



NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION  
2415 EISENHOWER AVENUE  
ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA 22314

NSF 20-071

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for NSF 20-505, Transitions to Excellence in Molecular and Cellular Biosciences Research (Transitions)

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1. Do I need to take an entire year of sabbatical leave to apply for this award?
2. My institution does not have a sabbatical policy, or has a sabbatical policy, but I'm unable to take a sabbatical at this time. Can I still apply for this award?
3. I am on a 9-month academic appointment. Can I still receive 6 months of salary support from the NSF?
4. Does my department have to match the remaining 6 months of salary in a 12-month calendar year?
5. I have other federal grants on which I receive more than 50% of my salary. Could I still receive 6 months of salary support from the NSF?
6. If I move to another city for my sabbatical, can I use any non-salary NSF dollars towards housing costs or living expenses?
7. Do I have to take the transition time in a continuous period?
8. What does my Department Chair have to convey in their letter of support?
9. The focus on my proposal will be on changing my research direction, do I still need to provide a Broader Impact section?
10. Can I use this grant mechanism solely for the purpose of obtaining the uncovered portion of my salary for a sabbatical?

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### 1. Do I need to take an entire year of sabbatical leave to apply for this award?

No. The award is meant to facilitate the transition of the PI's career into a new area of science. The PI must make a compelling case for the duration of the period that will

allow that transition

**2. My institution does not have a sabbatical policy, or has a sabbatical policy, but I'm unable to take a sabbatical at this time. Can I still apply for this award?**

Yes. As long as the institution will allow the PI to devote unrestricted time (of up to one year) to achieve a transition in research direction or to gain new, cutting edge expertise.

**3. I am on a 9-month academic appointment. Can I still receive 6 months of salary support from the NSF?**

Yes. The NSF will fund up to 6 months of PI salary/benefits during the first sabbatical or professional development year.

**4. Does my department have to match the remaining 6 months of salary in a 12-month calendar year?**

In accordance with NSF policy, inclusion of voluntary committed cost sharing is prohibited. However, reviewers will look for evidence that the department is supportive of the proposer and the proposed professional development plan.

**5. I have other federal grants on which I receive more than 50% of my salary. Could I still receive 6 months of salary support from the NSF?**

A PI cannot receive 6 months of salary support unless the other sources of support are changed to 50% or less. PIs cannot receive compensation for more than 100% of your salary.

**6. If I move to another city for my sabbatical, can I use any non-salary NSF dollars towards housing costs or living expenses?**

No.

**7. Do I have to take the transition time in a continuous period?**

No. For instance, a PI could split a 6-month sabbatical into two 3-month periods spread over 1 year.

**8. What does my Department Chair have to convey in their letter of support?**

The most important point to convey is how the department will support the PI's transition period. This could include documented release time from teaching and other administrative duties so the PI can focus on accomplishing the goals for the project and change of research focus.

**9. The focus on my proposal will be on changing my research direction, do I still**

### **need to provide a Broader Impact section?**

Yes, all proposals are required to have a Broader Impact section. In the case of this solicitation we encourage PIs to think about their proposed research direction change and how that will impact the Broader Impact efforts once their research is on a new trajectory.

### **10. Can I use this grant mechanism solely for the purpose of obtaining the uncovered portion of my salary for a sabbatical?**

All proposals should be responsive to the Transitions solicitation. The purpose of the Transitions solicitation is to allow investigators to change research direction for up to one year and then use that experience to build a new research project at their home institution. A key goal is to enable researchers to produce more innovative science and be successful in funding those ideas. Both a detailed plan for the sabbatical or professional development year and the new research direction for years 2 and 3 of the award should be described in the application. A proposal that simply requested the uncovered portion of a PIs salary during a sabbatical period without addressing the specific review criteria in the Transitions solicitation would be found unresponsive.