

# Focused Research Groups in the Mathematical Sciences (FRG)

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## PROGRAM SOLICITATION

NSF 12-566

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REPLACES DOCUMENT(S):  
NSF 06-580

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National Science Foundation

Directorate for Mathematical & Physical Sciences  
Division of Mathematical Sciences

**Full Proposal Deadline(s)** (due by 5 p.m. proposer's local time):

September 21, 2012

Third Friday in September, Annually Thereafter

September 20, 2013

Third Friday in September, Annually Thereafter

## IMPORTANT INFORMATION AND REVISION NOTES

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Any proposal submitted in response to this solicitation should be submitted in accordance with the revised *NSF Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide* (PAPPG) ([NSF 16-1](#)), which is effective for proposals submitted, or due, on or after January 25, 2016.

## SUMMARY OF PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

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### General Information

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**Program Title:**

Focused Research Groups in the Mathematical Sciences (FRG)

**Synopsis of Program:**

The purpose of the FRG activity is to allow groups of researchers to respond to recognized scientific needs of pressing importance, to take advantage of current scientific opportunities, or to prepare the ground for anticipated significant scientific developments in the mathematical sciences. Groups may include, in addition to mathematicians and statisticians, researchers from other science and engineering disciplines appropriate to the proposed research. The activity supports projects for which the collective effort by a group of researchers is necessary to reach the scientific goals. Projects should be scientifically focused and well-delineated. It is not the intent of this activity to provide general support for infrastructure. Projects should also be timely, limited in duration to up to three years, and substantial in their scope and impact.

**Cognizant Program Officer(s):**

*Please note that the following information is current at the time of publishing. See program website for any updates to the points of contact.*

- Tomek Bartoszynski, 1025 N, telephone: (703) 292-4885, email: [tbartosz@nsf.gov](mailto:tbartosz@nsf.gov)
- Eugene C. Gartland, Program Director, 1025 N, telephone: (703) 292-2279, email: [egartlan@nsf.gov](mailto:egartlan@nsf.gov)
- Timothy Hodges, 1025 N, telephone: (703) 292-2113, email: [thodges@nsf.gov](mailto:thodges@nsf.gov)
- Leland M. Jameson, 1025 N, telephone: (703) 292-4883, email: [ljameson@nsf.gov](mailto:ljameson@nsf.gov)
- Swatee Naik, 1025 N, telephone: (703) 292-4876, email: [snaik@nsf.gov](mailto:snaik@nsf.gov)
- Gabor Szekely, Program Director, 1025 N, telephone: (703) 292-8869, email: [gszekely@nsf.gov](mailto:gszekely@nsf.gov)
- Frederi G. Viens, 1025 N, telephone: (703) 292-2858, email: [fviens@nsf.gov](mailto:fviens@nsf.gov)

**Applicable Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number(s):**

- 47.049 --- Mathematical and Physical Sciences

## Award Information

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**Anticipated Type of Award:** Standard Grant or Continuing Grant

**Estimated Number of Awards:** 7 to 10 Approximately 7-10 awards annually.

**Anticipated Funding Amount:** \$10,000,000 Approximately \$10,000,000 will be available for this activity annually, subject to availability of funds.

## Eligibility Information

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### Who May Submit Proposals:

Proposals may only be submitted by the following:

- The categories of proposers identified in the NSF Grant Proposal Guide (GPG) are eligible to submit proposals under this program solicitation. Proposals involving investigators from more than one institution are allowed and should be submitted as separately submitted collaborative proposals. See GPG [Chapter II.D.4.b](#) for guidance on the simultaneous submission of proposals from different organizations.

### Who May Serve as PI:

There are no restrictions or limits.

### Limit on Number of Proposals per Organization:

There are no restrictions or limits.

### Limit on Number of Proposals per PI or Co-PI:

There are no restrictions or limits.

## Proposal Preparation and Submission Instructions

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### A. Proposal Preparation Instructions

- **Letters of Intent:** Not required
- **Preliminary Proposal Submission:** Not required
- **Full Proposals:**
  - Full Proposals submitted via FastLane: NSF Proposal and Award Policies and Procedures Guide, Part I: Grant Proposal Guide (GPG) Guidelines apply. The complete text of the GPG is available electronically on the NSF website at: [http://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub\\_summ.jsp?ods\\_key=gpg](http://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub_summ.jsp?ods_key=gpg).
  - Full Proposals submitted via Grants.gov: NSF Grants.gov Application Guide: A Guide for the Preparation and Submission of NSF Applications via Grants.gov Guidelines apply (Note: The NSF Grants.gov Application Guide is available on the Grants.gov website and on the NSF website at: [http://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub\\_summ.jsp?ods\\_key=grantsgovguide](http://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub_summ.jsp?ods_key=grantsgovguide))

### B. Budgetary Information

- **Cost Sharing Requirements:**

Inclusion of voluntary committed cost sharing is prohibited.
- **Indirect Cost (F&A) Limitations:**

None
- **Other Budgetary Limitations:**

Other budgetary limitations apply. Please see the full text of this solicitation for further information.

### C. Due Dates

- **Full Proposal Deadline(s)** (due by 5 p.m. proposer's local time):
  - September 21, 2012  
Third Friday in September, Annually Thereafter
  - September 20, 2013  
Third Friday in September, Annually Thereafter

## Proposal Review Information Criteria

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### Merit Review Criteria:

National Science Board approved criteria. Additional merit review considerations apply. Please see the full text of this solicitation for further information.

## Award Administration Information

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### Award Conditions:

Standard NSF award conditions apply.

### Reporting Requirements:

Standard NSF reporting requirements apply.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

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The Division of Mathematical Sciences (DMS) of the National Science Foundation (NSF) expects to make a small number of awards annually that will support the activities of groups of investigators. Proposals for these Focused Research Groups (FRG) in the Mathematical Sciences should provide a plan for making significant progress in scientifically focused areas of recognized or emerging importance to the mathematical sciences and explain that the success of the proposed research project depends in a crucial way upon a group effort. DMS employs the individual investigator award as the principal mechanism for supporting fundamental research. On the other hand, mathematics and statistics thrive on the sharing of ideas, and there are research needs that can only be met appropriately by teams of researchers. The advantages of pooled insights, complementary expertise, diverse points of view, and shared tasks make a successful research team more than the sum of its parts. A dedicated mode of support for such scientifically focused multi-investigator projects is provided by the FRG activity.

## II. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

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The purpose of the FRG activity is to support work by groups of three or more researchers to respond to recognized scientific needs of pressing importance, to take advantage of current scientific opportunities, or to prepare and solidify the ground for anticipated scientific developments in mathematics or statistics. Groups may include, in addition to mathematicians and statisticians, researchers from other scientific and engineering disciplines appropriate to the proposed research. Projects supported under this activity should be essentially collaborative in nature and depend for their advancement on the interaction of a group of researchers. Projects should be scientifically focused and well-delineated. It is not the intent of this activity to provide general support for infrastructure. Projects should be timely, limited in duration to up to three years, and substantial in both their scope and likely impact. For a renewal project, the research focus should also be substantially different from the one in the previously funded project. Here is a list, by no means exhaustive, of indicators suggesting that an FRG approach might be appropriate.

- Accumulated scientific results point to the possibility of a major breakthrough.
- A major recent breakthrough has created new possibilities for significant progress.
- An existing important scientifically focused research agenda needs close cooperation of several researchers to be advanced or can be significantly accelerated through such cooperation.

- Significant opportunities for productive mutual exchange between areas within mathematics or statistics or between mathematics or statistics and other scientific areas have recently become apparent.
- A substantial mathematical or statistical research agenda is waiting to be formulated and exploited, because a specific area in science or engineering is ready for closer interaction with the mathematical sciences.

The aim of the activity is to support projects for which the collective effort by a group of researchers is necessary to reach the scientific goals in a timely manner. Thus, proposals must explain that interaction and group effort are critical to the success of the project. The research group should include at least three senior personnel or other professionals. The group members can, but are not required to, come from more than one institution or discipline. Awards made under the FRG activity are intended to foster a crucial and unusual synergy between the group members that cannot be achieved with individual grants. In particular, researchers supported by this activity are expected to collaborate closely and intensely during the project on a well-delineated topic. At the same time, the impact and promise of supported projects should be broad, significant, and long-term. Examples of possible outcomes for FRG projects include the following:

- Substantial progress is made toward solution of a set of major open questions.
- New research directions that have become possible due to recent advances are identified, and significant progress is achieved.
- As a direct result of the group effort, an important scientifically focused research agenda is advanced significantly.
- Significant new opportunities for productive mutual exchange between different areas in mathematics or statistics are identified and progress is made towards exploiting these opportunities.
- Significant new opportunities for mathematics or statistics in areas of science and engineering are identified, and exemplary evidence of how to seize and exploit these opportunities is produced.

Additional possible outcomes include the following:

- Graduate students and postdoctoral researchers are trained in an important emerging area.
- Graduate students, postdoctoral researchers, and undergraduates are trained in new ways. This could include, but is not limited to, interdisciplinary training or training in team-based research.
- New and exemplary modes of collaborations are established.

FRG projects should take advantage of opportunities and resources at or near the institutions at which the research will be performed. Research groups are expected to remain open to the broader scientific community from which they are drawn and to disseminate the results of their work in a timely and effective fashion.

### III. AWARD INFORMATION

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Under this solicitation, proposals may be submitted for any funding amount from \$150,000 up to \$500,000 per year, for up to three years. The budget must be commensurate with the project and thoroughly justified in the proposal. DMS expects to fund approximately seven to ten awards annually, depending on the quality of submissions and the availability of funds. The anticipated date of awards is April of each year.

### IV. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

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#### Who May Submit Proposals:

Proposals may only be submitted by the following:

- The categories of proposers identified in the NSF Grant Proposal Guide (GPG) are eligible to submit proposals under this program solicitation. Proposals involving investigators from more than one institution are allowed and should be submitted as separately submitted collaborative proposals. See GPG [Chapter II.D.4.b](#) for guidance on the simultaneous submission of proposals from different organizations.

#### Who May Serve as PI:

There are no restrictions or limits.

#### Limit on Number of Proposals per Organization:

There are no restrictions or limits.

#### Limit on Number of Proposals per PI or Co-PI:

There are no restrictions or limits.

### V. PROPOSAL PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

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## A. Proposal Preparation Instructions

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**Full Proposal Preparation Instructions:** Proposers may opt to submit proposals in response to this Program Solicitation via Grants.gov or via the NSF FastLane system.

- Full proposals submitted via FastLane: Proposals submitted in response to this program solicitation should be prepared and submitted in accordance with the general guidelines contained in the NSF Grant Proposal Guide (GPG). The complete text of the GPG is available electronically on the NSF website at: [http://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub\\_summ.jsp?ods\\_key=gpg](http://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub_summ.jsp?ods_key=gpg). Paper copies of the GPG may be obtained from the NSF Publications Clearinghouse, telephone (703) 292-7827 or by e-mail from [nsfpubs@nsf.gov](mailto:nsfpubs@nsf.gov). Proposers are reminded to identify this program solicitation number in the program solicitation block on the NSF 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.
- Full proposals submitted via Grants.gov: Proposals submitted in response to this program solicitation via Grants.gov should be prepared and submitted in accordance with the NSF Grants.gov Application Guide: A Guide for the Preparation and Submission of NSF Applications via Grants.gov. The complete text of the NSF Grants.gov Application Guide is available on the Grants.gov website and on the NSF website at: ([http://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub\\_summ.jsp?ods\\_key=grantsgovguide](http://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub_summ.jsp?ods_key=grantsgovguide)). To obtain copies of the Application Guide and Application Forms Package, click on the Apply tab on the Grants.gov site, then click on the Apply Step 1: Download a Grant Application Package and Application Instructions link and enter the funding opportunity number, (the program solicitation number without the NSF prefix) and press the Download Package button. Paper copies of the Grants.gov Application Guide also may be obtained from the NSF Publications Clearinghouse, telephone (703) 292-7827 or by e-mail from [nsfpubs@nsf.gov](mailto:nsfpubs@nsf.gov).

In determining which method to utilize in the electronic preparation and submission of the proposal, please note the following:

Collaborative Proposals. All collaborative proposals submitted as separate submissions from multiple organizations must be submitted via the NSF FastLane system. Chapter II, Section D.4 of the Grant Proposal Guide provides additional information on collaborative proposals.

The following instructions supplement or deviate from the GPG:

- a. Cover sheet. To facilitate timely processing, the title of the proposed project should begin with the four characters "FRG:" The title of a collaborative FRG proposal should begin with the designation "FRG: Collaborative Research:" All proposals in a collaborative group should have the same title and should be submitted to the same DMS program(s).
- b. Project Description.
  - o Proposed Research. Narrative, not to exceed twenty pages, consisting of the following items:
    - An explanation of the scientific context and timeliness of the proposed project.
    - A description of the proposed research.
    - A justification for why a group effort is necessary to carry out the proposed project.
    - A timeline for the planned work and a justification for the duration.
    - Plans for disseminating the results.
    - Results from prior NSF support, if applicable and related to the proposal.
  - o Modes of Collaboration and Training. The following components, not to exceed an additional five pages total, can be included if appropriate:
    - A description of new modes of collaboration.
    - A description of new modes of training graduate students, postdoctoral researchers, or undergraduates.
    - A description of planned workshops and a list of tentative participants.
  - o Management Plan. Provide a management plan, describing how the group effort will be coordinated and how decisions will be made regarding the conduct of the project. This section may not exceed one page.
- c. Biographical Sketches. For all key personnel, please provide a biographical sketch. The first part of the biographical sketch, up to two pages in length, should be prepared following the guidelines specified in the Grant Proposal Guide. For each individual, up to one additional page is required describing how that individual will contribute to the project. For senior personnel and other professionals, this additional page should provide an estimate of the amount of time to be committed to the project. For investigators with other supported research, this additional page should explain how the investigator will allocate time and effort among the projects.

The page limits and the limits on listed publications in the biographical sketches will be strictly enforced. Proposals not adhering to these limitations will be returned without review.

## B. Budgetary Information

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### Cost Sharing:

Inclusion of voluntary committed cost sharing is prohibited.

### Indirect Cost (F&A) Limitations:

None

### Other Budgetary Limitations:

Award size is limited to between \$150,000 and \$500,000 per year for up to three years duration

## C. Due Dates

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- **Full Proposal Deadline(s)** (due by 5 p.m. proposer's local time):

September 21, 2012

Third Friday in September, Annually Thereafter

September 20, 2013

## D. FastLane/Grants.gov Requirements

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### For Proposals Submitted Via FastLane:

To prepare and submit a proposal via FastLane, see detailed technical instructions available at: <https://www.fastlane.nsf.gov/a1/newstan.htm>. For FastLane user support, call the FastLane Help Desk at 1-800-673-6188 or e-mail [fastlane@nsf.gov](mailto:fastlane@nsf.gov). The FastLane Help Desk answers general technical questions related to the use of the FastLane system. Specific questions related to this program solicitation should be referred to the NSF program staff contact(s) listed in Section VIII of this funding opportunity.

### For Proposals Submitted Via Grants.gov:

Before using Grants.gov for the first time, each organization must register to create an institutional profile. Once registered, the applicant's organization can then apply for any federal grant on the Grants.gov website. Comprehensive information about using Grants.gov is available on the Grants.gov Applicant Resources webpage: <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants.html>. In addition, the NSF Grants.gov Application Guide (see link in Section V.A) provides instructions regarding the technical preparation of proposals via Grants.gov. For Grants.gov user support, contact the Grants.gov Contact Center at 1-800-518-4726 or by email: [support@grants.gov](mailto:support@grants.gov). The Grants.gov Contact Center answers general technical questions related to the use of Grants.gov. Specific questions related to this program solicitation should be referred to the NSF program staff contact(s) listed in Section VIII of this solicitation.

**Submitting the Proposal:** Once all documents have been completed, the Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR) must submit the application to Grants.gov and verify the desired funding opportunity and agency to which the application is submitted. The AOR must then sign and submit the application to Grants.gov. The completed application will be transferred to the NSF FastLane system for further processing.

Proposers that submitted via FastLane are strongly encouraged to use FastLane to verify the status of their submission to NSF. For proposers that submitted via Grants.gov, until an application has been received and validated by NSF, the Authorized Organizational Representative may check the status of an application on Grants.gov. After proposers have received an e-mail notification from NSF, Research.gov should be used to check the status of an application.

## VI. NSF PROPOSAL PROCESSING AND REVIEW PROCEDURES

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Proposals received by NSF are assigned to the appropriate NSF program for acknowledgement and, if they meet NSF requirements, for review. All proposals are carefully reviewed by a scientist, engineer, or educator serving as an NSF Program Officer, and usually by three to ten other persons outside NSF either as *ad hoc* reviewers, panelists, or both, who are experts in the particular fields represented by the proposal. These reviewers are selected by Program Officers charged with oversight of the review process. Proposers are invited to suggest names of persons they believe are especially well qualified to review the proposal and/or persons they would prefer not review the proposal. These suggestions may serve as one source in the reviewer selection process at the Program Officer's discretion. Submission of such names, however, is optional. Care is taken to ensure that reviewers have no conflicts of interest with the proposal. In addition, Program Officers may obtain comments from site visits before recommending final action on proposals. Senior NSF staff further review recommendations for awards. A flowchart that depicts the entire NSF proposal and award process (and associated timeline) is included in the [GPG](#) as Exhibit III-1.

A comprehensive description of the Foundation's merit review process is available on the NSF website at: [http://www.nsf.gov/bfa/dias/policy/merit\\_review/](http://www.nsf.gov/bfa/dias/policy/merit_review/).

Proposers should also be aware of core strategies that are essential to the fulfillment of NSF's mission, as articulated in *Investing in Science, Engineering, and Education for the Nation's Future: NSF Strategic Plan for 2014-2018*. These strategies are integrated in the program planning and implementation process, of which proposal review is one part. NSF's mission is particularly well-implemented through the integration of research and education and broadening participation in NSF programs, projects, and activities.

One of the strategic objectives in support of NSF's mission is to foster integration of research and education through the programs, projects, and activities it supports at academic and research institutions. These institutions must recruit, train, and prepare a diverse STEM workforce to advance the frontiers of science and participate in the U.S. technology-based economy. NSF's contribution to the national innovation ecosystem is to provide cutting-edge research under the guidance of the Nation's most creative scientists and engineers. NSF also supports development of a strong science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) workforce by investing in building the knowledge that informs improvements in STEM teaching and learning.

NSF's mission calls for the broadening of opportunities and expanding participation of groups, institutions, and geographic regions that are underrepresented in STEM disciplines, which 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.

## A. Merit Review Principles and Criteria

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The National Science Foundation strives to invest in a robust and diverse portfolio of projects that creates new knowledge and enables breakthroughs in understanding across all areas of science and engineering research and education. To identify which projects to support, NSF relies on a merit review process that incorporates consideration of both the technical aspects of a proposed project and its potential to contribute more broadly to advancing NSF's mission "to promote the progress of science; to advance the national health, prosperity, and welfare; to secure the national defense; and for other purposes." NSF makes every effort to conduct a fair, competitive, transparent merit review process for the selection of projects.

### 1. Merit Review Principles

These principles are to be given due diligence by PIs and organizations when preparing proposals and managing projects, by reviewers when reading and evaluating proposals, and by NSF program staff when determining whether or not to recommend proposals for funding and while overseeing awards. Given that NSF is the primary federal agency charged with nurturing and supporting excellence in basic research and education, the following three principles apply:

- All NSF projects should be of the highest quality and have the potential to advance, if not transform, the frontiers of knowledge.
- NSF projects, in the aggregate, should contribute more broadly to achieving societal goals. These "Broader Impacts" may be accomplished through the research itself, through activities that are directly related to specific research projects, or through activities that are supported by, but are complementary to, the project. The project activities may be based on previously established and/or innovative methods and approaches, but in either case must be well justified.
- Meaningful assessment and evaluation of NSF funded projects should be based on appropriate metrics, keeping in mind the likely correlation between the effect of broader impacts and the resources provided to implement projects. If the size of the activity is limited, evaluation of that activity in isolation is not likely to be meaningful. Thus, assessing the effectiveness of these activities may best be done at a higher, more aggregated, level than the individual project.

With respect to the third principle, even if assessment of Broader Impacts outcomes for particular projects is done at an aggregated level, PIs are expected to be accountable for carrying out the activities described in the funded project. Thus, individual projects should include clearly stated goals, specific descriptions of the activities that the PI intends to do, and a plan in place to document the outputs of those activities.

These three merit review principles provide the basis for the merit review criteria, as well as a context within which the users of the criteria can better understand their intent.

## 2. Merit Review Criteria

All NSF proposals are evaluated through use of the two National Science Board approved merit review criteria. In some instances, however, NSF will employ additional criteria as required to highlight the specific objectives of certain programs and activities.

The two merit review criteria are listed below. **Both** criteria are to be given **full consideration** during the review and decision-making processes; each criterion is necessary but neither, by itself, is sufficient. Therefore, proposers must fully address both criteria. (GPG Chapter II.C.2.d.i. contains additional information for use by proposers in development of the Project Description section of the proposal.) Reviewers are strongly encouraged to review the criteria, including GPG Chapter II.C.2.d.i., prior to the review of a proposal.

When evaluating NSF proposals, reviewers will be asked to consider what the proposers want to do, why they want to do it, how they plan to do it, how they will know if they succeed, and what benefits could accrue if the project is successful. These issues apply both to the technical aspects of the proposal and the way in which the project may make broader contributions. To that end, reviewers will be asked to evaluate all proposals against two criteria:

- **Intellectual Merit:** The Intellectual Merit criterion encompasses the potential to advance knowledge; and
- **Broader Impacts:** The Broader Impacts criterion encompasses the potential to benefit society and contribute to the achievement of specific, desired societal outcomes.

The following elements should be considered in the review for both criteria:

1. What is the potential for the proposed activity to
  - a. Advance knowledge and understanding within its own field or across different fields (Intellectual Merit); and
  - b. Benefit society or advance desired societal outcomes (Broader Impacts)?
2. To what extent do the proposed activities suggest and explore creative, original, or potentially transformative concepts?
3. Is the plan for carrying out the proposed activities well-reasoned, well-organized, and based on a sound rationale? Does the plan incorporate a mechanism to assess success?
4. How well qualified is the individual, team, or organization to conduct the proposed activities?
5. Are there adequate resources available to the PI (either at the home organization or through collaborations) to carry out the proposed activities?

Broader impacts may be accomplished through the research itself, through the activities that are directly related to specific research projects, or through activities that are supported by, but are complementary to, the project. NSF values the advancement of scientific knowledge and activities that contribute to achievement of societally relevant outcomes. Such outcomes include, but are not limited to: full participation of women, persons with disabilities, and underrepresented minorities in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM); improved STEM education and educator development at any level; increased public scientific literacy and public engagement with science and technology; improved well-being of individuals in society; development of a diverse, globally competitive STEM workforce; increased partnerships between academia, industry, and others; improved national security; increased economic competitiveness of the United States; and enhanced infrastructure for research and education.

Proposers are reminded that reviewers will also be asked to review the Data Management Plan and the Postdoctoral Researcher Mentoring Plan, as appropriate.

### Additional Solicitation Specific Review Criteria

In addition to the National Science Board merit review criteria, reviewers will be asked to apply several specific criteria when reviewing FRG proposals. These criteria include:

- Extent to which the group effort is focused on a cohesive well-delineated goal
- Timeliness of the planned work
- Likelihood of substantial progress
- Long-term scientific impact of the proposed activity
- Extent to which the whole of the proposed group effort project will be greater than the sum of its parts
- Appropriateness of the group members, the group structure, and the proposed modes of collaboration
- The nature of involvement and extent of commitment of the senior personnel
- Adequacy and appropriateness of the proposed timeline and management plan

- Adequacy and appropriateness of the budget

FRG proposals are likely to be read by non-specialists at some stage of the review process. It is therefore particularly important that they be written to emphasize the impact of the projects in a broad mathematical context.

## B. Review and Selection Process

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Proposals submitted in response to this program solicitation will be reviewed by

Ad hoc Review and/or Panel Review.

Reviewers will be asked to evaluate proposals using two National Science Board approved merit review criteria and, if applicable, additional program specific criteria. A summary rating and accompanying narrative will generally be completed and submitted by each reviewer and/or panel. The Program Officer assigned to manage the proposal's review will consider the advice of reviewers and will formulate a recommendation.

After scientific, technical and programmatic review and consideration of appropriate factors, the NSF Program Officer recommends to the cognizant Division Director whether the proposal should be declined or recommended for award. NSF strives to be able to tell applicants whether their proposals have been declined or recommended for funding within six months. Large or particularly complex proposals or proposals from new awardees may require additional review and processing time. The time interval begins on the deadline or target date, or receipt date, whichever is later. The interval ends when the Division Director acts upon the Program Officer's recommendation.

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. After an administrative review has occurred, Grants and Agreements Officers perform the processing and issuance of a grant or other agreement. Proposers are cautioned that only a Grants and Agreements 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 a NSF Program Officer. A Principal Investigator or organization that makes financial or personnel commitments in the absence of a grant or cooperative agreement signed by the NSF Grants and Agreements Officer does so at their own risk.

Once an award or declination decision has been made, Principal Investigators are provided feedback about their proposals. In all cases, reviews are treated as confidential documents. Verbatim copies of reviews, excluding the names of the reviewers or any reviewer-identifying information, are sent to the Principal Investigator/Project Director by the Program Officer. In addition, the proposer will receive an explanation of the decision to award or decline funding.

## VII. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

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### A. Notification of the Award

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Notification of the award is made to *the submitting organization* by a Grants Officer in the Division of Grants and Agreements. Organizations whose proposals are declined will be advised as promptly as possible by the cognizant NSF Program administering the program. Verbatim copies of reviews, not including the identity of the reviewer, will be provided automatically to the Principal Investigator. (See Section VI.B. for additional information on the review process.)

### B. Award Conditions

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An NSF award consists of: (1) the award notice, which includes any special provisions applicable to the award 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 notice; (4) the applicable award conditions, such as Grant General Conditions (GC-1)\*; or Research Terms and Conditions\* and (5) any announcement or other NSF issuance that may be incorporated by reference in the award notice. Cooperative agreements also are administered in accordance with NSF Cooperative Agreement Financial and Administrative Terms and Conditions (CA-FATC) and the applicable Programmatic Terms and Conditions. NSF awards are electronically signed by an NSF Grants and Agreements Officer and transmitted electronically to the organization via e-mail.

\*These documents may be accessed electronically on NSF's Website at [http://www.nsf.gov/awards/managing/award\\_conditions.jsp?org=NSF](http://www.nsf.gov/awards/managing/award_conditions.jsp?org=NSF). Paper copies may be obtained from the NSF Publications Clearinghouse, telephone (703) 292-7827 or by e-mail from [nsfpubs@nsf.gov](mailto:nsfpubs@nsf.gov).

More comprehensive information on NSF Award Conditions and other important information on the administration of NSF awards is contained in the NSF *Award & Administration Guide* (AAG) Chapter II, available electronically on the NSF Website at [http://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub\\_summ.jsp?ods\\_key=aag](http://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub_summ.jsp?ods_key=aag).

### C. Reporting Requirements

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For all multi-year grants (including both standard and continuing grants), the Principal Investigator must submit an annual project report to the cognizant Program Officer no later than 90 days prior to the end of the current budget period. (Some programs or awards require submission of more frequent project reports). No later than 120 days following expiration of a grant, the PI also is required to submit a final project report, and a project outcomes report for the general public.

Failure to provide the required annual or final project reports, or the project outcomes report, will delay NSF review and processing of any future funding increments as well as any pending proposals for all identified PIs and co-PIs on a given award. PIs should

examine the formats of the required reports in advance to assure availability of required data.

PIs are required to use NSF's electronic project-reporting system, available through Research.gov, for preparation and submission of annual and final project reports. Such reports provide information on accomplishments, project participants (individual and organizational), publications, and other specific products and impacts of the project. Submission of the report via Research.gov constitutes certification by the PI that the contents of the report are accurate and complete. The project outcomes report also must be prepared and submitted using Research.gov. This report serves as a brief summary, prepared specifically for the public, of the nature and outcomes of the project. This report will be posted on the NSF website exactly as it is submitted by the PI.

More comprehensive information on NSF Reporting Requirements and other important information on the administration of NSF awards is contained in the *NSF Award & Administration Guide* (AAG) Chapter II, available electronically on the NSF Website at [http://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub\\_summ.jsp?ods\\_key=aag](http://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub_summ.jsp?ods_key=aag).

## VIII. AGENCY CONTACTS

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*Please note that the program contact information is current at the time of publishing. See program website for any updates to the points of contact.*

General inquiries regarding this program should be made to:

- Tomek Bartoszynski, 1025 N, telephone: (703) 292-4885, email: [tbartosz@nsf.gov](mailto:tbartosz@nsf.gov)
- Eugene C. Gartland, Program Director, 1025 N, telephone: (703) 292-2279, email: [egartlan@nsf.gov](mailto:egartlan@nsf.gov)
- Timothy Hodges, 1025 N, telephone: (703) 292-2113, email: [thodges@nsf.gov](mailto:thodges@nsf.gov)
- Leland M. Jameson, 1025 N, telephone: (703) 292-4883, email: [ljameson@nsf.gov](mailto:ljameson@nsf.gov)
- Swatee Naik, 1025 N, telephone: (703) 292-4876, email: [snaik@nsf.gov](mailto:snaik@nsf.gov)
- Gabor Szekely, Program Director, 1025 N, telephone: (703) 292-8869, email: [gszekely@nsf.gov](mailto:gszekely@nsf.gov)
- Frederi G. Viens, 1025 N, telephone: (703) 292-2858, email: [fviens@nsf.gov](mailto:fviens@nsf.gov)

For questions related to the use of FastLane, contact:

- FastLane Help Desk, telephone: 1-800-673-6188; e-mail: [fastlane@nsf.gov](mailto:fastlane@nsf.gov).

For questions relating to Grants.gov contact:

- Grants.gov Contact Center: If the Authorized Organizational Representatives (AOR) has not received a confirmation message from Grants.gov within 48 hours of submission of application, please contact via telephone: 1-800-518-4726; e-mail: [support@grants.gov](mailto:support@grants.gov).

## IX. OTHER INFORMATION

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The NSF website provides the most comprehensive source of information on NSF Directorates (including contact information), programs and funding opportunities. Use of this website by potential proposers is strongly encouraged. In addition, "NSF Update" is an information-delivery system designed to keep potential proposers and other interested parties apprised of new NSF funding opportunities and publications, important changes in proposal and award policies and procedures, and upcoming NSF [Grants Conferences](#). Subscribers are informed through e-mail or the user's Web browser each time new publications are issued that match their identified interests. "NSF Update" also is available on [NSF's website](#).

Grants.gov provides an additional electronic capability to search for Federal government-wide grant opportunities. NSF funding opportunities may be accessed via this mechanism. Further information on Grants.gov may be obtained at <http://www.grants.gov>.

The DMS Research Training Groups (RTG) program provides groups of mathematical sciences researchers having related research goals with funds to foster research-based training and education. See the [EMSW21 Program Solicitation](#).

## ABOUT THE NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION

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The National Science Foundation (NSF) is an independent Federal agency created by the National Science Foundation Act of 1950, as amended (42 USC 1861-75). The Act states the purpose of the NSF is "to promote the progress of science; [and] to advance the national health, prosperity, and welfare by supporting research and education in all fields of science and engineering."

NSF funds research and education in most fields of science and engineering. It does this through grants and cooperative agreements to more than 2,000 colleges, universities, K-12 school systems, businesses, informal science organizations and other research organizations throughout the US. The Foundation accounts for about one-fourth of Federal support to academic institutions for basic research.

NSF receives approximately 55,000 proposals each year for research, education and training projects, of which approximately 11,000 are funded. In addition, the Foundation receives several thousand applications for graduate and postdoctoral fellowships. The agency operates no laboratories itself but does support National Research Centers, user facilities, certain oceanographic vessels

and Arctic and Antarctic research stations. The Foundation also supports cooperative research between universities and industry, US participation in international scientific and engineering efforts, and educational activities at every academic level.

*Facilitation Awards for Scientists and Engineers with Disabilities* provide funding for special assistance or equipment to enable persons with disabilities to work on NSF-supported projects. See Grant Proposal Guide Chapter II, Section D.2 for instructions regarding preparation of these types of proposals.

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 about NSF programs, employment or general information. TDD may be accessed at (703) 292-5090 and (800) 281-8749, FIRS at (800) 877-8339.

The National Science Foundation Information Center may be reached at (703) 292-5111.

The National Science Foundation promotes and advances scientific progress in the United States by competitively awarding grants and cooperative agreements for research and education in the sciences, mathematics, and engineering.

To get the latest information about program deadlines, to download copies of NSF publications, and to access abstracts of awards, visit the NSF Website at <http://www.nsf.gov>

- **Location:** 4201 Wilson Blvd. Arlington, VA 22230
- **For General Information** (NSF Information Center): (703) 292-5111
- **TDD (for the hearing-impaired):** (703) 292-5090
- **To Order Publications or Forms:**
  - Send an e-mail to: [nsfpubs@nsf.gov](mailto:nsfpubs@nsf.gov)
  - or telephone: (703) 292-7827
- **To Locate NSF Employees:** (703) 292-5111

## 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; and 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 proposal review process; to proposer 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 or other entities needing information regarding applicants or nominees as part of a joint application review process, or in order to coordinate programs or policy; 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," 69 Federal Register 26410 (May 12, 2004), and [NSF-51](#), "Reviewer/Proposal File and Associated Records," 69 Federal Register 26410 (May 12, 2004). Submission of the information is voluntary. Failure to provide full and complete information, however, may reduce the possibility of receiving an award.

An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, an information collection unless it displays a valid Office of Management and Budget (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 the burden estimate and any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to:

Suzanne H. Plimpton  
Reports Clearance Officer  
Office of the General Counsel  
National Science Foundation  
Arlington, VA 22230

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