I-CREWS Vertically Integrated Project (VIP) Funding Request for Applications - 2026

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Priority Deadline: December 15, 2026 12pm (PST)

Additional rolling deadlines will be offered during the Spring 2027 semester

Introduction

The Idaho NSF EPSCoR I-CREWS program invites applications for funding to support the development of new Vertically Integrated Projects (VIP) courses aligned with I-CREWS research areas. The VIP model expands access to hand-on, research-based learning for students while supporting faculty scholarship and team-based inquiry.

This opportunity is part of Idaho's NSF EPSCoR Track-1 Research Improvement (RII) award, "Idaho Community-Engaged Resilience for Energy-Water Systems (I-CREWS) (2023-2028), which aligns with the Idaho Higher Education Research Strategic Plan and is at the center of the I-CREWS Education and Workforce Development plans.

I-CREWS Vision and Mission

Vision: Cultivate world-class, competitive, and collaborative research with urban, rural, and tribal communities that adapt to climate, population, and technological changes impacting energy-water (E-W) systems.

Mission: Co-create research and solutions that integrate education, technology, and community engagement to strengthen multisystemic resilience.

The project's central hypothesis is that community E-W systems can be characterized across scales to identify patterns of resilience. By integrating local knowledge, governance, and advanced modeling, I-CREWS aims to support equitable and data-informed adaptation strategies.

Purpose of VIP Funding

This funding supports faculty in developing new VIP courses connected to I-CREWS research areas. VIP courses engage undergraduate and graduate students in ongoing research teams where they:

- Earn academic credit for meaningful contributions to faculty-led research and design efforts
- Participate across multiple semesters to deepen learning and continuity
- Work in vertically integrated (mix of team members from first-year through postdocs), multidisciplinary teams that draw from students studying disciplines across campus

Faculty receive resources to create sustainable structures that link their active research with undergraduate education.

Course Design and Structure

The VIP courses will be set up to allow maximum flexibility and long-term engagement.

- Some VIP courses may be designed to have no prerequisites.
- Instructor permission is needed for enrollment.
- Depending upon the course, undergraduate students may register for 1 or 2 credits: each credit equals about 40 hours of work for the semester.
- Graduate students may register for credits.
- Course credits typically count as elective credits.

More information:
VIP National Consortium: www.vip-consortium.org
VIP in I-CREWS: https://idahocrews.org/education/
I-CREWS Research Areas. https://idahocrews.org/research/

Faculty are encouraged to adapt or collaborate with existing I-CREWS VIP courses to strengthen interdisciplinary and inter-institutional offerings.

Eligibility

Faculty at Boise State University, Idaho State University, University of Idaho, and Idaho's 2-4 year colleges are eligible.

Prior or current participation in the I-CREWS project is not required. New participants are encouraged to connect with I-CREWS leads and VIP coordinators at their institutions to discuss alignment and course planning.

Applicants should consult with their department chair or academic leadership before submitting a proposal.

Award and Budget

Up to four, $10,000 direct-cost awards will be granted.

Funds may be used for faculty or graduate assistant salary, fringe, and/or supplies to create and launch a VIP course aligned with I-CREWS research areas.

Please specify intended use and budget breakdown in your application, including the name(s) of people receiving salary support and estimated amounts of salary/fringe to each and including the breakdown of supplies. Facilities and Administrative (F&A) costs will be provided to recipient institutions by the Idaho EPSCoR Office

Expectations

- The new VIP course must be offered no later than Fall 2027
- Courses should be sustained over multiple semesters
- Students can join research teams through the VIP course and earn 1-2 credits each semester
- PIs are responsible for managing project logistics, expenditures, participant information, and reporting
- Funds must be expended within the awarded project period

Reporting and Acknowledgement

Awardees will provide brief progress updates for quarterly internal I-CREWS meetings and the annual NSF report (April submission, prior to the May 1 report deadline).

All materials or publications supported by this award must acknowledge: "This product was made possible by the NSF Idaho EPSCoR Program and by the National Science Foundation under award number OIA-2242769."

Application Process

To apply for VIP course development and delivery funds described in this announcement, please complete the online application at this LINK: https://idahoepscor.piestar-rfx.com/opportunities/all/rfp/141

- ✓ The completed application should not exceed 4 pages
- ✓ PI's at Idaho State University are expected to route applications through their Office of Sponsored Programs and obtain approval to submit prior to submission to the Idaho EPSCoR Office.

The *priority deadline* to apply is December 15, 2026 at 12pm Pacific Time.
Additional rolling deadlines will be offered during the Spring 2027 semester

Review Process

VIP application funding will be selected by the I-CREWS Workforce Development and Education team representing the statewide RII Track-1 award with input as needed from I-CREWS leadership teams.

Review may include content experts at any of Idaho's research universities who are not significantly involved in the I-CREWS project.

Selection Criteria

VIP course applications will be considered by the I-CREWS leadership team based on the following criteria:

- Clear alignment with I-CREWS research areas
- Likelihood of meeting basic standards of VIP courses: vertical, accessible, tied to a faculty member's scholarship
- The extent to which the course can provide multi-disciplinary/interdisciplinary training and experiences
- The quality of a brief plan to recruit students to the course
- Degree to which the course holds promise of being sustainable over the long-term (5+ years potential)
- Instructor(s) qualifications and past record of success in mentoring and teaching
- Geographic distribution of VIP courses at multiple institutions across the state

Questions?

Please contact the VIP coordinator on your campus:

Boise State University: Jim Fredricksen (jimfredricksen@boisestate.edu)
Idaho State University: Kitty Griswold, (kittygriswold@isu.edu)
University of Idaho: Karla Eitel (keitel@uidaho.edu)