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Dear Colleague Letter: 2019 Social, Behavioral, and Economic (SBE) Repositioning

Posted on behalf of the National Science Foundation's Division of Behavioral and Cognitive Sciences (BCS)

Dear Colleagues:

The social, behavioral, and economic (SBE) sciences have a tremendous impact on quality of life. With increasingly rigorous methods and an increasingly diverse workforce, the SBE sciences are making transformative advances in many areas. Innovators and entrepreneurs are using SBE insights to create new companies that provide jobs and grow the economy. First responders and service providers of all kinds are using SBE insights to deliver critical services with greater speed and precision. SBE discoveries about brains and behavior are helping us improve education and health outcomes, better serve communities in need, and enhance our understanding of one another. The SBE sciences are also critical to addressing nearly every major challenge we face today, from unemployment to terrorism, from the spread of infectious disease to the roots of violence, from the risks of natural hazards to man-made threats, and from entrepreneurial economic development understanding to enhanced quality of life and well-being.

SBE scientists are making real differences in the lives of millions of people. At NSF, we are looking for ways to build on that progress. With this goal in mind, the SBE Directorate is proud to announce a repositioning of some of its basic research programs. This type of repositioning is common practice at NSF and helps us advance the agency's mission more effectively. This repositioning is designed to:

- respond to new and emerging areas of scientific inquiry,
- help SBE researchers better connect their basic research plans to pressing national priorities, and
- make the value of basic research in the SBE sciences more apparent to a wider set of stakeholders.

This repositioning has been developed with the input of many stakeholders and will allow us to maintain an effective, flexible, and dynamic approach to funding as much breakthrough science as possible.

Repositioned programs in the Behavioral and Cognitive Sciences (BCS) Division are:

- **Human Networks and Data Science**: An evolution of the former RIDIR (Resource Implementations for Data Intensive Research in the Social, Behavioral, and Economic Sciences) competition, this program supports the use of large and multifaceted data to examine an expansive and fast-evolving set of complex human networks and systems.
- **Linguistics**: The change continues a partnership with the National Endowment for the Humanities' Documenting Endangered Languages program and integrates program management into NSF's diverse Linguistics Program. It renames NSF's contribution to this partnership. Dynamic Language Infrastructure (DLI) to more accurately capture the fundamental science that NSF funds in this important area of study.
- **Science of Learning and Augmented Intelligence**: This program builds on the successes of the former Science of Learning Program. It now incorporates basic research about how alterations to human contexts and relationships can bolster human intelligence, performance, and productivity.

Repositioned programs in the Social and Economic Sciences (SES) Division are:

- **Security and Preparedness** and **Accountable Institutions and Behavior (AIB)**: These two programs build from transformative basic research done by political scientists and other researchers.
    - Security and Preparedness supports scientific research that advances knowledge and understanding of issues broadly related to global and national security.
    - AIB supports scientific research that advances knowledge and understanding of issues broadly related to attitudes, behavior, and institutions connected to decision making processes, the provision of essential services, and accountability mechanisms in a range of public sector contexts.
    - The two programs coordinate to ensure that basic research in these areas effectively serves a broad range of critical national interests.

- **Law and Science**: This program is an expansion of the former Law and Social Science Program to support basic social science research on relationships between law and all areas of science, including interactions with biological, computer and information sciences, STEM education, engineering, geosciences, and mathematical and physical sciences.
- **Science of Science: Discovery, Communication, and Impact**: This evolution of the former Science of Science and Innovation Policy Program focuses on basic research that can increase the productivity of scientific workflows, our nation's capacity to communicate it accurately and effectively, and the value of that work to society.
- **Ethical and Responsible Research**: This evolution of the former Cultivating Cultures for Ethical STEM Program supports research on how to help scientists do work that is more replicable, reproducible, and ethical.
- **Science and Technology Studies**: This evolution of the former Science, Technology, and Society Program aligns with progress in this research community and seeks new ways to support research on how to better understand and improve science's societal impacts.

Please see links above for more details about repositioned program portfolios and processes. Please note that these changes do not affect current NSF/SBE solicitations and submission deadlines. All changes will begin to take effect with solicitation and program submission deadlines occurring after January 1, 2020.

In addition to the changes above, I would like to take this opportunity to remind the research community about the many innovative SBE programs that continue to provide a wide array of opportunities to conduct transformative basic science.

BCS

- Archaeology and Archaeometry
- Biological Anthropology
- Cognitive Neuroscience
- Cultural Anthropology
- Developmental Sciences
- Geography and Spatial Sciences
- Perception, Action, and Cognition
- Social Psychology

The National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics

- Research on the Science and Technology Enterprise: Statistics and Surveys

SES

- Decision, Risk, and Management Sciences
- Economics
- Methodology, Measurement, and Statistics
- Science of Organizations
- Sociology

On behalf of everyone at NSF, I invite you to be the future of basic research in the SBE sciences. We are interested in any and all SBE proposals whose Intellectual Merit is strong and whose potential Broader Impacts are great. We look forward to seeing the exciting science that will emerge from your participation in our existing and repositioned programs.

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

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Read the original Dear Colleague Letter