

STEM Solutions in Public Policy Award Competition

FAQs

1. Who is eligible to apply?
 - a. Any University of California masters or doctoral student in a science, technology, engineering, or mathematics (STEM) field is eligible to apply.
2. Must proposals be directly related to my graduate work?
 - a. Applicants are encouraged to draw on their graduate work and experience in developing bill proposals. However all STEM-related proposals are welcome. This includes bills that draw on scientific evidence in identifying a problem, solving a problem, or that would support STEM research and innovation in the State.
3. May groups collaborate on a proposal?
 - a. Groups of two or more are welcome to work together on a proposal. However, if a group's proposal wins, the research stipend and travel support will be issued only to a single designated (lead) participant.
4. May I submit more than one proposal?
 - a. Yes, you are welcome to submit more than one strong proposal for new STEM-related legislation.
5. What makes a strong proposal?
 - a. A strong bill idea is clearly presented, feasible, and original. Successful proposals will identify a problem, solution, and explain in detail how the proposed policy solution would address the problem. As part of laying out the solution (Question #2 of the application), applicants are encouraged, but not required, to include draft bill language. Proposals may be modest or may be bold and ambitious, but all strong proposals will show awareness of the current policy and political landscape. Remember, if a legislator carries a bill based on the idea, they will need to work with opposition, build a coalition of supporters, address stakeholder concerns, and take into account the needs of their district and the districts of other legislators.
6. Where can I find information on similar legislation in California or other states?
 - a. There are many ways to find related legislation. These include news stories, the legislative summaries on the state assembly and senate policy committee websites, and in the database of California's legislation dating back to 1999 at leginfo.legislature.ca.gov. The National Council of State Legislatures' website provides similar resources for all 50 states.
7. How does the selection process work?

- a. Participating UC faculty, UCCS staff, and legislative staff will identify the strongest proposals. The committee will further research and develop these proposals, working with offices to determine whether an elected official will introduce the legislation.
8. When can I expect to hear back?
 - a. Applications are accepted through Friday December 14, 2018. After that, applicants may be contacted with questions or to discuss their idea with staffers working with their proposal. Winners will be announced after the legislative bill introduction deadline in mid-February (exact date of which is TBD).
9. Might multiple bills be introduced based on multiple, unique STEM Solutions proposals? Might no legislation result from STEM Solutions proposals? How will prize money and travel support be distributed in these cases?
 - a. If multiple bills are introduced based on the ideas submitted, or if no bills are introduced based on the ideas submitted, the award will go to the application that scored highest during the initial round of selections. Additionally, a member of the team submitting that bill proposal will have the opportunity to discuss their proposal with legislator(s) and/or legislative staff in Sacramento.
10. What happens if a legislator decides to author a bill based on my proposal?
 - a. In this case, the bill will go through the legislative process. This means that it may be amended, may fail to pass out of a policy committee or during the floor vote, or it may make it all the way to the governor's desk only to be vetoed. Or, it could be signed! The old maxim holds true - never marry your bill, or you could get your heart broken. You will likely have the opportunity to meet with the legislative aide staffing the bill and possibly with the elected official authoring the bill. Often, when constituents propose bill ideas they are included as witnesses in committee hearings, so some offices may choose to invite you to testify. However, each office has its own processes and may provide different levels of engagement to proposal authors.