



NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
2415 EISENHOWER AVENUE
ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA 22314

NSF 18-089

Dear Colleague Letter: Research Experience for Teachers (RET): Funding Opportunity in the Biological Sciences

July 12, 2018

Dear Colleagues:

This DCL is to call your attention to a long-standing opportunity that enables K-12 science educators to participate in projects funded by the Directorate for Biological Sciences (BIO) at the National Science Foundation (NSF). The goal of the Research Experiences for Teachers (RET) activity is to enhance the professional development of K-12 science educators through research experiences at the emerging frontiers of science in order to bring new knowledge into the classroom. BIO strongly encourages all of its grantees to make special efforts to identify talented teachers who can participate in this RET activity to integrate research and education. This special opportunity is the same opportunity that is specified in the [Research Experiences for Undergraduates \(REU\) solicitation](#).

We believe that encouraging active participation of teachers in on-going NSF projects is an excellent way to strengthen the scientific expertise of our nation's teachers. Another goal of the RET supplement activity is to build collaborative relationships between K-12 science educators and the NSF research community. BIO is particularly interested in encouraging its researchers to build mutually rewarding partnerships with teachers at urban or rural schools and those in school districts with limited resources.

Before submitting an RET request (as part of a new or renewal NSF proposal or as a supplemental funding request to an existing NSF award), we strongly encourage the Principal Investigator to initiate a conversation via email or phone with the program director of his/her particular NSF award, or the cognizant program director for the program to which s/he is submitting a proposal.

PROPOSAL PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

See BIO Organizations websites at <https://www.nsf.gov/bio> for deadlines dates.

NEW OR RENEWAL PROPOSALS

For **new or renewal proposals** that include a RET component, the Project Description should include relevant information about the broader impacts of the activity (e.g. the form and nature of the teacher's involvement in the PI's NSF research project). Budgets for RET activities are generally under \$15,000 per teacher. Teacher costs, such as stipends, travel, and lodging, should be entered as "Participant Support Costs". All budgeted non-teacher costs, such as materials and supplies, should be appropriate for proposed activities and included in other sections of the Budget. All costs must be explained in the budget justification.

SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDING REQUESTS

Supplemental funding requests to an active BIO award must be prepared and submitted through FastLane in accordance with the instructions in Chapter VI.E.4 of the [NSF Proposal and Award Policies and Procedures Guide](#) (PAPPG).

Reminder: Any supplemental funding awarded by NSF must be expended by the end date of the original award.

The request must include the following components:

- A specific statement in the summary of proposed work that this is a request for an RET supplement.
- In the Justification for Supplement include a description of the proposed RET (not to exceed 3 pages, single spaced) that includes:
 - the form and nature of the teacher's involvement in the PI's NSF research. For example, the teacher may participate in the design of new experiments, modeling or analysis of experimental data or other activities that will result in intellectual contributions to the project;
 - plans for follow-up to insure translation of the teacher's research experience into classroom practice;
 - the selection criteria of the teacher participant; and
 - a brief description of the PI's experience with involving teachers in research, including prior RET supplements, if applicable.
- Year-1 and summary budget pages. Budgets for RET activities are generally under \$15,000 per teacher. Teacher expenses associated with RET should be entered in "Participant Support Costs" in the budget, and non-teacher expenses, such as materials and supplies, should be in other sections of the Budget. All expenses should be explained in the budget justification.
- The desired start date and duration of the supplement (normally a summer experience), but may be carried out during summer months, during the academic year, or both.

- A 2-page biographical sketch of the teacher (submitted in the Supplementary Documentation section).

Normally funds may be available for up to two teachers, but exceptions will be considered. Participation of science educators who are members of underrepresented groups (underrepresented minorities and persons with disabilities) is strongly encouraged. The decision to award a supplement will be based on internal review by the program director and availability of funds in a particular program.

NSF encourages you to visit K-12 educators in your local school district and region, including those participating in NSF-supported activities [[see awards list for the Division of Research on Learning in Formal and Informal Settings \(DRL\)](#)], as well as other NSF research and educational projects to help identify participants for this RET supplement opportunity. We trust that your time and efforts will strengthen the teaching of science, mathematics, and engineering and enhance the development of the U.S. science and engineering workforce.

Sincerely,

Joanne Tornow, Ph.D.
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Directorate for Biological Sciences