



National Science Foundation
4201 Wilson Boulevard
Arlington, Virginia 22230

NSF 14-116

Dear Colleague Letter: Opportunity to Request Instrumentation Funding for Midscale Level Instrumentation in Physics Division

September 11, 2014

Dear Colleague:

One of the most critical needs of research projects funded through the Physics Division (PHY) is that of having cutting-edge instrumentation that enables Principal Investigators (PIs) to remain competitive in a rapidly-changing scientific environment. Because this instrumentation can often cost significantly beyond what an individual investigator award can provide, the Physics Division has established a special Midscale Instrumentation Fund that enables Program Officers to include an instrumentation allotment in awards beyond the level that might be feasible otherwise.

This Fund does not constitute a separate program to which PIs can apply directly. Rather, anyone needing specialized equipment should request funding for that equipment as part of a regular proposal to a disciplinary program in the Division. Proposals should be submitted via the division-wide solicitation http://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub_summ.jsp?ods_key=nsf14576.

The proposal will be reviewed by that program as part of its standard merit review process.

As noted in the solicitation, for proposals involving development or construction of complex instrumentation (typically at or above the million dollar level), reviewers will be also asked to assess the applicant's ability to successfully deliver the instrumentation within the proposed budget. Applicants are strongly encouraged to articulate all foreseeable costs in the budget of such projects, including adequate plans for risk mitigation. Prior to final selection, these projects may be evaluated via a cost, schedule, and management review. Project management documentation should be uploaded as a supplementary document, if applicable. Investigators are strongly encouraged to contact the appropriate program officer to determine the level of detail that will likely be needed.

Should a funding recommendation be warranted, the Program Officer can request that the instrumentation funds be provided through the Midscale Instrumentation Fund provided the PI has demonstrated that the instrumentation requested is essential to the completion of the project.

The Midscale Instrumentation Fund is not designed to be used for all instrumentation purchases needed by the awardee. Rather, the Fund can only be accessed when the level needed exceeds the \$4M limit of the Major Research Instrumentation (MRI) program. Resources from the Fund can only be used for the instrumentation portion of the overall activity. For any award utilizing resources from the Fund, all R&D and operating expenses for the instrumentation must be provided by disciplinary program funds or other sources.

Resources from the Midscale Instrumentation Fund can be used for off-the-shelf purchases or for construction of specialized equipment. In the latter case, the construction must have a well-defined

beginning, an explicit funding profile, and a well-defined completion point. Midscale Instrumentation Fund resources are non-renewable and are intended to be one-time investments in the project.

PIs are encouraged to contact the cognizant Program Officer for the program to which the PI is applying prior to submission of a proposal that includes a midscale request. The names of these individuals are attached to the Program Descriptions for the respective programs on the Physics Division web page at <http://www.nsf.gov/phy/>.

Sincerely,

C. Denise Caldwell
Division Director
Division of Physics