



National Science Foundation  
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NSF 10-052

## Frequently Asked Questions: Climate Change Education (CCE) Program

### **NSF 10-542 : Climate Change Education (CCE): Climate Change Education Partnership (CCEP) Program, Phase I (CCEP-I)**

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**1. Are there any required formats or forms for submitting a proposal to the NSF CCEP-I program?**

All proposals submitted to NSF must follow basic formatting guidelines identified in the NSF Grant Proposal Guide (GPG) unless otherwise specified in the CCEP-I solicitation. The GPG can be accessed online at: [http://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub\\_summ.jsp?ods\\_key=gpg](http://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub_summ.jsp?ods_key=gpg). It is very important that proposals follow all of the relevant GPG requirements and include all required forms, or they will be returned without review for non-compliance.

**2. The solicitation seems to suggest there can only be up to four PIs/Co-PIs – is that a real limit?**

NSF policy permits only one PI and a maximum of four Co-PIs on a proposal. However, you can add individuals as non-Co-PI Senior Personnel to a proposal. This is done through the Form Preparation screen within the FastLane proposal preparation module by clicking on the Add/Delete Non-Co-PI Senior Personnel link. The FastLane online Help System has additional details on how to do this. If submitting via Grants.gov, instructions for entering additional senior project participants are included in section V.5. of the NSF Grants.gov application guide.

**3. What does NSF mean by the term “Education” in this solicitation?**

In the CCEP program, the term “education” refers to the creation and transmission of knowledge and skills related to climate science and climate change and its impacts, in either (or both) formal (K-16) and informal learning environments. Target audiences can be anywhere along the “K to grey” continuum. The emphasis is on achieving climate literacy, which will allow individuals and communities to make informed decisions about climate change. Projects must not delve into advocacy for particular responses, but present evidence so an informed decision can be made.

**4. What does NSF mean by the term “Expertise in Climate Science” in this solicitation?**

Funding for the CCEP program is being managed within the Directorates of Education and Human Resources, Geosciences, Biological Sciences, and the Office of Polar Programs. As such, participants that provide climate science expertise are expected to involve the types of **natural** sciences research areas (including mathematical and computer sciences) normally funded by NSF. Other types of climate-related science expertise supported by NSF (e.g., social science) can be incorporated in a proposal, but the proposal must have the natural sciences represented, too. Proposals that focus on human health or medicine-related scientific research that is normally supported primarily by the National Institutes for Health are discouraged.

**5. What type of expertise is needed for a CCEP Phase I Partnership proposal to be successful?**

At a minimum, the core team of a CCEP Phase I Partnership is required to include an expert in climate science, an expert in the learning sciences (e.g., cognition or educational research), and a practitioner involved with STEM education in formal or informal settings. Additional types of expertise may be appropriate, depending on the focus of the Partnership. These core elements are being required to ensure that Partnership activities: 1) incorporate current scientific understanding about climate and its impacts; 2) are built on sound principles of learning; and, 3) are realistic about barriers to practical implementation.

**6. What is the difference between a *Regional* and a *Thematic* Partnership?**

CCEP Partnerships should be organized around *common impacts* of climate change. For *Regional Partnerships*, these common impacts are shared by contiguous geographic regions. Examples would be the accelerated rate of global warming in the Arctic, or the regional drought in the Southwestern United States. For *Thematic Partnerships*, the common impacts being addressed are unified by a process (e.g., sea level rise) or a setting (e.g., mountain watersheds); in this case a Partnership may bring together partners who are not from contiguous geographic regions. Some CCEP Partnerships may choose to focus on a topic that is a combination of *Thematic* and *Regional*, but it is not a requirement.

**7. Are there any climate impact themes that are viewed as being of higher priority in this competition?**

NSF has not identified any priorities regarding the type of climate impacts to be addressed, but is generally interested in supporting projects that relate to the types of research normally supported by NSF. Projects that focus primarily on climate impacts on human health and medicine, which is traditionally supported by the National Institutes of Health and not NSF, would not be appropriate.

**8. What is NSF looking for in terms of scale or impact of the CCEP projects?**

In general, NSF is looking to support CCEP projects that are multi-disciplinary and have significant potential for sustainable effect at a scale that is not easily supported through other core programs within individual Directorates at NSF. Projects that have the potential to impact a small number of institutions, school districts, teachers, or learners are unlikely to be as competitive during the review process.

**9. Can a Phase I CCEP proposal include efforts to develop a new climate change curriculum?**

In general, no. The CCEP Phase I program is intended to primarily support strategic planning, synthesis, and network building activities that lead to greater adoption of high quality climate change education resources. Development of curriculum is an

implementation activity, not a strategic planning activity. In FY2011, there will be an opportunity to submit a request for supplemental funding to support small implementation efforts that are research-based during the first year of strategic planning. Full-scale development and implementation of new climate change curricula could be an appropriate activity to undertake as part of Phase II Partnership, but only if the scale of implementation is significant (i.e., more than one school or school district). Other NSF programs might be more appropriate for projects seeking to develop smaller-scale or more immediate curriculum changes. These include Transforming Undergraduate Education in STEM in the Division of Undergraduate Education and Discovery Research K-12 as well as Informal Science Education in the Division of Research on Learning.

**10. Would a Phase I project that has climate scientists providing professional development training for in-service teachers who work in the affiliated school district be sufficient to meet the CCEP Phase I criterion?**

In general, no. This type of activity can be supported through core NSF programs and does not fully meet the requirements or desired scale of impact outlined in the CCEP-I solicitation. This activity primarily involves implementation, not strategic planning. It is also unclear that the required expertise in the learning sciences is included in the design.

**11. Is it possible to include partners from other countries?**

The CCEP-I program encourages collaboration with international scientists and educators, but there are limitations with regard to what types of financial support can be given to international collaborators. NSF rarely provides direct support to foreign organizations and will only consider proposals for cooperative projects involving U.S. and foreign organizations if support is requested only for the U.S. portion of the collaborative effort. However, it may be possible to provide modest travel support for foreign collaborators to attend conferences, workshops, or symposia related to the proposed project. NSF can also support international travel for U.S. participants.

**12. Am I required to submit a Letter of Intent?**

Yes, you must submit a Letter of Intent through FastLane by April 23, 2010. Proposers MUST include a copy of the acknowledgment received from NSF in response to the Letter of Intent in the Supplementary Documentation section of the full proposal. NSF Letters of Intent are non-binding and used for planning purposes only. They are not used as a filter. Letters of Intent facilitate NSF's ability to identify appropriate reviewers for the CCEP-I proposals. Given the partnership structure of the CCEP program – which may engage a large segment of the climate science and education community – and the fact that the competition is being held late in the fiscal year, we felt it was prudent to identify proposing institutions and Principal Investigators as early as possible, so that reviewers without conflicts of interest can be recruited. There is a limit of 2500 characters (including spaces) for the project synopsis portion of the Letter of Intent template, so a brief description is only required. Be sure to identify all known partner organizations and personnel somewhere in the Letter of Intent; you may have to include some of this information in the project description section.

**13. Are Collaborative Proposals allowed?**

Collaborative Proposals submitted as separate submissions from multiple organizations are NOT allowed for the CCEP-I competition. A Lead institution to submit the proposal must be identified, with all other partnering institutions supported through sub-awards in the budget.

**14. Are there limitations regarding who is eligible to submit a Phase I CCEP proposal?**

All institutions identified in Chapter I.E of the Grant Proposal Guide are eligible to submit a proposal in response to the CCEP program solicitation, but there are limits on the number of proposals that can be submitted. An institution may submit only one CCEP-I proposal as the Lead Institution, but may be a non-Lead partner on more than one proposal.

**15. Is it possible for CCEP Partnerships to involve members of other Federal agencies (or Federal employees), or leverage other agency resources, in their proposal?**

Leveraging other Federal investments in climate change research and education as part of a CCEP project is allowed, but there are restrictions on the use of NSF funding to support the participation of Federal employees. NSF does not normally support research or education activities by scientists, engineers or educators employed by Federal agencies or Federally Funded Research and Development Centers (FFRDCs). Under unusual circumstances, other Federal agencies and FFRDCs may submit proposals directly to NSF. The NSF Grant Proposal Guide provides additional information regarding these rules.

**16. Are there any special conditions that need to be specifically addressed in the proposal?**

Yes. Each Partnership will be required to have an external Partnership evaluator for the Phase I activities. The evaluator must be identified in the Phase I proposal. In addition, representatives from each Partnership are required to attend annual Principal Investigator meetings during the Phase I awards. Funding for up to 3 participants from each project to attend these meetings should be included in the proposal budget.

**17. Since I am required to include an evaluation component, do I need to get an Institution Review Board (IRB) determination on this project?**

Yes. Projects involving research with human subjects must ensure that subjects are protected from research risks in conformance with the relevant federal policy known as the Common Rule (Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects, 45 CFR 690). All projects involving human subjects must either (1) have approval from the organization's Institutional Review Board (IRB) before issuance of an NSF award or, (2) must affirm that the IRB has declared the research exempt from IRB review, in accordance with the applicable subsection, as established in section 101(b) of the Common Rule. Additional information about IRB requirements is given in the Grant Proposal Guide. It is strongly advised that proposers initiate the process of IRB prior to submission of their proposal to NSF, to avoid subsequent delays in award processing.

**18. Can I support undergraduate or graduate student climate research or climate education research through a CCEP Phase I project?**

In general, no. Research is not a strategic planning activity, but an implementation activity that is best conducted through a Phase II award, or possibly through supplemental funding in FY 2011. Student support for participation in a Phase I strategic planning effort is allowed, but the proposal must address requirements of the America COMPETES Act related to ethics training for NSF-supported students.

**19. Can my CCEP-I project support postdoctoral fellows?**

Yes, if they are to participate in a strategic planning effort and not research. If salary support is requested for a postdoctoral fellow, the proposal must address requirements of the America COMPETES Act related to mentoring and ethics training for NSF-supported postdocs.

**20. My institution has not had NSF funding before; are there special conditions that apply?**

Institutions that would be new NSF awardees if their proposal is recommended for CCEP-I funding are **strongly encouraged** to initiate the process of becoming an NSF awardee by the time of proposal submission. This will allow timely processing of award documents prior to the end of the fiscal year close-out process at NSF. Additional information for prospective new awardees is available at [http://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub\\_summ.jsp?ods\\_key=pnag](http://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub_summ.jsp?ods_key=pnag).

**21. Are there additional review criteria that will be used to evaluate my proposal, in addition to the standard NSF Merit Review Criteria of Intellectual Merit and Broader Impacts?**

Yes. Additional review criteria are listed on page 14 of the [NSF 10-542](#) program solicitation.

**22. How will my proposal be reviewed, and when am I likely to know the outcome?**

Proposals submitted in response to the CCEP-I solicitation will be reviewed by a merit review panel convened in late June 2010. The top 10-15 highest ranked proposals will be further reviewed by NSF program staff through a virtual site visit with key participants in the proposed Partnership; this virtual site visit will be conducted by video-conferencing sometime in early-to-mid-July 2010. Unofficial notification regarding funding decisions should be given to proposers by the end of July. NSF anticipates that those projects recommended for funding will have official start dates in mid-September 2010.

**23. What types of activities can be supported through Supplemental Funding requests in FY 2011 and who is eligible to apply for these supplements?**

Supplemental funding requests for up to \$250,000 and 1 year of additional support will be accepted in FY 2011 by the March 15, 2011 deadline in two areas: 1) expansion of the initial Partnership through sub-awards to additional organizations; and 2) preliminary implementation of promising projects identified during the planning process. Only Lead institutions funded through the CCEP-I solicitation in FY 2010 and awardees funded through the CCE program in FY 2009 are eligible to submit these supplemental funding requests. A Partnership may submit more than one supplemental funding request.

**24. Where can I find more information about the U.S. Global Change Research Program, the National Climate Assessment, and the Climate Literacy framework?**

More information about these programs and resources is available at <http://www.globalchange.gov>.

**25. Should I discuss my proposal with NSF officers?**

It is recommended that you discuss only the suitability of your planned proposal for CCEP-I. Once submitted, proposals may not be discussed with NSF officers, as this would constitute unfair competition, or the perception thereof.