Dear Colleague Letter: Equipment Supplements for Centers of Research Excellence in Science and Technology (CREST Centers) Awarded in 2021 or 2023

December 5, 2023

Dear Colleague:

Consistent with the National Science Foundation's (NSF) efforts to increase the research capacity of Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs), the Division of Equity for Excellence in STEM (EES) encourages the submission of supplemental funding requests for equipment for CREST centers awarded in 2021 or 2023.

The CREST Program supports the creation of research centers that will lead to strong societal impacts through 5-year awards. The projects focus on the enhancement of the research capabilities of Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs) through the establishment of centers that effectively integrate education and research. CREST Center awards promote the development of new knowledge, the increase in the research productivity of individual faculty, and the expanded engagement of students from backgrounds historically underrepresented in STEM disciplines.

With this Dear Colleague Letter (DCL) the CREST program aims to provide access to up-to-date research equipment to the full spectrum of diverse talent in STEM at all levels, including students, postdoctoral researchers when applicable, and faculty. Institutions that submit supplemental funding requests in response to this DCL are still eligible to submit CREST Partnership Supplemental funding requests as described in the current program solicitation.

Supplemental funding requests submitted in response to this DCL should provide a strong rationale for the benefits of the requested funds in directly supporting the individual CREST center's mission through the purchase and maintenance of research-related equipment. Submission is limited to recipients with active CREST centers awarded in 2021 or 2023 that have made use of their current award funds at the rate of 20% per year.

SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS
Supplemental funding requests must be prepared in accordance with guidance in Chapter VI.E. 5 of the NSF Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide (PAPPG) and submitted through Research.gov.

Interested proposers should follow this guidance closely:

1. The supplemental funding request must include a clear statement as to why the equipment is appropriate for increasing the research capacity of the faculty member or the CREST Center.
2. The request must explain how the equipment will be sustained during and after the end of CREST funding.
3. The requested equipment must be aligned with research supported by the current CREST Center. The PIs are encouraged to outline a vision that simultaneously promotes inclusiveness and research excellence.
4. The budget may be up to $500,000 (including indirect costs) for shared equipment or $100,000 (including indirect costs) for equipment to be used by a single subproject PI.

Equipment supplemental funding requests submitted in response to this FY 2024 DCL are welcome through May 1, 2024, but submission by February 1, 2024 is strongly encouraged.

Please contact Luis Cubano (EDU-EES), lcubano@nsf.gov for any questions regarding this DCL.

Sincerely,

James L. Moore III
Assistant Director
Directorate for STEM Education (EDU)