



**U.S. NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
2415 EISENHOWER AVENUE
ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA 22314**

NSF 24-128

Dear Colleague Letter: Post-Baccalaureate Research and Training (PBRT) in the Biological Sciences Supplemental Funding Opportunity

September 11, 2024

Dear Colleagues:

A strategic focus of the U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF) is fostering the growth of a globally competitive and diverse research workforce. NSF's Directorate for Biological Sciences (BIO) invites Principal Investigators (PIs) of active awards to submit a supplemental funding request to support the research and training of post-baccalaureate students (post-baccs) who wish to engage in research or who want to pursue a career in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) but have faced barriers to participation in research experiences as an undergraduate student.

For the purposes of this Dear Colleague Letter (DCL), a post-bacc is defined as an individual who has a bachelor's degree but is not currently enrolled in another degree program and is not the recipient of a graduate degree. We expect that PIs will provide an intentional, mentored training effort that will develop the trainee's independence and competence as a researcher and provide them the opportunity to acquire the requisite technical, analytical, and interpersonal skills necessary to be competitive for graduate education or entry into the workforce.

NSF recognizes that barriers to participation in research at the undergraduate level persist. There are many students that complete their baccalaureate degree without the opportunity to engage in research experiences necessary to be competitive for graduate programs and other STEM career pathways.

The purpose of this DCL is to provide support for inclusive research training pathways to engage recent graduates in authentic, mentored research experiences.

NSF BIO encourages input and participation from the full spectrum of diverse talent that society has to offer which includes underrepresented and under-served communities.

By expanding the number and diversity of early-career individuals trained in the conduct of research, NSF BIO aims to mitigate the loss of talent that occurs between the attainment of a STEM undergraduate (baccalaureate) degree and entry into a STEM career pathway and, thereby, foster the growth of a competitive STEM workforce representative of the U.S. population.

DESCRIPTION OF THE OPPORTUNITY

NSF BIO will consider supplemental funding requests for up to 12 months of participant support on active BIO-supported awards. Although trainees are expected to do full time research, PIs should consider the individual needs of the participants so that they are able to balance their family or other obligations.

To be eligible, trainees must have received a baccalaureate college degree in a relevant field before the start of the training period, and ideally within four years prior to the start date. Individuals who have a graduate degree or who are accepted into, or already participating in, graduate programs are not eligible. Trainees must be a U.S. citizen, U.S. national, or a permanent resident of the United States.

The supplemental funding request should be submitted via Research.gov in accordance with the guidelines found in the *NSF Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide (PAPPG)*. The following sections are required:

Summary of Proposed Work: State that this is a PBRT request and provide information on the number of participants, the mentor's name(s) and potential project(s). Describe the training plan, including mentoring and professional development activities that will be part of the program. This section typically does not exceed one page.

Justification for Supplement: Describe in detail the participant's involvement in the research project, a description of the potential project, and information on the recruited participant, including a brief biographical sketch. Describe how the proposed program would contribute to the participants' long-term career goals and how the supplemental funding will serve to broaden participation.

Budget and Budget Justification: Trainee-related costs should be included under the Participant Support category (Line F) in the budget. This can include a stipend and, as appropriate, fringe benefits, and travel. The stipend should be a minimum of \$35,000 per year and can be increased in areas with higher cost of living commensurate with the host organization's relevant payroll schedule, but these requests must be very well justified in the Budget Justification. A modest amount for materials and supplies can be requested and should be included on line G1 in the budget. All costs should be clearly explained in the Budget Justification. Indirect costs should be calculated only on the amount listed on line G1.

Register in the NSF ETAP System: Mentors are required to register their PBRT opportunity in NSF ETAP and have the prospective trainee(s) submit all appropriate documentation through the NSF ETAP system.

PBRT supplemental funding requests will be reviewed for funding consideration upon receipt. To receive full funding consideration for FY2025, requests should be submitted by May 19th, 2025. Supplemental funding requests submitted after that date will be considered if funds are available.

Please direct any questions pertaining to this DCL to: PBRT-Supplements@nsf.gov.

Sincerely,

Susan Marqusee
Assistant Director
Directorate for Biological Sciences