



NCKRI Scholar Fellowship Program
FY 2025

Deadline: May 15th, 2024

The New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology, on behalf of the National Cave and Karst Research Institute (NCKRI), invites proposals for student scholarships in support of cave and karst research.

Application deadline: May 15th, 2024, 5:00 PM Mountain Time

Background and Goals

NCKRI is a non-profit government-supported institute headquartered in the City of Carlsbad, New Mexico. Its goals are to conduct, support, facilitate, and promote programs in cave and karst research, education, environmental management, and data acquisition and sharing.

NCKRI is a research center of New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology (a.k.a. New Mexico Tech or NMT), and was created by the US Congress in 1998 in partnership with the National Park Service, State of New Mexico, and the City of Carlsbad. Federal and state funding for NCKRI is administered by the New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology.

In 2019, NCKRI initiated a fellowship program to support cave and karst research by exceptional graduate and undergraduate students. NCKRI expects to award up to four fellowships in 2024: two to undergraduate applicants (\$2500 each) and two to graduate applicants (\$5000 each).

This funding opportunity is made possible by generous support from the National Park Service, through a Cooperative Agreement with the United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service under CFDA 15.944 - Natural Resource Stewardship.

Application Criteria

Eligible undergraduate and graduate students currently enrolled at any academic or research institution in the United States are invited to apply.

- 1. Clear relevance to cave and karst science:** NCKRI's goals are to conduct, support, facilitate, and promote programs in cave and karst research; thus, the research described in the proposal should be clearly relevant to cave and karst science. Basic and applied research in any field of cave and karst science will be considered.

- 2. Research addressing the priorities of the National Park Service:** NCKRI seed grant funds are made possible by support from the National Park Service. While research anywhere in the world qualifies for this grant program, priority will be given to projects addressing fundamental scientific questions or management applications within the National Park System. Proposals for work in a national park should include a letter of support from an appropriate authority at the park.
- 3. Outreach:** Each project must include an outreach component. Examples of appropriate outreach projects are instructional programs in a K-12 setting, video presentations of research posted on an institutional or NCKRI video channel, collaboration with a show cave or museum (including the NCKRI museum), college-level outreach initiatives, or collaboration with an artist. The awardee should expect to spend 5-10 hours on outreach in addition to preparation time.
- 4. Diverse applicants are encouraged:** NCKRI values the benefits of diversity in carrying out its missions. We strongly encourage and welcome applications from members of groups that have been historically underrepresented in STEM, including but not limited to ethnic minorities, first generation students, non-traditional students, women, veterans, LGBTQ+, and individuals with disabilities.
- 5. Eligibility requirements:** To qualify for this award, students must either be US citizens or permanent residents. Students must be currently enrolled at any academic or research institution in the United States.

Finalists will be selected based on scientific merit and quality of the proposal, alignment with cave and karst science and NCKRI research priorities, and strength of the personal statement. Previous recipients are not eligible for a second NCKRI scholar award.

Awards

Awards will be \$5000 for graduate students and \$2500 for undergraduate students. Awards are payable to the individual applicant, and are taxable income. It is recommended that recipients discuss their reporting obligations with their tax advisors.

Reporting

Awardees will be featured on the NCKRI website and annual report, and will be asked to provide a conceptual summary and a figure of their proposed research for the NCKRI website and report once they are selected for funding.

At the end of the project, NCKRI requests that the student provides a short report (approximately 2-3 pages, 2-3 figures) with a list of any presentations and publications resulting from the research. With the permission of the student, reports will be archived on the NCKRI website, summarized in the NCKRI annual report, and possibly published as part of NCKRI's Report of Investigation series.

To Apply

Applications consist of a research proposal, personal statement, and letter of support from the student's primary research advisor. Please fill out the required fields in our online application system by the application deadline, and upload the following two required documents.

- 1) Proposal document, which should include following sections as a single merged pdf:
 - a. Title and summary (100 words maximum) on a single page, used as a cover page.
 - b. Proposal document, describing the research objectives/hypotheses/questions and approach. **2 pages maximum** (1-inch margins, 12 pt. font, single-spaced Times New Roman or equivalent font). Students are encouraged to use the full two pages, and include graphics as an optional 3rd page, as described below.
 - c. Optional: A single figure and caption may be included as an additional page. The figure caption should be of appropriate length, and should not be used to fit in additional text to the proposal.
 - d. Literature cited (2 pages maximum).
 - e. 1 page explanation of how this funding will enable you to conduct your research, including itemized budget and justification including travel, supplies, equipment, etc. (1 page maximum).

- 2) Personal statement, which includes the following sections as a single merged pdf:
 - a. Personal statement (1 page) that describes educational and career goals, and experiences that motivate those goals. The statement should include a description of the student's interest in cave and karst science. (1-inch margins, 12 pt. font, single-spaced Times New Roman or equivalent font.)
 - b. A curriculum vitae (2 page limit), which includes a list of current and previous academic institutions (with current GPA for each institution).
 - c. Official or unofficial transcripts from the applicant's current institution.

The letter of support from the student's primary research advisor letter must be received by the application deadline. Reference letters should be sent as a pdf attachment to Judith.McShannon@nmt.edu, with the applicant's name in the subject line of the email (last name, first name). Letters should explain the referee's relationship to the applicant, comment on their academic and research potential, and describe a mentoring plan for the student.

Applications without a letter of support will not be considered complete. Additional information not specifically solicited (e.g., press clippings, extra letters of reference) will not be considered with the application.

Questions

Please direct any questions about submission to Judith McShannon (Judith.McShannon@nmt.edu). Other questions about this RFP should be directed to Daniel Jones, NCKRI Academic Director (daniel.s.jones@nmt.edu).