U.S. NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
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ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA 22314

NSF 24-056

Dear Colleague Letter: Expanding Geographic and Institutional Diversity in Computer and Information Science and Engineering (CISE)

February 15, 2024

Dear Colleagues:

The National Science Foundation's (NSF) Directorate for Computer and Information Science and Engineering (CISE) welcomes submission of both new proposals and supplemental funding requests from Established Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR) eligible institutions to broaden geographic and demographic participation. Through this Dear Colleague Letter (DCL), NSF aims to promote CISE-funded activities that enable sustainable growth and competitiveness across EPSCoR jurisdictions. The goal is to increase the representation of NSF awards and funding to organizations across the twenty-eight (28) EPSCoR-eligible jurisdictions. Proposals from institutions across EPSCoR-eligible jurisdictions are welcome to submit to all CISE programs. Collaborative proposals between EPSCoR and non-EPSCoR institutions with EPSCoR institutions as lead and proposals from Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs) and Emerging Research Institutions (ERIs) in EPSCoR jurisdictions are particularly encouraged.

This DCL aims to reaffirm CISE's commitment to bolster CISE-funded research that reaches diverse and talented communities across our country, in particular organizations located within EPSCoR jurisdictions. NSF recognizes the incredible potential and contributions of these institutions to the U.S. science and engineering ecosystem and encourages the science and engineering community's active involvement in furthering discoveries that benefit all Americans. CISE firmly believes in the immense untapped potential within EPSCoR jurisdictions and through this DCL is actively seeking proposals and supplemental funding requests to enhance the participation of EPSCoR institutions in NSF-funded research. These contributions are pivotal in ensuring that research and innovation are not confined to geographical boundaries but are inclusive and collaborative across the nation.

This DCL encourages proposal submissions from EPSCoR-eligible institutions to any and all

active CISE funding programs, with an aim to enhance engagement within the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) enterprise, specifically associated with geographic location, and thereby enabling the jurisdiction's national competitiveness. The DCL responds to Section 10325 (expanding geographic and institutional diversity in research) of the CHIPS and Science Act of 2022, which directs NSF to dedicate an increasing percentage of its budget to organizations across EPSCoR jurisdictions. Through this DCL, CISE aims to promote funded activities that enable sustainable growth in the competitiveness of EPSCoR jurisdictions, including:

- research proposals to CISE core and cross-cutting programs;
- infrastructure investments to build research capacity in EPSCoR jurisdictions;
- scholarships, fellowships, and traineeships within new and existing programs to promote development of sustainable research and academic personnel;
- partnerships with non-EPSCoR institutions that are led by EPSCoR institutions with the goal of building and/or expanding research, education, and workforce development capacity in EPSCoR jurisdictions; and
- capacity building activities for ERIs and MSIs.

Examples of encouraged submissions may include, but are not limited to:

- CISE Core proposals led by EPSCoR institutions.
- CISE cross-cutting/multi-disciplinary proposals led by EPSCoR institutions (for more information on CISE core and cross-cutting programs, please see: Computing and Communication Foundations programs, Computer and Network Systems programs, Information and Intelligent Systems programs, Office of Advanced Cyberinfrastructure programs).
- EArly-concept Grants for Exploratory Research (EAGER) proposals by EPSCoR institutions to initiate new, unexplored research activities. PIs must contact cognizant CISE program officer(s) whose expertise is most germane to the proposal topic before submittal.
- Rapid Response Research (RAPID) submissions by EPSCoR institutions when there is a severe urgency with regard to availability of, or access to data, facilities or specialized equipment, including quick-response research on natural or anthropogenic disasters and similar unanticipated events. PIs must contact cognizant CISE program officer(s) whose expertise is most germane to the proposal topic before submittal.
- CISE Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REU) and Research Experiences for Teachers (RET) Site site proposals to promote education and workforce development led by EPSCoR institutions.
- REU and RET supplemental funding requests to existing CISE awards from EPSCoR institutions.
- Research Coordination Networks (RCN) proposals from EPSCoR institutions that focus

on building research collaborations between EPSCoR and non-EPSCoR institutions on specific research topics.

- Supplemental funding requests to existing CISE awards from EPSCoR institutions to support additional graduate students for expanding and enhancing existing projects.
- Postdoctoral research and/or cyberinfrastructure professional supplemental funding requests to existing CISE awards from EPSCOR institutions to expand and enhance existing projects.
- ExpandAI proposals to build research capacity across EPSCoR MSIs.
- CISE-MSI Research Expansion proposals to build institutional research capacity across EPSCoR institutions.
- Proposals to build cyberinfrastructure across EPSCoR institutions (e.g., through the Community Infrastructure for Research in CISE, Campus Cyberinfrastructure, and Strengthening the Cyberinfrastructure Professional Ecosystem programs).
- National Artificial Intelligence Research Institutes, Secure and Trustworthy Cyberspace Frontiers and Cyber-Physical Systems Frontiers, and Expeditions in Computing proposals, led by EPSCoR institutions.
- CISE-oriented proposals to NSF's Mid-scale Research Infrastructure-1 and Mid-scale Research Infrastructure-2 programs, led by EPSCoR institutions.

Proposers are encouraged to engage with institutional representatives to identify and submit to active CISE funding opportunities. Interested proposers should prepare and submit proposals in accordance with the instructions contained in the relevant funding opportunity and the *NSF Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide* (PAPPG). Please refer to specific program descriptions, Dear Colleague Letters, and solicitations for program-specific deadlines for new proposals and supplemental funding requests

Investigators from eligible organizations are strongly encouraged to contact corresponding program staff to discuss prospective funding requests prior to submitting to NSF.

Questions should be directed to: cise-epscor@nsf.gov.

Thank you for your unwavering dedication to advancing science and ensuring that all jurisdictions have equal opportunities to contribute to the national scientific enterprise. We look forward to your proposals and the exciting possibilities they hold.

Sincerely,

Dilma Da Silva
Acting Assistant Director, NSF CISE