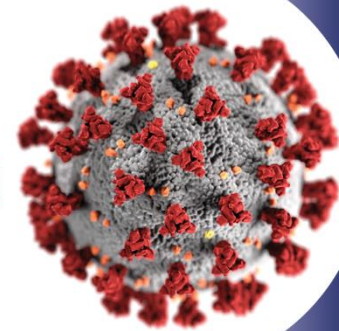




Taking Action: COVID-19 Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Challenge



AN IDEAS CHALLENGE FOR INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Participants' Guide

*The U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF) is seeking submissions describing the evidence-based steps that Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs) have taken, or will take, to mitigate the negative impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the diversity, equity, and inclusion of undergraduate and graduate students, postdoctoral researchers, and faculty in STEM higher education programs and institutions. IHEs **do not** need to have a grant from NSF to submit to this challenge.*

CHALLENGE PRIZE INFORMATION

\$200,000 in total cash prizes will be awarded to winning IHEs. Each of the four categories will have a 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place cash-prize winner and up to 10 honorable mention designees (see table).

Prize Breakdown:

Winners	STEM Undergraduate – Two-Year IHEs	STEM Undergraduate – Four-Year IHEs	STEM Graduate and Postdoctoral	STEM Faculty
First Place	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$25,000
Second Place	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000
Third Place	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000
Honorable mention	Up to 10 (no cash award)	Up to 10 (no cash award)	Up to 10 (no cash award)	Up to 10 (no cash award)

Sponsoring Programs

- ADVANCE ○ HBCU-UP ○ LSAMP ○ TCUP
- AGEP ○ HSI ○ NSF INCLUDES

Taking Action: COVID-19 Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Challenge Participants' Guide

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CHALLENGE DESCRIPTION

Overview

The “Taking Action: COVID-19 Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Challenge” is an ideas challenge for Institutions of Higher Education¹ (IHEs). The challenge is designed to highlight the need for institutional solutions to mitigate the long-term, negative impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) of undergraduate and graduate students, postdoctoral researchers, and faculty in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM). All eligible IHEs are encouraged and invited to submit descriptions of institutional actions that have been implemented, or will be implemented, such as new and revised policies, procedures, and practices to ensure continued progress toward more diverse, equitable, and inclusive STEM higher education programs and institutions. For more details, please read the Participants’ Guide in its entirety.

Because the issues impacting STEM undergraduate and graduate students, postdoctoral researchers, and faculty vary, the challenge is divided into four categories: 1) STEM undergraduates at community and technical colleges; 2) STEM undergraduates at four-year institutions; 3) STEM graduate students and postdoctoral researchers; and 4) STEM faculty. Each category will have first-, second-, and third-place cash winners and may include up to 10 honorable mention designees. Submissions from Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs) and community and technical colleges are particularly encouraged in all challenge categories for which they are eligible. IHEs **do not** need to have a grant from NSF to submit to this challenge.

IHEs are not being asked to collect or report demographic data on students or employees at their institution to NSF. Rather, NSF is seeking descriptions of the actions that are being implemented, or will be implemented, by the submitting IHE to ensure diversity, equity, and inclusion for the STEM population in the challenge category to which they are submitting.

The goal of this competition is to identify actions that IHEs can take to ensure DEI in STEM despite the long-term challenges of the COVID pandemic and to share these strategies broadly, including via social media and other means, thereby highlighting the importance of these actions, and providing information for others to implement these actions if applicable to their institutional context. The challenge first-, second-, and third-place winners will be invited to present their ideas at an NSF-hosted virtual event that will be open to the public, recorded, and made available to the public. The challenge is a public acknowledgment of the current or planned efforts by IHEs with the overall goal of knowledge sharing. The cash prize does not have to, but can, fund the actions submitted to the challenge.

¹ **Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs):** U.S.-based public or private, non-profit two- and four-year IHEs (including community and technical colleges) accredited in, and having a campus located in the U.S and its territories. Each campus that is part of a system may be considered a separate institution for submission purposes if the campus is geographically separate from the other campus(es), and if the campus has its own chief academic officer.

IHEs may only submit one proposal per category but are welcomed to submit to more than one category, if eligible. Submissions will be accepted beginning October 14, 2021, through 11:59 PM ET December 30, 2021. The challenge will be posted on [Challenge.Gov](#) and the [NSF Taking Action: COVID-19 Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Challenge website](#). Winners will be announced in March 2022 and will be invited to present their ideas with the community at a future NSF event. All prize-winning and honorable mention submissions will be added to a repository and made available to the public.

The NSF programs sponsoring the challenge include: [Alliances for Graduate Education and the Professoriate \(AGEP\)](#), [ADVANCE](#), [Historically Black Colleges and Universities Undergraduate Program \(HBCU-UP\)](#), [NSF Inclusion across the Nation of Communities of Learners of Underrepresented Discoverers in Engineering and Science \(NSF INCLUDES\)](#), [Improving Undergraduate STEM Education: Hispanic-Serving Institutions Program \(HSI\)](#), [Tribal Colleges and Universities Program \(TCUP\)](#), and [Louis Stokes Alliances for Minority Participation \(LSAMP\)](#).

Why Enter?

- To widely share your IHE's plans to mitigate the long-term impacts of the pandemic on DEI in STEM at your institution.
- For the opportunity to have your idea included in the Taking Action: COVID-19 Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Challenge winning ideas repository that will be archived and shared broadly.
- For national recognition of your ideas to address COVID-19 long-term impacts on diversity, equity, and inclusion in STEM.
- For the potential of your idea to be widely adopted and implemented by other IHEs, increasing the impact of your solutions.
- For an opportunity to win one of the 3 cash prizes for your institution or to be among those receiving honorable mentions for their ideas.
- For an opportunity to present your idea at an NSF organized event and be recognized for your positive contribution to DEI work in STEM to the STEM education and research communities.

CHALLENGE CATEGORIES

In this document and for the purposes of this challenge, we use the phrase “diverse STEM [students, postdoctoral researchers, and faculty]” to refer to people of different races and ethnicities, genders, and abilities that have been underrepresented in STEM education and workforce and/or are more likely to experience disadvantage in their advancement in STEM education, careers, and academia, as well as society. In STEM education and workforce contexts, this includes but is not limited to American Indians or Alaska Natives, Asians, Blacks or African Americans, Native Hawaiians or Other Pacific Islanders, Hispanics or Latinos, women, and

persons with disabilities. While race, ethnicity, gender, and ability are listed separately in the previous sentence, it is recognized that these identities do not exist in isolation from each other and the intersection of one or more of these identities likely needs to be considered when developing and implementing plans to address the COVID-19 pandemic's impacts on diversity, equity, and inclusion in STEM.

STEM Undergraduates Level – Two-Year IHEs and Four-Year IHEs

The impacts of the pandemic on the recruitment, student learning outcomes, retention, and persistence of diverse STEM undergraduate students are not completely understood. We do, however, know that the pandemic has revealed underlying equity gaps as well as strengths and weaknesses in virtual learning, specifically in STEM education. Strategies to mitigate the negative impacts of the pandemic on diverse STEM undergraduate students are needed to address immediate and long-term issues of access and equity. The sudden and drastic pivot to online course delivery and the cancellation of undergraduate research or wet lab experiences will likely impact metrics such as time to first degree, student debt, persistence, and retention in STEM degree programs, especially for students in transitions during the pandemic and those with dependent care or other care-giving responsibilities.

We are seeking submissions from two-year IHEs, community and technical colleges (challenge category 1), and from four-year institutions (challenge category 2). In both cases, we are seeking institutional actions such as new and revised policies and practices that IHEs have implemented, or will implement, to address the negative impacts of the pandemic on important student outcomes such as the retention, success, and advancement of diverse STEM undergraduate students. The IHE does not need to have a grant from NSF to be eligible to submit an entry.

Sponsoring NSF Programs: [Historically Black Colleges and Universities Undergraduate Program \(HBCU-UP\)](#), [NSF Inclusion across the Nation of Communities of Learners of Underrepresented Discoverers in Engineering and Science \(NSF INCLUDES\)](#), [Improving Undergraduate STEM Education: Hispanic-Serving Institutions Program \(HSI\)](#), [Tribal Colleges and Universities Program \(TCUP\)](#), and [Louis Stokes Alliances for Minority Participation \(LSAMP\)](#)

STEM Graduate and Postdoctoral Level

The impacts of the pandemic on STEM graduate students and postdoctoral researchers are varied from institution to institution and the long-term impacts on their transitions to the STEM workforce are not yet known. We know that some graduate STEM degree programs have been closed and that some institutions have delayed graduate admissions decisions. Additionally, some graduate students and postdoctoral researchers have lost research results and/or lab time for conducting experiments. Doctoral students and postdoctoral researchers have reported increased stress and time commitments necessary to care for family members with COVID-19 or their children who are unable to go to school or child-care facilities. Doctoral candidates and postdoctoral researchers who are searching and interviewing for faculty positions are finding significant delays and decreases in STEM faculty hiring.

Concerns about underlying issues, policies, and practices that are failing to address the possible long-term impacts of COVID-19 on the participation, transition, and advancement of diverse STEM graduate student and postdoctoral researchers along the pathways into the STEM professoriate should be addressed. We are seeking institutional actions such as new and revised policies and practices that IHEs have implemented, or will implement, to address the negative impacts of the pandemic such as the retention, success, and advancement of diverse STEM graduate students and postdoctoral researchers (challenge category 3). The IHE does not need to have a grant from NSF to be eligible to submit an entry.

Sponsoring NSF Programs: [Alliances for Graduate Education and the Professoriate \(AGEP\)](#), [ADVANCE](#), and [NSF Inclusion across the Nation of Communities of Learners of Underrepresented Discoverers in Engineering and Science \(NSF INCLUDES\)](#)

STEM Faculty Level

The long-term impacts of the pandemic on faculty are not completely understood, but early research on the impacts of COVID-19 on STEM faculty have found the following: increased workload for teaching, mentoring, and service during the pandemic; impacts on the work-life balance of faculty, especially those with dependent care giving responsibilities; research and teaching lab closures; reduced research time and/or funding for students and postdoctoral researchers; lay-offs or reductions in full-time status of non-tenure track and tenure track faculty; and reduced collaborative work due to national and international travel restrictions for faculty, students and postdoctoral researchers. At the same time, some faculty report positive impacts such as having time to write and submit papers for publication. Unfortunately, this is not a universal experience as we know from journal publishers that fewer STEM publications authored by women have been submitted during the pandemic, and this could be detrimental for early career faculty who are in the midst of data collection and who are seeking their first research grants. The differential impact on research productivity is a concern as it may result in wide variations in STEM faculty career development during this time and could exacerbate systemic disparities already experienced by diverse STEM faculty.

Therefore, we are seeking submissions that describe actions such as new or revised policies and practices that address the possible long-term impacts of the pandemic on the diversity, equity, and inclusion of the current STEM faculty and the future STEM faculty in both tenured and tenure track positions as well as non-tenure track positions (challenge category 4). Submissions should describe actions that the IHE has implemented or will implement to mitigate negative long-term impacts of the pandemic on faculty DEI such as the retention, success, and advancement of diverse STEM faculty and/or the recruitment and hiring of diverse STEM faculty candidates. The IHE does not need to have a grant from NSF to be eligible to submit an entry.

Sponsoring NSF Programs:

[Alliances for Graduate Education and the Professoriate \(AGEP\)](#), [ADVANCE](#), and [NSF Inclusion across the Nation of Communities of Learners of Underrepresented Discoverers in Engineering and Science \(NSF INCLUDES\)](#)

HOW TO ENTER

Applicants can access the [submission portal](#) through the official website for the NSF Taking Action: COVID-19 Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Challenge at www.nsf.gov/takingaction under the “How to Enter” Menu option.

Submissions will be accepted beginning October 14, 2021. The deadline for submissions is 11:59 PM ET on December 30, 2021.

Who Can Submit on behalf of the IHE?

Submissions must be made by an institution-wide administrator. For the purpose of this challenge, institution-wide administrators are defined as the Chief Executive Officer or Chief Academic Officer.

For systems of higher education: Each campus that is part of a system of higher education may be considered a separate institution for purposes of submission to this challenge, if the campus is geographically separate from the other campus(es), and if the campus has its own chief academic officer. Alternatively, a system may submit to the challenge as one entity if the submission describes system-wide actions that will be taken by the whole system (IHEs in the system will not be eligible to submit to the same challenge category). IHEs should coordinate their efforts within the institution to assure that only one (1) entry per category is submitted (and across the system if applicable).

Submissions from individuals, or groups of individuals, **will not be accepted** because we are seeking entries describing institutional action(s) to address the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Impacted individuals should be consulted and should contribute to the development of any institutional systemic action. A statement acknowledging the individuals or groups that contributed to the idea(s) should be included in an acknowledgement section on the cover page.

Challenge Submission Content

This challenge is seeking institutional actions that will address systemic issues that have been exacerbated or revealed by the pandemic. Submissions must describe institutional action(s) taken to ensure DEI in STEM for the long-term. **Institutional actions are those that result in changed policies, practices, or procedures.** For example, policies related to standardized test scores and financial aid calculations for undergraduate or graduate admissions may be changed across the institution to address the pandemic’s impact on graduate student admissions over the next five to 10 years.

The submission must focus on institutional action(s) taken for the targeted group described in the challenge category to which the entry is submitted: 1. STEM undergraduate students at two-year IHEs (including community and technical colleges); 2. STEM undergraduate students at four-

year IHEs; 3. STEM graduate students and postdoctoral researchers; or 4. STEM faculty. An IHE is welcome to submit different entries to each of the challenge categories for which the IHE is eligible. A single submission should not address more than one of these categories, but may address the transitions into and from that category (i.e. high school to college, postdoctoral researcher to faculty, etc.). Each submission is expected to include all the actions that have been, or will be, implemented at the institution, therefore **multiple submissions within one category are not permitted**.

A submission may describe actions that are institution-wide and/or actions that are not institution-wide, such as actions taken by a college or a single academic unit (department or office) within the institution. Actions taken within one classroom or research laboratory are not included in this challenge because we are seeking institutional actions that result in systemic change. Although laudable and encouraged, actions undertaken by individual students, faculty, staff, or administrators should not be submitted to this challenge as these are not institutional actions.

STEM includes all the sciences and engineering fields supported by the NSF including the social, behavioral, STEM education research, and economic sciences.

Submission Sections: Submissions must include sections A, B, and C described below, noting the page limits. An image can be included but is optional (section D).

A. Cover Page (1-page)

- The name of the IHE submitting the entry, the full name, title, and contact info for the administrator(s) submitting the entry, and the email and phone number for a secondary point of contact that can answer questions about the submission.
- Brief introduction to the institution with contextual information on the population(s) of focus in the challenge submission. Links to additional institutional information may be included.
- Acknowledgement statement listing the individuals or groups that contributed to the development of the actions.

B. Narrative (3-pages)

- **Description of the anticipated long-term impact(s) of the COVID-19 pandemic** on the diversity, equity, and inclusion of STEM [undergraduate students, graduate students, postdoctoral researchers, or faculty] at the IHE. Explain why these impacts are potentially significant to DEI in STEM and need to be addressed. Cite the evidence used to identify these long-term issues for DEI in STEM at the IHE. Evidence sources might include internal policy and data reviews, focus groups, surveys, etc. and external sources such as the DEI research literature, COVID reports, etc.
- **Description of the evidence-informed, institutional action(s)** that the IHE has, or will, implement to address the anticipated long-term negative impacts of the pandemic on the diversity, equity, and inclusion of STEM [undergraduate students, graduate students, postdoctoral researchers, or faculty]. Be sure to accurately cite the sources of the ideas for the actions that have been or will be implemented. Include enough information so

that others would be able to replicate and adapt the work (links to websites with more information is acceptable but the website content will not be reviewed for judging purposes).

- Be clear if the action(s) have been implemented or will be implemented.
- Describe how long the IHE will continue the action(s) and the reach of the changes within the institution (STEM programs or whole institution for example).
- Include information about the institutional resources, such as staff time and effort, needed to implement the action(s).
- Clearly outline the expected outcome(s) of the institutional action(s) (how will the institutional actions ensure DEI in STEM despite the pandemic).
- Describe plans for evaluating or monitoring the effectiveness of the action(s) over time and/or to identify any unexpected long-term impacts from the pandemic on DEI in STEM.

C. References cited in the narrative section B (1-page) References are not required if there are no citations in the submission. The one page for references cannot be used to provide other information to support the submission.

D. (*Optional*) One high-resolution graphic image or picture that illustrates the DEI problem(s), actions implemented, or other image representative of the submission.

- Images or pictures may be black and white or color and must fit on one standard page (8.5"x11") when printed.
- If an image or picture is included, the submission must also include a completed and signed [NSF image release form](#) with the option for "NSF and External Use" selected on the first page of the form.

Page Format: Single-spaced, 0.5 inch margins, and minimum font size 11.

Electronic format: The cover page, narrative, and references should be combined into one file in Adobe PDF format. The image or picture should be saved as a high resolution (300 DPI not to exceed 50 MB) .png, .tiff, .jpeg, or .pdf file (no videos accepted). The completed and signed NSF image release form should be saved as an Adobe PDF format.

Submission Portal: In the [submission portal](#), all fields on the submission page should be completed following the directions below.

1. Title field: Enter a title for your submission using the following naming convention:

“**Category Code:** Title of Submission”

Category Codes:

- Category 1 (2-Year Undergraduates at IHEs): “**2YUG**”
- Category 2 (4-year Undergraduates at IHEs): “**4YUG**”
- Category 3 (Graduate Students and Postdoctoral Researchers): “**GSPD**”
- Category 4 (Faculty): “**FAC**”

Example 1: If the submission is for the Graduate and Postdoctoral category and your submission title is “Moving Forward Together,” enter the Title as *GSPD: Moving Forward Together*

Example 2: If the submission is for the 2-year Undergraduate category and your submission title is “Full-STEAM Ahead,” enter the Title as *2YUG: Full-STEAM Ahead*

2. Brief Description field: Enter a description of your entry. [500 Character Limit]
3. Description field: Enter “see uploaded files.”
4. Upload files: Upload all required elements as a single PDF file. **Required Elements (RE)** include: cover page, narrative, and references. See descriptions in A, B, and C above. If the submission includes an image or picture (item D above), then upload the high-resolution image file (.png, .tiff, .jpeg, or.pdf) and the completed and signed [NSF image release form](#) as an Adobe PDF file.
Files should be named as follows with hyphens but no spaces:
 - Required Elements: RE-**Category Code**-[file name]
 - Image File: Image-**Category Code**-[file name]
 - Image release form: Form-**Category Code**-[file name]
5. *Rules, Terms & Conditions*: Check the box indicating that you have read the rules, terms and conditions of the challenge
6. Click the “Review and Submit” button at the bottom of the page
7. Click the “Submit” button once reviewed to complete the entry.

NOTES:

- IHEs can submit entries in more than one category, however, only one entry per category will be accepted. If submitting to more than one category, please submit two separate entries noting each category in the *Title field* as described above.
- At any point the IHE’s representative can click “Save Draft” to save and complete the submission at a later time.
- The IHE representative will receive an automated email confirming submission of the entry.
- Submissions can be edited in the [submission portal](#) at any point prior to the December 30, 2021, submission deadline.

ELIGIBILITY

The challenge is limited to submissions from U.S.-based, public or private, non-profit, two- and four-year **IHEs** (including community and technical colleges) accredited in, and having a campus located in the U.S. and its territories and possessions. *Having a previous or current NSF grant award is not required to participate in this challenge.*

For systems of higher education: Each campus that is part of a system may be considered a separate institution for submission purposes if the campus is geographically separate from the other campus(es), and if the campus has its own chief academic officer.

A higher education system may submit an entry on behalf of the entire system describing system-wide actions to any of the four challenge categories for which the system's IHEs are eligible. Note that IHEs within this system would then not be eligible to submit separate entries to the challenge within that challenge category. If the actions in the challenge submission are not system-wide then the IHE that will be implementing or has implemented the actions should submit to the challenge rather than the system.

Submissions must be made by an institution-wide administrator (or system-wide administrator if the entry is from a system of higher education). For the purposes of this challenge, institution- or system- wide administrators are defined as the Chief Executive or Academic Officer of the IHE or the system of higher education.

Important Additional Eligibility Information by Challenge Category:

Category 1 - Two-Year Undergraduate Challenge. Submissions must come from an institution which primarily awards associate degrees. The institution may have a transfer program towards a four-year degree and occupational/workforce programs (such as certificates requiring coursework).

Category 2 - Four-Year Undergraduate Challenge. Submissions must come from IHEs that offer bachelor's degrees in STEM.

Category 3 - Graduate and Postdoctoral Researcher Challenge. Submissions must come from IHEs that have STEM graduate degree granting programs and/or train STEM postdoctoral researchers.

Category 4 - STEM Faculty Challenge. Submissions are welcomed from all IHEs that meet the basic eligibility criteria irrespective of the types of STEM degrees offered.

Note: *Any submissions not meeting the eligibility criteria will not be reviewed and will not be eligible for a prize award or honorable mention. IHEs may not be informed of ineligibility before the deadline for submissions ends.*

CHALLENGE RULES

Submission Limit: Each IHE is limited to one entry within each of the challenge categories for which the IHE is eligible. Multiple submissions from the same IHE within one challenge category will result in automatic disqualification of all submissions from that IHE in that category.

Intellectual Property: All original ideas submitted will remain the intellectual property of the challenge participant. All submissions will be publicly available information, allowing for the exchange of ideas between all participants and non-participants alike. All entries, even those not selected for a prize or honorable mention, may be used in part or in whole by NSF in publications and social media and shared by NSF for research and education purposes. No commercialization of challenge submissions can be conducted without prior authorization and consent from the submitters.

Consent: By participating in the challenge, all participants consent to NSF's use and display of the submitted information and the name of the IHEs.

Non-endorsement: The selection of winners or honorable mention designees is not an endorsement by NSF or NSF officials of the organization or components of the submissions (whether in part or in whole).

Funding Restrictions: Funds from the Federal Government cannot be used to develop submissions to this challenge unless specifically allowable by the federal grant.

Plagiarism: NSF has a no-tolerance policy for plagiarism. Upon discovery, any submissions that do not follow this policy will be disqualified and if applicable, will forfeit any prizes.

Waiver: Participation in this challenge is an agreement to assume all liability. Participants are agreeing to waive all claims against the Federal Government and its related entities (except in the case of willful misconduct), for any injury, death, damage, or loss of property, revenue, or profits, whether direct, indirect, or consequential, arising from their participation in the challenge, whether the injury, death, damage, or loss arises through negligence or otherwise.

Disclaimer: NSF reserves the right to disqualify and/or clarify any submissions.

Partial Submissions: Submissions that do not include all of the required components described in the "Submission Specifications" section of this document will be disqualified from the challenge. IHEs may not be informed of incomplete submissions before the deadline for submissions ends and will not be able to amend their submission.

Conflict of Interest: Institution-wide administrators submitting to this challenge shall not: be a current federal employee or on loan to the National Science Foundation through an Intergovernmental Personnel Act (IPA) Assignment; Federal Temporary Appointments, Visiting Scientist, Engineer and Educator (VSEE) Program or volunteer to be a judge of this prize competition. Immediate family members of NSF staff involved in the design, development, and

implementation of this challenge shall not serve as institution-wide administrators submitting to this challenge.

Withdrawal of Submissions: To withdraw from the challenge, the institution-wide administrator (or system-wide administrator if the entry is from a system of higher education) who initially submitted the challenge should log into their account and delete their entry. Entries can be deleted until December 30, 2021.

JUDGING PROCESS AND CRITERIA

Screening for Eligibility

All entries will undergo a screening for eligibility by NSF staff using the eligibility criteria outlined in the “Eligibility” section of this document. Any entries not meeting any one of the eligibility criteria will not be judged and will be deemed ineligible for a prize award or honorable mention designation.

A panel of NSF employees and external judges will review the challenge submissions based on the following criteria:

Criteria (100 pts):

1. (20 pts) How thoughtfully and carefully does the submission explain one or more anticipated significant, long-term, impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on diversity, equity, and inclusion in STEM for [undergraduate students, graduate students, postdoctoral researchers, or faculty] at their institution?
2. (40 pts) How thoroughly and effectively will the institutional action(s) that have been, or will be, implemented by the IHE result in systemic solutions to address the anticipated long-term impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on DEI in STEM that were identified by the IHE?
3. How likely are the institutional actions described in the submission to be:
 - a. (20 pts) Easily adapted and reproduced by other IHEs?
 - b. (20 pts) Sustainable by the IHE and by other IHEs that potentially adapt them?

The judges will also indicate if they recommend the submission for honorable mention if it is not selected for an award prize.

CHALLENGE PRIZE INFORMATION

\$200,000 in total cash prizes will be awarded to winning IHEs. Each of the four categories will have a 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place cash-prize winners and up to 10 honorable mention designees (see table). Cash prizes will be dispersed to the submitting Institution of Higher Education. Cash prizes will not be released to any individuals.

Prize Breakdown:

<i>Winners</i>	<i>STEM Undergraduate – Two-Year IHEs</i>	<i>STEM Undergraduate – Four-Year IHEs</i>	<i>STEM Graduate and Postdoctoral</i>	<i>STEM Faculty</i>
First Place	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$25,000
Second Place	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000
Third Place	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000
Honorable mention	Up to 10 (no cash award)	Up to 10 (no cash award)	Up to 10 (no cash award)	Up to 10 (no cash award)

The challenge is a public acknowledgment of the current and planned efforts by IHEs with the overall goal of knowledge sharing. The cash prize does not have to, but can, fund the actions submitted to the challenge. The cash prize is a recognition of the potential impact of the current or planned actions that were submitted. NSF has no restrictions on how cash prizes are spent except that institutional policies must be followed. Winners are neither expected nor required to submit progress reports to NSF.

KEY DATES

Taking Action: COVID-19 Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Challenge Stages	Approximate Dates
Challenge Submissions Accepted	October 14, 2021 - December 30, 2021 (11:59 PM EST)
Challenge Submissions Screened for Eligibility by NSF	January 2022
Challenge Submissions Judged by External Judges	January - February 2022
NSF Reviews the Judges Recommendations and Approves Winners and Honorable Mentions	February - March 2022
Winners and Honorable Mentions Announced *(Cash prizes awarded by NSF)	March 2022
Presentations by Winners and Selected Honorable Mention Designees	April 2022

*Cash awards will be processed and distributed after announcements.

Please refer to the frequently asked questions section for a list of common questions and answers.

If you have questions about the NSF Taking Action: COVID-19 Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Challenge, please send an email to: COVIDChallengeTeam@nsf.gov.

RESOURCES

Note that there may be other relevant resources not listed here.

General Resources

- NSF COVID website for grantees: https://www.nsf.gov/news/special_reports/coronavirus/
- Intersectionality overview: <https://www.awis.org/intersectionality/>
- National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. 2020. Reopening U.S. Research Universities: Confronting Long-Standing Challenges and Imagining Novel Solutions: Proceedings of an Exploratory Workshop—in Brief. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. doi: <https://doi.org/10.17226/25947>

Undergraduate and Graduate STEM Students Resources

- Undergraduate and Graduate STEM Students' Experiences During COVID-19: Proceedings of a Virtual Workshop Series: <https://www.nap.edu/catalog/26024/undergraduate-and-graduate-stem-students-experiences-during-covid-19-proceedings>
- Council of Graduate Schools, Navigating the COVID-19 Pandemic <https://cgsnet.org/navigating-covid-19-pandemic>
- APLU, APLU COVID-19 Resources, <https://www.aplu.org/news-and-media/communications-resources/coronavirus/>
- National Postdoctoral Association, The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the Postdoctoral Community, https://www.nationalpostdoc.org/page/POSTDOCKET_1803

STEM Faculty Resources

- ADVANCE on-line Journal Special Edition on COVID <https://www.advancejournal.org/section/2102-volume-2-issue-2>
- NASEM Consensus Study Report on The Impact of COVID-19 on the Careers of Women in Academic Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (<https://www.nap.edu/read/26061/chapter/1>)
- NSF INCLUDES ASPIRE Alliance, COVID-19 Resources, <https://www.aspirealliance.org/national-change/covid-19-resources>
- AAUW, AAUW & COVID-19: Standing Strong through Crisis, <https://www.aauw.org/resources/member/initiatives/connected-community/>

Community Colleges Resources

- COVID-19, Supporting Learners, and the Responses of our Nation's Community Colleges: A Virtual Town Hall Discussion: <https://vimeo.com/436540303>
- American Association of Community Colleges, webinar series Quality, Equity, and Inclusion during the COVID Crisis, <https://www.aacu.org/events/webinar-series-quality-equity-and-inclusion-during-covid-crisis>

Minority Serving Institutions Resources

- COVID-19, Systemic Racism, and the Responses of HBCUs: A Virtual Town Hall Discussion: <https://www.nationalacademies.org/event/06-29-2020/covid-19-systemic-racism-and-the-responses-of-hbcus-a-virtual-town-hall-discussion>
- COVID-19, DACA, and the Responses of Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs): A Virtual Town Hall Discussion: <https://www.nationalacademies.org/event/07-08-2020/covid-19-daca-and-the-responses-of-hispanic-serving-institutions-hsis-a-virtual-town-hall-discussion>
- AIHEC Research Survey on the Impact of COVID-19 on TCU Student Experiences: http://www.aihec.org/what-we-do/docs/PR/PR21/Report%20on%20Research%20Survey%20on%20the%20Impact%20of%20COVID-19%20on%20TCU%20Student%20Experiences%20Feb2021_final.pdf

Taking Action: COVID-19 Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Challenge

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS)

General Topics

What are the goals of the Taking Action: COVID-19 Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Challenge?

The Taking Action: COVID-19 Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Challenge has two goals: 1. Encourage IHEs to think deeply about the long-term, potentially negative impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on diversity, equity and inclusion in STEM and develop systemic solutions and actions to mitigate the impacts on STEM students, postdoctoral researchers, and faculty; and 2. Create a repository of the actions of the prize-winning and honorable mention submissions that can be shared broadly highlighting the importance of these actions to DEI in STEM and to provide information for other IHEs to adapt these actions.

How can the winning institutions spend the cash awards?

The challenge is meant to be a public acknowledgment of the current or planned efforts by the winning IHEs with the overall goal of sharing the actions that have been or will be implemented. The cash prize does not have to, but can, fund the actions submitted to the challenge. NSF has no restrictions on how cash prizes are spent except that institutional policies must be followed.

Will winners and honorable mention designees have to submit annual reports to NSF?

No, winners and honorable mention designees are neither expected nor required to submit progress reports to NSF.

Will there be another Taking Action: COVID-19 Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Challenge?

No, this is the one-time challenge to help IHEs identify and plan for the negative long-term impacts of COVID-19.

Eligibility

Does my institution have to be a current or past grantee of the NSF to submit to this Challenge?

No. Having a previous or current NSF grant award is not required to participate in this challenge.

Can my STEM professional society, non-academic organization, company, research lab, museum, or observatory submit to this challenge?

No. The challenge focuses on the impact of COVID-19 on IHEs and will only accept entries from eligible IHEs.

Can campuses that are part of one system submit separate entries?

Yes. Each campus that is part of a system may be considered as a separate institution for submission purposes if the campus is geographically separate from the other campus(es), and if the campus has its own chief academic officer.

Can a higher education system with multiple campuses submit a system-wide entry?

Yes. A system with multiple IHEs may submit an entry describing system-wide actions to any of the four challenge categories for which the system's IHEs are eligible. If the actions in the challenge submission are not system-wide, then the IHE that will be implementing or has implemented the actions should submit to the challenge rather than the system. Note that IHEs within a system would not be eligible to submit separate entries to the challenge within the same category that the system submitted an entry.

Can two or more IHEs collaborate on a submission?

No. For this challenge, submissions should be focused on what the IHE (or higher education system) is doing within its organizations to mitigate the impacts of the pandemic on DEI in STEM. Everyone is encouraged to visit the challenge website after the competition has closed and winners have been selected to see the winning ideas that could be adapted and implemented by others.

Can my IHE submit an entry for the work that I am doing in my research lab or my classroom for my undergraduate or graduate students or postdoctoral researchers?

No. Submissions must describe institutional actions such as policy and procedure changes that will impact at least one whole department within the institution. The work individuals do to support their students throughout the pandemic is of course also very important for ensuring diversity, equity, and inclusion in STEM, but that work is not what this challenge seeks to recognize.

Is this a fellowship or scholarship program to get a STEM degree?

No. Federal undergraduate STEM opportunities can be found at <https://stemundergrads.science.gov> and graduate STEM opportunities at <https://stemgradstudents.science.gov>. In addition, the NSF offers graduate level fellowships please review deadlines and instructions at this website: <https://www.nsfgrfp.org>.

Limits on Entries

Can my IHE submit more than one entry in the same challenge category?

No. Each IHE is limited to one entry within each of the four challenge categories. The submission is meant to be inclusive of all the efforts being implemented by the IHE, therefore multiple submissions within one category are not allowed. Multiple submissions from the same IHE within one challenge category will result in automatic disqualification of all submissions from that IHE in that challenge category.

Can my IHE submit an entry in more than one challenge category?

Yes. An IHE can submit an entry to each of the challenge categories for which they are eligible. Review the Participant's Guide section on "Eligibility" closely.

Submission Process

Our IHE is planning on implementing actions in the future, but what if something happens that prevents the full implementation?

Submissions should be made in good faith by the IHE with full intentions of following through with the actions described in the challenge submission. However, NSF does not require progress reports for challenge winners. If implementation does not happen as planned, the NSF will not reverse award decisions or require the return of the prize funds as the goals of the challenge will have been met by the sharing of the winning ideas.

Judging

Will feedback be provided on the submissions?

No. NSF will not provide written or verbal feedback on the content of the entries. Please do not contact the NSF to inquiry about feedback on the submission. Email notifications to winners, honorable mention designees, and those not selected for an award will be sent in March 2022.

Submission Contents

Can my IHE submit an entry that describes actions being taken at the college or department level?

Yes. A submission may describe actions that are not institution-wide, such as actions taken by a college or single academic unit within the institution, but the institution is still limited to one submission per challenge category.

What if we are doing or plan on doing a lot of different things at our institution?

Within a challenge category, each submission is expected to include all the actions that have been or will be implemented at the institution focused on DEI issues for the population of focus for that challenge category. IHEs may want to highlight the most impactful or most unique actions in their submission due to page limitations.

Can I include links to websites with additional information?

Yes, however the information contained on websites that are provided in the entry will not be reviewed by the judges to determine their scores for the entries. IHEs may still want to include links to additional information to assist others who may want to learn from the work of the IHE and replicate the actions as well as demonstrate institutional commitment to the action(s) that are described in the entry.

Are references or citations required?

References are required if there are citations in the submission and not required if there are no citations in the submission. The one page for references cannot be used to provide other information to support the submission.

What kind of evidence can be used as support information for the entry?

Evidence to support how IHEs identified the long-term systemic DEI issues should be cited in the entry as well as evidence to support the selection of the actions that IHEs

have or will implement to address those issues. Evidence may be published or unpublished and might include internal policy and data analysis, interviews or focus groups, surveys, the related research literature, state and national reports, etc.

What will NSF do with the Taking Action: COVID-19 Diversity, Equity & Inclusion ideas it receives through this competition?

The goal of this competition is to share the strategies of the prize-winning and honorable mention submissions broadly, including via social media and other means, thereby highlighting the importance of these actions and providing information for others to implement these actions.

Does the IHE retain its intellectual property rights over submission content?

All original ideas submitted will remain the intellectual property of the submitting IHE. All submissions will be publicly available information, allowing for the exchange of ideas between participants and non-participants. All entries, even those not selected for a prize or honorable mention, may be used in part or in whole by NSF in publications and social media and shared by NSF for research and education purposes. No commercialization of challenge submissions can be conducted without prior authorization and consent from the submitters.

Process and Timeline

Will status updates be given during the eligibility review and judging process?

No. NSF will not be able to provide updates during the process. Please do not contact the NSF to inquire about the status updates until March 2022. Email notifications to winners, honorable mention designees, and those not selected for an award will be sent in March 2022.

Will IHEs be required to participate in the presentation webinar if selected as a winner?

Challenge winners, and some honorable mention designees, in all four categories will be invited to present their ideas at an NSF-hosted virtual event that will be open to the public and recorded for sharing. Although strongly encouraged, it is not a requirement that winning IHEs present at this virtual event.

Will I be required to submit a report if I win?

No. The challenge is a public acknowledgment of the current and planned efforts by IHEs with the overall goal of knowledge sharing. The cash prize is not to fund the proposed ideas but to serve as a recognition of current and planned actions.