THE NSF 2026 IDEA MACHINE

- Entrants suggest "grand challenge" questions for future research
- Video pitches & public comments
- A blue-ribbon panel advises NSF
- Best ideas receive public recognition, cash prizes
- Launches around August 31, 2018

Identifying new directions for research.

**STEP 01**
Competition opens/entries accepted

**STEP 02**
NSF staff selects 30 representative entries

**STEP 03**
Videos invited & posted online

**STEP 04**
Public comments collected; NSF analysis added

**STEP 05**
Blue-Ribbon Panel picks 12 entries for remote interviews

**STEP 06**
Blue-Ribbon Panel recommends 6 entries

**STEP 07**
NSF staff adds analysis

**STEP 08**
NSF Leadership selects 2-4 winning entries

**STEP 09**
Prizes awarded for winning ideas

**STEP 10**
Funding opportunities
“If you want to have good ideas, you must have many ideas; ... and what you have to learn is which ones to throw away.” – Linus Pauling

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What makes a good Big Idea?</th>
<th>How will we recognize one?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Has a worthwhile objective(s)</td>
<td>2000 &gt;&gt; 30</td>
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<td>• Ambitious &amp; challenging; may require a paradigm shift in our thinking</td>
<td>• Does the same theme emerge in multiple entries?</td>
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<td>• Progress would have significant impact</td>
<td>• Is NSF staff exceptionally enthused?</td>
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<td>• Requires the talents of the research community</td>
<td>• Has this idea already generated excitement among researchers and the public?</td>
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<td>• Will attract creative contributions from many researchers</td>
<td>30 &gt;&gt; 4</td>
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<td>• Will benefit many stakeholders, both inside and outside of the research community</td>
<td>• Did it resonate in the public comments?</td>
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30 >> 4
• Is the Blue-Ribbon panel excited?
• Does it make sense for NSF?
Idea Machine Challenge Timeline

Online Entries
NSF Staff Judging
Video pitches & Public Comment
Blue-Ribbon Panel
Interviews
Winning Ideas Selected
Funding Opportunities Identified
Prizes Awarded