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NSF's Build and Broaden: Enabling New Social, Behavioral and Economic Science Collaborations with Minority-Serving Institutions

Posted on behalf of the National Science Foundation's (NSF) Directorate for Social, Behavioral, and Economic Sciences (SBE)

Originally published as a Dear Colleague Letter on the NSF Website. Read the original Dear Colleague Letter.

Dear Colleague:

The National Science Foundation's (NSF) Directorate for Social, Behavioral, and Economic Sciences (SBE) supports research in many areas associated with our rapidly changing world, including fundamental research on human development, learning, and social behavior, and the surrounding social, economic, and natural environments. Research supported in SBE advances our understanding of people, social organizations and society in a changing world where there are new opportunities for human interconnectedness as well as challenges that affect our ability to live healthy and productive lives.

With this Dear Colleague Letter (DCL), SBE wishes to notify the research community of a new opportunity called Build & Broaden (B^2) and invites the submission of conference proposals in FY 2020. Proposals should be designed to foster partnerships and build research collaborations among institutions that include at least one Minority-Serving Institution (MSI). MSIs include Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs),

Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs), Tribal Colleges or Universities (TCUs), and other institutions that enroll a substantial fraction of underrepresented minority students, as described below[1]. The response to this DCL will inform future steps for B2 in FY 2021.

BACKGROUND

National forecasts of the impending science and engineering skills shortage underscore the importance of expanding the volume and increasing the diversity of the science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) workforce. NSF's strategic plan for fiscal years 2018 to 2022 (https://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub_summ.jsp?ods_key=nsf18045) spells out the Foundation's core values, which include a focus on inclusion "to support outstanding researchers and innovative thinkers from across our Nation's diversity of regions, types of organizations, and demographic groups." The demand for these skills currently exceeds the supply of graduates. HBCUs, HSIs, TCUs and other MSIs can make a considerable contribution to educating and training science leaders for U.S. economic growth and competitiveness. Yet NSF has received comparatively low numbers of grant proposals from MSIs in scientific areas that SBE supports. With relatively few competitive proposals submitted, NSF is limited in its ability to invest in SBE-related research, and associated capacity building activities, at these institutions. With its emphasis on broadening participation at MSIs, Build and Broaden is designed to mitigate this problem.

BUILD AND BROADEN (B2)

The goal of this DCL is to encourage partnerships with and among MSIs in order to promote fundamental research, perspectives, and ideas in the SBE sciences. NSF's hope is that this new initiative will build capacity at MSIs for SBE-related research and provide researchers with new ways to diversify and energize their research teams. NSF anticipates funding up to 10 conferences pursuant to this DCL, subject to the availability of funds and the quality of proposals received.

Proposals may address any of the scientific areas supported by SBE. Proposals can come directly from HBCUs, HSIs, TCUs and other MSIs, or from any other NSF-eligible research entity. Proposers are strongly encouraged to plan to host and design conferences at the MSI campus identified in the proposal.

DEADLINE DATE AND SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

Proposals must be prepared and submitted in accordance with the guidelines contained in the NSF Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide (PAPPG). The proposal title must start with "Build and Broaden:".

Proposals in response to this DCL are due May 1, 2020. Guidance on preparation of conference proposals is provided in PAPPG Chapter II.E.7. Proposals may be submitted via Fastlane or Grants.gov. NSF anticipates that all awards will be made by summer 2020.

Questions about this DCL should be directed to the following e-mail address: sbe-buildandbroaden@nsf.gov.

- Arthur Lupia
  Assistant Director
  Directorate for Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences
- Kellina Craig-Henderson
  Deputy Assistant Director
  Directorate for Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences

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1 "HBCU" refers to the "part B institution" in section 322 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1061), and "TCU" has the meaning given in section 316 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1059c). "MSI" means Hispanic-Serving Institutions as defined in section 502 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C 1101a); Alaska Native Serving Institutions and Native Hawaiian-Serving Institutions as defined in section 317 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1059d); and Predominantly Black Institutions, Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions, and Native American-Serving Nontribal Institutions as defined in section 371 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 13 1067q(c)). Please see the U.S. Department of Education website (https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/edlite-minorityinst.html) for more detail about requirements for being an MSI.