

Key Personnel and Letters of Commitment Webinar

Presenters:

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NSF HSI National Resource Hub for Improving STEM Success:
Jump Start
Grantsmanship Webinar Series



hsistemhub.org



AGENDA: BUILDING A STRONG AND EFFECTIVE TEAM

- Review the NSF HSI Program Solicitation and discuss specific information related to team development
- Reflect in general on what makes an effective team

"It is the long history of humankind (and animal kind, too) that those who learned to collaborate and improvise most effectively have prevailed." – Charles Darwin

WHAT THE NSF HSI CALL TELLS US

Read the program solicitation carefully

Synopsis of NSF HSI Program

“....seeks to enhance the quality of undergraduate STEM education at HSIs and to increase retention and graduation rates of undergraduate students pursuing degrees in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) at HSIs. In addition, the HSI program seeks to build capacity in undergraduate STEM education at HSIs that typically do not receive high levels of NSF grant funding.”

“Kids (or young adults), regardless of race or background, can accomplish anything if we expect great things from them.” Jose Rosario, second grade teacher at Success Academy

WHAT THE NSF HSI CALL TELLS US

- Track 1. Building Capacity – up to \$2,500,000 for up to 5 years. Three priority areas: Critical Transitions,; Innovative Cross-Sector Partnerships; and Teaching and Learning in STEM
- Track 2. HSI's New to NSF – up to \$300,000 for up to 3 years. Only open to institutions that have not received NSF funding in the five years preceding the deadline

Track 1 proposals, in general, will require a larger team than Track 2

"Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much." – Helen Keller

WHAT THE NSF HSI CALL TELLS US

Track I: Critical Transitions

Successful project *leadership teams will typically include STEM administrators and those who specialize in higher education issues and processes. The project teams should have representation from all institutional partners with explicit roles and responsibilities.* There should be evidence of administrative commitment to the project from each institution.

"Talent wins games, but teamwork and intelligence win championships." --Michael Jordan

WHAT THE NSF HSI CALL TELLS US

Track I: Innovative Cross Sector Partnerships

This priority area supports mutually beneficial partnerships that yield benefits to society, enhance the capacity for research at partner institutions, and facilitate cross-sector knowledge generation and transfer. ***Partners may include industry, government, academic institutions, non-profit organizations, and local communities.*** The role and responsibilities of each partner should be explicitly described in the proposal. ... Today's research problems are complex and their solutions often require interdisciplinary teams and cross-sector partnerships. ... A variety of institutional partnerships can be envisioned

WHAT THE NSF HSI CALL TELLS US

Track I: Teaching and Learning in STEM

This priority area supports projects that enhance understanding of how students learn STEM topics and how faculty adopt culturally relevant instruction approaches in STEM. Investigators may consider behavioral, cognitive, affective, learning, and social differences as well as organizational, institutional, or systematic processes that may affect student engagement and learning. ***It is expected that projects in this priority area will include investigators (internal or external to the institution) with demonstrated expertise in education research and/or social science research methods, as well as knowledge about STEM programs***

WHAT THE NSF HSI CALL TELLS US

Track 2: HSIs New to NSF

Target institutions that have never receive NSF funding **or** have not received NSF funding in the past 5 years. Track 2 projects will develop evidence-based innovative models that address retention and graduation rates of students pursuing associate and baccalaureate degrees in STEM. These projects can serve as pilots for future Track I projects. ***Collaborations between currently funded NSF projects and HSIs new to NSF projects are encouraged. Proposers are strongly encouraged to use resources developed by other NSF awardees and to consult with people from these projects or centers.***

“Get behind other people’s success. Your life was built on other people’s dreams, so let’s not let them down.”
Dionicia Nava, student at California State University, Los Angeles

WHAT THE NSF HSI CALL TELLS US

Inclusion of education research or social science research expertise may be helpful on the project leadership team to provide guidance in research design or methodologies, instrument implementation or development, data analysis, or qualitative research procedures as appropriate.

All proposals must include a project evaluation plan that describes the mechanisms that will be employed to assess success, indicating how the resulting evidence will be employed for project improvement purposes. The evaluation must be lead by an expert independent evaluator or evaluation team.

WHAT THE NSF HSI CALL TELLS US

The project leadership team should reflect the diversity in expertise needed to successfully manage the proposed project. The ***project leadership team must include a STEM faculty member currently teaching in one of the STEM disciplines.*** It is expected that projects will include investigators (internal or external to the institution) with ***demonstrated expertise in education research and/or social science research methods, as well as knowledge about STEM programs. Include a description of the responsibilities, qualifications, and level of effort of the key personnel involved in the project, including the roles of consultants and advisors at each stage of the project.*** Need to address how project activities, communications, and relationships will be managed across collaborating individuals and institutions.

BUILDING A STRONG AND EFFECTIVE TEAM

BEFORE organizing your team think about your strategy

- Scale of your proposal (capacity 1 or capacity 2; <>\$1 million)
- Areas of expertise required (by the RFP or by nature of proposal)
- Roles to be filled: Co-PIs, Key Personnel, and Project Evaluator as well as any consultants or advisors
 - Does the RFP require anything specific – social scientist, evaluation, etc.
- Will participation from multiple institutions, geographic locations increase your chance of success

Remember one person cannot do everything in a large proposal

“A leader takes people where they want to go. A great leader takes people where they don’t necessarily want to go, but ought to be.” – Rosalynn Carter

BUILDING A STRONG AND EFFECTIVE TEAM

What does it take to have a strong team?

- Leadership
- Clear objectives
- Clear roles
- Communication
- Cooperation
- Individual contribution
 - authentic voice
- Collaborative
- Monitor and Review



"Many ideas grow better when transplanted into another mind than the one where they sprang up." Oliver Wendell Holmes

PERSONAL THOUGHTS ON TEAM DEVELOPMENT

- Understand the team requirements for the proposal
 - Include team members from required or suggested areas
- Create a strong and diverse team
- People you trust, respect and can work well with
- Don't be afraid to take risks
- Team work takes time and effort

"Find a group of people who challenge and inspire you, spend a lot of time with them, and it will change your life." – Amy Poehler

"It is amazing what you can accomplish if you do not care who gets the credit." – Harry Truman

AGENDA: LETTERS OF COMMITMENT

- Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide (*PAPPG*)
- HSI Call for proposals: letters of commitment
- Where do I need commitment?
- Samples

PROPOSAL & AWARD POLICIES & PROCEDURES GUIDE (PAPPG)

Format for letters of commitment:

- “If the proposal submitted by Dr. [insert the full name of the Principal Investigator] entitled [insert the proposal title] is selected for funding by NSF, it is my intent to collaborate and/or commit resources as detailed in the Project Description or the Facilities, Equipment and Other Resources section of the proposal” (PAPPG II-26).
- “Documentation of collaborative arrangements of significance to the proposal should be reflected in the letters of collaboration. (See Chapter II.C.2.d.(iv).)”
- Make sure to cite your letters in the project description or in the facilities, equipment, and other resources section.

HSI CALL FOR PROPOSALS: LETTERS OF COMMITMENT

- “Letters of Support that document what is being committed that is of significance to the project.”
- “Letters that merely endorse the project or offer nonspecific support for project activities should not be included and the proposal may be returned without review if general support letters are included.”

CHAPTER II.C.2.J. SPECIAL INFORMATION AND SUPPLEMENTARY DOCUMENTATION: LETTERS OF SUPPORT

- “While letters of collaboration are permitted, unless required by a specific program solicitation, letters of support should not be submitted as they are not a standard component of an NSF proposal.”
- “A letter of support submitted in response to a program solicitation requirement must be unique to the specific proposal submitted and cannot be altered without the author’s explicit prior approval. Proposals that contain letters of support not authorized by the program solicitation may be returned without review.”
- If any doubts about your letters, it is highly recommended to get in touch with the program officer in advanced. He or she will tell you where to describe your collaboration in your proposal and how. Remember, cost share is not allowed in this solicitation.

SPECIAL INFORMATION AND SUPPLEMENTARY DOCUMENTATION PAPPG: CHAPTER II.C.2.I.

- “Any substantial collaboration with individuals not included in the budget should be described in the Facilities, Equipment and Other Resources section of the proposal (see Chapter II.C.2.i). This should be documented in a letter of collaboration from each collaborator.”
- “Such letters should be provided in the supplementary documentation section of the FastLane Proposal Preparation Module and follow the format instructions specified in Chapter II.C.2.j.”

CHAPTER II.C.2.I.

i. **Facilities, Equipment and Other Resources**

This section of the proposal is used to assess the adequacy of the resources available to perform the effort proposed to satisfy both the Intellectual Merit and Broader Impacts review criteria. Proposers should describe only those resources that are directly applicable. Proposers should include an aggregated description of the internal and external resources (both physical and personnel) that the organization and its collaborators will provide to the project, should it be funded. Such information must be provided in this section, in lieu of other parts of the proposal (e.g., Budget Justification, Project Description). The description should be narrative in nature and must not include any quantifiable financial information. Reviewers will evaluate the information during the merit review process and the cognizant NSF Program Officer will review it for programmatic and technical sufficiency.

WHERE DO I NEED COMMITMENT?

- **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?

WHERE DO I NEED COMMITMENT?

2. Track 2: HSIs New to NSF

This track seeks to build capacity in undergraduate STEM education at HSIs that either have never received NSF funding or have not received funding from NSF in the five years prior to the proposal deadline. This track is designed to stimulate implementation, adaptation, and innovation in one or more of the three priority areas identified in Track 1, and to increase the number of HSIs participating in NSF programs.

Track 2 projects will develop evidence-based innovative models that address retention and graduation rates of students pursuing associate or baccalaureate degrees in STEM. Projects may be guided by the set of questions above or have a research question(s) and/or hypothesis to be addressed. Anticipated new knowledge to be generated from the project should be described. It is expected that some of the funded Track 2 projects will serve as pilots for ideas that may be expanded in future proposals in Track 1 or other NSF programs.

Collaborations between currently funded NSF projects and HSIs New to NSF projects are encouraged. Proposers are strongly encouraged to use resources developed by other NSF awardees and to consult with people from these projects and centers. Track 2 proposals should be commensurate with available resources. If some resources needed to complete the proposed activities are not available at the proposing institution, the needed resources may be obtained via partnerships with other institutions. Such partnerships will support development and capacity of the proposing institution. In such partnerships, the Lead Principal Investigator must be employed by an eligible Track 2 institution.

WHERE DO I NEED COMMITMENT?

- “Include letters of commitment with specific contributions from the participants' supporting institutions. These should make specific commitments and not just be generic support of good will.”
- “You are telling a story by showcasing the quality of people and institutions that you are working with.”
- “A colleague at another institution who intends to collaborate with you on your proposed research and attests to that in writing.”

Sample letter #1

Recommended Template for Letters of Collaboration or Letters of Cooperation for Proposals Submitted to the GSS Program

To: NSF Geography and Spatial Sciences (GSS) Program

From: _____ (Printed name of the individual collaborator
or name of the organization and name and position of the official submitting this memo).

By signing below (or transmitting electronically), I acknowledge that I am listed as a collaborator
on [or that I will cooperate in helping support the activities of] the proposal entitled
"_____(proposal title)_____, " with _____(PI name)_____ as the Principal Investigator.

I agree to undertake the tasks associated with me as described in the project description of this
proposal, and/or commit to provide or make available the resources designated in the
proposal.

Signed: _____

Organization: _____

Date: _____

[https://www.nsf.gov/sbe/
bcs/grs/GSS_LetterColla
bTemplate.pdf](https://www.nsf.gov/sbe/bcs/grs/GSS_LetterCollabTemplate.pdf)

ACTIVITY

- Mention at least one collaboration you have or plan to have when submitting your proposal. Also, describe how do you plan to collaborate with them.
- If you want to share it with us, please write it in the section of questions and answers box



**THANK YOU FOR ATTENDING
TODAY'S WEBINAR**

Improving Undergraduate STEM Education: Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSI Program)

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