



University of Toledo Rocket Fuel Fund (UTRFF)

Technology Validation and Pre-commercialization Request for Proposals (RFP)

RFP Release	Deadline for Submission
2017	
Round 1 – February 1, 2017	May 1, 2017
Round 2 – July 1, 2017	September 1, 2017
2018	
Round 3 – November 1, 2017	January 1, 2018
Round 4 – March 1, 2018	May 1, 2018
Round 5 – July 1, 2018	September 1, 2018
2019	
Round 6 – November 1, 2018	January 1, 2019
Round 7 – March 1, 2019	May 1, 2019
Round 8 – July 1, 2019	September 1, 2019

Applications must be e-mailed to UTRFF Program Manager, Anne Izzi (anne.izzi@utoledo.edu), no later than 5 p.m. Eastern Time on January 1, May 1, or September 1 of each year to be considered for funding. Applications received after 5 p.m. on those dates will be considered for the subsequent application cycle, provided that funding is available. Any deadline that falls on a weekend or holiday will be shifted to the next business day.

Awards will be announced within 60 days of application deadline.

Funding provided in part by a grant from the U.S. Department of Commerce/Economic Development Administration.

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Questions? All questions regarding this RFP or UTRFF program must be submitted in writing via e-mail to anne.izzi@utoledo.edu with the subject line “UTRFF Question”.

University of Toledo Rocket Fuel Fund (UTRFF)

Technology Validation and Pre-commercialization Fund

1. UTRFF Introduction

- a) Overview: The UTRFF was created to provide funding to drive early stage discoveries towards economic development and commercialization at northwest Ohio institutions of higher education and other non-profit organizations, and establish an earlier point of contact for innovators with UT's successful continuum of programs designed to support economic development. The program is structured to provide assistance to early stage technologies to help facilitate the best innovations from northwest Ohio researchers.
- b) Technology Areas for Support: The UTRFF seeks early stage technologies with strong market potential in the following areas:
- Advanced Manufacturing
 - Advanced Materials
 - Biomedical/Life Sciences
 - Drug Development
 - Energy/Smart Energy Solutions
 - Medical Devices
 - Sensors
 - Software/Information Technology
- c) Request for Proposals (RFP): This RFP is being issued for funds to be awarded under the University of Toledo Rocket Fuel Fund (UTRFF). This RFP is not a contract or commitment of any kind on behalf of the University of Toledo. The University of Toledo, in collaboration with Rocket Innovations, administers this RFP and reserves the right to adjust any information regarding this RFP for whatever reason it deems appropriate. The University of Toledo Offices of Research and Sponsored Programs and Grants Accounting will administer all funds awarded under this RFP. Issuing this RFP does not bind the University of Toledo to make an award of any UTRFF funds. Any award of UTRFF funds with respect to this RFP will be subject to availability of funds through the U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration Regional Innovation Strategy i6 Challenge funding.
- d) Committee: Rocket Innovations will form a committee in collaboration with the University of Toledo (Committee). The Committee will consist of a total of five (5) individuals [Program Manager, technical advisors (2), and commercialization advisors (2)] who will review applications and make funding recommendations from the UTRFF. The Committee reserves the right to fund any proposal in full or in part, to request additional information to assist in the review process, to reject any or all proposals responding to this RFP, to re-issue the RFP and accept new proposals if the Committee determines that doing so is in the best interests of the UTRFF, and to perform any other activities it deems appropriate. Applicants whose proposals are not funded will receive feedback from the Program Manager when awards are announced.

- e) Schedule: Proposals will be accepted February 1, 2017 through September 1, 2019. Applications must be e-mailed to Anne Izzi (anne.izzi@utoledo.edu) no later than 5 p.m. Eastern Time by the deadlines for proposals—January 1, May 1, and September 1—of each year to be considered for funding. Any application received after 5 p.m. on those dates will be considered for the subsequent application cycle, provided that funding is available. Grantees will be notified by e-mail within 60 days of application.

2. Program Description

- a) Purpose and Goal: The purpose of this program is to support development of the best commercialization opportunities from academic and other non-profit institutions throughout northwest Ohio. The goal of the UTRFF is to provide funding to advance development of potentially valuable technologies to a point at which industry can justify funding to support additional R&D, execute a license agreement, or establish a new commercial venture. UTRFF funds are not meant to be early stage “proof of concept” funds—projects supported by the UTRFF must have already advanced beyond basic research and should have the equivalent of a laboratory-scale proof of concept prior to application to the UTRFF.
- b) Support: All Applicants may access other support, commercialization programming and events at the University of Toledo as available. External Grantees will be matched with a UT faculty member with expertise in the area of the funded technology who may be able to assist with testing or other technology validation. Funding from the sub-grant may be used to pay for such testing or validation. Applicants and awardees will be notified of upcoming events by e-mail.

3. Funding

- a) Request and Cost Share: Requests may be up to \$50,000 per submission. A cash match of at least 20% of the total cost of the award is required from internal and external Grantees. Greater weight will be given to proposals that include higher percentages of match. Follow-on funding may be available to those who successfully complete a project after submission of a final report with positive results, on condition that there is documented commercial interest.

4. Conditions

- a) Eligibility: Applicant eligibility is restricted to University of Toledo faculty and staff, and institutions of higher education or not-for-profit institutions from any of the 18 northwest Ohio counties including Lucas, Wood, Williams, Fulton, Defiance, Henry, Ottawa, Sandusky, Paulding, Putnam, Hancock, Seneca, Van Wert, Allen, Hardin, Wyandot, Mercer, and Auglaize. UTRFF awards to institutions other than UT will be granted to the institution (Grantee), and NOT to the Principal Investigator. Applicants that become Grantees must maintain eligibility while the grant is open. The Grantee will serve as technical director of the project and its administration, and will be legally and financially responsible for any UTRFF awarded funds. A Grantee that loses eligibility forfeits its award and may be required to repay the full amount of the monies it has received under the award.
- b) Limit on Number of Proposals per Principal Investigator: PIs are limited to one UTRFF proposal per cycle, and one award at a time. Once a project is completed, the PI will be eligible to submit

a subsequent proposal, but will not receive a future award until the final report from the previous award is received.

- c) Customer Discovery: Principal investigators are required to have participated in the NSF I-Corps™, I-Corps@Ohio, or Introduction to Customer Discovery (ICD) course available through Rocket Innovations designed to introduce entrepreneurial and customer discovery to stimulate interactions between faculty and industry. For information on participating in one of these programs, please contact Norm Rapino at norman.rapino.utoledo.edu.
- d) Intellectual Property: To be considered eligible for UTRFF funds, a technology must already have at the time of application, intellectual property protection, defined as patent-pending, patent-issued, or copyright, as appropriate. It is expected that the majority of technology will be patent-pending, which includes provisional patent applications.
- e) Project Period: One year. The Project Period is the period during which any work funded by the UTRFF will take place. A project is the plan of activity or activities that make up the total scope of work for which an award of UTRFF funds is being requested. Extensions of any kind will not be granted.
- f) Resubmissions: Applicants whose proposals are not funded will receive feedback from the Program Manager when awards are announced. Resubmissions must include a brief narrative in Question 1(a) of the application form explaining how the new proposal has been adjusted to answer feedback received after the last submission.

5. Expenses and Reporting

- a) Reimbursements: Reimbursements will be based upon actual expenses invoiced by the Grantee to the University of Toledo Grants Accounting Office based upon terms negotiated in the award agreement. Invoices should be submitted to Grants Accounting on a monthly basis. The Program Manager will review and approve all subcontractor invoices. Once invoices have been approved, they will be returned to the Grants Accounting Office, which will review and submit them to Accounts Payable for payment. Reimbursements will be paid on a proportional basis from UTRFF and cost match.
- b) Report Form: A report form which may be used for all reports will be e-mailed to the Principal Investigators along with their award notification.
 - 1) Semi-annual Progress Reports: Reports will be required of Grantees at six months and at the completion date to ensure that progress has been made as expected. Final payment of award will not be released until a final report has been received. Failure to submit a report within sixty days of its due date may be a basis for termination of the award.
 - 2) Commercialization Reports: On the first anniversary of completion of the grant and for the next two (2) years following the Project Period, Grantees are required to report to the Program Manager any development towards commercialization, including option or license agreements, company formation, or any other milestones that indicate commercialization success.

6. General Proposal Requirements

- a) Application Form: Application materials may be downloaded at this link: <http://www.utoledo.edu/rocketinnovations/rocketfuelfund.html> or request the materials by e-mailing anne.izzi@utoledo.edu. To submit, e-mail completed proposals by the deadline to anne.izzi@utoledo.edu with “UTRFF Submission” in the subject line.
- b) Formatting:
 - Proposals are to be submitted on 8.5 x 11-inch paper.
 - Margins must not be less than ¾ inch on all sides.
 - Font must be 11 point or larger with no more than six lines per inch.
 - Not including the required letter of support, Application Information Page and Contact Information Page, all pages must be numbered consecutively 1-6.
 - Place proposal title, page number and Applicant name in the footer on each page.
 - Proposals should not include color figures that cannot be understood when photocopied in black and white.
- c) Letter of Support: The first page of the proposal must be a one page letter of support from the Applicant organization’s Technology Transfer Office or Research Office attesting that the technology has been reviewed and selected as among the Applicant’s best opportunities. In addition, the letter of support must include the amount requested and the amount of cash match it will commit to the project.
- d) Information Pages: The Application Information Page and Contact Information Page should follow the letter of support. Submissions that do not include the title and signature of all necessary individuals may result in the proposal being rejected.
- e) Trade Secrets: Trade secret information should not be included, as submissions will be subject to the Ohio Public Records Act in Section 149.43 of the Ohio Revised Code.
- f) Proposal Narrative: Applications are limited to six pages, not including the required letter of support from the Applicant organization, Application Information Page and Contact Information Page. No other letters of collaboration or support are permitted, nor are references or links to any other work. Such information will not be considered. Applicants should review the space suggestions included in each question, but may use the space as they feel best presents the project. Due to the short page limit, the application is not intended to provide an in-depth technical assessment of the technology and/or scope of work.
- g) Presentation: Finalists will be required to present a brief slide deck overview of the technology to the Committee for consideration and Q&A after which awards will be made.
- h) Additional Documents: Required for University of Toledo Applicants ONLY--Internal budget form approved by the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, Conflict of Interest Disclosure, RSP-100, and Grant Match Program Cover Page documents approved by all relevant parties prior to submission. Any proposals received without these documents may be rejected upon initial administrative review.
- i) Budget Restrictions: Legal fees, patent prosecution expenses and indirect costs (Facilities & Administrative (F&A)), are not allowed as part of the budget request. In addition, UTRFF funds

may not be used to provide bonuses, incentive compensation, rewards, proposal development, administration costs, or travel expenses. Budget line items in Question 8 of the application form are the only reimbursable expenses allowed.

7. Evaluation

- a) Criteria: Proposals will be evaluated based on the likelihood of the ability to meet metrics as set forth within this RFP, the quality of the scope of work (SOW), degree to which the SOW aims to develop the technology towards commercialization, and appropriate use of funds as described in the budget narrative. The following criteria have been designated with the highest relevance to the UTRFF:
- Commercial opportunity including size of potential market.
 - Proposed proof is deemed meaningful and likely impactful to move the technology to a point where it is ready to be licensed to a start-up or young company.
 - Proposed proof can be generated during the one-year Project Period and with the proposed resources.
 - Validation/proof process will be conducted or overseen by an independent third party.
 - Degree to which the intellectual property is protected.
 - Commercially reasonable path to market entry of first product.
- b) Weighting: Weighting of the evaluation criteria will include:
- Qualifications and experience of the applicant;
 - Technical merit of the concept;
 - Appraisal of the market and commercial opportunity;
 - Quality of technology development plan;
 - Strength of intellectual property;
 - Percentage of cash match committed;
 - Potential for start-up formation and/or new job creation.

Appendix A--Awards Process and Mandatory Compliance

Awards Process: The University of Toledo Rocket Fuel Fund (UTRFF) Process will consist of the following:

I. Submittal of Proposal

Applicants are responsible to ensure that complete proposals are sent to the UTRFF by e-mail to anne.izzi@utoledo.edu with “UTRFF Submission” in the subject line by the deadline.

Applicants must ensure that proposals submitted in response to this RFP comply with all requirements as set forth in the RFP. Applicants are advised to read this RFP carefully to ensure a complete understanding of submission requirements. In particular, the form, format, and content of all proposals must follow the directions provided and must use the application form provided in Appendix B. Applicants are solely responsible to ensure that proposals are complete, accurate, responsive to the requirements of this RFP, and received by the UTRFF in the manner described.

Note: All costs incurred in preparation of proposals shall be borne by Applicant. Proposal preparation costs and/or proposal consultancy costs are not recoverable from UTRFF awards nor will they be considered as Cost Share to the project.

II. Proposal Review and Evaluation Procedures

Upon receipt of proposals, University of Toledo staff will conduct an administrative review to screen proposals for compliance with the objective content requirements defined in the RFP. Examples of elements checked in the screening process include Applicant eligibility, proposal completeness and inclusion of all required documentation. Proposals found not compliant with this RFP’s requirements may be eliminated from consideration and not reviewed further.

III. Award Decisions

UTRFF Program Management: The milestone-driven program will be managed by the University of Toledo in collaboration with Rocket Innovations. A sub-committee will be formed that will be served by UT, business, and community leaders who possess significant experience in developing start-ups, drafting business models and plans, and providing advice and counsel to early stage businesses. The committee will make and approve funding recommendations. Award decisions will be final. In a situation in which a technology falls outside the scope of the subcommittee, outside experts may supplement the subcommittee as needed.

IV. Award and Agreement Preparation and Execution

Awards of UTRFF funds will be made based on proposals as submitted (including any such modifications that may be identified during the review and evaluation process), the budget, and any other conditions set forth by the University of Toledo/Rocket Innovations. The grant will remain open for the duration of the project, plus a two month reporting period during which final reports are required to be submitted to the UTRFF.

An award consists of: (1) an award letter for the proposal which includes any special provisions applicable to the award and any numbered amendments thereto; (2) the budget, which indicates the amounts, by categories of expense, on which the UTRFF has based its support; (3) applicable award conditions; and (4) any announcement or other issuance that may be incorporated by reference in the award letter.

The University of Toledo Office of Research and Sponsored Programs will prepare a Grant Agreement—a legal agreement setting forth the terms and conditions upon which UTRFF funds are awarded and the respective rights and obligations of the Applicant and U.S. Economic Development Administration with respect to UTRFF funds and the Project for which they are to be used. This award is subject to the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (Uniform Guidance). The Grant Agreement will incorporate the proposal and project budget, as either may have been modified by evaluation findings, funding decisions, or other terms or conditions consistent with the approval by the University of Toledo/Rocket Innovations committee.

Grant Agreements will be sent to Applicants for review and signature. The University of Toledo Office of Research and Sponsored Programs will execute Grant Agreements after acceptance by the Applicant, after which the Grant is entered on the University of Toledo's accounting system by Grants Accounting and invoices may be submitted. Once the Grant Agreement is fully-executed, the Applicant will be considered and referred to as a "Grantee".

Grantees are required to complete the project as described in the Grantee's proposal as submitted and with only those modifications as agreed by the Grantee and the University of Toledo in finalizing the Grant Agreement. The UTRFF Program Manager will work with the Grantee throughout the Project Period to ensure continued compliance.

Grantees are required to submit to UT's Office of Grants Accounting invoices and expenditures reports, to document achievement of Project milestones, and to submit a post-Project completion. All reports and invoices will be submitted in the form and format required by The University of Toledo Office of Grants Accounting.

V. Mandatory Compliance: The following restrictions apply to all UTRFF Projects:

Human and Animal Research: For any Proposal that includes use of human subjects, the Applicant's and each Collaborator's human subject policies and procedures must comply with the Code of Federal Regulations, Title 45, Part 46. For any Proposal that includes use of animal subjects, the Lead Applicant's and each Collaborator's animal subject policies and procedures must comply with US Code, Title 7, Sections 2131-2156.

Compliance with Laws: Grant Agreements will require Grantees to comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws in the performance of the Project. Grantees must accept full responsibility for payments of all unemployment compensation, insurance premiums, workers' compensation premiums, all income tax deductions, social security deductions, and any and all other taxes or payroll deductions required for all employees engaged by Grantees on the performance of the work authorized by the Grant Agreements.

Other Compliance: UTRFF funding may not be used for research involving tissue obtained from aborted fetuses. (See Ohio Revised Code Section 2919.14)