

Alliances For Graduate Education And The Professoriate (AGEP)

Program Solicitation

NSF 04-575

Replaces Document 01-138



National Science Foundation

Directorate for Education and Human Resources

Division of Human Resource Development

Letter of Intent Due Date(s) (required):

May 17, 2004

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

July 26, 2004

REVISIONS AND UPDATES

- Letters of Intent are required in FY 2004.
- Level of funding has increased.

SUMMARY OF PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

General Information

Program Title:

Alliances For Graduate Education And The Professoriate (AGEP)

Synopsis of Program:

The Alliances for Graduate Education and the Professoriate (AGEP) program is intended to increase significantly the number of domestic students receiving doctoral degrees in the sciences, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), with special emphasis on those population groups underrepresented in these fields (i.e., African Americans, Hispanics, American Indians, Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiians or other Pacific Islanders). In addition, AGEP is particularly interested in increasing the number of minorities who will enter the professoriate in these disciplines. Specific objectives of the AGEP program are (1) to develop and implement innovative models for recruiting, mentoring, and retaining minority students in STEM doctoral programs, and (2) to develop effective strategies for identifying and supporting underrepresented minorities who want to pursue academic careers.

Cognizant Program Officer(s):

- Dr. Roosevelt Johnson, Program Director, Directorate for Education and Human Resources, Division of Human Resource Development, 4201 Wilson Blvd., Suite 815, Arlington, VA, 22230, telephone: (703)292-4669, fax: (703) 292-9018, email: ryjohnso@nsf.gov

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

- 47.076 --- Education and Human Resources

Eligibility Information

- **Organization Limit:** An alliance may hold only one active award at a time. The alliance must consist of two or more doctoral degree granting institutions serving STEM graduate education needs. One of these primary institutions must be designated as the lead institution for the project. Secondary partner institutions (non doctoral degree granting) may participate in an alliance as subawardees. An institution may be a primary member in only one alliance.
- **PI Eligibility Limit:** Because AGEP is centered on sustainable institutional changes in graduate education, the Provost or Graduate Dean of the lead Institution should serve as the Principal Investigator. A full explanation should be provided for a PI designation in variance with this requirement. Co-Principal investigators from partner institutions may be designated as appropriate for the project.
- **Limit on Number of Proposals:** Only one proposal may be submitted per alliance.

Award Information

- **Anticipated Type of Award:** Cooperative Agreement
- **Estimated Number of Awards:** 3 to 6 - Awards anticipated in FY 2004.
- **Anticipated Funding Amount:** \$6,000,000 pending availability of funds in FY 2004.

Proposal Preparation and Submission Instructions

A. Proposal Preparation Instructions

- **Letters of Intent:** Submission of Letters of Intent is required. Please see the full text of this solicitation for further information.
- **Full Proposal Preparation Instructions:** This solicitation contains information that deviates from the standard Grant Proposal Guide (GPG) proposal preparation guidelines. Please see the full text of this solicitation for further information.

B. Budgetary Information

- **Cost Sharing Requirements:** Cost Sharing is required (Percentage).
- **Cost Sharing Level/Amount:** 30%
- **Indirect Cost (F&A) Limitations:** Not Applicable.
- **Other Budgetary Limitations:** Other budgetary limitations apply. Please see the full text of this solicitation for further information.

C. Due Dates

- **Letters of Intent (required):**
May 17, 2004
- **Full Proposal Deadline Date(s)** (due by 5 p.m. proposer's local time):
July 26, 2004

Proposal Review Information

- **Merit Review Criteria:** National Science Board approved criteria. Additional merit review considerations apply. Please see the full text of this solicitation for further information.

Award Administration Information

- **Award Conditions:** Standard NSF award conditions apply.
- **Reporting Requirements:** Standard NSF reporting requirements apply.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The U.S. continues to suffer from a long-standing underrepresentation of minorities (i.e., African Americans, Hispanics, American Indians, Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiians or other Pacific Islanders) among science, mathematics and engineering doctorates. This untapped talent has serious consequences for the nation's ability to compete in a world economy driven by technological advances, as well as for a large segment of the nation's citizens who suffer loss of opportunity. This underrepresentation is evident in all sectors: academe, industry, and government. Over the years, both government and private sectors have invested significant resources to increase minority representation in advanced STEM study and careers. While some exemplary programs exist, limited progress has been made overall.

The Alliances for Graduate Education and the Professoriate (AGEP) program is intended to increase significantly the number of students receiving doctoral degrees in the sciences, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), with special emphasis on those population groups underrepresented in these fields (i.e., African Americans, Hispanics, American Indians, Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiians or other Pacific Islanders). In addition, since lack of role models and mentors in the professoriate constitutes a significant barrier to producing minority STEM graduates, NSF is particularly interested in increasing the number of minorities who will enter the professoriate in these disciplines. Specific objectives of the AGEP program are:

1. to develop and implement innovative models for recruiting, mentoring, and retaining minority students in STEM doctoral programs and
2. to develop effective strategies for identifying and supporting underrepresented minorities who want to pursue academic careers.

II. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

GOAL

The goal of the AGEP program is to increase the number of underrepresented minority students pursuing advanced study, obtaining doctoral degrees, and entering the professoriate in STEM disciplines. Alliances participating in this program are expected to engage in comprehensive institutional cultural changes that will lead to sustained increases in the conferral of STEM doctoral degrees, significantly exceeding historic levels of performance.

ALLIANCES

Alliances consisting of two or more doctoral degree granting institutions serving the STEM graduate education needs are eligible to submit proposals. One institution must be designated as the lead institution for the project. Institutions in the U.S. and its territories having documented success in translating minority matriculates into degree recipients are strongly encouraged to participate. A single institution may participate in only one alliance. Through the alliance, it is anticipated that the strengths of the respective individual institutions will be maximized to serve the AGEP program goals. Alliance commitment will be assessed with respect to willingness and ability of participating institutions to align relevant financial and operational resources to the goals articulated by this program. To ensure commitment and the potential for success, the Provost or Graduate Dean of the lead institution should serve as the Principal Investigator (PI). A full explanation should be provided for a PI designation in variance with this agreement.

ACTIVITIES

The purpose of these awards is to catalyze changes in institutional, departmental, and organizational culture and practices that will result in significant increases in the recruitment, retention, degree conferral, and STEM career (especially academic) entry of minority students. The proposal should clearly describe strategies to ensure effective recruitment, mentoring, retention, and degree completion of minority students. Strategies may include, but are not limited to:

1. support for students to attend conferences,

2. coordinated recruitment among partner institutions,
3. proactive use of faculty in student recruitment,
4. development of systemic mentoring and mentor training,
5. faculty and student exchange programs,
6. specific preparation for the professoriate, and
7. more effective career counseling and career placement.

In support of the activities described above, the program provides funding in a variety of cost categories, including:

1. provision for faculty release time,
2. program coordination and clerical support (partial),
3. special workshop/seminar support costs,
4. faculty/student travel between institutions (e.g., recruitment, joint research, etc.)
5. peer mentoring stipends, and
6. evaluation and assessment costs (partial).

Under the AGEP program, NSF intends to support a portfolio of projects that serve as effective models for addressing these issues. Proposals should clearly describe strategies for increasing minority student admissions; for creating supportive environments for these students at both the institutional and departmental levels; as well as for developing student interest in, and preparation for, academic careers (teaching and other faculty roles). Relevant strategies may include, for example, developing partnerships with undergraduate institutions that produce large numbers of minority STEM majors (e.g., Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs), Tribal Colleges); providing underrepresented minority undergraduates with enriched academic and research experiences that place strong emphasis on obtaining doctorates and pursuing academic careers; and/or developing student networks or mentoring programs at the undergraduate and/or graduate levels. Projects are also strongly encouraged to develop linkages with the NSF-supported Louis Stokes Alliances for Minority Participation (LSAMP) projects, which also produce large numbers of minority STEM graduates. The activities described are merely illustrative of the broad range of activities that are possible under the AGEP program. Project strategies that do not specifically address the AGEP goal will not be considered competitive. The AGEP program stresses the building of a well-documented knowledge base of successful strategies.

DISCIPLINES

Projects involving any of the STEM fields normally supported by NSF are eligible. Projects are expected to be comprehensive, broadly covering STEM departments. All participating departments must be explicitly identified in the proposal. Multiple STEM departments must be involved at AGEP institutions, and departments can be transitioned in over the 5 year cooperative agreement.

PROJECT EVALUATION

It is expected that each AGEP project will complement its efforts with its own formative evaluation. This evaluation should be the basis for strengthening implementation over the course of the project and for annual reporting to NSF that will be used to justify continued investment in the project. Proposals should provide suggestions of objectives, benchmarks, and indicators of progress that will inform reviewers of the proposers' understanding of essential factors for judging accountability, both quantitative (minority enrollment and Ph.D. production) and qualitative (the process of change in organizational culture). This evaluation must show an effective process by which student progress will be assessed on an annual basis. Indicators of cultural changes include changes in policies, practices, and programs at the graduate school office or departmental levels. Changes can occur with student recruitment, admissions, and selection processes, academic support, and socialization to profession.

PROGRAM EVALUATION

Awardees will be required to participate in a program-level evaluation by which NSF can assess quantitative gains in relevant measures for underrepresented minority students and make qualitative assessments of the process of change. Shortly after awards have been made, project evaluators will be asked to assist a NSF contractor in developing a program evaluation that will mutually benefit the agency and project participants. AGEP projects are expected to have the capability of collecting and analyzing data derived from program evaluation activities. AGEP projects must set (and meet) measurable goals and collect evidence (disaggregated by ethnicity, gender, and discipline) to determine progress toward the AGEP goal of significantly increasing the number of underrepresented minorities attaining doctoral degrees in STEM disciplines.

COST SHARING

Cost sharing at a level of 30 percent of the requested total amount of NSF funds is required. Examples of cost sharing provided by currently funded AGEP projects include staff salaries (full and partial), provision of office space, support for student staffing and publication costs.

ALLOWABLE STUDENT SUPPORT

Student support is allowable, but AGEP is not intended to be a fellowship program. If financial support is requested, proposals must clearly explain the need being addressed, as well as student recruitment, selection and accountability criteria. Allowable student support is limited to financial support for employing team building principles (e.g., collaborative learning experiences, small group clustering in academic sections, structured work-study groups), individual skill development (e.g.,

participation in special seminars and colloquia), involvement in research (e.g., stipends or salary for academic-year or summer research programs, and related personal career counseling and mentoring), and other activities designed to enhance student experiences and student/faculty/mentor interaction. AGEP will also provide direct support to enable students to attend summer enrichment activities and to participate in other activities throughout the academic year. Please note that student support can only be provided to U.S. citizens, nationals, and permanent U.S. residents.

PAST PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

To aid reviewers in assessing past performance of proposing institutions, proposals should include the following baseline data over the 1994-present time period (for U.S. citizens, nationals, and permanent U.S. residents only):

1. the sum and the average of the numbers of minority STEM Ph.D. conferrals per year as well as the sum and the averages of minority STEM graduate enrollments for each STEM department, disaggregated by population subgroup (e.g., African American, Hispanic, and Native American),
2. annual total and minority baccalaureate and master's degree conferrals for STEM departments of the submitting alliance institutions, and
3. annual numbers of underrepresented minority students who have left the same programs without completing their degrees.

III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

Organizational Limit

An alliance may hold only one active award at a time. The alliance must consist of two or more doctoral degree granting institutions serving STEM graduate education needs. One of these primary institutions must be designated as the lead institution for the project. Secondary partner institutions (non doctoral degree granting) may participate in an alliance as subawardees. An institution may be a primary member in only one alliance.

PI Eligibility Limit

Because AGEP is centered on sustainable institutional changes in graduate education, the Provost or Graduate Dean of the lead Institution should serve as the Principal Investigator. A full explanation should be provided for a PI designation in variance with this requirement. Co-Principal investigators from partner institutions may be designated as appropriate for the project.

Limit on Number of Proposals

Only one proposal may be submitted per alliance.

IV. AWARD INFORMATION

AGEP awards are up to five years in duration, and only one AGEP award is allowable per alliance. Awards will be made up to a level of \$2,000,000 per year depending on numbers of students served, number of participating institutions, and factors related to the comprehensiveness of the project design, with the average award about \$1,200,000 per year. The purpose of these awards is to catalyze changes in institutional, departmental, and organizational culture and practices that will result in significant increases in the recruitment, retention, degree conferral, and STEM career (especially academic) entry of minority students.

Anticipated Type of Award: Cooperative Agreement

Estimated Number of Awards: 3 to 6 - Awards anticipated in FY 2004.

Anticipated Funding Amount: \$6,000,000 pending availability of funds in FY 2004.

V. PROPOSAL PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

A. Proposal Preparation Instructions

Letters of Intent (*required*):

Letters of Intent are required in FY 2004, must be submitted by the LEAD institution, and must include the following:

- A. Name of lead institution,

- B. Primary contact at the lead institution,

- C. Names of ALL participating institutions (Primary and Others), and

- D. Initial participating STEM departments/disciplines.

Letters of Intent may be submitted by the following methods:

- A. Mail To: Dr. Roosevelt Y. Johnson, Program Director, Directorate for Education and Human Resources, Division of Human Resource Development, Suite 815, Arlington, VA 22230; telephone: (703)292-4669, or

- B. Email To: ryjohnso@nsf.gov

Full Proposal Instructions:

Proposals submitted in response to this program announcement/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/cgi-bin/getpub?gpg>. Paper copies of the GPG may be obtained from the NSF Publications Clearinghouse, telephone (703) 292-7827 or by e-mail from pubs@nsf.gov.

AGEP Proposal Requirements: These deviate from the GPG guidelines.

COVER SHEET

The Cover Sheet should specify "AGEP" at the beginning of the title and list the solicitation number in the appropriate box. Select Alliances for Graduate Education and the Professoriate (AGEP) as the appropriate NSF program and Division of Human Resource Development (HRD) as the NSF division to be entered on the proposal cover sheet.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Proposals should clearly articulate project objectives, planned outcomes with respect to recruitment, retention, and degree conferral of minority students; project monitoring guidelines; and how outcomes will be measured. Proposals should:

- a. demonstrate understanding of issues and awareness of, and coordination with, related programs;
- b. describe proposed activities, indicating unique aspects of the project and logic underlying its development;
- c. state plans for institutionalization of these strategies after NSF support ends;
- d. provide baseline statistics and describe anticipated project impact;
- e. identify major project participants (alliance partners and key personnel), clearly articulating their capabilities and roles;
- f. describe plans for coordination and management of activities, including administrative infrastructure at the lead and partner institutions;
- g. describe grantee contributions to the project in terms of support for activities; and

h. describe indicators and other evaluative information for monitoring annual progress.

PRIOR NSF SUPPORT

If the prospective PI or Co-PI(s) received support for related NSF activities within the past five years, a brief description of project(s) and outcome(s) must be provided in sufficient detail to enable reviewers to assess the value of results achieved. Projects should be identified by NSF award number, amount, period of support, title, summary of results, and list of publications and formal presentations that acknowledge the NSF award. Descriptions of prior NSF support should be limited to five pages and must be included as part of the 15-page limit. Alliance institutions that are award recipients of NSF programs that promote involvement of minorities in higher education must describe the value-added and complementarity of these efforts. Such programs include the Louis Stokes Alliances for Minority Participation (LSAMP), Centers of Research Excellence in Science and Technology (CREST), Historically Black College and Universities-Undergraduate Program (HBCU-UP), and Minority Institutions of Excellence (MIE).

KEY PERSONNEL

Biographical sketches of key project personnel (each no more than two pages in length) should highlight relevant experience in recruiting, academic and career mentoring, and producing minority STEM Ph.D. recipients and knowledge of research methodologies, higher education, minority participation in advanced STEM study and workforce entry, etc. Up to 10 major relevant publications may be listed for each of the key personnel.

TIMELINE

Timeline for major project benchmarks should be uploaded as a file into Supplementary Docs in FastLane. (1 page maximum)

BUDGET AND ALLOWABLE COSTS

The budget should be prepared using the Budget Form available in FastLane. Budgets should be prepared for each year of support requested. No funds for faculty research or faculty salaries may be requested. While provision of limited student support is allowable, the AGEP program is not intended to be a fellowship program. Annual budgets and budget justifications should also be included for each proposed subaward. Students receiving support must be citizens, nationals, or permanent residents of the U.S. Limited funds intended to partially defray the costs of research by students may be requested. Annual budgets should include requests for funds to support annual visits to NSF in Arlington, VA for:

1. the PI and lead representatives from the alliance, and
2. project evaluators.

BUDGET JUSTIFICATION

A brief justification for funds in each budget category should be provided. This section (three pages maximum) should also include details of institutional cost-sharing, and of other sources of support.

Proposers are reminded to identify the program announcement/solicitation number (04-575) in the program announcement/solicitation block on the proposal Cover Sheet. Compliance with this requirement is critical to determining the relevant proposal processing guidelines. Failure to submit this information may delay processing.

B. Budgetary Information

Cost Sharing:

Cost sharing at a level of 30 percent of the requested total amount of NSF funds is required for all proposals submitted in response to this announcement/solicitation. The proposed cost sharing must be shown on line M on the proposal budget. Documentation of the availability of cost sharing must be included in the proposal.

Only items which would be allowable under the applicable cost principles, if charged to the project, may be included in the awardee's contribution to cost sharing. Contributions may be made from any non-Federal source, including non-Federal grants or contracts, and may be cash or in kind (see OMB Circular A-110, Section 23). It should be noted that contributions counted as cost sharing toward projects of another Federal agency may not be counted towards meeting the specific cost sharing requirements of the NSF award.

All cost sharing amounts are subject to audit. Failure to provide the level of cost sharing reflected in the approved award budget may result in termination of the NSF award, disallowance of award costs and/or refund of award funds to NSF.

Other Budgetary Limitations:

No funds for faculty research or faculty salaries may be requested. Student support is allowable, but AGEP is not intended to be a fellowship program.

C. Due Dates

Proposals must be submitted by the following date(s):

Letters of Intent (*required*):

May 17, 2004

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

July 26, 2004

D. FastLane Requirements

Proposers are required to prepare and submit all proposals for this announcement/solicitation through the FastLane system. Detailed instructions for proposal preparation and submission via FastLane are 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 announcement/solicitation should be referred to the NSF program staff contact(s) listed in Section VIII of this announcement/solicitation.

Submission of Electronically Signed Cover Sheets. The Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR) must electronically sign the proposal Cover Sheet to submit the required proposal certifications (see Chapter II, Section C of the [Grant Proposal Guide](#) for a listing of the certifications). The AOR must provide the required electronic certifications within five working days following the electronic submission of the proposal. Proposers are no longer required to provide a paper copy of the signed Proposal Cover Sheet to NSF. Further instructions regarding this process are available on the FastLane Website at: <http://www.fastlane.nsf.gov>

VI. PROPOSAL REVIEW INFORMATION

A. NSF Proposal Review Process

Reviews of proposals submitted to NSF are solicited from peers with expertise in the substantive area of the proposed research or education project. These reviewers are selected by Program Officers charged with the oversight of the review process. NSF invites the proposer to suggest, at the time of submission, the names of appropriate or inappropriate reviewers. Care is taken to ensure that reviewers have no conflicts with the proposer. Special efforts are made to recruit reviewers from non-academic institutions, minority-serving institutions, or adjacent disciplines to that principally addressed in the proposal.

The National Science Board approved revised criteria for evaluating proposals at its meeting on March 28, 1997 ([NSB 97-72](#)). All NSF proposals are evaluated through use of the two merit review criteria. In some instances, however, NSF will employ additional criteria as required to highlight the specific objectives of certain programs and activities.

On July 8, 2002, the NSF Director issued [Important Notice 127](#), Implementation of new Grant Proposal Guide Requirements Related to the Broader Impacts Criterion. This Important Notice reinforces the importance of addressing both criteria in the preparation and review of all proposals submitted to NSF. NSF continues to strengthen its internal processes to ensure that both of the merit review criteria are addressed when making funding decisions.

In an effort to increase compliance with these requirements, the January 2002 issuance of the GPG incorporated revised proposal preparation guidelines relating to the development of the Project Summary and Project Description. Chapter II of the GPG specifies that Principal Investigators (PIs) must address both merit review criteria in separate statements within the one-page Project Summary. This chapter also reiterates that broader impacts resulting from the proposed project must be addressed in the Project Description and described as an integral part of the narrative.

Effective October 1, 2002, NSF will return without review proposals that do not separately address both merit review criteria within the Project Summary. It is believed that these changes to NSF proposal preparation and processing guidelines will more clearly articulate the importance of broader impacts to NSF-funded projects.

The two National Science Board approved merit review criteria are listed below (see the [Grant Proposal Guide](#) Chapter III.A for further information). The criteria include considerations that help define them. These considerations are suggestions and not all will apply to any given proposal. While proposers must address both merit review criteria, reviewers will be asked to address only those considerations that are relevant to the proposal being considered and for which he/she is qualified to make judgments.

What is the intellectual merit of the proposed activity?

How important is the proposed activity to advancing knowledge and understanding within its own field or across different fields? How well qualified is the proposer (individual or team) to conduct the project? (If appropriate, the reviewer will comment on the quality of the prior work.) To what extent does the proposed activity suggest and explore creative and original concepts? How well conceived and organized is the proposed activity? Is there sufficient access to resources?

What are the broader impacts of the proposed activity?

How well does the activity advance discovery and understanding while promoting teaching, training, and learning? How well does the proposed activity broaden the participation of underrepresented groups (e.g., gender, ethnicity, disability, geographic, etc.)? To what extent will it enhance the infrastructure for research and education, such as facilities, instrumentation, networks, and partnerships? Will the results be disseminated broadly to enhance scientific and technological understanding? What may be the benefits of the proposed activity to society?

NSF staff will give careful consideration to the following in making funding decisions:

Integration of Research and Education

One of the principal strategies in support of NSF's goals is to foster integration of research and education through the

programs, projects, and activities it supports at academic and research institutions. These institutions provide abundant opportunities where individuals may concurrently assume responsibilities as researchers, educators, and students and where all can engage in joint efforts that infuse education with the excitement of discovery and enrich research through the diversity of learning perspectives.

Integrating Diversity into NSF Programs, Projects, and Activities

Broadening opportunities and enabling the participation of all citizens -- women and men, underrepresented minorities, and persons with disabilities -- 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.

Additional Review Criteria:

Proposals are expected to demonstrate:

- knowledge of those factors affecting the successful transition of minority students from undergraduate through graduate study and academic career entry in STEM fields;
- prior success in dealing with affective (non-academic) components of graduate education that are necessary to ensure success of minority students in obtaining STEM doctoral degrees;
- potential for successfully aligning similar existing programs (NSF-supported or otherwise) within, or outside of, the alliance to ensure a comprehensive, integrated effort; and,
- ability to provide quality educational and research opportunities that will prepare students for successful STEM careers (e.g., interdisciplinary research, use of information technology, communications skills).

B. Review Protocol and Associated Customer Service Standard

All proposals are carefully reviewed by at least three other persons outside NSF who are experts in the particular field represented by the proposal. Proposals submitted in response to this announcement/solicitation will be reviewed by Panel Review.

Reviewers will be asked to formulate a recommendation to either support or decline each proposal. The Program Officer assigned to manage the proposal's review will consider the advice of reviewers and will formulate a recommendation.

A summary rating and accompanying narrative will be completed and submitted by each reviewer. In all cases, reviews are treated as confidential documents. Verbatim copies of reviews, excluding the names of the reviewers, are sent to the Principal Investigator/Project Director by the Program Director. In addition, the proposer will receive an explanation of the decision to award or decline funding.

In most cases, proposers will be contacted by the Program Officer after his or her recommendation to award or decline funding has been approved by the Division Director. This informal notification is not a guarantee of an eventual award.

NSF is striving to be able to tell proposers whether their proposals have been declined or recommended for funding within six months. The time interval begins on the closing date of an announcement/solicitation, or the date of proposal receipt, whichever is later. The interval ends when the Division Director accepts the Program Officer's recommendation.

In all cases, 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 and 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.

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 Division 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.A. for additional information on the review process.)

B. Award Conditions

An NSF award consists of: (1) the award letter, 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 letter; (4) the applicable award conditions, such as Grant General Conditions (NSF-GC-1); * or Federal Demonstration Partnership (FDP) Terms and Conditions * and (5) any announcement or other NSF issuance that may be incorporated by reference in the award letter. Cooperative agreement awards also are administered in accordance with NSF Cooperative Agreement Terms and Conditions (CA-1). Electronic mail notification is the preferred way to transmit NSF awards to organizations that have electronic mail capabilities and have requested such notification from the Division of Grants and Agreements.

*These documents may be accessed electronically on NSF's Website at http://www.nsf.gov/home/grants/grants_gac.htm. Paper copies may be obtained from the NSF Publications Clearinghouse, telephone (703) 292-7827 or by e-mail from pubs@nsf.gov.

More comprehensive information on NSF Award Conditions is contained in the NSF *Grant Policy Manual* (GPM) Chapter II, available electronically on the NSF Website at <http://www.nsf.gov/cgi-bin/getpub?gpm>. The GPM is also for sale through the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office (GPO), Washington, DC 20402. The telephone number at GPO for subscription information is (202) 512-1800. The GPM may be ordered through the GPO Website at <http://www.gpo.gov>.

C. Reporting Requirements

For all multi-year grants (including both standard and continuing grants), the PI must submit an annual project report to the cognizant Program Officer at least 90 days before the end of the current budget period.

Within 90 days after the expiration of an award, the PI also is required to submit a final project report. Failure to provide final technical reports delays NSF review and processing of pending proposals for the PI and all Co-PIs. 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 FastLane, for preparation and submission of annual and final project reports. This system permits electronic submission and updating of project reports, including information on project participants (individual and organizational), activities and findings, publications, and other specific products and contributions. PIs will not be required to re-enter information previously provided, either with a proposal or in earlier updates using the electronic system.

VIII. CONTACTS FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

General inquiries regarding this program should be made to:

- Dr. Roosevelt Johnson, Program Director, Directorate for Education and Human Resources, Division of Human Resource Development, 4201 Wilson Blvd., Suite 815, Arlington, VA, 22230, telephone: (703)292-4669, fax: (703) 292-9018, email: ryjohnso@nsf.gov

For questions related to the use of FastLane, contact:

- Victoria A. Smoot, Directorate for Education & Human Resources, Division of Human Resource Development, 815 N, telephone: (703) 292-4677, fax: (703) 292-9018, email: vsmoot@nsf.gov

IX. OTHER PROGRAMS OF INTEREST

The NSF *Guide to Programs* is a compilation of funding for research and education in science, mathematics, and engineering. The NSF *Guide to Programs* is available electronically at <http://www.nsf.gov/cgi-bin/getpub?gp>. General descriptions of NSF programs, research areas, and eligibility information for proposal submission are provided in each chapter.

Many NSF programs offer announcements or solicitations concerning specific proposal requirements. To obtain additional information about these requirements, contact the appropriate NSF program offices. Any changes in NSF's fiscal year programs occurring after press time for the *Guide to Programs* will be announced in the NSF *E-Bulletin*, which is updated daily on the NSF Website at <http://www.nsf.gov/home/ebulletin>, and in individual program announcements/solicitations. Subscribers can also sign up for NSF's *Custom News Service* (<http://www.nsf.gov/home/cns/start.htm>) to be notified of new funding opportunities that become available.

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