

U.S. Geological Survey

Notice of Funding Opportunity

New Geologic Mapping and Related Activities – Earth Mapping Resources Initiative- FY2025

Funding Opportunity Number

G25AS00207

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BASIC INFORMATION

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: G25AS00207

Assistance Listing Number(s): 15.073

Estimated Total Program Funding: \$20,000,000

Expected Number of Awards: 26

Award Ceiling: \$5,000,000

Award Floor: \$0

Cost Sharing Required?

No

Closing Date for Applications: 12/31/2025

Electronically submitted applications must be submitted no later than 5:00 p.m., ET, on the listed application due date.

Have Questions?

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Executive Summary

The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) is offering a funding opportunity to facilitate the new geologic mapping activities as part of the overall Earth Mapping Resources Initiative (Earth MRI) effort to collect geophysical, geologic, geochemical, and topographic data in areas of critical mineral potential across the Nation. This advanced mapping of the Nation's subsurface geologic resources will also directly benefit our understanding of domestic resources of other economically valuable mineral and energy resources, groundwater resources and water security, geologic hazards, and infrastructure dependencies on subsurface geology. Final approval and issuance of financial support is dependent on various funding, administrative and programmatic contingencies.

Awards made in support of Earth MRI are subject to the availability of funds and will be in the form of a Cooperative Agreement. The USGS is designated as the lead Federal agency for geologic map data. Earth MRI is designed to aid in fulfilling that leadership responsibility and to ensure that the needs of the Nation for high-quality two- and three-dimensional geologic framework data are being met. This role cannot be filled by the USGS alone, and Earth MRI is a collaborative approach to acquiring data for the Nation.

Additionally, Earth MRI is mandated by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (PL 117-58, signed on 11/15/21) - directing the USGS to accelerate efforts to carry out fundamental integrated topographic, geologic, geochemical, and geophysical mapping activities focused on the assessment of critical minerals.

ELIGIBILITY

Eligible Applicants

25 – Others (see text field entitled “Additional Information on Eligibility” for clarification)

Additional Information on Eligibility

The implementation model for Earth MRI is based on multi-agency partnerships with State Geological Surveys for geologic framework data collection, with the USGS acting in a lead program management role to facilitate planning and acquisition for the broader community, through Cooperative Agreements. Earth MRI presents a unique opportunity to increase collaboration between the USGS and the State Geological Surveys.

Cost Sharing Requirement

Cost Sharing Required?

No

GET READY TO APPLY

Required System Registrations

Unique Entity Identifier and SAM.gov Registration

Before applying, all **applicants** except individuals applying as a natural person **must be registered in SAM.gov**. During the SAM.gov registration the entity will obtain their Unique Entity Identifier (UEI).

The SAM.gov registration process can take several months. If your organization is not already registered in SAM.gov, begin the registration process as soon as possible.

To register in SAM.gov, go to the [SAM.gov website](#) and use the available resources to complete registration.

- **Financial assistance registrants** must review and certify compliance with the SAM.gov “Financial Assistance General Representations and Certifications”.
- **Already registered?** You already have a Unique Entity ID. Before applying, check that your “Financial Assistance General Representations and Certifications” on SAM.gov is complete. Remember to renew your registration every year to keep it active while you have an award or application in progress. You can update your registration whenever you need, including during renewal.
- **Need help?** For additional information and contact information on the [SAM.gov Help page](#).

GRANTS.GOV

This program accepts application through [Grants.gov](#) so once you receive your UEI return to Grants.gov to [register](#) with Grants.gov. Please allow for 30 days to register and set up a Workspace in Grants.gov. See [Submission Instructions](#) section below for additional details.

Refer to Attachment – Submission Instructions & Tips.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Program Goals

Proposals responsive to the FY2025 Earth MRI Geologic Mapping/Geochemical Mapping/Geophysical Mapping Funding Opportunity should be focused on expanding upon the understanding of domestic critical mineral resources through advanced airborne geophysical surveys and advanced geological and geochemical mapping of subsurface geologic resources. These efforts will directly benefit the understanding of domestic resources of other economically valuable mineral and energy resources, groundwater resources and water security, geologic hazards, and infrastructure dependencies on subsurface geology. Proposed projects should be responsive to FY2025 USGS Earth MRI Solicitation Guidance and should align with USGS-designated Focus Areas for this Fiscal Year.

Program Description

It is anticipated that multiple awards will be made to individual State Geological Surveys, issued under Sole Source Authority as a Cooperative Agreements, with a performance period of three years from the project start date. The total anticipated funding for the duration of the FY2025 Earth MRI mapping award cycle (~26 projects in total) will not exceed \$20M. There will be substantial involvement on the part of the USGS, working with the recipient organizations to promote the objectives of the program, monitor progress, and agree on milestones and accomplishments for work performed as part of the agreement. Please refer to supplemental information that may be available in response to a request to the NCGMP Program Office (NCGMP-EMRI@usgs.gov); that information describes the rationale for selection of projects for FY2025.

Additionally, this Program does not provide Federal funding for infrastructure projects.

Legislative Authority

PL 117-58, Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) and 43 USC 36d

Type of Award

Projects will be funded through:

Funding Instrument

CA (Cooperative Agreement)

Recipient should expect the Federal agency to have substantial involvement in the project.

Through the USGS National Cooperative Geologic Mapping Program (NCGMP) and Mineral Resources Program (MRP), Federal and State scientists will coordinate efforts to plan and carry out mapping and data collection, analysis, and interpretations. Specifically, the USGS role will be to facilitate critical planning and regional synthesis, integrating data obtained through USGS research (FEDMAP) and through State efforts. State Geological Survey data collection, interpretation, and mapping efforts will focus on regions with high potential for critical mineral resources, but these investments will also provide value far beyond supporting the exploration for critical minerals. With USGS in the coordination and planning role, and State Geological Surveys mapping and conducting analyses and interpretation on the ground, Earth MRI benefits the geologic research community, particularly relative to critical minerals assessment.

PREPARE YOUR APPLICATION

Applications Content and Format

Pre-Application Requirements

The proposed project should: (1) be clearly defined and justified, and (2) be organized around a credible critical minerals issue. A graphic or index map and a GIS shapefile and a paragraph describing the survey area showing the project areas should be included in the proposal. The GIS shapefile and descriptive paragraph will be used on the USGS Earth MRI website (<https://usgs.gov/special-topic/earthmri>) and must be approved and ready for public release. All proposal submissions must include the materials listed below:

Application Documents

Applicants must submit the following forms with their application as specified below. Instructions for accessing and submitting application forms are provided in the [Submission Instructions](#) section of this document below. For instructions on completing form fields, see the form instructions on the [Grants.gov Forms Repository](#).

Forms/Assurances/Certifications	Submission Requirement
SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance Note: For applicants requesting more than \$100,000 in Federal funds, the Authorized Representative's signature (or electronic equivalent) on the Application for Federal Assistance form also represents their certification of the statements in Appendix A to 43 CFR 18-Certification Regarding Lobbying	Required from all applicants

Forms/Assurances/Certifications	Submission Requirement
SF-424A, Budget Information – Non-Construction Programs	Required for non-construction projects
SF-424C: Budget Information – Construction Programs	Required for construction projects
SF-429 (Cover Page & Attachment B), Request to Acquire, Improve, or Furnish Real Property Note: The SF-429 forms are only available in the Grants.gov Forms Repository . Applicants must download the form and include the completed form as an application attachment.	Required if requesting to acquire, improve, or furnish real property.
SF-LLL, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities	Required if requesting more than \$100,000 in Federal funds <u>and</u> the applicant has used or plans to use funds other than Federal appropriated funds for lobbying related to the proposed project.
Project Abstract Summary (OMB 4040-0019). Must include, in plain language: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Award purpose, • Activities to be performed, • Expected deliverables or outcomes, • Intended beneficiaries, Subrecipient activities (if known or specified at time of award)	Required from all applicants
DOI Research and Development (R&D) – Current and Pending (Other) Support Note: This form is available on the DOI website . Applicants must download the form and include the completed form as an application attachment.	Required for research projects.
DOI Research and Development (R&D) – Biographical Sketch Note: This form is available on the DOI website . Applicants must download the form and include the completed form as an application attachment.	Required for research projects.

Project Narrative

Introduction:

The introduction should describe relationship of proposed project to State and Earth MRI goals and priorities. It should give a very brief overview of the project objectives and scientific problems to be addressed.

Task Description:

- Location and Geologic Setting. Name and location (if relevant) of the project area and the lead geological survey, and other entities that will contribute to tasks.
- Purpose and Justification. Briefly describe the justification of the task and how it achieves Earth MRI goals. If the Earth MRI geophysical mapping will be used by local or state agencies in making decisions, reporting on these foreseeable outcomes is encouraged. It is helpful to include basic science benefits as well as the applied science.
- Strategy for Completing Cooperative Project. When describing how the work will be performed, list any interagency cooperative efforts. If a project is part of a multiyear effort, explain what will be completed for each year.
- Preliminary Results and Prior Work. If you have done any work in the area, especially funded by STATEMAP, provide a brief summary of findings or outcomes.
- Deliverable Descriptions. You should provide an explicit list of products (e.g. geophysical data releases, contractor-supplied reports) and all required specifications for these products that will be delivered at the end of the Cooperative Agreement period. The geophysical data and associated reports will be posted on the public Earth MRI website, so please follow all internal State geological survey review and approval processes required for public release of reports.
- Project Personnel. Identify the Principal Investigator first. Then list the other support positions (such as geologist, field assistant, or cartographer). Briefly discuss their role on the project so that it links to the budget and strategy section.
- References or Bibliography. Include a list of past project deliverables, presentations made at professional or public meetings, and other interactions the public, industry, or government agencies for instances where geologic information was delivered or presented.

Budget Narrative

Applicants must describe and justify items and costs listed in their budget. The budget narrative must identify the following cost items: total estimated costs, non-Federal cost share, third-party contributions, and any pre-award costs. Total project cost is the sum of all allowable costs, including required and voluntary cost share and third-party contributions.

Budget items must be:

- Reasonable, allowable, allocable, and necessary
- Compliant with [2 CFR §200 Subpart E](#) cost principles

Indirect Costs: Applicants must indicate in their budget narrative how they will charge indirect costs, including the rate to be applied:

- **De Minimis Rate:** If eligible, state if your organization is opting to use the de minimis rate of up to 15% of total modified direct costs. Entities that do not have a current Federal negotiated indirect cost rate (including provisional rate) may propose to use the de minimis rate. For more information, refer to [2 CFR 200.414\(f\)](#).
- **Negotiated Rate:** State if you will negotiate with your cognizant agency. If your organization has previously negotiated a rate, attach a copy of the most recently negotiated rate agreement (active or expired).

Include a proposed budget that describes expenses related to salary, fringe benefits, travel, equipment or software purchases, and other items required to complete the described task.

- **Personnel/Salaries.** List names, positions, and rate of compensation.
- **Fringe Benefits.** Propose your rates/amounts. If rates are audit approved, include a copy of the audit agreement and/or the name of the audit agency.
- **Travel** – Itemize the estimated travel costs (i.e., number of people, number of travel days, per diem rate, mileage rate, airfare or other transportation, and any other travel costs). Includes any field travel.
- **Equipment.** List computer hardware, software, GPS, vehicles, and any other nonexpendable property.
- **Supplies.** List costs for office and laboratory supplies, including base maps, aerial photographs, petrographic thin sections, and other office and laboratory supplies. Please itemize (include number and cost for each).
- **Contractual.** List any contractual services and provide breakdown of all costs. Sub-awards should be listed as a single line-item in the Contractual category. A separate budget sheet providing the same level of detail for each category as described in this section is required for each sub-award and should be attached.
- **Other Direct Costs.** Includes drilling and analytical laboratory expenses, map digitization costs, printing, routine computer maintenance contracts, and charges for computer time. Itemize the different types of costs not included elsewhere and explain the cost's applicability to the project.
- **Total direct charges.** Totals for items a - g.
- **Indirect Charges.** Show proposed rate and amount. A copy of your institutions Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement must be included in your proposal if requesting federal funds for indirect costs.
- **Total in-kind matching funds,** with a breakdown of the spend plan for those matching funds.

Other Required Information

Conflict of Interest and Unresolved Matters Disclosures: If any actual or potential conflict of interest exists related to this project at the time of application, the applicant must provide sufficient information to support a program determination of significance per [2 CFR 1402.112](#). Refer to [2 CFR 200.112](#) Conflict of Interest and [2 CFR 200.113](#).

Overlap or Duplication of Effort Statement:

Applicants must state in their application if the activities, costs, or time commitment of key personnel proposed in this application overlap with those in any other Federal proposal or award or not. If no overlap exists, include a statement to that effect. If any overlap exists, provide:

- Activities: Description any overlapping activities.
- Costs: Description of any overlapping costs.
- Time: Description of any overlapping key personnel time.
- A copy of any overlapping or duplicative proposal submitted to any other potential funding entity.
- Details on when any overlapping proposal was submitted, to whom, and the expected date of the funding decision.

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS AND DEADLINES

Address to Request Application Package

Applicants will receive a request for proposal link via email to apply via grants.gov.

Submission Dates and Times

Closing Date for Applications: 12/31/2025

Closing Date Explanation

Electronically submitted applications must be submitted no later than 5:00 p.m., ET, on the listed application due date.

Submission Instructions

Apply Through Grants.gov

To apply through [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov), please follow the instructions in the [Quick Start Guide for Applicants](#). Before applying, ensure that at least one person at your organization is registered and has the Authorized Organization Representative (AOR). Only the AOR can submit the application. If you need more users, they must create their own Grants.gov account. Follow these steps below to apply:

- Create a Workspace: Creating a workspace allows you to complete it online and route it through your organization for review before submitting.
- Complete a Workspace: Invite participants to the workspace so you can collaborate on the application. Required applications forms are included in the Grants.gov Funding Opportunity Package and can be completed in the Workspace, unless noted otherwise in the Required Forms table above. Check for errors before submission.
- Submit a Workspace: An application may be submitted through workspace by clicking the Sign and Submit button on the Manage Workspace page, under the Forms tab
- Track a Workspace Submission: After successfully submitting a workspace application, a Grants.gov Tracking Number (GRANTXXXXXXXX) is automatically assigned to the application.

The system generates a date and time stamp and sends it to the applicant's AOR via email as proof of submission. Make sure your application passes the Grants.gov validation checks. Do not encrypt, zip, or password-protect any files. Only registered individuals in SAM as both a user and an AOR can submit applications. Please allow 30 days to register in Grants.gov.

Application System Technical Support: For Grants.gov technical registration and submission, downloading forms, and application packages, contact Grants.gov Customer Support at 1-800-518-4726 or by email at Support@grants.gov.

APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

Eligibility Review

During the eligibility review, the application is checked for timely submission, completed packages (see [Application Documents](#) above) and alignment with the requirements of this announcement. The Federal agency may remove an application if it does not pass the eligibility review. Specifically, an application must meet the following requirements to be deemed eligible under this Notice:

1. Meets first order requirement by addressing priority critical minerals, adheres to USGS-provided Workplan and Cost Plan Guidance, and follows the deposit model approach to examine potential for critical minerals in proposed study area.
2. Meets DOI or Congressional priorities and provides opportunities for deliverables in the first and second years (including required progress reports outlined in award Terms and Conditions) and describes a robust critical mineral-focused project that also addresses second-order requirements, for example the project area meets important data needs that support other geoscience information requirements, such as understanding regional groundwater, natural hazards, or energy resource issues.
3. The proposed project area contains or has reasonable potential for hosting mineral deposit types that contain priority critical minerals either as primary, co-, or byproduct commodities.
4. The inclusion of plans for a report summarizing the critical mineral-related features discovered project life cycle that meets State geological survey review and approval process, which will be made available to the public.
5. The proposed acquisition of new framework geologic data and/or three-dimensional geologic models will increase understanding of geologic processes that influence the distribution of prospective mineral systems and concentration of critical minerals. These data and(or) models will ideally lead to delineation of areas with high potential for undiscovered mineral resources.
6. The land status will allow for exploration and development for the reasonably foreseeable future. For example, the study area will not focus on protected lands such as National and State Parks or wildlife refuges or urban areas.
7. Where possible, the proposing entity offers fiscal support to help offset the costs of new data acquisition.

8. Where applicable, the proposal describes ongoing mapping activities that materially support work in the proposed focus area.
9. The proposal maximizes integration of existing or pending geophysical surveying, geologic mapping, topographic data, and involves an appropriate mix of staffing expertise.

This eligibility determination will be made by the Earth MRI Science Coordinator in reviewing any submitted proposals responsive to this Notice.

If an applicant selected for funding hasn't finished their SAM.gov registration (see [2 CFR 25.200](#) and [2 CFR 25.110](#)) when the federal agency is ready to make an award, we may decide that the applicant is ineligible for the award and choose to grant it to someone else. Please refer [2 CFR 25.205](#) for more information.

Prior to making an award, the DOI checks the anticipated recipient and their key project personnel against the current list of prohibited or restricted persons or entities in the System for Award Management (SAM.gov) Exclusions database. We are prohibited from making an award if a recipient or any key personnel are found ineligible, prohibited, restricted, or otherwise excluded from receiving or participating in an award, as their ineligibility condition applies to this program.

If removed from consideration for ineligibility, the Federal agency will notify the applicant in writing.

Merit Review

In consultation with other USGS staff responsible for the administration of Earth MRI, the NCGMP will evaluate and approve submitted proposals based on the overall value and benefit to the government in consideration of the project's responsiveness to this Funding Opportunity Guidance. Additionally, the benefits of each submission will be judged on project location and areal extent of proposed data acquisition, cost realism, the level of in-kind matching funds offered, the maturity of applicant's proposal, and the technical approach and past performance as applicable and related to the requested proposal.

Review and Selection Process

This program reviews proposed budgets to ensure:

- figures are correct
- estimated costs are necessary and reasonable and clearly linked to project narratives
- avoid obviously unallowable costs
- identify costs requiring prior approval
- ensure indirect cost rates are applied correctly
- confirm cost sharing requirements are reflected in the budget.

This program reviews applications for potential overlap or duplication between the proposed project and any other funded or proposed project. Depending on the circumstances, DOI may choose to not make an award.

This program will select applications that are directly supportive of established Earth MRI objectives; additionally, the merit review process will include a ranking of submitted proposals on the following considerations:

- Technical Quality of the Proposal:
 - a. Is the proposal well-written and concise?
 - b. How well does the proposal demonstrate the scientific and technical viability of the proposed objectives?
 - c. Do the deliverables for each project adequately relate to the proposed project?
 - d. Does the proposal stress relevant and new high scientific quality mapping contributions?
- Proven capabilities for Geologic Data Acquisition:
 - a. Does the proposing entity have established capabilities for the collection of new high scientific quality geologic framework data?
 - b. Does the proposing entity identify staff with the appropriate scientific background needed to accomplish the stated goals?
 - c. Has the proposing entity demonstrated the ability to construct publication-quality geologic maps?
 - d. Does the proposing entity have a proven capacity to create geologic maps in interpretable GIS formats?

Each proposal will be evaluated by the Earth MRI Science Coordinator based on the overall value and benefit to the government in consideration of the project's responsiveness to Program guidance and this Notice. In addition to the ranking criteria listed above, the benefits of each submission will be judged on project location and areal extent of proposed data acquisition, cost realism, the level of in-kind matching funds offered (where possible), the maturity of applicant's proposal, and the technical approach and past performance as applicable and related to the submitted proposal.

Risk Review

Prior to making an award, the program assesses the risk posed by the applicant per [2 CFR 200.206](#). If an award will be made, the program may apply special conditions corresponding to the risk assessed. For awards over the simplified acquisition threshold (currently \$250,000), the program reviews eligibility and financial integrity information in the applicant's SAM.gov records per [2 CFR 200.206\(a\)](#). The program also assesses financial management capabilities, project delivery experience, staffing resources, past performance, administration and reporting compliance records, and overall project complexity and potential challenges.

AWARD NOTICES

Notices of Federal Award are sent electronically via GrantSolutions or e-mail. These notices outline the terms, conditions, and payment instructions per [2 CFR 200.211](#). The Notice of Federal Award signed by an authorized Grants Officer is the legal instrument obligating financial assistance to a recipient. Any other prior notice is not an authorization to begin work. If the

program allows pre-award costs per [2 CFR 200.458](#), beginning performance before receiving a Notice of Federal Award is at the applicant's own risk.

Anticipated Project Start Date: 07/01/2025 (anticipated earliest possible award issued under this Notice)

Anticipated Project End Date: 12/30/2028 (anticipated latest possible award end date issued under this Notice)

The range of anticipated award start dates issued under this Notice is 7/1/2025 – 12/31/2025; the range of anticipated award end dates issued under this Notice is 6/30/2028 – 12/30/2028. Award Period of Performance duration is 3 years from the project start date. Awards are expected to be issued on or before the individual state-specific target start date and recipients will receive award notification directly over email from the supporting Grants Specialist. Unsuccessful applicants will receive notification over email from the supporting Grants Specialist no later than 12/31/2025.

POST AWARD REQUIREMENTS AND ADMINISTRATION

Administration and National Policy Requirements

For award administration and national policy requirements, see the [DOI General Terms and Conditions](#). Infrastructure projects require the use of American iron, steel, manufacture products, and construction materials per [2 CFR 184](#).

Geospatial Data

If you receive financial assistance from the Department of the Interior (DOI), recipient must follow these rules for geospatial data:

Follow Federal Standards: All geospatial data you collect or create must meet the standards set by the Federal Geospatial Data Committee (FGDC) or the Department of the Interior. This is required by the Geospatial Data Act of 2018, which is part of Public Law 115-254, specifically in Subtitle F (Geospatial Data), sections 751-759C (codified at [43 U.S.C. §§ 2801–2811](#)).

Include Metadata: Your Geographic Information Systems (GIS) files must include complete metadata. Metadata is information that describes the data, such as where it came from, how accurate it is, and how it should be used. This is to ensure that anyone using the data understands its context and quality.

Check for Existing Data: Before you start collecting new geospatial data, you need to check GeoPlatform.gov. This is to see if there is already existing geospatial data from federal, state, local, or private sources that can meet your needs and is available for free. If such data is available, you should use it instead of gathering new data.

These rules help ensure that geospatial data is reliable, high-quality, and that resources are used efficiently.

Reporting

The recipient's Notice of Award will detail all reporting requirements, including frequency, due dates, and instructions for requesting extensions. In general, but not limited to, recipients must:

- Submit Federal Financial reports and Program Performance reports.
- Use the [Federal Financial Report \(SF-425\) form](#) for financial reporting.
- Monitor award activities and report on program performance per [2 CFR 200.329](#),
- Promptly notify the awarding program in writing of any issues, delays, or conditions impairing award objectives per [2 CFR 200.329\(e\)](#),
- Disclose any conflicts of interest related to their award that arise during the award period per [2 CFR 1402.112](#),
- Report on the status of real property acquired under the award in which the Federal government retains an interest per [2 CFR 200.330](#), and
- Report all violations of Federal criminal law involving fraud, bribery, or gratuity violations potentially affecting the Federal award per [2 CFR 200.113](#).
- Report any matters related to recipient integrity and performance to SAM.gov per [Appendix XII to 2 CFR 200](#).
- If the Federal share of the award is more than \$100,000 and the recipient makes or agrees to make any payment using non-appropriated funds for lobbying in connection to the award, disclose those activities using the Disclosure of Lobbying (SF-LLL) form per [43 CFR 18.100](#).
- Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 (FFATA) requires certain recipients to report information on executive compensation through SAM.gov and information on all sub-awards, subcontracts, and consortiums over \$30,000 to the [FFATA Subaward Reporting System \(FSRS\)](#).

Other Information

NA