



The IRIS Grant Program is designed to stimulate new industry-led research and development (R&D) partnerships between Tennessee-based companies and the state’s leading research institutions.

IRIS aims to lower the barrier for companies to pilot innovative technologies and pursue new discoveries within the state, while also demonstrating the strength of Tennessee’s research capabilities and fostering long-term corporate investment in the state’s innovation ecosystem.

This program is designed for companies capable of self-funding their R&D initiatives but seeking state support as a strategic incentive.

Grant awards start at \$250,000.

TARGETED INDUSTRIES



Advanced
Manufacturing



Aerospace &
Defense



Automotive



Distribution &
Logistics



Food &
Beverage



Healthcare &
Life Sciences



Nuclear



Advanced Technology
& Computing

RESEARCH PARTNERS

Tennessee’s research institutions are driving discovery across a wide range of fields. From nuclear energy and life sciences to quantum computing and more—Tennessee’s researchers are shaping the future of industry and innovation.

Belmont University

East Tennessee State University

Meharry Medical Center

Middle Tennessee State University

Oak Ridge National Laboratory

Tennessee State University

Tennessee Tech University

University of Memphis

University of Tennessee, Chattanooga

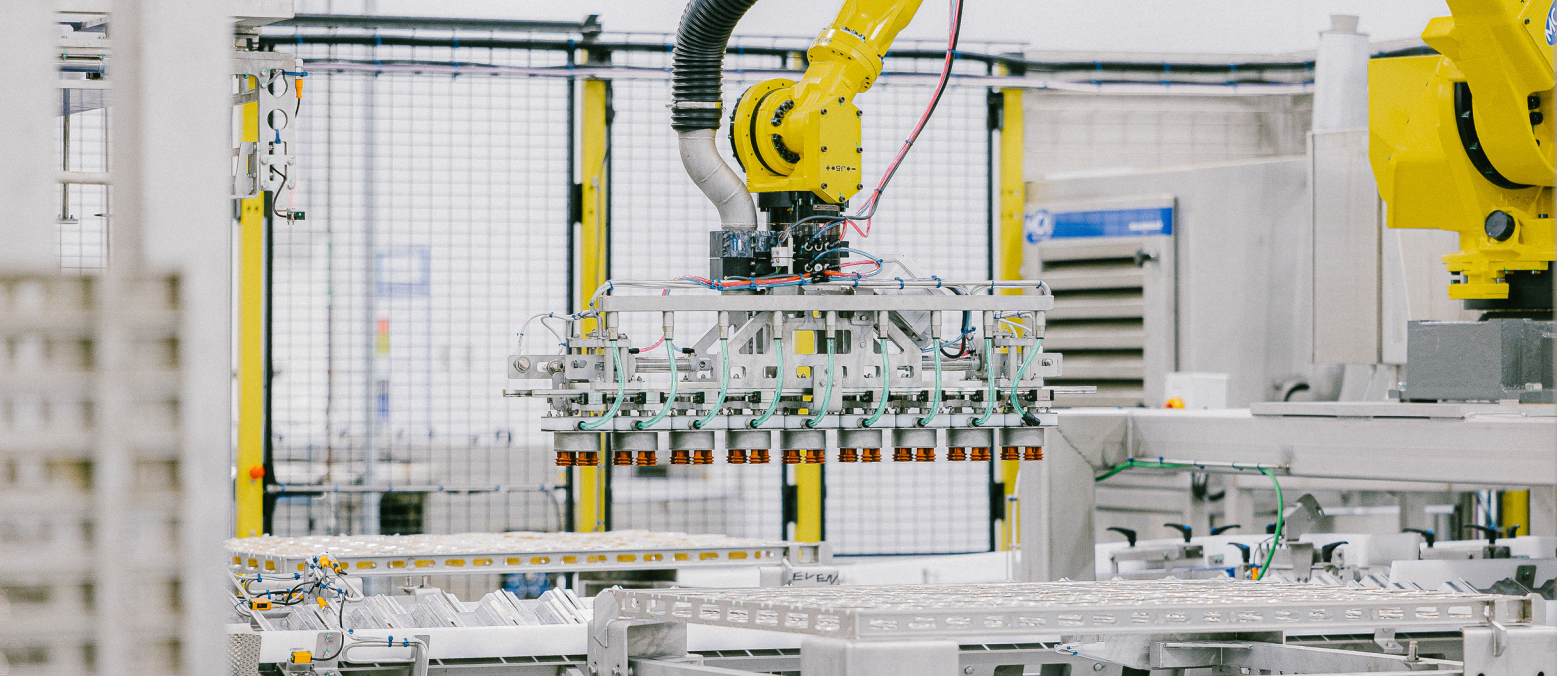
University of Tennessee Health
Science Center

University of Tennessee, Knoxville

University of Tennessee, Martin

University of Tennessee Space Institute

Vanderbilt University



ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Company must have a physical presence in Tennessee with the expectation that the industry partner will be a substantial financial contributor (beyond in-kind contributions) to the project costs at the associated research partner.

Companies must be in good standing with the State of Tennessee, including but not limited to the Tennessee Department of Revenue, the Tennessee Secretary of State's Office and TNECD.

Intended for companies with capital ready to invest in R&D projects.

Not designed for early-stage startups or pre-revenue ventures.

Not intended for companies relying on state funding to proceed.

R&D ACTIVITIES

Eligible R&D activities must involve collaboration between a company and one or more research institutions with the goal of developing new products, processes or technologies that drive business growth and innovation.

These activities should be investigative or experimental in nature, focusing on advancing technical knowledge or addressing specific industry challenges.

Eligible projects may encompass a wide range of collaborative research and development activities, such as:

Collaborative research to develop or improve products, materials or production processes

Applied research to address a specific technical or scientific challenge facing the company

Prototyping or pilot-testing of new technologies

Development and validation of innovative tools, systems or software

Technical modeling, simulations or lab-scale experiments conducted with a research institution

GET STARTED



Prior to applying, complete the IRIS Intake Form to confirm eligibility. For more information, visit the tnecd.com or contact us at IRIS@tn.gov.

Note: Only eligible expenses incurred by the participating university or research partner qualify for reimbursement under the grant program.