

## University Innovation Research Fund (UIRF)

In 2019, following the loss of major federal grants to other states, the Oregon legislature established the UIRF to enable Oregon's public universities and Oregon Health & Science University to demonstrate that state funds to match federal grant funds would be available. This fund allows Oregon's public universities to compete at the national level for certain federal research funds aimed at economic innovation.

### Optimizing Opportunities

Each year, the federal government issues numerous grant opportunities that could contribute to Oregon's innovation economy. Oregon's public universities frequently compete individually, collaboratively, or as members of national teams for significant federally-funded grants. While the universities are remarkably successful at winning federal research funding, certain categories of federal grants frequently require non-federal matching funds.

The UIRF, which is aimed specifically at projects that include an economic development connection, sends a strong signal to federal granting authorities that there is an immediate and dependable state commitment for a proposal's objectives, thus giving Oregon's proposals an advantage in the federal evaluation process. Additionally, the fund is designed to support grants that have a direct or potential impact to drive economic development across the state. The fund not used for fundamental research projects.

### An Oregon Success Story

Since inception, the fund has demonstrated its value and resulted in over \$45 million in federal funding to Oregon universities.

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 \$5 million allocation from the UIRF was essential in securing tens of millions invested in Oregon. However, it also depleted the account.

### 2023-25 Request

Oregon's public research universities are requesting a \$20 million allocation to the UIRF in Business Oregon's budget. Oregon has new opportunities to compete for funds from the federal CHIPS Act and other sources and state matches will be critical to securing the grants.

### For More Information

Please contact Dana Richardson, Oregon Council of Presidents, at [richardsond@mail.wou.edu](mailto:richardsond@mail.wou.edu), or the government relations staff member from any of the seven public universities. Thank you for supporting Oregon's students.