



# Oregon University Innovation Research Fund (UIRF)

## Driving Economic Growth Through Research and Innovation

The University Innovation Research Fund (UIRF) was established by the Oregon Legislature in 2019 to enhance the competitiveness of Oregon’s research and innovation universities in securing federal research grants that focus on economic development. This fund is housed at Business Oregon and provides matching grants to leverage federal funding opportunities that require state investment, ensuring Oregon remains at the forefront of cutting-edge innovation for economic impact.

The UIRF strategically supports research aligned with key Oregon economic sectors, including advanced manufacturing, high technology, renewable energy, healthcare innovation, and materials science. By facilitating federal grant awards that often require industry and community partnerships, the fund plays a crucial role in strengthening Oregon’s research infrastructure, fostering job creation, and advancing economic development.

## Request for \$30 Million in the 2025-2027 Biennium

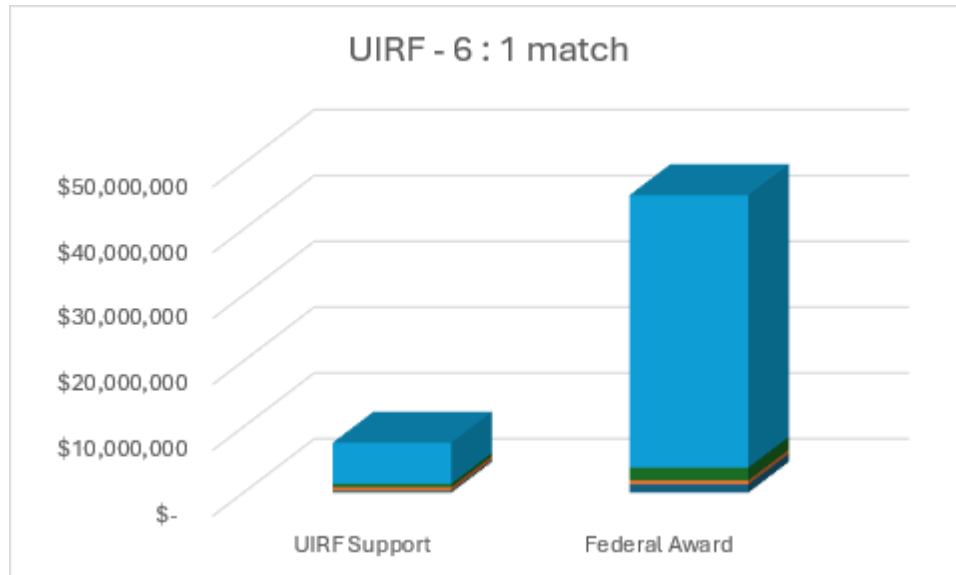
For the upcoming legislative cycle, we are seeking a \$30 million allocation to expand the impact of the UIRF, ensuring Oregon capitalizes on emerging opportunities. Key considerations include:

- **NSF Regional Innovation Engines (RIE) Finalists** – Oregon universities are finalists for three NSF RIE awards, necessitating state matching funds to secure these competitive grants.
- **Federal Funding Trends** – Increasingly, federal funding agencies require state investment as a prerequisite for grant eligibility. The UIRF ensures Oregon institutions remain competitive for these opportunities.
- **Economic Development Strategy** – The UIRF aligns with Oregon’s broader economic strategy, supporting industry partnerships, workforce development, and market deployment efforts that drive long-term job growth.

The University Innovation Research Fund has demonstrated a remarkable return on investment by attracting federal research dollars, fostering industry partnerships, and supporting Oregon’s innovation ecosystem. An additional \$30 million investment in the UIRF will further amplify these successes, securing major federal research awards, expanding industry collaborations, and driving high-impact economic development initiatives for Oregon.

## Results to Date

Since its inception, the UIRF has provided \$7,587,500 in state matching funds, which has successfully leveraged \$45,200,000 in federal awards—a nearly sixfold return on investment. This substantial leveraging effect underscores the importance of continued state support in maintaining Oregon’s leadership in research and innovation.



## Examples of UIRF Impact

### Marine Renewable Energy Research & Industry Relocation

With \$250,000 in UIRF support, OSU secured a \$1,250,000 million DOE award to upgrade marine renewable energy infrastructure, and another \$100,000 from private industry (Panthalassa). These upgrades enabled 150+ days of experimental testing, valued at \$750,000, and contributed to \$4 million in additional federal grants. As a result, Panthalassa relocated from San Francisco to Portland, bringing in top talent from Google, SpaceX, Raytheon, and NASA to Oregon.

### Mass Timber

In September 2022, the UIRF was utilized by the Oregon Mass Timber Coalition (a partnership between UO, OSU, Port of Portland and state agencies) to secure a \$41.4 million Build Back Better grant awarded by the U.S. Economic Development Administration. The funding will assist in developing and expanding Oregon’s emerging mass timber industry through university research involving the use of mass timber in housing; development of a factory by the Port of Portland to produce mass timber housing; and forest restoration projects in the Willamette National Forest. The \$6.25 million allocation from the UIRF was essential in securing tens of millions invested in Oregon.