

**NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION (NSF)  
COMPUTER SCIENCE EDUCATION RESEARCH CONGRESSIONAL REPORT  
IN COMPLIANCE WITH PUBLIC LAW 114-329:  
AMERICAN INNOVATION AND COMPETITIVENESS ACT, SEC. 310 (E)  
FISCAL YEAR 2020**

**Summary**

The American Innovation and Competitiveness Act, 2017, Public Law 114-329, requires the National Science Foundation (NSF) to undertake specific activities regarding computer science education research (Sec. 310):

- “(b) GRANT PROGRAM.-
- (1) IN GENERAL. — The Director of the Foundation shall award grants to eligible entities to research computer science education and computational thinking.
- (2) RESEARCH. — The research described in paragraph (1) may include the development or adaptation, piloting or full implementation, and testing of —
- A. models of preservice preparation for teachers who will teach computer science and computational thinking;
  - B. scalable and sustainable models of professional development and ongoing support for the teachers described in subparagraph (A);
  - C. tools and models for teaching and learning aimed at supporting student success and inclusion in computing within and across diverse populations, particularly poor, rural, and tribal populations and other populations that have been historically underrepresented in computer science and STEM fields; and
  - D. high-quality learning opportunities for teaching computer science and, especially in poor, rural, or tribal schools at the elementary school and middle school levels, for integrating computational thinking into STEM teaching and learning.
- (c) COLLABORATIONS. — In carrying out the grants established in subsection (b), eligible entities may collaborate and partner with local or remote schools to support the integration of computing and computational thinking within pre-kindergarten through grade 12 STEM curricula and instruction.
- (d) METRICS. — The Director of the Foundation shall develop metrics to measure the success of the grant program funded under this section in achieving program goals.
- (e) REPORT. — The Director of the Foundation shall report, in the annual budget submission to Congress, on the success of the program as measured by the metrics in subsection (d).
- (f) DEFINITION OF ELIGIBLE ENTITY. — In this section, the term “eligible entity” means an institution of higher education or a non-profit research organization.”

**Background**

NSF’s Computer Science for All (CSforAll) activities address the national need to build computer science education opportunities and teacher preparation at the preK-12 level, as part of building the U.S. economy. Projects are expected to address equity issues in computer science education, including the participation of girls and women, and other under-represented groups.

NSF launched Computer Science for All: Researcher Practitioner Partnerships (CS for All: RPP) under the (STEM+C) program in 2017 with solicitation NSF 17-525<sup>1</sup>. In 2018, NSF issued an updated solicitation, NSF 18-537<sup>2</sup>. In 2020, Computer Science for All (CSforAll: Research and RPPs) became a stand-alone program and NSF issued an updated solicitation, NSF 20-539<sup>3</sup>. As the new acronym suggests, this updated solicitation added a focus on research to serve the goals of the program. Specifically, a new Research Strand was added to support projects designed to contribute to the educational field new knowledge about the teaching and learning of introductory computer science concepts. The Research Strand aligns the program with the mission of NSF to produce knowledge in service of societal needs.

The CS for All: Research and RPPs program synopsis in the program solicitation states that:

This program aims to provide all U.S. students with the opportunity to participate in computer science (CS) and computational thinking (CT) education in their schools at the preK-12 levels. With this solicitation, the National Science Foundation (NSF) focuses on both research and researcher-practitioner partnerships (RPPs) that foster the research and development needed to bring CS and CT to all schools. Specifically, this solicitation aims to provide (1) high school teachers with the preparation, professional development (PD) and ongoing support they need to teach rigorous computer science courses; (2) preK-8 teachers with the instructional materials and preparation they need to integrate CS and CT into their teaching; and (3) schools and districts with the resources needed to define and evaluate multi-grade pathways in CS and CT.

## **Metrics**

Short-, mid-, and longer-term metrics for success are considered by the program as follows:

- Short-term metrics focus on ensuring that the program is making awards in the four areas outlined in the law and that the awards address the goal of broadening participation in computer science. One indicator of broadening participation is the diversity of the populations targeted in the awards. CSforAll considers ‘short-term’ metrics to be those observable on an annual basis. To date, the program has only reported progress with respect to these short-term metrics.
- Mid-term metrics include the extent to which funded projects are achieving goals as measured by the progress reported in NSF’s required annual and final project reports. CSforAll operationalizes ‘mid-term’ as progress that is reasonable to expect individual projects to achieve within three years of award. This is the first report to include an assessment of progress with respect to these mid-term metrics.
- Longer-term (beyond five years) metrics will include an evaluation of the outcomes of the program, which are based on the program aims as described in the program solicitation and the well-aligned requirements of Public Law 114-329. Program staff will work with the Evaluation and Monitoring Group within NSF’s Directorate for Education and Human Resources and the Evaluation and Assessment Capability within NSF’s Office of Integrative Activities to develop (1) a set of specific longer-term metrics and (2) a program evaluation plan for assessing the collective success of the CSforAll: RPP projects using these longer-term metrics.

### Report on the Success of the Program as Measured by the Short-Term Metrics

During fiscal year (FY) 2020, the program made 37 new awards to proposals submitted pursuant to NSF 20-539. These awards addressed the first three research topics listed in Sec. 310 of the Act as follows. Because some awards address more than one of the goals addressed in (b)(2) A, B, and C, the number of awards sums to more than 37:

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<sup>1</sup> [www.nsf.gov/pubs/2017/nsf17525/nsf17525.htm](http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2017/nsf17525/nsf17525.htm)

<sup>2</sup> [www.nsf.gov/pubs/2018/nsf18537/nsf18537.htm](http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2018/nsf18537/nsf18537.htm)

<sup>3</sup> [www.nsf.gov/pubs/2020/nsf20539/nsf20539.htm](http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2020/nsf20539/nsf20539.htm)

- 33 awards address subsection (b)(2) A and (b)(2) B;
- 37 awards address subsection (b)(2) C; and
- 4 awards address multi-grade pathways to CT and CS.

With respect to subsection (b)(2) D, all 37 new awards explicitly stated that they address at least one underrepresented or underserved group. The specific groups addressed by these 37 awards are detailed in the following table. Because some awards serve more than one underrepresented group, the number of awards sums to more than 37.

**Underrepresented or Underserved Group  
Served by Backbone Organizations**

Category	Number of awards serving
African-Americans	21
Latino/a	17
Women/Girls	11
Low Socio-Economic Status	9
Rural	7
Disabilities	6
Native Americans	4
English Language Learners	1
Pacific Islanders	0

Report on the Success of the Program as Measured by the Mid-Term Metrics

Mid-term metrics assess progress that individual awards have made at least three years after the award start date, based on information contained in projects’ annual reports. Given that the program began in FY 2017, mid-term metrics are possible only for the awards that NSF issued in that first year.

In their annual reports, awardees are requested to provide information about the progress of their individual projects:

- What are the major goals of the project?
- What was accomplished under these goals and objectives? What were the major activities, the specific objectives, significant results, and key outcomes?
- What opportunities for training and professional development has the project provided?
- Have the results been disseminated to communities of interest?
- What do you plan to do during the next reporting period to accomplish the goals?

Based on the responses of the awardees, program staff assessed that 100 percent of projects awarded in FY 2017 have been making satisfactory progress for each year of the project duration.

