

Tips for Applying

We surveyed recent awardees and panel reviewers to ask for their input and advice to help you prepare a high quality application. Here are their recommendations:

Top Tips from Awardees

1. Start early, taking significant time to compose essays, and rewrite
2. Demonstrate your personal motivation and excitement for research
3. Spend time to thoroughly research your topic
4. Integrate essays to create singular theme, link the content together
5. Keep essays clear and simple to read
6. Give essays to many people for review
7. Get input from professors or university administration
8. Get input from previous applicants or winners
9. Thoroughly address both [Intellectual Merit and Broader Impacts](#)
10. Be sure you adequately address the [Broader Impacts](#) criterion
11. Be sure to include all volunteer, leadership and extracurricular activities
12. Highlight the significance of your research and how it will impact society
13. Pay close attention to language in the [solicitation](#)
14. Focus on getting strong recommendation letters
15. Mention what sets you apart from a typical applicant - be unique!

Top Tips from Reviewers

1. Gain research experience, especially at the undergrad level (for example, see [NSF's REU program](#))
2. Become involved in leadership roles and community service
3. Write clear and scientifically-sound essays
4. Strive for scientific publications and presentations
5. Have a strong academic record
6. Be sure to demonstrate the [Broader Impacts](#) criteria well
7. Select strong recommenders
8. Link your teaching and research experiences
9. Ensure you display a history of accomplishments
10. Thoroughly address both [Intellectual Merit and Broader Impacts](#)
11. Highlight any international experience you may have
12. Display your passion and motivation in the essays
13. Be knowledgeable of your research topic
14. Demonstrate the significance of your proposed work
15. Make sure the proposed research is realistic