



National Science Foundation  
4201 Wilson Boulevard  
Arlington, Virginia 22230

## Division of Chemistry Dear Colleague Letter on the Broader Impacts Review Criterion

*This DCL replaces NSF 02-161.*

April 7, 2008

Dear Colleague,

Proposals submitted to the National Science Foundation (NSF) are evaluated through the use of two merit review criteria, which all proposals must address explicitly. These criteria are intellectual merit and broader impacts. Through its [merit review process](#), NSF ensures that proposals submitted are reviewed in a fair, competitive, transparent, and in-depth manner.

In light of NSF's commitment to the broader impacts criterion, proposers should carefully consider ways to incorporate rigorous, meaningful and innovative broader impacts activities (e.g., broadening participation) that integrate with the research being proposed. It is expected that project activities related to broader impacts will be of the same caliber as those addressing the intellectual merit criterion. They should be based on good scholarship, and be designed to achieve clearly stated goals and metrics, while possessing the appropriate expertise and resources available for implementation. *Thus, a simple listing of outreach activities, or reference to inclusion of research personnel who are members of underrepresented groups, falls short of the rigor required to satisfactorily address this criterion.*

We would like to call the community's attention to several sections of all proposals that require the broader impacts criterion to be specifically addressed: the *Project Summary*, the *Project Description*, and the *Results of Prior Support* section.

### *Project Summary:*

As instituted by [Important Notice 127](#) and noted in the current [Grant Proposal Guide](#) (GPG II.C.2.b.), it is required that the *Project Summary* must clearly address in separate statements (within the one page limit) both the intellectual merits and the broader impacts of the proposed activity. These should be further elaborated upon in the *Project Description*. *Proposals that do not separately address both criteria will be returned without review.*

### *Project Description:*

Further, as also noted in GPG II.C.2.d., the *Project Description* must describe, as an integral part of the narrative, the broader impacts resulting from the proposed activities, addressing one or more of the following as appropriate for the project: how the project will integrate research and education by advancing discovery and understanding while at the same time promoting teaching, training, and learning; ways in which the proposed activity will broaden the participation of underrepresented

groups, (e.g., gender, ethnicity, disability, geographic, etc.); how the project will enhance the infrastructure for research and/or education, such as facilities, instrumentation, networks, and partnerships; how the results of the project will be disseminated broadly to enhance scientific and technological understanding; and potential benefits of the proposed activity to society at large.

*Results of Prior Support:*

Finally, if any PI or co-PI has received NSF funding in the past five years, a *Results of Prior Support* section is required (GPG II.C.2.d.iii.). Each PI and co-PI who has received more than one award (excluding amendments) must report on the award most closely related to the proposal. The following information must be provided:

- (a) the NSF award number, amount and period of support;
- (b) the title of the project;
- (c) a summary of the results of the completed work, *including, for a research project, any contribution to the development of human resources in science and engineering*;
- (d) publications resulting from the NSF award;
- (e) a brief description of available data, samples, physical collections and other related research products not described elsewhere; and
- (f) if the proposal is for renewed support, a description of the relation of the completed work to the proposed work.

Reviewers will be asked to comment on the quality of the prior work described in this section of the proposal. Please note that the *Results of Prior Support* section may contain up to five pages.

Since reviewers and NSF program staff must address the broader impacts criterion in the review and decision processes, proposers can draw on examples of broader impacts listed in NSF's [Representative Activities](#), and at the [American Chemical Society Broader Impacts Showcase](#), but are urged to be creative in their approaches and to discuss ideas with their NSF program officer.

Luis Echegoyen  
Director, Division of Chemistry  
[lechegoy@nsf.gov](mailto:lechegoy@nsf.gov)  
703-292-4960