources including funds from AAES Hatch grants cannot be used as part of the match.
5. Note: 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 AAES faculty. To request a waiver of the cost share requirement, please submit a justification (limit to 1 page) with a list of faculty champions for the equipment and how the equipment will

- promote innovative research and collaborations. Please include letters of support from the faculty champions.
6. A letter signed by the P.I.'s department head/chair/director or the Associate Dean for Research (ADR), certifying that the requested equipment is not available for the P.I.'s use. For P.I.s hired in the last five years (i.e., since 2016), the letter should also confirm that the requested equipment was not included in the P.I.'s start-up package. College of Agriculture faculty members are requested to review the College of Agriculture Searchable Equipment Database and verify that the requested equipment is not available for their use, prior to soliciting a letter of certification from their department head or ADR. Such applications must include a search report for the equipment in the College of Agriculture Searchable Equipment Database: aaes.auburn.edu/equipment-database/.
 7. Vendor Quote: Attach an official vendor quote.

Proposal Format:

- Margin - 1 inch: top, bottom, left, and right.
- Minimum font size - 11 points.
- Single- or double-spaced, single-sided 8.5 x 11 inch pages.
- Pages should be numbered.

PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

Application deadline: Proposals must be received by 5:00 PM (Central Time), **March 31, 2021**.

You will be using our AAES Grant Management System to submit your applications this year:

- Open an internet browser (Chrome preferred) and navigate to AAES Grant Management System
- Login with your AU username and password.
- Click Start a new grant proposal.
- Expand the Alabama Agricultural Experiment Station section.
- Click the Begin a new proposal button under the appropriate program.
- Provide a title for the project by clicking the Edit title button.
- Provide a proposal description by clicking the Edit description button.
- Complete your user profile by selecting the link in RED
- Complete each section of the proposal submission form (Contact Information, Research Focus Area, etc.) by answering all questions.
- When all sections are complete, review and submit your proposal.

PROPOSAL EVALUATION

Each application will be evaluated in a two-part process. First, each application will be screened to ensure that it meets the eligibility and administrative requirements as set forth in this RFA. Applications that do not meet the guidelines as stated in the RFA will be eliminated from the competition and returned to the applicant without review. Second, an internal panel of AAES faculty will be convened to evaluate applications that meet these requirements for technical content, based on the following criteria:

- **Merit of the P.I.'s/team's research program (50 points).** Proposals should include a section entitled "Description/merit of the P.I.'s/team's research program" to 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 P.I.(s) will collaborate and work with others for programmatic development.
- **Need and justification for the equipment (50 points).** The proposals should include a section entitled "Need and justification for the equipment" to explain the P.I.'s/team's research program/project(s) for which the equipment will be used. Include how the equipment will complement or enhance the research program and allow the applicant/team to become more competitive for future extramural funding.
- **Cost share amount (Mandatory).** The application must include the required cost share amount and sources. A minimum of 50% cost share is required. Funds from federal sources including funds from AAES Hatch grants cannot be used as part of the match. 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 AAES faculty. To request a waiver of the cost share requirement, please submit a justification (limit to 1 page) with a list of faculty champions for the equipment and how the equipment will be used to support research in the program. Please include letters of support from the faculty champions.
- **Letter of support by the P.I.'s department head/chair/director or ADR (Mandatory).** The letter must certify that the requested equipment is not available for the P.I.'s use. For P.I.s hired in the last five years (i.e., since 2016), the letter should also confirm that the requested equipment was not included in the P.I.'s start-up package. College of Agriculture faculty members are requested to review the College of Agriculture Searchable Equipment Database and verify that the requested equipment is not available for their use, prior to soliciting a letter of certification from their department head or ADR. Such applications must include a search report for the equipment in the College of Agriculture Searchable Equipment Database: aaes.auburn.edu/equipment-database/.
- **Official vendor quote for the equipment (Mandatory).**

AWARD ANNOUNCEMENT

Upon the completion of application review process, the lead P.I. will be notified of funding decisions by May 31, 2021. Equipment awards must be expended by August 31, 2021. Your department is responsible for preparing the necessary paperwork to purchase and pay for the equipment. The AAES Business Office will provide a FOP for the award portion of the funds. No-cost extensions will NOT be allowed.

CONTACT

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