

For Immediate Release: August 2, 2023

Space Valley Announced a Finalist for Potential \$160M Federal Grant

ALBUQUERQUE—Today the U.S. National Science Foundation announced the Space Valley Coalition as a finalist of its first-ever Regional Innovation Engines Competition. The NSF Engines program is anticipated to be transformational for the nation, ensuring the U.S. remains globally competitive in key technology areas for decades to come. Each NSF Engine could receive up to \$160 million over 10 years.

Space Valley is one of 16 finalists narrowed down from 188 applications. Its proposal, titled "Space for Earth, Space for All, Space Valley's Role in Securing America's Economic and Political Future," seeks to leverage New Mexico and Colorado's existing space assets to build a world-leading regional space innovation hub. In addition to being an increasingly important geopolitical issue, space, as an industry, is expected to exceed \$3 trillion by 2040 by some estimates.

The New Mexico Trade Alliance is serving as the lead on the NSF proposal on behalf of the Space Valley Coalition.

"Since Robert Goddard's early rocket testing nearly a century ago, New Mexico has been a leader in space innovation. Our many government, private, and academic space assets make us a logical choice for the U.S. to invest its next phase of major space tech innovation," said New Mexico Trade Alliance President and proposal Principal Investigator, Randy Trask. "The Space Valley Coalition welcomes the opportunity to continue to share with the NSF all our region has to offer to protect the nation from space-based threats and to ensure that it is America who ushers the world into the next era of technology."

During the final round, NSF representatives will be visiting each finalist's region. According to the NSF, Engines' partners will be a key component of the selection process at this stage, and it is offering a clarion call to regional constituents to support their region's team by increasing or reinforcing their commitments to support proposed activities.

Winners are expected to be announced by the end of the year.

The Regional Innovation Engines Program emphasizes the importance of strategies that organize and accelerate the translation of use-based research to commercial applications.

"This NSF opportunity will strengthen the reach and mission of our academic institutions, creating exciting career pathways, partnering with local companies, providing unprecedented opportunities to students, and advancing research in aerospace innovation where only the stars are the limit," added Dr.

Christos Christodoulou, proposal Co-Principal Investigator and Director of COSMIAC, the University of New Mexico's Space Research Institute. "Space Valley was born to execute this important work."

Aerospace is a top priority economic sector for New Mexico Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham's administration. A strong advocate for the space industry as a transformative economic driver for the region, the New Mexico Economic Development Department has played a vital role in the development of Space Valley.

"Aerospace is a fast-growing industry in New Mexico with incredible potential to drive global innovation while creating quality careers in communities across the state," said Economic Development Department Deputy Secretary Jon Clark. "The State looks forward to welcoming the NSF to New Mexico and underscoring our commitment to making Space Valley the premier innovation ecosystem for the future of space."

Last year the Space Valley Coalition was announced as a finalist for the Economic Development Administration's Build Back Better Challenge and received a \$500K Phase One award to continue Coalition building and strategic planning. Coalition member Central New Mexico Community College led that effort resulting in the foundation for what would become the current NSF proposal.

The Space Valley Coalition is comprised of government, industry, and academia from throughout the Rio Grande Valley, a region critical to the nation's space strategy and research, development, and testing infrastructure.

For more on today's announcement visit <https://new.nsf.gov/news/nsf-regional-innovation-engines-program-selects-16>.

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