



NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
2415 EISENHOWER AVENUE
ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA 22314

NSF 22-083

Dear Colleague Letter: A Supplemental Funding Opportunity for Supporting Research in Nascent Translation (SPRINT) through the Partnerships for Innovation (PFI) Program

May 6, 2022

Dear Colleague:

For more than two years, the COVID-19 pandemic has affected research productivity,¹ with disproportionately negative impacts felt by women^{2, 3, 4} and individuals who have traditionally been underrepresented in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields.⁵ A key aspect of this productivity has been the translation of research results to the market and society. As the Nation's universities return to normal operation, NSF seeks to lessen these impacts, both on the conduct of STEM research as well as on the researchers themselves.

With this Dear Colleague Letter (DCL), NSF is making available the Supplemental Funding Opportunity for Supporting Post-pandemic Research in Nascent Translation (SPRINT), which is specifically intended to help restart translational research activities. Through this DCL, NSF aims to support, encourage, and enable current awardees of the Partnerships for Innovation (PFI) program to restart their efforts so that they can move toward technology commercialization and the creation of startups that can subsequently apply to the NSF Small Business Innovation Research and Small Business Technology Transfer (SBIR/STTR) programs.

NSF especially welcomes supplemental funding requests pursuant to this DCL from traditionally underrepresented populations in STEM (including but not limited to, Blacks/African Americans, Latino/Hispanic Americans, American Indians, Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiians and Other Pacific Islanders, women, and persons with disabilities), those at minority-serving institutions (MSIs), and those located in states included in the Established Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR) program.

SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

The PFI program has a long history of offering researchers from all disciplines supported by NSF the opportunity to perform translational research and technology development, catalyze partnerships, and accelerate the transition and commercialization of discoveries from the laboratory to the marketplace for societal benefit.

The expected goals of the SPRINT supplement are to specifically:

- Ensure researchers and the broader national research enterprise resume emphases on translational research; and
- Address potential delays in the professional development, mentoring, and understanding of technology-based business of the next generation workforce.

Ultimately, these supplements will accelerate the transfer and commercialization of technology from the laboratory to the marketplace and strengthen the U.S. innovation ecosystem.

ELIGIBILITY

All active PFI awardees are eligible. The PFI program is particularly interested in assisting groups traditionally underrepresented in STEM as described above.

Only one SPRINT supplemental funding request can be submitted per PFI award. The receipt of other supplemental funding does not limit the eligibility for submission of a SPRINT supplemental funding request.

SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDING REQUEST PREPARATION INSTRUCTIONS

SPRINT supplemental funding is subject to the availability of funds, the good standing of the original PFI award, and the quality of the supplemental funding request. **Prior to submission of a SPRINT supplemental funding request, a Principal Investigator (PI) must provide their cognizant PFI Program Director with a two-page (maximum) summary of (1) the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the current PFI project; and (2) how the planned supplemental funding request will address such impact.** The PI must obtain prior email approval from the cognizant PFI Program Director before the submission of the SPRINT supplement to NSF. This email approval must be included as a Supplementary Document in the supplemental funding request. SPRINT supplemental funding requests submitted without prior approval from the cognizant PFI Program Director will be returned without review.

The SPRINT supplemental funding request must include the following components:

1. In the Justification for Supplement section:
 - The NSF award number of the original PFI award.
 - Description of the currently envisioned use case, customer segment, and value

proposition. If the team has participated in the NSF Innovation Corps (I-Corps™), indicate the I-Corps team number and approximate cohort date (i.e., "May-June 2021").

- Description of the specific interruptions/delays in the PFI project actually caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Specific dependent care obligations and related personal matters should not be discussed; for these types of issues, please include this statement: "The COVID-19 pandemic delayed translation of this research because of personal reasons."
- Project Description (three-page maximum) that describes the scope of work for which supplemental funds are requested. The Project Description should focus on the commercialization objectives, the understanding of the marketplace, and the level of disruption caused by the pandemic.

2. In the Budget Justification section:

- All costs allowed in a PFI award, with the exception of the Allowable Patent Expenses (APEX) supplement (see [NSF 22-065](#)), may be requested through this opportunity.
- The maximum request is up to 20% of the original PFI award.

3. In the Other Supplementary Documents section:

- The cognizant PFI Program Director's email approval to submit the SPRINT supplemental funding request.

Additional information about the preparation and submission of supplemental funding requests is contained in Chapter VI.E.5 of the [NSF Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide](#) (PAPPG).

TARGET DATES AND REVIEW PROCESS

Supplemental funding requests may be submitted at any time. However, a target date of June 15 is requested for consideration during a current fiscal year.

All supplemental funding requests will be internally reviewed by the cognizant PFI Program Director. The cognizant PFI Program Director's review will focus on the commercialization objectives in the supplemental funding request, the PI's understanding of the marketplace, and the level of disruption caused by the pandemic.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

The activities undertaken and results obtained under the SPRINT supplement must be reported in the annual and final project reports for the PFI award.

COGNIZANT PROGRAM DIRECTORS

For questions about this DCL, please contact the cognizant PFI Program Directors:

- Jesus Soriano, Program Director, pfi@nsf.gov, (703) 292-7795
- Katie Bratlie, Program Director, pfi@nsf.gov, (703) 292-2638
- Samir Iqbal, Program Director, pfi@nsf.gov, (703) 292-7529

Sincerely,

Erwin Gianchandani
Assistant Director
Directorate for Technology, Innovation, and Partnerships

REFERENCES

- ¹ <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-021-03045-w>
- ² <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-021-00854-x>
- ³ <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/23780231211006977>
- ⁴ <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2020/10/20/large-scale-study-backs-other-research-showing-relative-declines-womens-research>
- ⁵ <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.663252/full>