



SOUTH DAKOTA SPACE GRANT CONSORTIUM

Student Stipend Program

INTERNSHIP STIPENDS – Application and Instructions

2026/2027 Academic Year (Summer/Fall 2026 & Spring 2027)

Release Date – January 12, 2026

Program Summary

The South Dakota Space Grant Consortium (SDSGC) NASA Internship and Fellowship (NIF) stipend program invites applications from U.S. citizens for undergraduate and graduate students pursuing degrees in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) related areas of study, and that support the pursuit of graduate degrees in the fields of STEM. This stipend will support internships of at least 400 hours of mentored, degree-relevant activity at a NASA Center (note: US citizenship required for NASA Centers that require US citizenship) or Aerospace Industry. Internship projects must align with NASA's mission and those of the SDSGC and its affiliates.

Note: All 2026/2027 awards are contingent upon U.S. Congressional approval of the 2026 federal budget and the availability and receipt of FY2026 Space Grant funding from NASA.

******IMPORTANT NOTE: Applying for this internship funding is not the same as applying for the internship. This offer only helps pay for an internship, if an offer is extended by any of the three options below. You must still apply for the internships with NASA, Aerostar, and/or KBR to first be considered for the opportunity.***

Internships Options

- NASA Center Internship stipends that are fully-funded by Space Grant are provided in the standardized amounts of \$7,300 (undergraduate students) and \$9,000 (graduate students) to support 10-week Summer internships, and \$13,120 (undergraduate) and \$15,840 (graduate) to support 16-week Fall/Spring semester internships at NASA Centers, plus an additional \$1,500 allowance to assist with additional expenses associated with internship. If NASA fully-funds or provides partial financial support to the student intern, the Space Grant stipend amount will be appropriately reduced from the dollar figures referenced above. In other words, NASA Center Internships may be: A) fully-funded by Space Grant, B) cooperatively-funded by Space Grant and NASA, or C) fully-funded by NASA. Specifics are determined individually after a student applies and is selected for a NASA internship offer.
- Aerostar Aerospace Industry Internships – One to two \$12,000 mechanical/aerospace internship stipends will be provided to South Dakota

students who apply to, and are selected by, Aerostar Technical Solutions for internships at their Sioux Falls, SD facility. (Available position descriptions will be announced soon)

- KBR Aerospace Industry Internship – An aerospace internship stipend of up to \$12,000 will be provided to a South Dakota student who applies to, and is selected by, KBR for an internship at USGS EROS in Sioux Falls, SD. (Available position descriptions will be announced soon)

Summer or semester-long Internships must align with at least one of NASA's Mission Directorate Research Priorities [see Appendices A.1 – A.6 for a list of these priorities (pages 1-27)] and/or at least one of the NASA Centers Areas of Interest [see Appx. A.7 for a list of these areas of interest (pages 28-52)], posted at <https://sdspacegrant.sdsmt.edu/NASAMissionDirectorate&CenterAlignmentFY2023.docx>

Important Dates

- Application Deadline: **February 20, 2026, 11:59 p.m. MST.**
- Anticipated Award Notification: March 30, 2026
- Anticipated Award Disbursement (pending Congressional approval): April 30, 2026

Eligibility

All applicants must be citizens of the United States. Stipends under this solicitation are available only to undergraduate and graduate students attending South Dakota institutions of higher education during the award period (Fall 2026/Spring 2027).

Application Instructions

Applications are to be submitted online and consist of the following five items:

1. A completed application form
2. Cover letter
3. Faculty recommendation letter
4. Resume
5. Transcript(s) of completed undergraduate and graduate work, including a list of current courses and registration (for high school seniors applying for college freshmen-level educational stipend, include high school transcript)

More detailed instructions

- **Application form** must be completed online at the following website:
https://sdmines.sdsmt.edu/cgi-bin/global/sg_update_app.cgi
- **Cover letter** must include (max 2 pages, 12pt font, excluding references):
 - Reference to any education or experience the applicant may have in relation to NASA
 - A career goal statement

- A statement indicating whether the applicant plans to be enrolled as a full-time or part-time student during the requested stipend period (Summer 2026/Fall 2026/Spring 2027),
- The location and brief description of the proposed NASA, aerospace industry, or other internship if known at the time of writing the cover letter, and
- A statement of how the proposed research aligns with at least one of **NASA's Mission Directorate Research Priorities** listed in **Appendix A.1 – A.6** (pages 1-27) posted at:
<https://sdSPACEgrant.sdsmt.edu/NASAMissionDirectorate&CenterAlignmentFY2023.docx>

*****Please note that NASA Center and industry internships also have their own internship or employment application process separate from this application. Those agencies or employers must be contacted directly for their application materials. Many internships provided by NASA Centers and industry occur in the summer.

- **Recommendation letter:** Recommendation letter must come from a STEM faculty member and address the students' qualifications for the Space Grant stipend. Alternatively, if the student has a NASA mentor or collaborator involved in the research project, that person may submit the recommendation letter in lieu of a college faculty member. Faculty/NASA mentors who prefer to submit their recommendation letter separately rather than giving it to the student to include in their application must submit it online by 11:59 p.m. MST on February 20, 2026, according to instructions that will be sent to them in a system-generated email message.
- **Resume** must include a summary of education, training, experience, and accomplishments.
- **Transcript** must be the most recent copy of the applicant's completed undergraduate and graduate work (must include Fall 2025 grades). An unofficial copy or scanned photocopy of the transcript is sufficient.

Application Electronic Submission Instructions

1. Application item #1 (The Application Form) is to be completed online at:
https://sdmines.sdsmt.edu/cgi-bin/global/sg_update_app.cgi
2. Applications items #2, #3, #4, and #5 must be uploaded as a **single electronic file in PDF format** (5MB file size limit) online at the same website as the Application Form by **11:59 p.m. MST, February 20, 2026**.
Note: Students should not wait until the last day, or even close to it, if their faculty recommendation letter is to be submitted separately by the faculty member. The online application site will close to further uploads at 11:59 p.m. MST, February 20, 2026.)
3. Faculty who wish to submit their recommendation letter (item 3) separately rather than giving it to the student to include in their electronic application may do so by uploading the letter in PDF format directly to an online site that only the reviewers

will be able to access. The recommendation letters are due by February 20, 2026, 11:59 p.m. MST. The URL address where the faculty member should upload his/her letter will be sent to that person in a system-generated email message immediately after the student enters that person's email address on the completed Application Form and clicks "Submit".

Late, incomplete applications, or applications that do not follow application instructions will not be reviewed and are ineligible for awards.

Awards *(All Awards are contingent upon SDSGC's receipt of FY2026 Space Grant funding from NASA)*

Applications will be reviewed and award selections made by the SDSGC Management Team listed online (<https://sdspacegrant.sdsmt.edu/contact.html>). **The purpose of both undergraduate and graduate fellowship stipends is to reward past accomplishments and recognize potential future achievements. The stipends are made to individuals and are not to be considered compensation for employment.** The student awardee should contact the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) or a tax accountant to determine what needs to be reported on a tax return since Consortium personnel are not qualified to answer any tax related questions.

End of Award Reporting

At the end of the award period, the student must submit a brief report (an email message will suffice) to Dr. Todd Letcher <todd.letcher@sddstate.edu> at the Space Grant Headquarters Office summarizing their experience and accomplishments. Additional survey/questionnaire documents will be sent periodically to student awardees via email by a private company associated with the National Space Grant Foundation hired by the SD Space Grant Consortium to conduct longitudinal tracking of students supported by Space Grant. NASA requires that we gather data on the education and employment history of current and former participants in our programs. The longitudinal tracking survey/questionnaire is an online document. The email message sent to the students will explain how to access it.

Acknowledgement in Papers/Presentations

In any presentations or publications that the student develops as a result of his/her Space Grant-supported educational or research project, we ask that the student please acknowledge the support provided by the NASA South Dakota Space Grant Consortium.

FAFSA

Students who have filed a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) for the period in which they would receive the Space Grant stipend may wish to visit with their institution's Financial Aid office to determine what impact, if any, receiving a Space Grant stipend could have on their eligibility for Federal Student Aid (loans, work-study, and certain grants).

Inquiries

Questions concerning the preparation and submission of applications and the administration of this program should be addressed to Dr. Todd Letcher, South Dakota State University, Crothers Engineering Hall 212, Mechanical Engineering-Box 2219, Brookings, SD 57007, Email: todd.letcher@sdstate.edu, Phone: 605-688-5311.

Internship Websites

The following websites provide information on specific internships and educational programs to which students can apply at NASA Centers, KBR (USGS EROS), other government agencies, or industry. Some of these internships may not yet be open for application to 2026-2027 programs. However, in the Space Grant application cover letter, students who are interested in NASA, other government, or aerospace industry internships should indicate to which of those internships they have applied, or are planning to apply when applications open. Please note that most, but not all, NASA internship opportunities are listed here.

NASA Internships (NASA's internship web portal)

<https://www.nasa.gov/learning-resources/internship-programs/>

KBR Science and Space Division Aerospace Internship at USGS EROS – Interested students can apply for the Space Grant-funded aerospace internship opportunity at KBR (contractor for USGS EROS) listed at the following website. The student's Space Grant application cover letter should clearly have "*KBR Internship application*" typed near the top of the page. ***Will be announced soon

Aerostar (intern positions) – Interested students can apply for Space Grant-supported mechanical/aerospace internship opportunities at Aerostar Technical Solutions at their Sioux Falls, SD facility. **The student's Space Grant application cover letter should clearly have "*Aerostar Internship application*" typed near the top of the page.** ***Will be announced soon

Sanford Underground Research Facility (SURF) Internships, including Davis/Bahcall Scholars Program

<https://sanfordlab.org/dbs>

<https://www.sanfordlab.org/feature/internships>