

# **EXPERIMENTAL PROGRAM TO STIMULATE COMPETITIVE RESEARCH (EPSCOR)**

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[PROGRAM SOLICITATION]

***NSF 00-43***

**Directorate for Education and Human Resources**

***DEADLINE DATE: JULY 17, ANNUALLY***



**NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION**



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## Summary of Program Requirements

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### **GENERAL INFORMATION**

**Program Name:** Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR)

**Short Description/Synopsis of Program:** EPSCoR is a program designed to fulfill the National Science Foundation's mandate to promote scientific progress nationwide. The EPSCoR program is directed at those jurisdictions that have historically received lesser amounts of federal R&D funding. Nineteen states and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico currently participate in the program. NSF establishes partnerships with leaders of state government, higher education and industry to effect lasting improvements in a state's research infrastructure and its national R&D competitiveness.

**Cognizant Program Officer(s):** Mr. Richard E. Hastings, Program Director, Room 875, Office of the Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research, telephone 703 306-1683, e-mail: rhasting@nsf.gov.

**Applicable Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) No.:**

47.076 — Education and Human Resources

### **ELIGIBILITY**

- ◆ Limitation on the categories of organizations that are eligible to submit proposals:

**Proposals may be submitted by organizations in the 19 EPSCoR states and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.**

- ◆ PI eligibility limitations:

**Proposal must be submitted by State EPSCoR Project Director**

- ◆ Limitation on the number of proposals that may be submitted by an organization:

**Only one proposal may be submitted per eligible jurisdiction.**

## AWARD INFORMATION

- ◆ Type of award anticipated: **Standard Grant**
- ◆ Number of awards anticipated in FY 01: **5-10 awards**
- ◆ Amount of funds available:

**Approximately \$20 million will be available for this initiative in FY FY2001, depending upon availability of funds**

- ◆ Anticipated date of award: **January 2001**

## PROPOSAL PREPARATION & SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

### ◆ Proposal Preparation Instructions

- Letter of Intent requirements: **None**
- Preproposal requirements: **None**
- Proposal preparation instructions: **Standard NSF Grant**

#### **Proposal Guide instructions**

- Supplemental proposal preparation instructions: **None**
- Deviations from standard (GPG) proposal preparation instructions: **None**

### ◆ Budgetary Information

- Cost sharing/matching requirements:

**For proposals submitted in response to this solicitation, the grantee must provide at least one dollar of matching funds for every two dollars of NSF support. The proposed cost sharing must be shown on line M on the proposal budget (NSF Form 1030.)**

- Indirect cost (F&A) limitations: **None**
- Other budgetary limitations:

**Award amounts up to \$3 million/year for proposals submitted in response to this announcement**

◆ **FastLane Requirements**

- FastLane proposal preparation requirements:

**FastLane use required**

- FastLane point of contact:

**Richard E. Hastings, 703 306-1683, rhasting@nsf.gov**

◆ **Deadline/Target Dates**

- Proposal Deadline: **5:00 PM, your local time, July 17 annually (FastLane)**

**PROPOSAL REVIEW INFORMATION**

- ◆ Merit Review Criteria:

**Standard National Science Board approved criteria**

**AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION**

- ◆ Grant Award Conditions: **GC-1 or FDP III**

- ◆ Special grant conditions anticipated:

**Cost Sharing, Detailed Annual Reports delineating progress toward milestones.**

- ◆ Special reporting requirements anticipated:

**Cost Sharing, Detailed Annual Reports delineating progress toward milestones.**

# ***EPSCoR***

## Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research

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# **The Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research**

## **I. Introduction**

Section 3(e) of the National Science Foundation (NSF) Act of 1950, as amended, states that: “...it shall be an objective of the Foundation to strengthen research and education in the sciences and engineering, including independent research by individuals, throughout the United States, and to avoid undue concentration of such research and education.” Through its Congressional mandate, the NSF promotes and advances scientific progress nationwide. However, in 1978, public concern about undue geographical concentration of federal funding of academic research and development (R&D) led Congress to further authorize the NSF to conduct the Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR). The Congressional instructions, which established the Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research, have been restated in subsequent Congressional authorizations of the Foundation’s budget. Eligibility for EPSCoR participation, therefore, is restricted to those jurisdictions that have historically received lesser amounts of federal R&D funding and have demonstrated a commitment to develop their research bases and to improve the quality of science, mathematics, and engineering research conducted at their universities and colleges.

Nineteen states and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico currently participate in the program. The states are: Alabama, Alaska, Arkansas, Idaho, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Mississippi, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Carolina, South Dakota, Vermont, West Virginia, and Wyoming. This solicitation is directed to the EPSCoR governing committees and their designated fiscal agents with responsibility for administration of the National Science Foundation’s EPSCoR initiative.

### **A. Mission**

EPSCoR acts on the premise that universities and their science and engineering faculty and students are valuable resources that can potentially influence a state’s development in the twenty-first century much the same way that agricultural, industrial and natural resources did in the twentieth century. EPSCoR’s goal, therefore, is to identify, develop, and utilize a state’s academic science and technology resources in a way that will support wealth creation and a more productive and fulfilling way life for its citizens. To achieve this goal the NSF actively cooperates with state leaders in government, higher education, and business to establish productive long-term partnerships capable of effecting lasting improvements to the state’s academic research infrastructure and increased national R&D competitiveness.

EPSCoR increases the R&D competitiveness of an eligible state through the development and utilization of the science and technology (S&T) resources residing in its major research universities, those institutions granting significant

numbers of the state's Ph.D. degrees in science and engineering disciplines. EPSCoR works to achieve increased academic research competitiveness by:

- Stimulating sustainable S&T infrastructure improvements at the state and institutional levels that significantly increase the ability of a state's EPSCoR researchers to compete for federal and private sector R&D funding; and
- Providing means to accelerate the movement of EPSCoR researchers and institutions into the mainstream of federal and private sector R&D support.

## **B. EPSCoR Awards**

The NSF enters into an EPSCoR-state partnership to achieve improvements in R&D competitiveness through development of the state's academic S&T infrastructure. A successful EPSCoR partnership requires that both parties invest significant resources to achieve the desired increases in academic research competitiveness. NSF provides academic S&T infrastructure improvement support through the program described below.

- **EPSCoR Research Infrastructure Improvement Grants:** 36-month grants of up to \$9.0 million total to support S&T infrastructure improvements selected by the state's EPSCoR governing committee as being critical to the state's future R&D competitiveness. A non-federal matching share of one-to-two (i.e., at least one dollar from state, institutional, and/or private sector sources for every two dollars of NSF/EPSCoR support) is required over the term of the award.

In conjunction with the development of a state's academic S&T research infrastructure, EPSCoR attempts to accelerate the movement of EPSCoR researchers and institutions into the mainstream of federal and private sector R&D support through partnerships established with NSF's regular research and education programs.

- **EPSCoR Co-funding:** Co-funding of proposals submitted to NSF's special competitions, regular research, and research support grant programs by investigators working in areas that have been identified as priorities by the state's EPSCoR governing committee.

The following pages of this solicitation give instructions for the preparation and submission of requests for each of these two types of EPSCoR support, along with descriptions of eligible activities and merit review criteria.

## **C. Eligible Activities**

The NSF recognizes that local considerations strongly influence the scope and nature of EPSCoR activities within a state and, therefore, NSF does not require that specific activities be carried out as part of EPSCoR awards. However, all proposals for EPSCoR-supported projects must provide convincing background and rationale for the projects proposed; adhere to EPSCoR objectives, as described in this solicitation; and meet national standards of excellence, including persuasive evidence of the ability to produce demonstrable achievements within the award interval and the potential to obtain subsequent non-EPSCoR support from federal, state, and/or private sector sources.

A state's EPSCoR request may include: support for academic, state, profit, and non-profit organizations as well as individuals employed by such organizations both inside and outside the state. In addition, cooperative programs among research universities within or among EPSCoR states or between a state's research universities and predominantly undergraduate institutions are eligible for EPSCoR support. In all cases, however, principal investigators of EPSCoR projects proposed for NSF support must be affiliated with research universities, agencies, or organizations within the participant state, and all EPSCoR supported projects must enhance the research competitiveness of the state's higher education institutions. In addition, all activities carried out under an EPSCoR award are subject to the restrictions concerning eligible science and engineering disciplines and activities detailed in the *Grant Proposal Guide* (NSF 00-2).

## **II. EPSCoR Research Infrastructure Improvement Grants**

An appropriate fiscal agent, acting on behalf of a jurisdiction's EPSCoR Committee, may submit a single EPSCoR Research Infrastructure Improvement (RII) proposal in response to this solicitation.

The amount of NSF support that may be requested in an EPSCoR Research Infrastructure Improvement proposal shall be limited to a maximum of \$9.0 million over a period of 36 months, dependent upon availability of EPSCoR program funds. A jurisdiction with a current Research Infrastructure Improvement grant will be ineligible to receive a second such award during the 36-month period following its award date.

An EPSCoR Research Infrastructure Improvement grant should be used to improve a state's academic research infrastructure. The state's EPSCoR governing committee shall work closely with leaders in academe, government, and the private sector to identify potential R&D improvement strategies and activities that are most likely to advance the development of a nationally competitive academic R&D capability. It is important to note that a Research Infrastructure Improvement grant is not the appropriate mechanism to provide support for individual faculty S&T research projects. Requests for support of such projects should be directed to the NSF's regular research grant programs.

The EPSCoR jurisdiction's strategy and implementation mechanisms to develop and utilize the S&T resources that reside in its research universities should be described in its EPSCoR Research Infrastructure Improvement proposal. In preparation for submitting a proposal, the EPSCoR governing committee within each jurisdiction is expected to have undertaken a comprehensive analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for development of its research institutions in support of overall jurisdictional R&D objectives. Successful infrastructure improvement plans are likely to be those that candidly represent the opportunities for enhanced academic R&D competitiveness among a jurisdiction's universities, including the acquisition of sustained non-EPSCoR support. Most importantly, the state's infrastructure improvement strategy must identify implementation mechanisms that have a high probability of realizing stated goals and objectives. In all instances, specification of performance milestones and a timetable for achieving such milestones is a prerequisite for EPSCoR support.

### A. Examples of Infrastructure Improvements

Past EPSCoR experience indicates that infrastructure improvement strategies that sharply focus available fiscal and human resources on a *limited number* of R&D areas and activities that are consistent with long-term institutional objectives are most successful. Illustrative examples of S&T infrastructure improvement activities that are consistent with NSF/EPSCoR program objectives are given below. **In each instance EPSCoR support of a proposed R&D improvement activity should not replace other available federal, state, or institutional resources and should add significant value to the existing situation.**

- Improvements that will significantly increase an EPSCoR institution's R&D competitiveness such as: competitive levels of start-up funding for new faculty including "seed funding" of faculty research leading to the submission of competitive grant proposals; faculty exchange programs with major centers of research activity; acquisition of state-of-the-art research instrumentation that is unavailable through NSF's regular grant programs; and development of nationally competitive high-performance computing and networking capabilities.
- Partnerships among EPSCoR universities and between EPSCoR universities and nationally recognized centers of R&D activity (e.g., federal and industrial R&D laboratories, NSF-sponsored research centers, and academic institutions with nationally-recognized research capabilities).
- Partnerships between the jurisdiction's research universities and the private sector, especially those that: increase linkages between EPSCoR researchers and their counterparts in high-technology small businesses and increase the competitiveness of the jurisdiction's S&T entrepreneurial talent in competitions for federal Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) grant funding.

- Innovations in graduate education and human resource development that will expand student career options and facilitate the entry of members of underrepresented groups within the jurisdiction (i.e., minorities, women, and the physically disabled) into high-demand S&T fields.
- Creation of graduate research training groups, or similar appropriate mechanisms that: integrate education and research; encourage multidisciplinary educational experiences; establish links with industry and national laboratories; and nurture a synergistic "corporate" educational and research responsibility.

To insure maximum impact of limited EPSCoR funds, NSF support should not replace existing institutional, state, federal, or private sector funding to maintain existing activities, however excellent they may be. Nor should EPSCoR funding be employed as an alternative to support available through NSF's regular grant programs and special competitions. In addition, requests for EPSCoR funding must: (1) add measurable value to existing research capability in S&T areas of high institutional and jurisdictional priority and (2) present strong potential to generate sustained non-EPSCoR funding from federal, state, or private sector sources.

## **B. Proposal Preparation**

Proposals submitted in response to this program announcement should be prepared and submitted in accordance with the general guidelines contained in the *Grant Proposal Guide* (GPG), NSF 00-2. The complete text of the GPG (including electronic forms) is available electronically on the NSF Web site at: <<http://www.nsf.gov/>>. Paper copies of the GPG may be obtained from the NSF Publications Clearinghouse, telephone 301.947.2722 or by e-mail from [pubs@nsf.gov](mailto:pubs@nsf.gov).

Proposers are reminded to identify the program announcement number (NSF 00-43) in the program announcement/solicitation block on the NSF Form 1207, "*Cover Sheet for Proposal to the National Science Foundation*." Compliance with this requirement is critical to determining the relevant proposal processing guidelines. Failure to submit this information may delay processing.

### Project Description

The section labeled Project Description may not exceed 15 pages, including text as well as any graphic or illustrative materials, and must include the following items.

- The current status of the jurisdiction's academic R&D enterprise including a comprehensive analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for development of its research institutions in support of overall jurisdictional R&D objectives.

- The proposed overall strategy and accompanying implementation mechanisms to improve its competitiveness for federal, state, and private sector R&D funding.
- The specific S&T infrastructure improvement activities identified as being likely to advance to the jurisdiction's future R&D competitiveness and their relationship to the development of nationally competitive S&T focus areas.
- The plan for obtaining non-EPSCoR funding from federal, state, or private sector sources to sustain EPSCoR-initiated infrastructure improvements.
- A management plan containing the following sections. (1) Project Monitoring and Assessment: milestones and a timetable for achieving jurisdictional and institutional EPSCoR objectives and the plan and criteria for monitoring and evaluating program effectiveness. (2) EPSCoR Governing Committee: Committee composition and its role in project governance including specific management responsibilities. (3) EPSCoR Project Director: The role and duties of the project's director. (4) Technical Assistance<sup>1</sup>: A plan to ensure that adequate scientific, technical, and management expertise and assistance are available.

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<sup>1</sup> Technical assistance may include, but is not necessarily limited to, assisting with planning and preparation of proposals to be submitted to major NSF grant competitions; developing frameworks for university-industry-government collaboration; bringing outside experts to an institution/jurisdiction in a mentoring capacity, either individually or in a workshop context; sending EPSCoR researchers on mini-sabbaticals to existing centers to gather experience on management issues; or engaging one of various expert consulting groups for developmental assistance needs.

## Cost Sharing

The grantee must provide at least one dollar of matching funds for every two dollars of NSF support. The proposed cost sharing must be shown on line M on the proposal budget (NSF Form 1030.)

The amount of cost sharing must be shown in the proposal in enough detail to allow NSF to determine its impact on the proposed project. Documentation of availability of cost sharing must be included in the proposal.

Only items which would be allowable under the applicable cost principles, if charged to the project, may be included as the grantee's contribution to cost sharing. Contributions may be made from any non-Federal source, including non-Federal grants or contracts, and may be cash or in-kind (see OMB Circular A-110, Section 23). It should be noted that contributions counted as cost-sharing toward projects of another Federal agency may not be counted towards meeting the specific cost-sharing requirements of the NSF grant.

All cost-sharing amounts are subject to audit. Failure to provide the level of cost-sharing reflected in the approved grant budget may result in termination of the NSF grant, disallowance of grant costs and/or refund of grant funds to NSF.

## Fiscal Arrangement

The jurisdiction's EPSCoR Committee shall designate a fiscal agent for the project. Where possible, this should be the employing organization of the Project Director. A single EPSCoR Research Infrastructure Improvement grant of 36-month duration will be negotiated with the NSF EPSCoR Project Director, subject to the approval of the jurisdiction's EPSCoR Committee and the designated fiscal agent. All negotiations will be based on the results of the review process and the availability of funds. Decisions concerning the award of an EPSCoR Research Infrastructure Improvement grant will be announced, by written notification, to officials of the fiscal agent by the cognizant NSF grants official. The level of NSF support may be negotiated with the Awardee annually, depending upon the jurisdiction's progress in meeting its EPSCoR objectives, the continued commitment of matching funds, and the availability of EPSCoR program funds.

## **C. Proposal Submission**

In response to this solicitation an appropriate fiscal agent, acting on behalf of the jurisdiction's NSF/EPSCoR Committee, may submit one EPSCoR Research Infrastructure Improvement proposal. The proposal must be prepared in strict accordance with the instructions given in the *Grant Proposal Guide* and this solicitation.

Proposers are required to prepare and submit proposals using the NSF FastLane system. Detailed instructions for proposal preparation and submission via FastLane are available at <https://www.fastlane.nsf.gov/a1/newstan.htm>.

The deadline for submission of EPSCoR Research Infrastructure Improvement proposals is 5:00 p.m. (your local time) July 17 annually.

Submission of Signed Cover Sheets. For proposals submitted electronically, the signed paper copy of the proposal Cover Sheet (NSF Form 1207) must be postmarked (or contain a legible proof of mailing date assigned by the carrier) within five working days following proposal submission and be forwarded to the following address.

Program Solicitation NSF 00-43  
National Science Foundation  
DIS-FastLane Cover Sheet  
4201 Wilson Blvd.  
Arlington, VA 22230

A proposal may not be processed until the complete proposal (including signed Cover Sheet) has been received by NSF.

Proposals must be submitted in final form. Addition or correction of proposal materials must not be requested by proposers and will not be considered, unless the EPSCoR program staff solicits additional material. The NSF requires notification of any development, following submission of the proposal that might significantly affect the proposed plan (e.g., change in key project personnel).

#### **D. Proposal Review**

Reviews of proposals submitted to NSF are solicited from peers with expertise in the substantive area of the proposed research or education project. These reviewers are selected by Program officers charged with the oversight of the review process. NSF invites the proposer to suggest, at the time of submission, the names of appropriate or inappropriate reviewers. Care is taken to ensure that reviewers have no conflicts with the proposer. Special efforts are made to recruit reviewers from non-academic institutions, minority serving institutions, or adjacent disciplines to that principally addressed in the proposal.

Proposals will be reviewed against the following general merit review criteria established by the National Science Board. Following each criterion are potential considerations that the reviewer may employ in the evaluation. These are suggestions and not all will apply to any given proposal. Each reviewer will be asked to address only those that are relevant to the proposal and for which he/she is qualified to make judgments.

##### What is the intellectual merit of the proposed activity?

How important is the proposed activity to advancing knowledge and understanding within its own field or across different fields? How well qualified is the proposer (individual or team) to conduct the project? (If appropriate, the reviewer will comment on the quality of prior work.) To what extent does the

proposed activity suggest and explore creative and original concepts? How well conceived and organized is the proposed activity? Is there sufficient access to resources?

#### What are the broader impacts of the proposed activity?

How well does the activity advance discovery and understanding while promoting teaching, training, and learning? How well does the proposed activity broaden the participation of underrepresented groups (e.g., gender, ethnicity, disability, geographic, etc.)? To what extent will it enhance the infrastructure for research and education, such as facilities, instrumentation, networks, and partnerships? Will the results be disseminated broadly to enhance scientific and technological understanding? What may be the benefits of the proposed activity to society?

P.D.s should address the following elements in their proposal to provide reviewers with the information necessary to respond fully to both NSF merit review criteria. NSF staff will give these factors careful consideration in making funding decisions.

#### Integration of Research and Education

One of the principal strategies in support of NSF's goals is to foster integration of research and education through the programs, projects and activities it supports at academic and research institutions. These institutions provide abundant opportunities where individuals may concurrently assume responsibilities as researchers, educators, and students and where all can engage in joint efforts that infuse education with the excitement of discovery and enrich research through the diversity of learner perspectives.

#### Integrating Diversity into NSF Programs, Projects, and Activities

Broadening opportunities and enabling the participation of all citizens -- women and men, underrepresented minorities, and persons with disabilities -- is essential to the health and vitality of science and engineering. NSF is committed to this principle of diversity and deems it central to the programs, projects, and activities it considers and supports.

#### Special Evaluation Criterion for EPSCoR Proposals

In responding to the merit review criterion, "What are the broader impacts of the proposed activity?" reviewers will also be asked to place special emphasis on the likelihood that: **the proposed S&T infrastructure improvements will enhance research competitiveness and substantially improve the jurisdiction's ability to obtain non-EPSCoR funding from federal, state, or private sector sources.**

A summary rating and accompanying narrative will be completed and signed by each reviewer. In all cases, reviews are treated as confidential documents. Verbatim copies of reviews, excluding the names of the reviewers, are mailed to the Principal Investigator/Project Director by the Program Director. In addition, the proposer will receive an explanation of the decision to award or decline funding.

#### Review Protocol and Associated Customer Service Standard

All proposals are carefully reviewed by at least three other persons outside NSF who are experts in the particular field represented by the proposal. Proposals submitted in response to this announcement are expected to be reviewed by panel.

Reviewers will be asked to formulate a recommendation to either support or decline each proposal. A program officer assigned to manage the proposal's review will consider the advice of reviewers and will formulate a recommendation. NSF will be able to tell applicants whether their proposals have been declined or recommended for funding within six months for 95 percent of proposals. The time interval begins on the proposal deadline or target date or from the date of receipt, if deadlines or target dates are not used by the program. The interval ends when the division director accepts the program officer's recommendation.

In all cases, after programmatic approval has been obtained, the proposals recommended for funding will be forwarded to the Division of Grants and Agreements for review of business, financial, and policy implications and the processing and issuance of a grant or other agreement. Proposers are cautioned that only a Grants Officer may make commitments, obligations or awards on behalf of NSF or authorize the expenditure of funds. No commitment on the part of NSF should be inferred from technical or budgetary discussions with an NSF Program officer. A project director or organization that makes financial or personnel commitments in the absence of a grant or cooperative agreement signed by the NSF Grants Officer does so at its own risk.

### **E. Award Administration**

#### Notification of the Award.

Notification of the award is made to the submitting organization by a Grants Officer in the Division of Grants and Agreements (DGA). Organizations whose proposals are declined will be advised as promptly as possible by the cognizant NSF Program Division administering the program. Verbatim copies of reviews, not including the identity of the reviewer, will be provided automatically to the Project Director.

#### Grant Award Conditions.

An NSF grant consists of: (1) the award letter, which includes any special provisions applicable to the grant and any numbered amendments thereto; (2) the budget, which indicates the amounts, by categories of expense, on which NSF has based its support (or otherwise communicates any specific approvals or disapprovals of proposed expenditures); (3) the proposal referenced in the award letter; (4) the applicable grant conditions, such as Grant General Conditions (NSF GC-1)\* or Federal Demonstration Partnership Phase III (FDP) Terms and Conditions\* and (5) any NSF brochure, program guide, announcement or other NSF issuance that may be incorporated by reference in the award letter. Electronic mail notification is the preferred way to transmit NSF grants to organizations that have electronic mail capabilities and have requested such notification from the Division of Grants and Agreements.

\* These documents may be accessed electronically on NSF's Web site at: <<http://www.nsf.gov/>>. Paper copies may be obtained from the NSF Publications Clearinghouse, telephone 301 947-2722 or by e-mail from [pubs@nsf.gov](mailto:pubs@nsf.gov).

More comprehensive information on NSF Award Conditions is contained in the NSF *Grant Policy Manual* (GPM) Chapter II, (NSF 95-26) available electronically on the NSF Web site. The GPM also is available in paper copy by subscription from the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402. The GPM may be ordered through the GPO Web site at: <<http://www.gpo.gov/>>.

### Awardee Reporting Requirements

For all multi-year grants (including both standard and continuing grants), the PD must submit an annual project report to the cognizant Program Officer at least 90 days before the end of the current budget period.

Within 90 days after expiration of a grant, the PD also is required to submit a final project report. Approximately 30 days before expiration, NSF will send a notice to remind the PD of the requirement to file the final project report. Failure to provide final technical reports delays NSF review and processing of pending proposals for that PD. PDs should examine the formats of the required reports in advance to assure availability of required data.

Both annual reports and final reports should contain specific information certifying the commitment of cost sharing funds and describe outcomes that have been achieved relative to stated programmatic milestones, expressed in terms that are readily understandable to a scientifically or technically literate lay reader

NSF has implemented a new electronic project reporting system, available through FastLane, which permits electronic submission and updating of project reports, including information on: project participants (individual and organizational); activities and findings; publications; and, other specific products and contributions. Reports will continue to be required annually and after the expiration of the grant, but PDs will not need to re-enter information previously

provided, either with the proposal or in earlier updates using the electronic system.

### Project Organization/Changes

Primary responsibility for project management of an EPSCoR Research Infrastructure Improvement award rests with the grantee organization and the EPSCoR Project Director. Policy guidance and program oversight shall be provided by the state EPSCoR committee. Committee membership should reflect the state's leadership and represent state government, higher education, and the private sector.

NSF grant management policies require that certain changes receive prior approval of either the cognizant NSF program officer or the NSF Grants and Agreements officer. Many changes may be made at the discretion of the EPSCoR Project Director, while others require the approval of an institutional grants official. The NSF's policies on grant changes are contained in the NSF *Grant Policy Manual* (NSF 95-26) and the NSF *Grant General Conditions*.

## **III. Developmental Assistance Supplements**

For existing EPSCoR Cooperative Agreements supporting a jurisdiction's Research Infrastructure Improvement activities, requests for supplements to those awards may be made to the EPSCoR Office to provide additional expertise and assistance for the jurisdiction to further its objectives of increased research competitiveness. Supplement requests must describe the specific need to be addressed (e.g. assistance with planning and preparation of a proposal to be submitted to a centers or other major NSF competition); detail how the jurisdiction proposes to meet the need; and provide an explicit budget and budget justification. The duration and amount of Developmental Assistance Requests will vary with the specific need to be addressed but must not exceed 24 months and a total of \$75,000. Such assistance may include, but is not necessarily limited to, assisting with planning and preparation of proposals to be submitted to major NSF grant competitions; developing frameworks for university-industry-government collaboration; bringing outside experts to an institution/jurisdiction in a mentoring capacity, either individually or in a workshop context; sending EPSCoR researchers on mini-sabbaticals to existing centers to gather experience on management issues; or engaging one of various expert consulting groups for developmental assistance needs.

## **IV. EPSCoR Co-Funding**

To accelerate the movement of EPSCoR researchers and institutions into the mainstream of federal and private sector R&D support, the EPSCoR Office has initiated a co-funding mechanism. This Co-funding Initiative is not a program to which proposals can be submitted. Instead, it is an internal means whereby the

EPSCoR Office and the reviewing/managing program jointly provide support for proposals that review at or near the cutoff point for funding from regular NSF competitions. Individual investigator, research group, and research center proposals submitted to both recurring and special competitions of programs throughout the NSF's research divisions, as well as to various cross-directorate and Foundation-wide competitions, may be eligible for co-funding. EPSCoR co-funding is restricted to awards made to investigators at institutions in the twenty jurisdictions eligible to participate in NSF EPSCoR.<sup>2</sup>

In any fiscal year, the availability of EPSCoR Office funds for this initiative will determine the overall level of co-funding. However, the amount of co-funding received by each jurisdiction will depend primarily on the number and quality of proposals submitted from institutions in that jurisdiction.

EPSCoR co-funding is limited to those research areas identified by the jurisdiction and its major research universities as being important to future R&D competitiveness (i.e., those S&T areas of emphasis that have been identified as priorities by the state's EPSCoR governing committee). For proposals deemed relevant, the state EPSCoR Project Director provides a signed "Certification of Eligibility for EPSCoR Co-funding" form (NSF Form 1404).

Proposals from "first-time" investigators (i.e. those who have not previously or recently received NSF research support) will be given preference or higher priority for EPSCoR co-funding. Proposals submitted by individual investigators who have had significant amounts of previous research support from the NSF research division to which the proposal is submitted are NOT an EPSCoR priority. However, proposals from such investigators will be considered for EPSCoR co-funding if they have the potential to result in broad institutional improvements [e.g., Major Research Instrumentation (MRI), Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REU) Sites, Integrative Graduate Education and Research Training (IGERT), etc.] or demonstrably assist in the development of research careers of junior-level faculty.

All proposals must be prepared and submitted according to the instructions contained in the *Grant Proposal Guide (NSF 00-2)* or the current program announcement of any particular program or special competition to which they are submitted. In addition, to be potentially eligible for co-funding support, proposals must include NSF Form 1404. This certification form must accompany the proposal at the time of submission. It should be placed directly behind the signed cover page (NSF Form 1207) of the original copy only for hard copy proposal submissions or mailed with the signed cover page and any other required forms bearing original signatures for proposals submitted electronically via *FastLane*

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<sup>2</sup> Investigators planning collaborative research projects with colleagues from non-EPSCoR jurisdictions are advised to submit simultaneous proposals, indicating "Collaborative Research:" in the project title (see the *Grant Proposal Guide* concerning special guidelines for preparation/submission of Collaborative Proposals).

(Note: It is anticipated that, as of October 1, 2000, all proposals to NSF must be submitted via *FastLane*).

Information on how to contact EPSCoR Project Directors regarding certification may be found, along with a working copy of NSF Form 1404 and more information about certification and the Co-funding Initiative, at: <http://www.ehr.nsf.gov/EHR/EPSCoR/report/cofund.htm>.

The review and administration of EPSCoR-certified proposals will be handled by the NSF programs to which they are submitted. EPSCoR co-funding eligibility is kept in confidence by the managing program to which a proposal has been submitted and is not a factor in the review of certified proposals.

Co-funding award decisions, including final budget levels, shall result from negotiations between the EPSCoR Office staff and the cognizant NSF Program Officer. Any personal requests for co-funding of proposals by EPSCoR researchers to cognizant NSF program officers or EPSCoR Office staff are strongly discouraged and will jeopardize the opportunity for EPSCoR co-funding.

## **V. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

### Contact for Additional Information

General inquiries, as well as questions concerning FastLane, should be made to the Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR) Program Director, Mr. Richard E. Hastings, Room 875, National Science Foundation, Arlington, VA 22230, telephone 703 306-1385, e-mail: [rhasting@nsf.gov](mailto:rhasting@nsf.gov).

### Other Programs of Interest

The NSF Guide to Programs is a compilation of funding for research and education in science, mathematics, and engineering. General descriptions of NSF programs, research areas, and eligibility information for proposal submission are provided in each chapter. Many NSF programs offer announcements concerning specific proposal requirements. To obtain additional information about these requirements, contact the appropriate NSF program offices listed in Appendix A of the GPG. Any changes in NSF's fiscal year programs occurring after press time for the Guide to Programs will be announced in the NSF Bulletin, available monthly (except July and August), and in individual program announcements. The Bulletin is available electronically via the NSF Web Site at <http://www.nsf.gov>. The direct URL for recent issues of the Bulletin is <http://www.nsf.gov/od/lpa/news/publicat/bulletin/bulletin.htm>. Subscribers can also sign up for NSF's Custom News Service to find out what funding opportunities are available.

## About the National Science Foundation

The National Science Foundation (NSF) funds research and education in most fields of science and engineering. Grantees are wholly responsible for conducting their project activities and preparing the results for publication. Thus, the Foundation does not assume responsibility for such findings or their interpretation.

NSF welcomes proposals from all qualified scientists, engineers and educators. The Foundation strongly encourages women, minorities, and persons with disabilities to compete fully in its programs. In accordance with federal statutes, regulations, and NSF policies, no person on grounds of race, color, age, sex, national origin, or disability shall be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving financial assistance from NSF (unless otherwise specified in the eligibility requirements for a particular program).

Facilitation Awards for Scientists and Engineers with Disabilities (FASSED) provide funding for special assistance or equipment to enable persons with disabilities (investigators and other staff, including student research assistants) to work on NSF-supported projects. See the program announcement or contact the program coordinator at (703) 306-1636.

The National Science Foundation has Telephonic Device for the Deaf (TDD) and Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) capabilities that enable individuals with hearing impairments to communicate with the Foundation regarding NSF programs, employment, or general information. TDD may be accessed at (703) 306-0090 or through FIRS on 1-800-877-8339.

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## Privacy Act and Public Burden Statements

The information requested on proposal forms and project reports is solicited under the authority of the National Science Foundation Act of 1950, as amended. The information on proposal forms will be used in connection with the selection of qualified proposals; project reports submitted by awardees will be used for program evaluation and reporting within the Executive Branch and to Congress. The information requested may be disclosed to qualified reviewers and staff assistants as part of the review process; to applicant institutions/grantees to provide or obtain data regarding the proposal review process, award decisions, or the administration of awards; to government contractors, experts, volunteers and researchers and educators as necessary to complete assigned work; to other government agencies needing information as part of the review process or

in order to coordinate programs; and to another Federal agency, court or party in a court or Federal administrative proceeding if the government is a party. Information about Principal Investigators may be added to the Reviewer file and used to select potential candidates to serve as peer reviewers or advisory committee members. See Systems of Records, NSF-50, "Principal Investigator/Proposal File and Associated Records," 63 Federal Register 267 (January 5, 1998), and NSF-51, "Reviewer/Proposal File and Associated Records," 63 Federal Register 268 (January 5, 1998). Submission of the information is voluntary. Failure to provide full and complete information, however, may reduce the possibility of receiving an award.

Pursuant to 5 CFR 1320.5(b), an agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to an information collection unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The OMB control number for this collection is 3145-0058. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 120 hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions. Send comments regarding this burden estimate and any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to: Suzanne Plimpton, Reports Clearance Officer, Information Dissemination Branch, Division of Administrative Services, National Science Foundation, Arlington, VA 22230, or to Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs of OMB, Attention: Desk Officer for National Science Foundation (3145-0058), 725 – 17<sup>th</sup> Street, N.W. Room 10235, Washington, D.C. 20503.