



Established Program to
Stimulate Competitive Research

ND EPSCoR REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
Development of NATURE Sunday Academy STEM Modules
Issued: February 17th, 2026
Deadline: 5:00 pm CDT, March 17th, 2026

Purpose:

The ND EPSCoR State Office supports higher education across North Dakota by strengthening science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) capacity, expanding educational and research opportunities, and developing strong pathways for future scientists, engineers, educators, and technical professionals.

The Nurturing American Tribal Undergraduate Research and Education ([NATURE](#)) Sunday Academy is a long-standing STEM outreach [program](#) that has advanced these goals for more than 25 years. The program provides half-day, hands-on STEM learning experiences for middle and high school students on Tribal College campuses throughout North Dakota. Sunday Academy lessons emphasize active learning, problem solving, and exploration, with activities developed in collaboration with Tribal College faculty and community partners. The program is designed to help students build interest in STEM fields and confidence in their ability to succeed in them.

ND EPSCoR invites faculty to contribute to this effort by developing and delivering new STEM learning modules for the 2026–2027 academic year.

Description:

ND EPSCoR is soliciting proposals from faculty interested in creating interactive, activity-based STEM modules for the NATURE Sunday Academy. Selected faculty will participate in a summer development workshop held on the North Dakota State University campus from June 10–12th, 2026. During this workshop, faculty will collaborate with Tribal College faculty, NATURE Coordinators, K–12 teachers, and cultural elders from participating tribal communities to strengthen lesson design and implementation. These collaborations will help faculty connect STEM concepts to local knowledge systems, community priorities, and place-based examples, resulting in learning modules that are both technically rigorous and locally relevant. The workshop provides structured guidance, time for lesson refinement, and opportunities for dialogue that support meaningful integration of community perspectives into STEM activities.

During the academic year, participating faculty will travel to Tribal College campuses on four Sundays between September and March (specific dates to be determined) to deliver their modules. Faculty will work directly with middle and high school students in a supportive, inquiry-driven environment that emphasizes hands-on exploration and discussion. Prior experience working with Tribal Colleges or informal STEM education programs is not required; the NATURE Sunday Academy provides logistical coordination, curriculum support, and on-site assistance throughout the program.

Why Participate?

Participation in the NATURE Sunday Academy offers faculty a unique opportunity to share their STEM expertise with motivated students while developing innovative teaching materials that can inform future instruction. Faculty collaborate with colleagues from universities and Tribal Colleges across the state, gaining experience in community-connected STEM education and informal learning environments. Many participants find the program professionally rewarding, as it allows them to see the immediate impact of their work on students' curiosity, confidence, and engagement with STEM.

Faculty also gain experience working alongside Tribal College educators and cultural elders during lesson development, providing valuable perspective on place-based teaching and community-connected STEM learning. These collaborations often lead to stronger instructional materials, new professional relationships, and insights that faculty bring back into their own teaching, outreach, and research activities.

Compensation and Support:

Faculty selected to develop and deliver NATURE Sunday Academy modules will receive a \$2,000 stipend to support lesson development, workshop participation, and module delivery. Additional funding of up to \$800 is available for lesson materials, and up to \$1,500 is available for travel reimbursement to Tribal College campuses. ND EPSCoR staff coordinate scheduling, travel logistics, and on-site support to reduce administrative demands on participating faculty.

Eligibility:

Faculty from ND institutions and tribal colleges including: Dickinson State University, Mayville State University, Minot State University, North Dakota State University, University of North Dakota, Valley City State University, Cankdeska Cikana Community College, Nueta Hidatsa Sahnish College, Sitting Bull College, Turtle Mountain College, and United Tribes Technical College, are eligible to develop STEM modules. Collaborative proposals involving faculty from multiple institutions are welcome.

Proposal Preparation and Review:

Proposals should be no more than 500 words and include the name of the faculty member(s), department, and institution, along with a description of the STEM topic, intended learning goals, and planned hands-on activities. Proposals that emphasize active, student-centered learning approaches are strongly encouraged.

Proposals will be evaluated based on the clarity of the STEM topic, the potential of the activities to engage and motivate students, and the overall quality and feasibility of the lesson design.

Submission and Notification:

Please submit proposals through the NDSU submission portal ([LINK](#)) by 5:00 pm CDT, March 17th, 2026.

Awards are contingent upon the availability of funding. Notifications will begin on April 1, 2026, and will continue until all module openings are filled.

Questions regarding proposal submission should be directed to Britt Heidinger (britt.heidinger@ndsu.edu), the ND EPSCoR's NATURE Sunday Academy Coordinator.