

Building Community and Capacity in Data Intensive Research in Education (BCC-EHR)

PROGRAM SOLICITATION

NSF 17-532

REPLACES DOCUMENT(S):
NSF 15-563



National Science Foundation

Directorate for Education & Human Resources
Research on Learning in Formal and Informal Settings
Division of Graduate Education

Full Proposal Deadline(s) (due by 5 p.m. submitter's local time):

March 15, 2017

IMPORTANT INFORMATION AND REVISION NOTES

In FY17, The Building Community and Capacity in Data Intensive Research program will be participating in a pilot program that will employ a streamlined initial budget process for proposals. The intent of this pilot is to allow NSF program staff and reviewers to focus on the science while reducing the investigators' administrative workload by requiring only a basic justification of the resources necessary to complete the project. If a proposal is recommended for award, NSF staff will request full budgets and budget justifications and will proceed as normal with the recommendation process. See Section V for additional information.

Any proposal submitted in response to this solicitation should be submitted in accordance with the revised *NSF Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide* (PAPPG) ([NSF 17-1](#)), which is effective for proposals submitted, or due, on or after January 30, 2017. Please be advised that proposers who opt to submit prior to January 30, 2017, must also follow the guidelines contained in NSF 17-1.

SUMMARY OF PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

General Information

Program Title:

Building Community and Capacity in Data Intensive Research in Education (BCC-EHR)

Synopsis of Program:

As part of NSF's Cyberinfrastructure Framework for 21st Century Science and Engineering (CIF21) activity, the Directorate for Education and Human Resources (EHR) seeks to enable research communities to develop visions, teams, and capabilities dedicated to creating new, large-scale, next-generation data resources and relevant analytic techniques to advance fundamental research for areas of research covered by EHR programs. Successful proposals will outline activities that will have significant impacts across multiple fields by enabling new types of data-intensive research. Investigators should think broadly and create a vision that extends intellectually across multiple disciplines and that includes—but is not necessarily limited to - areas of research funded by EHR.

Cognizant Program Officer(s):

Please note that the following information is current at the time of publishing. See program website for any updates to the points of contact.

- John C. Cherniavsky, 855.37, telephone: (703) 292-5136, email: jchernia@nsf.gov
- Finbarr (Barry) Sloane, 890.04, telephone: (703) 292-8465, email: fsloane@nsf.gov

Applicable Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number(s):

- 47.076 --- Education and Human Resources

Award Information

Anticipated Type of Award: Standard Grant

Estimated Number of Awards: 5

Anticipated Funding Amount: \$2,500,000

pending availability of appropriations

Eligibility Information

Who May Submit Proposals:

The categories of proposers eligible to submit proposals to the National Science Foundation are identified in the Grant Proposal Guide, Chapter I, Section E.

Who May Serve as PI:

There are no restrictions or limits.

Limit on Number of Proposals per Organization:

There are no restrictions or limits.

Limit on Number of Proposals per PI or Co-PI:

There are no restrictions or limits.

Proposal Preparation and Submission Instructions

A. Proposal Preparation Instructions

- **Letters of Intent:** Not required
- **Preliminary Proposal Submission:** Not required
- **Full Proposals:**
 - Full Proposals submitted via FastLane: NSF Proposal and Award Policies and Procedures Guide, Part I: Grant Proposal Guide (GPG) Guidelines apply. The complete text of the GPG is available electronically on the NSF website at: http://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub_summ.jsp?ods_key=gpg.
 - Full Proposals submitted via Grants.gov: NSF Grants.gov Application Guide: A Guide for the Preparation and Submission of NSF Applications via Grants.gov Guidelines apply (Note: The NSF Grants.gov Application Guide is available on the Grants.gov website and on the NSF website at: http://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub_summ.jsp?ods_key=grantsgovguide)

B. Budgetary Information

- **Cost Sharing Requirements:**

Inclusion of voluntary committed cost sharing is prohibited.
- **Indirect Cost (F&A) Limitations:**

Not Applicable
- **Other Budgetary Limitations:**

Not Applicable

C. Due Dates

- **Full Proposal Deadline(s)** (due by 5 p.m. submitter's local time):

March 15, 2017

Proposal Review Information Criteria

Merit Review Criteria:

National Science Board approved criteria apply.

Award Administration Information

Award Conditions:

Standard NSF award conditions apply.

Reporting Requirements:

Standard NSF reporting requirements apply.

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I. INTRODUCTION

As part of NSF's Cyberinfrastructure Framework for 21st Century Science and Engineering (CIF21) activity, the Directorate for Education and Human Resources (EHR) seeks to enable research communities to develop visions, teams, and capabilities dedicated to creating new, large-scale, next-generation data resources and relevant analytic techniques to advance fundamental research for areas of research covered by EHR. Successful proposals will outline activities that will have significant impacts across multiple fields by enabling new types of data-intensive research. Investigators should think broadly and create a vision that extends intellectually across multiple disciplines and that includes-but is not necessarily limited to-areas of research covered by EHR.

II. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

For information about EHR fields to which proposals might be relevant, investigators should consult EHR's main home page. Prospective PIs are encouraged to consult the list of previously funded awards (available on the BCC-EHR Program web site) to better understand the topics that have been funded and to evaluate the innovativeness of their own proposed project.

The purpose of this solicitation is to encourage submission of proposals for activities that will enable communities to develop visions for data-intensive EHR areas of research. In some cases, large scale data repositories may already exist, but the infrastructure such as tools and communities to utilize the data may be in need of development. In other cases appropriate activities may include the design of large scale data repositories and/or associated analytic tools.

Data in repositories could include traditional relational data, collections of interactions data, video data, or one of many other forms of structured sets of data. The primary objectives of proposals under this solicitation are to organize a research community or engage an existing research community to design and, perhaps, prototype data-intensive research infrastructure for EHR areas of research. The BCC-EHR program will not support implementation of such infrastructure. For the purpose of this competition, data-intensive research is defined as research involving data resources that are well beyond the storage requirements, computational intensiveness or complexity that is currently typical of the areas of research funded by EHR. Proposals should make clear how the proposed activities will enable promising EHR research that would not otherwise be possible.

Submitted proposals for FY 2017 should focus on the development of communities, or the utilization of existing communities, to develop plans for data repository design or utilization, and to develop infrastructure (including analytic tools) within which identified research may effectively proceed. The NSF's Research Coordination Network (RCN) solicitation and past RCN awards may provide helpful examples of ways to structure community building activities. RCN solicitation requirements, however, do not apply to BCC proposals. While the development of a prototype is permissible, the focus of FY 2017 projects should NOT be the implementation of a full-scale data resource, but rather building a broader community and/or capacity to design and eventually use a resource.

This will be the final BCC-EHR solicitation. Established research communities in EHR that have already identified the need for specific large scale data resources and/or associated analytics may also consider submitting to the *Data Infrastructure Building Blocks (DIBBS)* program, NSF 17-500, or to submit a research proposal to EHR Core Research, NSF 15-509.

Successful proposals will outline activities that will have significant impacts across multiple fields by enabling new types of data-intensive research. Investigators should think broadly and create a vision that extends intellectually across multiple disciplines and that includes--but is not necessarily limited to--areas of research funded by EHR. Proposals will need to describe the bodies of data and other resources that will be involved in the infrastructure. Infrastructure includes data, data structures, metadata, analytics and those tools needed to facilitate educational and STEM education research. Investigators should think creatively about data and consider new data collections, repurposed existing data, and new approaches to data as appropriate for the research questions of interest. Novel approaches are encouraged. Proposals should have a well-defined work plan with steps sufficiently detailed.

An explicit goal of this competition is to focus on building the community and capacity to enable broad and large scale infrastructure

which extends well beyond a single discipline and which will be utilized by a large number and wide range of researchers. While it is acceptable, for example, to focus data collection on a single city or geographic region, the relevance of the proposed work should be of interest to a national or international community.

Applicants should examine the following questions in an integrated manner - to the extent that they are relevant to their own projects.

Science:

- What broad, important, fundamental research questions will be addressed?
- Since this is a capacity and community building program, what research communities would be interested in exploring these questions?

Information technology:

- What kinds of data are anticipated, including the metadata and the broader infrastructure in which data are embedded? (The data involved may be newly gathered, newly aggregated and/or newly created.)
- How will the data be collected? If the data repositories are novel (e.g., not a relational database), what would be their design? What new analytic or statistical approaches are needed to analyze the data?
- What infrastructure is required to ensure access to and long-term maintenance of these large-scale data?

Governance:

- How will the research communities involved in the project address governance as they relate to issues such as sustainability, access and ethical use of data?

Community building and identification:

- How will relevant individuals and communities be identified and integrated into the project?
- How will input be obtained and necessary networks established?

Applicants are strongly encouraged to include, as part of the project description, a discussion of any social and public policy issues that relate to the type, use, and acquisition of data associated with the large-scale data repository envisioned for their project. Topics bearing on these issues could include the ethical uses of these data, the protection of human-subject privacy and data-confidentiality, and how the broader social impacts of the enabled research can enhance the well-being of society and its members. Whenever feasible, the voluntary participation of human subjects should be secured by means of explicit opt-in procedures. The protection of human subjects is of paramount importance for many proposals to BCC-EHR; if the proposed project will involve the use of human data or data related to human activities, PIs should consult with their local institutional review board to obtain either IRB approval or official letters of exemption. BCC-EHR proposals will not be recommended for awards until and unless appropriate IRB approval or exemption documents have been submitted to NSF.

The size and scale of a proposal should be determined by the readiness of the research community: some may be just forming, while others may be ready to expand membership or to build prototypes. This solicitation encourages proposals from communities at all levels of preparedness.

To ensure that the research project has value to a wide community, investigators are encouraged to involve researchers from multiple research disciplines. Proposals should contain dissemination plans that include an outline of how the broader research community will be able to examine, comment on, and otherwise contribute to, or benefit from, the proposed effort.

III. AWARD INFORMATION

Normal limits for funding requests of BCC proposals are up to \$500,000 with award durations up to three years. Estimated program budget, number of awards and average award size/duration are subject to the availability of funds.

V. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

Who May Submit Proposals:

The categories of proposers eligible to submit proposals to the National Science Foundation are identified in the Grant Proposal Guide, Chapter I, Section E.

Who May Serve as PI:

There are no restrictions or limits.

Limit on Number of Proposals per Organization:

There are no restrictions or limits.

Limit on Number of Proposals per PI or Co-PI:

There are no restrictions or limits.

V. PROPOSAL PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

A. Proposal Preparation Instructions

Full Proposal Preparation Instructions: Proposers may opt to submit proposals in response to this Program Solicitation via Grants.gov or via the NSF FastLane system.

- Full proposals submitted via FastLane: Proposals submitted in response to this program solicitation should be prepared and submitted in accordance with the general guidelines contained in the NSF Grant Proposal Guide (GPG). The complete text of the GPG is available electronically on the NSF website at: http://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub_summ.jsp?ods_key=gpg. Paper copies of the GPG may be obtained from the NSF Publications Clearinghouse, telephone (703) 292-7827 or by e-mail from nsfpubs@nsf.gov. Proposers are reminded to identify this program solicitation number in the program solicitation block on the NSF Cover Sheet For Proposal to the National Science Foundation. Compliance with this requirement is critical to determining the relevant proposal processing guidelines. Failure to submit this information may delay processing.
- Full proposals submitted via Grants.gov: Proposals submitted in response to this program solicitation via Grants.gov should be prepared and submitted in accordance with the NSF Grants.gov Application Guide: A Guide for the Preparation and Submission of NSF Applications via Grants.gov. The complete text of the NSF Grants.gov Application Guide is available on the Grants.gov website and on the NSF website at: (http://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub_summ.jsp?ods_key=grantsgovguide). To obtain copies of the Application Guide and Application Forms Package, click on the Apply tab on the Grants.gov site, then click on the Apply Step 1: Download a Grant Application Package and Application Instructions link and enter the funding opportunity number, (the program solicitation number without the NSF prefix) and press the Download Package button. Paper copies of the Grants.gov Application Guide also may be obtained from the NSF Publications Clearinghouse, telephone (703) 292-7827 or by e-mail from nsfpubs@nsf.gov.

In determining which method to utilize in the electronic preparation and submission of the proposal, please note the following:

Collaborative Proposals. All collaborative proposals submitted as separate submissions from multiple organizations must be submitted via the NSF FastLane system. Chapter II, Section D.5 of the Grant Proposal Guide provides additional information on collaborative proposals.

See Chapter II.C.2 of the [GPG](#) for guidance on the required sections of a full research proposal submitted to NSF. Please note that the proposal preparation instructions provided in this program solicitation may deviate from the GPG instructions.

Important Information for FY17

In FY17, The Building Community and Capacity in Data Intensive Research program will be participating in a pilot program that will employ a streamlined initial budget process for proposals. The intent of this pilot is to allow NSF program staff and reviewers to focus on the science while reducing the investigators' administrative workload by requiring only a basic justification of the resources necessary to complete the project. If a proposal is recommended for award, NSF staff will request full budgets and budget justifications and will proceed as normal with the recommendation process.

Proposing organizations are strongly recommended to allow sufficient time to familiarize themselves with the changes to the online submission process to allow a timely uploading of proposals.

For the streamlined proposal budget process in the initial proposal submission stage, proposers will submit a zero proposed budget in the NSF Budget format. Since the senior personnel listed on the Cover Sheet are currently prepopulated on the budget, they will need to be removed from Section A of the budget for the purposes of submitting a streamlined proposal budget. To do this, proposers should:

- Navigate to the Budget Section;
- Click "Funds" (or "Add a Year", if appropriate, then click "Funds");
- Delete the Senior Personnel from Budget Section A (by clicking on "Add/Remove Senior Personnel") and then click "Save"; and
- Click to the Bottom of Page, click "Calculate" and "Save" and "Go Back".

The budget justification should not provide itemized dollar amounts per budget category; rather it should provide sufficient narrative detail for program officers and reviewers to determine that resources are essential, adequate, and appropriate to support the project being proposed. Information must be provided for any of the requested items listed below:

- Person-months of Senior Personnel (such as 1 month, 2 months, etc.);
- Number of anticipated postdoctoral scholars, graduate or undergraduate students, administrative and clerical staff, and a brief overview of their respective roles;
- Equipment purchases, including estimated cost;
- Number of domestic and foreign trips anticipated, their necessity for the project, as well as the number of travelers and the location of the trip, if available;
- Number of project participants;
- Pertinent materials and supplies, consultant services, etc.; or
- Any subawards, to whom, and a brief description of the work to be performed.

If a proposal is recommended for award, a full budget and budget justification will be requested by NSF. In those cases, amounts must be included in all appropriate budget categories, including indirect costs and any other items not discussed in the original budget justification.

Please note that some of NSF's electronic compliance warning messages in FastLane will not be relevant for this streamlined proposal budgeting pilot and should be disregarded. For example, proposers will receive a warning that an insufficient amount is being requested in the budget; this, however, will not affect the ability to submit the proposal. For FastLane help, please see the appropriate section below.

If postdoctoral researchers are anticipated and discussed in the budget justification, a Postdoctoral Researcher Mentoring Plan is required even though the absence of one will not prevent submission of the proposal.

It is expected that all proposers will comply with the guidance of the NSF PAPPG and this program solicitation.

B. Budgetary Information

Cost Sharing:

Inclusion of voluntary committed cost sharing is prohibited.

Budget Preparation Instructions:

In FY17, The Building Community and Capacity in Data Intensive Research Program will be participating in a pilot program that will employ a streamlined initial budget process for proposals. Please see the Important Information for FY17 under Section V.A, above.

C. Due Dates

- **Full Proposal Deadline(s)** (due by 5 p.m. submitter's local time):
March 15, 2017

D. FastLane/Grants.gov Requirements

For Proposals Submitted Via FastLane:

To prepare and submit a proposal via FastLane, see detailed technical instructions available at: <https://www.fastlane.nsf.gov/a1/newstan.htm>. For FastLane user support, call the FastLane Help Desk at 1-800-673-6188 or e-mail fastlane@nsf.gov. The FastLane Help Desk answers general technical questions related to the use of the FastLane system. Specific questions related to this program solicitation should be referred to the NSF program staff contact(s) listed in Section VIII of this funding opportunity.

For Proposals Submitted Via Grants.gov:

Before using Grants.gov for the first time, each organization must register to create an institutional profile. Once registered, the applicant's organization can then apply for any federal grant on the Grants.gov website. Comprehensive information about using Grants.gov is available on the Grants.gov Applicant Resources webpage: <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants.html>. In addition, the NSF Grants.gov Application Guide (see link in Section V.A) provides instructions regarding the technical preparation of proposals via Grants.gov. For Grants.gov user support, contact the Grants.gov Contact Center at 1-800-518-4726 or by email: support@grants.gov. The Grants.gov Contact Center answers general technical questions related to the use of Grants.gov. Specific questions related to this program solicitation should be referred to the NSF program staff contact(s) listed in Section VIII of this solicitation.

Submitting the Proposal: Once all documents have been completed, the Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR) must submit the application to Grants.gov and verify the desired funding opportunity and agency to which the application is submitted. The AOR must then sign and submit the application to Grants.gov. The completed application will be transferred to the NSF FastLane system for further processing.

Proposers that submitted via FastLane are strongly encouraged to use FastLane to verify the status of their submission to NSF. For proposers that submitted via Grants.gov, until an application has been received and validated by NSF, the Authorized Organizational Representative may check the status of an application on Grants.gov. After proposers have received an e-mail notification from NSF, Research.gov should be used to check the status of an application.

VI. NSF PROPOSAL PROCESSING AND REVIEW PROCEDURES

Proposals received by NSF are assigned to the appropriate NSF program for acknowledgement and, if they meet NSF requirements, for review. All proposals are carefully reviewed by a scientist, engineer, or educator serving as an NSF Program Officer, and usually by three to ten other persons outside NSF either as *ad hoc* reviewers, panelists, or both, who are experts in the particular fields represented by the proposal. These reviewers are selected by Program Officers charged with oversight of the review process. Proposers are invited to suggest names of persons they believe are especially well qualified to review the proposal and/or persons they would prefer not review the proposal. These suggestions may serve as one source in the reviewer selection process at the Program Officer's discretion. Submission of such names, however, is optional. Care is taken to ensure that reviewers have no conflicts of interest with the proposal. In addition, Program Officers may obtain comments from site visits before recommending final action on proposals. Senior NSF staff further review recommendations for awards. A flowchart that depicts the entire NSF proposal and award process (and associated timeline) is included in the [GPG](#) as Exhibit III-1.

A comprehensive description of the Foundation's merit review process is available on the NSF website at: http://www.nsf.gov/bfa/dias/policy/merit_review/.

Proposers should also be aware of core strategies that are essential to the fulfillment of NSF's mission, as articulated in [Investing in Science, Engineering, and Education for the Nation's Future: NSF Strategic Plan for 2014-2018](#). These strategies are integrated in the program planning and implementation process, of which proposal review is one part. NSF's mission is particularly well-implemented through the integration of research and education and broadening participation in NSF programs, projects, and activities.

One of the strategic objectives in support of NSF's mission is to foster integration of research and education through the programs, projects, and activities it supports at academic and research institutions. These institutions must recruit, train, and prepare a diverse STEM workforce to advance the frontiers of science and participate in the U.S. technology-based economy. NSF's contribution to the national innovation ecosystem is to provide cutting-edge research under the guidance of the Nation's most creative scientists and engineers. NSF also supports development of a strong science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) workforce by investing in building the knowledge that informs improvements in STEM teaching and learning.

NSF's mission calls for the broadening of opportunities and expanding participation of groups, institutions, and geographic regions

that are underrepresented in STEM disciplines, which is essential to the health and vitality of science and engineering. NSF is committed to this principle of diversity and deems it central to the programs, projects, and activities it considers and supports.

A. Merit Review Principles and Criteria

The National Science Foundation strives to invest in a robust and diverse portfolio of projects that creates new knowledge and enables breakthroughs in understanding across all areas of science and engineering research and education. To identify which projects to support, NSF relies on a merit review process that incorporates consideration of both the technical aspects of a proposed project and its potential to contribute more broadly to advancing NSF's mission "to promote the progress of science; to advance the national health, prosperity, and welfare; to secure the national defense; and for other purposes." NSF makes every effort to conduct a fair, competitive, transparent merit review process for the selection of projects.

1. Merit Review Principles

These principles are to be given due diligence by PIs and organizations when preparing proposals and managing projects, by reviewers when reading and evaluating proposals, and by NSF program staff when determining whether or not to recommend proposals for funding and while overseeing awards. Given that NSF is the primary federal agency charged with nurturing and supporting excellence in basic research and education, the following three principles apply:

- All NSF projects should be of the highest quality and have the potential to advance, if not transform, the frontiers of knowledge.
- NSF projects, in the aggregate, should contribute more broadly to achieving societal goals. These "Broader Impacts" may be accomplished through the research itself, through activities that are directly related to specific research projects, or through activities that are supported by, but are complementary to, the project. The project activities may be based on previously established and/or innovative methods and approaches, but in either case must be well justified.
- Meaningful assessment and evaluation of NSF funded projects should be based on appropriate metrics, keeping in mind the likely correlation between the effect of broader impacts and the resources provided to implement projects. If the size of the activity is limited, evaluation of that activity in isolation is not likely to be meaningful. Thus, assessing the effectiveness of these activities may best be done at a higher, more aggregated, level than the individual project.

With respect to the third principle, even if assessment of Broader Impacts outcomes for particular projects is done at an aggregated level, PIs are expected to be accountable for carrying out the activities described in the funded project. Thus, individual projects should include clearly stated goals, specific descriptions of the activities that the PI intends to do, and a plan in place to document the outputs of those activities.

These three merit review principles provide the basis for the merit review criteria, as well as a context within which the users of the criteria can better understand their intent.

2. Merit Review Criteria

All NSF proposals are evaluated through use of the two National Science Board approved merit review criteria. In some instances, however, NSF will employ additional criteria as required to highlight the specific objectives of certain programs and activities.

The two merit review criteria are listed below. **Both** criteria are to be given **full consideration** during the review and decision-making processes; each criterion is necessary but neither, by itself, is sufficient. Therefore, proposers must fully address both criteria. (GPG Chapter II.C.2.d.i. contains additional information for use by proposers in development of the Project Description section of the proposal.) Reviewers are strongly encouraged to review the criteria, including GPG Chapter II.C.2.d.i., prior to the review of a proposal.

When evaluating NSF proposals, reviewers will be asked to consider what the proposers want to do, why they want to do it, how they plan to do it, how they will know if they succeed, and what benefits could accrue if the project is successful. These issues apply both to the technical aspects of the proposal and the way in which the project may make broader contributions. To that end, reviewers will be asked to evaluate all proposals against two criteria:

- **Intellectual Merit:** The Intellectual Merit criterion encompasses the potential to advance knowledge; and
- **Broader Impacts:** The Broader Impacts criterion encompasses the potential to benefit society and contribute to the achievement of specific, desired societal outcomes.

The following elements should be considered in the review for both criteria:

1. What is the potential for the proposed activity to
 - a. Advance knowledge and understanding within its own field or across different fields (Intellectual Merit); and
 - b. Benefit society or advance desired societal outcomes (Broader Impacts)?
2. To what extent do the proposed activities suggest and explore creative, original, or potentially transformative concepts?
3. Is the plan for carrying out the proposed activities well-reasoned, well-organized, and based on a sound rationale? Does the plan incorporate a mechanism to assess success?
4. How well qualified is the individual, team, or organization to conduct the proposed activities?
5. Are there adequate resources available to the PI (either at the home organization or through collaborations) to carry out the proposed activities?

Broader impacts may be accomplished through the research itself, through the activities that are directly related to specific research projects, or through activities that are supported by, but are complementary to, the project. NSF values the advancement of scientific knowledge and activities that contribute to achievement of societally relevant outcomes. Such outcomes include, but are not limited to: full participation of women, persons with disabilities, and underrepresented minorities in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM); improved STEM education and educator development at any level; increased public scientific literacy and public engagement with science and technology; improved well-being of individuals in society; development of a diverse, globally competitive STEM workforce; increased partnerships between academia, industry, and others; improved national security; increased economic competitiveness of the United States; and enhanced infrastructure for research and education.

Proposers are reminded that reviewers will also be asked to review the Data Management Plan and the Postdoctoral Researcher Mentoring Plan, as appropriate.

B. Review and Selection Process

Proposals submitted in response to this program solicitation will be reviewed by Ad hoc Review and/or Panel Review.

Reviewers will be asked to evaluate proposals using two National Science Board approved merit review criteria and, if applicable, additional program specific criteria. A summary rating and accompanying narrative will generally be completed and submitted by each reviewer and/or panel. The Program Officer assigned to manage the proposal's review will consider the advice of reviewers and will formulate a recommendation.

After scientific, technical and programmatic review and consideration of appropriate factors, the NSF Program Officer recommends to the cognizant Division Director whether the proposal should be declined or recommended for award. NSF strives to be able to tell applicants whether their proposals have been declined or recommended for funding within six months. Large or particularly complex proposals or proposals from new awardees may require additional review and processing time. The time interval begins on the deadline or target date, or receipt date, whichever is later. The interval ends when the Division Director acts upon the Program Officer's recommendation.

After programmatic approval has been obtained, the proposals recommended for funding will be forwarded to the Division of Grants and Agreements for review of business, financial, and policy implications. After an administrative review has occurred, Grants and Agreements Officers perform the processing and issuance of a grant or other agreement. Proposers are cautioned that only a Grants and Agreements Officer may make commitments, obligations or awards on behalf of NSF or authorize the expenditure of funds. No commitment on the part of NSF should be inferred from technical or budgetary discussions with a NSF Program Officer. A Principal Investigator or organization that makes financial or personnel commitments in the absence of a grant or cooperative agreement signed by the NSF Grants and Agreements Officer does so at their own risk.

Once an award or declination decision has been made, Principal Investigators are provided feedback about their proposals. In all cases, reviews are treated as confidential documents. Verbatim copies of reviews, excluding the names of the reviewers or any reviewer-identifying information, are sent to the Principal Investigator/Project Director by the Program Officer. In addition, the proposer will receive an explanation of the decision to award or decline funding.

VII. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

A. Notification of the Award

Notification of the award is made to *the submitting organization* by a Grants Officer in the Division of Grants and Agreements. Organizations whose proposals are declined will be advised as promptly as possible by the cognizant NSF Program administering the program. Verbatim copies of reviews, not including the identity of the reviewer, will be provided automatically to the Principal Investigator. (See Section VI.B. for additional information on the review process).

B. Award Conditions

An NSF award consists of: (1) the award notice, which includes any special provisions applicable to the award and any numbered amendments thereto; (2) the budget, which indicates the amounts, by categories of expense, on which NSF has based its support (or otherwise communicates any specific approvals or disapprovals of proposed expenditures); (3) the proposal referenced in the award notice; (4) the applicable award conditions, such as Grant General Conditions (GC-1)*; or Research Terms and Conditions* and (5) any announcement or other NSF issuance that may be incorporated by reference in the award notice. Cooperative agreements also are administered in accordance with NSF Cooperative Agreement Financial and Administrative Terms and Conditions (CA-FATC) and the applicable Programmatic Terms and Conditions. NSF awards are electronically signed by an NSF Grants and Agreements Officer and transmitted electronically to the organization via e-mail.

*These documents may be accessed electronically on NSF's Website at http://www.nsf.gov/awards/managing/award_conditions.jsp?org=NSF. Paper copies may be obtained from the NSF Publications Clearinghouse, telephone (703) 292-7827 or by e-mail from nsfpubs@nsf.gov.

More comprehensive information on NSF Award Conditions and other important information on the administration of NSF awards is contained in the NSF *Award & Administration Guide* (AAG) Chapter II, available electronically on the NSF Website at http://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub_summ.jsp?ods_key=aag.

C. Reporting Requirements

For all multi-year grants (including both standard and continuing grants), the Principal Investigator must submit an annual project report to the cognizant Program Officer no later than 90 days prior to the end of the current budget period. (Some programs or awards require submission of more frequent project reports). No later than 120 days following expiration of a grant, the PI also is required to submit a final project report, and a project outcomes report for the general public.

Failure to provide the required annual or final project reports, or the project outcomes report, will delay NSF review and processing of any future funding increments as well as any pending proposals for all identified PIs and co-PIs on a given award. PIs should examine the formats of the required reports in advance to assure availability of required data.

PIs are required to use NSF's electronic project-reporting system, available through Research.gov, for preparation and submission of annual and final project reports. Such reports provide information on accomplishments, project participants (individual and organizational), publications, and other specific products and impacts of the project. Submission of the report via Research.gov constitutes certification by the PI that the contents of the report are accurate and complete. The project outcomes report also must be prepared and submitted using Research.gov. This report serves as a brief summary, prepared specifically for the public, of the nature and outcomes of the project. This report will be posted on the NSF website exactly as it is submitted by the PI.

More comprehensive information on NSF Reporting Requirements and other important information on the administration of NSF awards is contained in the NSF *Award & Administration Guide* (AAG) Chapter II, available electronically on the NSF Website at

VIII. AGENCY CONTACTS

Please note that the program contact information is current at the time of publishing. See program website for any updates to the points of contact.

General inquiries regarding this program should be made to:

- John C. Cherniavsky, 855.37, telephone: (703) 292-5136, email: jchernia@nsf.gov
- Finbarr (Barry) Sloane, 890.04, telephone: (703) 292-8465, email: fsloane@nsf.gov

For questions related to the use of FastLane, contact:

- FastLane Help Desk, telephone: 1-800-673-6188; e-mail: fastlane@nsf.gov.

For questions relating to Grants.gov contact:

- Grants.gov Contact Center: If the Authorized Organizational Representatives (AOR) has not received a confirmation message from Grants.gov within 48 hours of submission of application, please contact via telephone: 1-800-518-4726; e-mail: support@grants.gov.

IX. OTHER INFORMATION

The NSF website provides the most comprehensive source of information on NSF Directorates (including contact information), programs and funding opportunities. Use of this website by potential proposers is strongly encouraged. In addition, "NSF Update" is an information-delivery system designed to keep potential proposers and other interested parties apprised of new NSF funding opportunities and publications, important changes in proposal and award policies and procedures, and upcoming NSF [Grants Conferences](#). Subscribers are informed through e-mail or the user's Web browser each time new publications are issued that match their identified interests. "NSF Update" also is available on [NSF's website](#).

Grants.gov provides an additional electronic capability to search for Federal government-wide grant opportunities. NSF funding opportunities may be accessed via this mechanism. Further information on Grants.gov may be obtained at <http://www.grants.gov>.

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NSF receives approximately 55,000 proposals each year for research, education and training projects, of which approximately 11,000 are funded. In addition, the Foundation receives several thousand applications for graduate and postdoctoral fellowships. The agency operates no laboratories itself but does support National Research Centers, user facilities, certain oceanographic vessels and Arctic and Antarctic research stations. The Foundation also supports cooperative research between universities and industry, US participation in international scientific and engineering efforts, and educational activities at every academic level.

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The National Science Foundation Information Center may be reached at (703) 292-5111.

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To get the latest information about program deadlines, to download copies of NSF publications, and to access abstracts of awards, visit the NSF Website at <http://www.nsf.gov>

- **Location:** 4201 Wilson Blvd. Arlington, VA 22230
- **For General Information** (NSF Information Center): (703) 292-5111

TDD (for the hearing-impaired): (703) 292-5090

• **To Order Publications or Forms:**

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or telephone: (703) 292-7827

• **To Locate NSF Employees:** (703) 292-5111

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The information requested on proposal forms and project reports is solicited under the authority of the National Science Foundation Act of 1950, as amended. The information on proposal forms will be used in connection with the selection of qualified proposals; and project reports submitted by awardees will be used for program evaluation and reporting within the Executive Branch and to Congress. The information requested may be disclosed to qualified reviewers and staff assistants as part of the proposal review process; to proposer institutions/grantees to provide or obtain data regarding the proposal review process, award decisions, or the administration of awards; to government contractors, experts, volunteers and researchers and educators as necessary to complete assigned work; to other government agencies or other entities needing information regarding applicants or nominees as part of a joint application review process, or in order to coordinate programs or policy; and to another Federal agency, court, or party in a court or Federal administrative proceeding if the government is a party. Information about Principal Investigators may be added to the Reviewer file and used to select potential candidates to serve as peer reviewers or advisory committee members. See Systems of Records, [NSF-50](#), "Principal Investigator/Proposal File and Associated Records," 69 Federal Register 26410 (May 12, 2004), and [NSF-51](#), "Reviewer/Proposal File and Associated Records," 69 Federal Register 26410 (May 12, 2004). Submission of the information is voluntary. Failure to provide full and complete information, however, may reduce the possibility of receiving an award.

An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, an information collection unless it displays a valid Office of Management and Budget (OMB) control number. The OMB control number for this collection is 3145-0058. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 120 hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions. Send comments regarding the burden estimate and any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to:

Suzanne H. Plimpton
Reports Clearance Officer
Office of the General Counsel
National Science Foundation
Arlington, VA 22230

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