National Science Foundation
4201 Wilson Boulevard
Arlington, Virginia 22230

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Dear Colleague Letter: Advanced Technological Education (ATE) Program Support for Manufacturing Innovation Institutes (MIIs) and Investing in Manufacturing Communities Partnerships (IMCPs)

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The National Network for Manufacturing Innovation (NNMI) Initiative is a federal interagency effort supporting the development of Manufacturing Innovation Institutes (MIIs) (http://www.manufacturing.gov/welcome.html). The MIIs have unique areas of concentration, but one common goal across the MIIs is building a workforce pipeline to support advanced manufacturing. A second interagency effort is the Investing in Manufacturing Communities Partnership (IMCP) initiative (http://www.eda.gov/challenges/imcp/). This initiative encourages communities to develop economic development strategies to attract manufacturing and supply chain investments. A part of a comprehensive economic development strategy includes supporting or developing a qualified workforce for the industries. The National Science Foundation's (NSF) Advanced Technological Education (ATE) program is supporting the development of a highly qualified entry-level workforce for both the NNMI and IMCP Initiatives through partnerships between both MIIs and IMCPs and ATE Centers and projects.

The ATE program focuses on the education of technicians for the high-technology fields that drive our nation's economy with an emphasis on the role of two-year community and technical colleges in this effort. The program involves partnerships between academic institutions and industry to promote improvement in the education of science and engineering technicians at the undergraduate and secondary school levels. The ATE program was launched in 1993 in response to the Scientific and Advanced Technology Act (SATA) of 1992, and the program has supported and continues to support a broad portfolio of advanced manufacturing Centers and projects. Centers and projects have developed curricular materials and Skills Standards in partnership with industry, provided professional development for secondary school teachers and both 2-year and 4-year faculty, and developed clearly articulated career pathways into the supported industries.

MIIs and IMCPs are encouraged to partner with and utilize the mechanisms and resources developed through the ATE program in crafting workforce development plans that include preparing a world-class entry-level technical workforce. ATE Centers and projects may request supplemental funds to support their work with either MIIs or IMCPs. Prospective ATE PIs may also include a workforce plan supporting an MII or IMCP during the regular proposal submission process. Whether submitted as a supplemental funding request or included in a regular proposal submission, a clear scope of work to be carried out by the ATE personnel and a budget and budget justification must be submitted. Supplemental funding requests are described in the NSF Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide (PAPPG) (see Chapter 1, section E of the Award and Administration Guide). Requests for supplemental funding should be discussed with the cognizant Program Officer prior to formal submission via the Authorized Organizational Representative Functions in FastLane. A letter from the MII or IMCP elaborating on its commitment and contributions to the partnership and agreeing to the proposed scope of work should be included as a supplementary document to either a supplemental funding request or a regular proposal submission.

Resources:

- NSF awards database, http://www.nsf.gov/awardsearch
- Advanced Technological Education (ATE) Program, http://www.nsf.gov/ate
- ATE Centers, http://www.atecenters.org/
- ATE Central, http://www.atecentral.net/
- Manufacturing Innovation Institutes, http://manufacturing.gov/institutes.html
- Investing in Manufacturing Communities Partnership, http://www.eda.gov/challenges/imcp/

Questions about this Dear Colleague Letter should be addressed to Celeste Carter, vccarter@nsf.gov.

Sincerely,
Susan R. Singer, Division Director, Division of Undergraduate Education