



National Science Foundation
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NSF 12-056

Dear Colleague Letter: Promoting Partnerships between Centers for Chemical Innovation and Informal Science Education Organizations, FY 2012 Supplemental Funding Opportunity

The NSF Divisions of Chemistry (CHE) and Research on Learning in Formal and Informal Settings (DRL) wish to provide supplemental funding opportunities to Phase II Centers for Chemical Innovation (CCI) that enable new collaborations with informal science education (ISE) organizations.

Empowering the Nation through Discovery and Innovation, the NSF Strategic Plan for FY 2011-2016,¹ articulates the need for public literacy in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM): "The scientific literacy of society is central to the progress of science and is a necessary backdrop for innovation. Given the complex and technical challenges that society faces, ranging in scope from personal to global, it is vital that resources and opportunities for continued access to cutting-edge science are broadly available."

Teams are invited to develop a project that benefits both the CCI and the ISE Organization. Higher risk projects that explore new models of collaboration, new approaches or platforms for informal science education, and new models of professional development are particularly encouraged. Supplements are expected to address at least one of the following goals:

- to promote strong partnerships between CCI researchers and ISE professionals that lead to a deeper mutual understanding of each other's profession
- to develop and pilot new collaborative programs that enhance public science literacy and public understanding of the research being done at the CCIs
- to provide professional development opportunities to ISE professionals and CCI researchers and staff

Supplemental funding requests of up to \$150,000 may be submitted. NSF expects to fund up to three supplements, contingent on availability of funds and quality of submitted requests. For full consideration, such supplemental funding requests must be submitted by May 16, 2012. For planning purposes, the estimated start date for these programs should be three to four months after submission. The duration of this partnership development activity should reflect the scope of work and be less than 24 months. Travel costs for three team members' attendance at the FY 2014 ISE PI Meeting (January 2014 in Washington DC) should be included in the requested budget.

The supplemental funding request should include plans for an evaluation component, particularly front-end and formative evaluations that will strengthen their project. In addition to the project evaluation, teams (CCI staff or researcher, ISE professional, evaluator) will participate in a formative evaluation of this partnership program, potentially including focus groups and interviews, to take place at the ISE PI meeting in January 2014.

¹ Empowering the Nation through Discovery and Innovation, NSF Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years (FY) 2011-2016. http://www.nsf.gov/news/strategicplan/nsfstrategicplan_2011_2016.pdf