



U.S. NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
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ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA 22314

NSF 24-077

Dear Colleague Letter: Enhancing STEM Education, Research Capacity, and Workforce Development in Established Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR) Jurisdictions

April 11, 2024

Dear Colleague:

In alignment with the CHIPS and Science Act of 2022, [the U.S. National Science Foundation's Directorate for STEM Education \(EDU\)](#) affirms its commitment to support science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education, research capacity, workforce development, and professional development within institutions in Established Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR) eligible jurisdictions. Through this Dear Colleague Letter (DCL), EDU encourages new proposal submissions to EDU programs and supplemental funding requests to existing EDU awards led by institutions in the 28 EPSCoR jurisdictions (see list below). In order to achieve this, EDU seeks increased accessibility to the ideas, opportunities, and tools of STEM education and research for students, educators, researchers, communities at all levels and in all settings (both formal and informal), and by the public in EPSCoR jurisdictions, which historically receive less STEM education funding than other regions of the country.

The mission of EDU is to achieve excellence in U.S. STEM education; to support the development of a diverse and well-prepared workforce of scientists, technicians, engineers, mathematicians, and educators; and to strengthen a well-informed citizenry. This DCL is aligned with this mission by expanding the geographic and institutional reach of EDU investments in EPSCoR jurisdictions that will enhance and support untapped STEM innovation, instructional talent, and robust and rigorous research on teaching and learning in STEM education. Focused attention in these areas is likely to stimulate private sector investments in these jurisdictions and, importantly, greater equity in STEM education and economic development throughout the Nation. The EDU mission is intentionally seeking broader institutional inclusion that may catalyze STEM education, scientific discovery, and workforce development in EPSCoR jurisdictions, improving the quality of life of all citizens and the health, prosperity, welfare, and security of the nation.

Proposal submissions and supplemental funding requests should address one or more of the following EDU goals:

- Prepare the **next generation of STEM professionals** and attract and retain more Americans to STEM careers.
- Develop a robust research community that can conduct **rigorous research and evaluation** that will support excellence in STEM education and that **integrates research and education**.
- Increase the **technological, scientific, and quantitative literacy** of all Americans so that they can successfully participate in every realm of citizenship, living productive lives in an increasingly technological society.
- Broaden participation (**e.g., individuals, geographic regions, types of institutions, and STEM disciplines**) and close achievement gaps in all STEM fields.

EPSCoR-eligible jurisdictions (FY2024-FY2027) include Alabama, Alaska, Arkansas, Delaware, Guam, Hawaii, Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Mississippi, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Vermont, US Virgin Islands, West Virginia, and Wyoming. These jurisdictions have demonstrated a commitment to enhance their research capacity and improve the quality of STEM research yet have historically received little federal research and development funding. Pub. L. No. 100-570, 102 Stat. 2865 sets forth a jurisdiction's eligibility for EPSCoR funding. Please visit the EPSCoR [website](#) for more information

All Four Divisions in the Directorate for STEM Education (EDU) are participating in this DCL:

Division of Equity for Excellence in STEM (EES) serves as a focal point for NSF's agency-wide commitment to enhancing the quality and excellence of STEM education, STEM education research, and STEM research through expanding participation by individuals from historically underrepresented groups – racial/ethnic minorities, women, and persons with disabilities. Priority is placed on investments that promise innovation and transformative strategies and that focus on creating and testing models that ensure the full participation of and provide opportunities for the educators, researchers, and institutions dedicated to serving these populations. For EES program information, please see the Division's [webpage](#).

Division of Research on Learning in Formal and Informal Settings (DRL) invests in the improvement of STEM learning for people of all ages and backgrounds by promoting innovative research, development, and evaluation of learning and teaching across all STEM disciplines in formal and informal learning

settings. It is the only Division at NSF that focuses exclusively on preK-12 STEM education in formal schooling environments and learning outside of school (e.g., television, film, radio, exhibitions, Artificial Intelligence, etc.). For DRL program information, please see the Division's [webpage](#).

Division of Undergraduate Education (DUE) aims to promote excellence in undergraduate STEM education for all students. The Division accomplishes its mission through a variety of programs that constitute a comprehensive approach to strengthening STEM education at two- and four-year colleges and universities by improving curricula, instruction, laboratories, infrastructure, assessment, diversity of students and faculty, and collaborations. For DUE program information, please see the Division's [webpage](#).

Division of Graduate Education (DGE) advocates for innovative, inclusive, high quality graduate education in STEM fields. DGE manages innovative cross-Foundation programs that directly or indirectly support U.S. citizens and permanent residents in their quest to become the leading scientists and engineers of the future. To better inform its programs, DGE supports research and other activities that will generation exciting new ideas for graduate education of the future. For DGE program information, please see the Division's [webpage](#).

PROPOSAL AND SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDING REQUEST PREPARATION INSTRUCTIONS

New Proposals

Proposals must include "EDU EPSCoR DCL:" at the beginning of the proposal title or immediately following any solicitation specific or PAPPG required title prefix.

New proposals must be prepared and submitted to an EDU program within one of the divisions named above. Proposers must follow the guidance in the [NSF Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide](#) (PAPPG) and must adhere to the due dates (if applicable) and guidance specified in the relevant program solicitation, program announcement, or program description to which the proposal will be submitted.

For new proposals, in addition to the proposal types specified in the relevant program solicitation, program announcement, or program description, proposers may also consider the following additional proposal types specified in the PAPPG and below. See Chapter II.F of the PAPPG for more information.

- EARly Concept Grants for Exploratory Research (EAGER) Proposals
- Planning Proposals
- Rapid Response Research (RAPID) Proposals
- Conference Proposals

- EDU is especially interested in conference proposals seeking to host NSF funding and informational workshops for single or multiple EPSCoR jurisdictions.

Proposers are encouraged to discuss proposal concepts with the relevant program before submission.

SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDING REQUESTS

For supplemental funding requests, approval must be obtained from the cognizant NSF Program Director for the original award prior to submission of the supplemental funding request. The email confirming approval to submit must be uploaded as a Supplementary Document in the proposal.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Partnerships among EPSCoR jurisdictions are encouraged but not required.

EDU plans to conduct outreach and information dissemination, which will be accessible online at <https://new.nsf.gov/edu> to all eligible institutions, which includes 2- and 4-year institutions of higher education, community-based organizations, and informal STEM providers.

CONTACT

For general inquiries regarding this DCL please forward your inquiry to EDUEPSCoR@nsf.gov.

Sincerely,

James L. Moore III
Assistant Director
Directorate for STEM Education