



National Science Foundation
4201 Wilson Boulevard
Arlington, Virginia 22230

NSF 16-004

Dear Colleague Letter: Optics and Photonics (OP)

October 5, 2015

Dear Colleagues:

Optics and photonics are key enabling technologies that impact society in a multitude of areas including information and communications, imaging and sensing, healthcare, energy, manufacturing, and national security. Building upon impressive progress in fundamental optical science and in nanotechnology in recent years, optics and photonics have become drivers for technological innovation and economic growth. To address the national need in supporting basic research in optics and photonics and translating results of research to applications, the National Science Foundation announces a new crosscutting program, PD 15-9102, *Optics and Photonics (OP)*.

The Optics and Photonics program is an NSF-wide crosscutting activity that involves multiple Divisions within the Directorate for Mathematical and Physical Sciences (MPS), the Directorate for Engineering (ENG), the Directorate for Biological Sciences (BIO), and the Directorate for Computer and Information Science and Engineering (CISE). Because the field of optics and photonics is inherently interdisciplinary in nature, often requiring expertise across traditional disciplinary boundaries, OP will enable the research community to achieve breakthrough scientific and technological progress.

Through this Dear Colleague Letter, NSF encourages innovative research proposals on optics and photonics that are relevant to one or more Divisions in the Directorates for Mathematical and Physical Sciences (MPS), Engineering (ENG), Biological Sciences (BIO), and Computer and Information Science and Engineering (CISE). Currently the OP Program encompasses efforts of more than 30 disciplinary programs within 9 divisions; the detailed list of the disciplinary programs involved and of the research areas of particular interest to each division is given in the document [PD 15-9102](#).

A working group comprising representatives of all participating NSF funding units will coordinate review of proposals on optics and photonics. The group will ensure that proposals are reviewed by the most suitable NSF disciplinary program and will coordinate co-review by more than one disciplinary program when appropriate. Investigators should identify OP proposals by including the three characters "OP:" at the beginning of the proposal title. This designation will serve to bring the proposal to the attention of the crosscutting OP working group.

Proposals should be submitted to the appropriate program description or program solicitation listed in [PD 15-9102](#). Proposals must comply with the requirements of the corresponding program description or program solicitation. The due date for any proposal is the due date for submission to the particular disciplinary program. Proposals that would particularly benefit from joint review should be submitted to a primary disciplinary program with secondary disciplinary program(s) in another Division(s) identified in the Proposal Cover Sheet, by the due date of the primary program.

NSF recommends that researchers contact Program Directors in the participating disciplinary programs for details on appropriate programs and the specifics for proposal submission in their respective Divisions; for highly interdisciplinary research topics members of the OP working group can be contacted

as well. For additional details, including contact information for the OP working group, please see the document [PD 15-9102](#).

Sincerely,

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