



NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
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NSF 22-072

Dear Colleague Letter: Geoscience Research Experiences for Post-Baccalaureate Students (GEO-REPS) Supplemental Funding Opportunity

April 20, 2022

Dear Colleagues:

The National Science Foundation's (NSF) Directorate for Geosciences (GEO) recognizes the importance of early-career research experiences, especially for individuals contemplating a career in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) research, and the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on the career trajectories of undergraduate students who were denied such a research experience.

Many undergraduates who were planning to participate in research experiences in the past two years—whether through Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REU), REU supplements, or individual arrangements with faculty mentors—may have found that their host labs or research settings were not able to accommodate them due to restrictions imposed by the pandemic. Students from historically excluded groups and those from schools with limited access to research or research facilities are particularly impacted, because such research experiences are often the only way that these individuals get exposure to the kinds of experiences that will motivate them to enter a STEM graduate program or career. Students who are still enrolled as undergraduates may have future opportunities to participate in an REU once pandemic restrictions relax. However, those who graduated and obtained their baccalaureate degrees are no longer eligible to participate as an REU student and, thus, may have been denied the valuable opportunity to engage in independent research. The purpose of this Dear Colleague Letter (DCL) is to provide a mechanism to help fill this gap.

NSF GEO invites Principal Investigators (PIs) of active awards to submit a supplemental funding request to support the research training of post-baccalaureate students. For the purposes of this DCL, a post-baccalaureate student is defined as an individual who has a bachelor's degree but is not currently enrolled in another degree program. The GEO Research Experience for Post-Baccalaureate Students (GEO-REPS) DCL encourages

requests for supplemental funding to existing awards for the purpose of supporting research experiences for post-baccalaureate students who desire to engage in research or who want to pursue a career in STEM but did not have access to opportunities to begin or complete a research experience as an undergraduate student due to pandemic-related interruptions. We expect that PIs will provide REPS participants with an independent but guided research project and professional development to better prepare them for graduate education or entry into the STEM workforce. Ideally, REPS participants will be involved in the development of their research project. High-quality mentoring for participants is very important in supporting post-baccalaureate scholars. Mentors are strongly encouraged to sustain interaction with the participant(s) throughout the duration of the supplemental funding. Mentors are also encouraged to help connect research experiences to scholars' long-term career goals and to support the scholars' transition to graduate school or the STEM workforce. PIs are encouraged to use the resources available at their own institution or at the [GEO REU Resource Center](#) to design a program that aims to develop further the participants' competency as a research scholar. At a minimum, PIs are expected to provide training in ethics and the responsible conduct of research and to inform participants of institutional policies or code of conduct on sexual harassment.

NSF GEO is particularly interested in increasing the participation of historically excluded or under-involved groups in geoscience research and education such as persons with disabilities, individuals from underrepresented racial and ethnic communities [1], LGBTQIA+ individuals, and women. Proposals submitted in response to this DCL are strongly encouraged to substantively involve participants who are members of these groups. Proposers are also strongly encouraged to consider involving veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces as part of NSF's broader effort to promote veteran involvement in STEM research and education.

DESCRIPTION OF THE OPPORTUNITY

NSF GEO will consider supplemental funding requests for up to 12 months of participant support on active GEO-supported grants. Although participants are expected to do full time research, PIs should consider the individual needs of the participants so that they are able to balance family or other obligations. Person-related participant support costs can include a stipend (recommended at a minimum of \$650/week for full-time participation) and, as appropriate, travel. NSF expects participant costs to be included under the Participant Support costs category (Line F) in the budget. A modest amount for materials and supplies can be requested and should be included on line G1 in the budget. All costs should be clearly explained in the budget justification. Indirect costs should be calculated only on the amount listed on line G1. A supplemental funding request may include support for more than one student. However, PIs are reminded that there is limited funding for this program, and requests for more than one student should be well-justified.

Prior to formally submitting a supplemental funding request, the PI of the existing award should contact the cognizant Program Officer for the award. The supplemental funding request should be submitted in FastLane in accordance with the guidelines found in the [PAPPG](#). The guidance below might be helpful in preparing the request.

- In the section entitled "Summary of Proposed Work," state that this is a GEO-REPS request and provide brief information on the number of participants, names of potential participant(s), mentor names and potential projects, and professional development activities that will be part of the program. This section typically does not exceed one page.
- In the section entitled "Justification for Supplement," describe in detail the participant's involvement in the research project, a description of the potential project, the mentoring plan for the participant including any professional development activities, and information on the recruited participant, including a brief biographical sketch. Describe how the proposed program would contribute to the participants' long-term career goals and how the supplemental funding will serve to broaden participation.

GEO-REPS supplemental funding requests will be reviewed for funding consideration upon receipt. To receive full funding consideration for FY2022, requests should be submitted by **July 1, 2022**. Supplemental funding requests submitted after that date will be considered if funds are available.

Please direct any questions pertaining to this DCL to:

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Sincerely,

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