



**National Science Foundation**  
**4201 Wilson Boulevard**  
**Arlington, Virginia 22230**

**NSF 13-047**

## **Dear Colleague Letter: Veteran's Research Supplement (VRS) Program**

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The National Science Foundation (NSF) recognizes that veterans represent a potential underutilized workforce for the U.S. science and engineering research and industry communities. Many veterans are transitioning from active military service to civilian careers and exploring education options through the post-9/11 GI Bill. At a time when the U.S. is challenged with a science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) workforce shortage, NSF is exploring alternate pathways of veterans' engagement into STEM fields.

Recommendations from the NSF Engineering Education and Centers (EEC) Division Workshop entitled "Veterans' Education for Engineering and Science" in April 2009 stated:

"NSF and other federal science and engineering agencies should create an education/career development program focused on getting veterans into science and technology careers. NSF already has grant programs that fund student's research experiences. The cost to expand and enrich such programs is a small fraction of the cost of the post-9/11 veteran educational benefit. Yet by expanding it, the community could engage a significant number of veterans with the potential to pursue careers in fields of engineering, science and technology."  
(<http://www.nsf.gov/eng/eec/VeteranEducation.pdf>)

Subsequent to this report, the Industrial Innovation and Partnerships Division (IIP) successfully piloted the Research Experiences for Veterans (REV) supplement opportunity with the Industry/University Cooperative Research Centers (I/UCRC) sites in 2011 ([NSF 11-054](#)) and 2012 ([NSF 12-063](#)). In 2012 IIP and EEC launched the Research Experiences for Veterans and Teachers (REV/T) with the I/UCRCs and Engineering Research Centers (ERCs) via [NSF 12-073](#). In addition, the Engineering Directorate endorsed the Engineering Research Experience for Veterans (EREV) for the Grant Opportunities for Academic Liaison with Industry (GOALI) program in 2012 ([NSF 12-074](#)).

While the REV pilot focused on undergraduate students, NSF has also promoted research opportunities for K-12 STEM and community college educators for many years. Encouraging the active participation of these educators is an excellent way to inspire and teach them about relevant research and laboratory techniques. In turn, they can teach engineering and computer science concepts to their students and stimulate those students to pursue careers in these fields. For example, the Research Experiences for Teachers (RET) in Engineering program was initiated in FY 2001 to involve middle and high school STEM teachers in university research in order to bring knowledge of engineering and technological innovation to the classroom. The teacher participants have benefitted greatly from this program, and the host universities also have been inspired by gaining more knowledge about the K-12 environment and its needs.

To better engage veterans in engineering projects, IIP and EEC Divisions of the Directorate for Engineering (ENG) at NSF are now accepting requests from their active grantees for the Veterans Research Supplement (VRS). The proposed VRS will afford veteran students, veteran teachers, or veteran community college faculty an opportunity to participate with active IIP and EEC grantees to conduct industrially relevant research in order to gain a deeper understanding of engineering. Veterans

receiving a VRS will intern with any of the following active awardees or affiliated member companies supported by IIP and EEC (Points of contact are listed for each program):

- Industry/University Cooperative Research Centers ( I/UCRC), (Rathindra DasGupta)
- Engineering Research Center ( ERC) university leads and partners, ( Mary Poats)
- Research Experiences for Teachers in Engineering and Computer Science ( RET), (Mary Poats)
- Research Experiences for Undergraduates ( REU) sites, ( Esther Bolding)
- Engineering Education Research ( EER) grantees, (Richard Smith)
- Small Business Innovation Research ( SBIR) Phase II grantees, ( Ben Schrag)
- Small Business Technology Transfer ( STTR) Phase II grantees, ( Ben Schrag)
- Partnerships for Innovation - Building Innovation Capacity ( BIC) grantees, ( Sara Nerlove)
- Partnerships for Innovation - Accelerating Innovation Research ( AIR) grantees, ( Barbara Kenny)
- Grant Opportunities for Academic Liaison with Industry ( GOALI) grantees, ( Don Senich)

**Eligibility to participate as recipients of the VRS will be limited to the following five groups:**

1. Full or part-time veteran undergraduate or graduate students at U.S. Universities and colleges,
2. Full or part-time veteran community college students,
3. Veteran K-12 STEM teachers,
4. Veteran community college faculty, or
5. Veteran students participating in summer research experiences.

**PI Eligibility:** All active IIP and EEC grantees (I/UCRC, ERC, EER, PFI, GOALI, SBIR, STTR, RET site and REU site grantees). Note: *The IIP or EEC grantee is the VRS applicant, not the VRS candidate.*

**Anticipated type of award:** Supplement to existing IIP or EEC awards

**Supplement preparation and submission instructions:** The VRS supplement will be targeted to enable veteran students, pre-college STEM teachers, and/or community college faculty to participate in active NSF grants. Active I/UCRC or ERC centers are encouraged to submit supplement requests for veteran undergraduate students, veteran graduate students, and veteran teachers to work with university faculty and/or active industrial partners on center-sponsored research projects. Veterans must be classified as full or part-time students at U.S. universities, community colleges, or teachers at U.S. precollege institutions. PIs requesting the VRS must be active in the IIP and EEC programs listed above. The VRS is not transferrable to the dependents of the veterans. Veterans may complete the research experience at any time during the year. Supplemental funding requests must be submitted electronically via the NSF FastLane system and include a brief description of the request, a budget, and a budget description. PIs should follow the instructions found in the Award and Administration Guide of the Proposal and Award Policies and Procedures Guide ( NSF 13-1) at [http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/policydocs/pappguide/nsf13001/aag\\_1.jsp#IE4](http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/policydocs/pappguide/nsf13001/aag_1.jsp#IE4).

**Anticipated funding amount and estimated number of awards:** This supplement program will not exceed \$2,000,000 from the current FY2013 budget, pending the availability of funds. A maximum of two hundred supplements is anticipated, with a maximum VRS amount of \$10,000. An individual veteran is eligible for a maximum of three VRS supplements. All costs related to the support of the veteran during the supplement period should be budgeted as participant support on the NSF budget form.

NSF also recommends interested principal investigators apply for one or a maximum of two VRS per year. Active principal investigators should consult their NSF program director for specific guidance as to the number and availability of supplements. Supplemental proposals will be internally evaluated per NSF supplemental support guidelines with particular emphasis on the following components: a clearly defined research project, identification of project deliverables and a project timeline, and an explanation of anticipated benefits to the veteran student.