

Building Research Capacity of New Faculty in Biology (BRC-BIO) (NSF 22-500)

1

BRC-BIO Working Group

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2

Goals of BRC-BIO

- **Enhance research capacity by supporting new faculty** of biology at minority-serving institutions (MSIs), predominantly undergraduate institutions (PUIs), and other universities and colleges that are not among the nation's most research-intensive institutions
- **Broaden participation by expanding the types of institutions** that submit proposals to BIO
- **Expand opportunities to groups underrepresented in biology**, including Blacks and African Americans, Hispanics, Latinos, Native Americans, Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders, and persons with disabilities, especially those serving at under-resourced institutions



3

Eligibility

- **Institutions not among the nation's most research intensive:**
 - Predominantly Undergraduate Institutions (PUIs), including some Minority-serving Institutions (MSIs)
 - Other institutions classified as R2, D/PU, or M1-3
- PIs must be at the Assistant Professor rank (or equivalent), with service at that rank for **no more than 3 years by the proposal submission date**
- The PI's appointment must have **both research *and* educational** responsibilities
- **Members of groups typically underrepresented in the biological sciences are especially encouraged to apply**



4

What do awards support?

- Awards will support **new faculty to initiate and build independent research** programs by enhancing their research capacity
- Projects **can include biology-focused research collaborations:**
 - Among faculty within the same institution
 - Across peer-, or research-intensive institutions, or
 - Partnerships with industry or other non-academic partners that advance the candidate's research program
- Projects should enable the **establishment of sustainable research programs** for faculty and enrich undergraduate research experiences and thereby grow the STEM workforce.



5

Proposals

- Project Descriptions **limited to 6 pages**
- **Intellectual Merit** section should articulate a compelling overarching research goal for their research program, specific research questions to be addressed by this project, and a brief but feasible research plan
 - **All fields supported** by the BIO directorate are eligible
 - Research should provide a solid foundation upon which to build a long-term, **sustainable research program**
- **Broader Impacts** section should include how the proposed activities will increase participation of underrepresented students of biology including participation in research



6

Proposals: Other Documents

- **Required Supplementary Document: Impact Statement (reviewed)**
 - 2 pages describing the likely impact of the project to launch the PI's research program
 - Impact on the career development and the research capacity of the faculty participant(s)
 - Impact on undergraduate research experiences
- **Required Single Copy Document: Institutional Letter of Support**
 - 1 page from the PI's department head (or other senior organizational official)
 - Statement that the PI is eligible for this program
 - Statement of support for the proposed plan of research and teaching



7

Budgets

- Up to \$450,000 in research costs and up to \$50,000 in justified equipment costs over 3 years
- Costs may include 50% teaching release time/year + 2 months of summer salary
- Personnel such as undergraduates, post-baccalaureate associates, laboratory technicians and postdoctoral support are allowed
- Other acceptable costs:
 - Research and conference related travel
 - Contractual administrative services as needed
 - Strongly justified subawards to collaborating institutions



8

Target Dates and Timeline

2022	Target submission window: Dec (1-31)
2023	Target submission window: June (1-30)



9

Proposal Review

- Dedicated panels with reviewers from similar institution types well represented
- Includes solicitation-specific criteria, such as impact statement
- Proposals should be understandable by someone who is not a specialist in the proposed questions, techniques, and approaches



10

Solicitation-Specific Criteria

- The potential of the project to increase the quantity, quality, and capacity of research of the PI
- The potential to increase the diversity and number of students engaged in authentic research experiences
- Institutional support for the activity, as described in the institutional support letter
- If applicable, the nature and impact of the proposed collaborations or partnerships



11

Reviewers will evaluate all merit review criteria

- Intellectual Merit
- Broader Impacts
- Solicitation Specific Criteria



12

For More Information

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13

Potential Questions

Q. I recently moved institutions, but I am currently an Assistant Professor in year 1 at my current institution. Does the 3-year eligibility requirement include the number of years at my former institution?

A. No. If you are in the first three years of an Assistant Professor position at an institution that is targeted in the BRC-BIO solicitation, you are eligible to apply.



14

Potential Questions

Q. A piece of equipment I need for the project costs more than \$50,000, can I still request support for it?

A. Yes, equipment expenditures greater than \$50,000 will be considered on a case-by-case basis. The entire budget request should still total not more than \$500,000 and the equipment should be strongly justified.



15

Potential Questions

Q. What is the review process?

A. Proposals will be reviewed in dedicated, interdisciplinary panels managed by program officers from all four BIO divisions. Review will be based on NSF's merit review criteria, intellectual merit and broader impacts, and on additional criteria, as indicated in the solicitation.



16

Potential Questions

Q. How should I describe my research project for reviewers?

- A. Reviewers are biologists, but not necessarily specialists in your research area. Describe your research goals, rationale, and approaches in sufficient detail to allow any reviewer to assess impact and feasibility. Avoid jargon and writing at technical level that would only be accessible to field experts.



17

Potential Questions

Q. I don't have any preliminary data. Will this be viewed negatively?

- A. No, preliminary data are not required. However, reviewers will consider feasibility. Addressing feasibility could include evidence from your research track record or contributions of collaborators.



18

Potential Questions

Q. Is the Project Description really only 6 pages?

A. Yes, we are working hard to make this application process as streamlined as possible. But remember you still need to discuss both Intellectual Merit and Broader Impacts in named sections. The Results of Prior Support section is NOT required.



19

Potential Questions

Q. Can I use the Impact Statement to also describe broader impacts?

A. Yes, these two pages can complement and extend the Broader Impacts section of the Project Description. It should explain how the proposal will increase your research capacity and contribute to STEM retention and diversity in students in the context of your institution.



20