Directorate for Biological Sciences Virtual Office Hour

Welcome! We will begin the BIO REU Virtual Office Hour soon.
Please submit questions in the Zoom Q&A box.

June 10, 2026

Directorate for Biological Sciences (BIO)
Welcome!

Program Directors in attendance today:

- Amanda Simcox (REU Program Director)
- Melissa Pilgrim (REU Program Director)
- Gordon Burleigh
- Diana Chu
- Leslie Rissler
- Karen Cone (BIO Science Advisor)

Administrative Support & Technical Assistance:

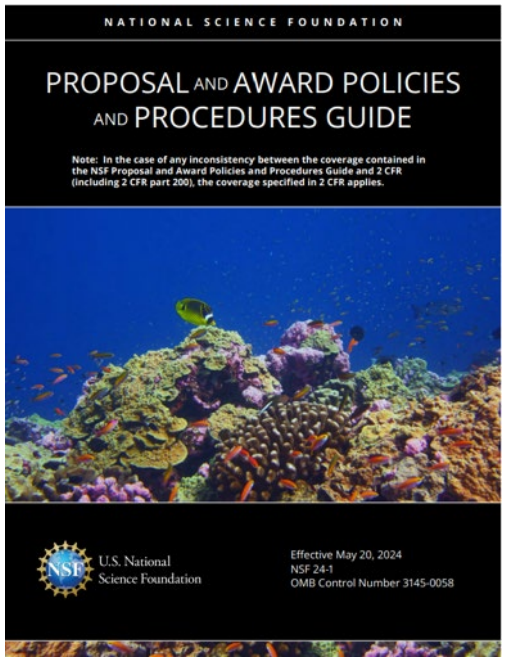
- Jennifer Visosky

BIO Virtual Office Hour
Today's Topics

- Updates and Reminders
- Recent Solicitations
- Topic of the Day: BIO REU Program
- Q&A with Program Directors

Reminders: General

Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide (PAPPG)



- Current version is NSF 24-1
- Latest version can always be found at: https://www.nsf.gov/policies/pappg
- Check for recent mini-updates (supplements NSF 26-200 and NSF 26-202)

Implementation of Executive Orders

- Updates on NSF Priorities can be found at https://www.nsf.gov/updates-on-priorities
- Updates on NSF's Implementation of Executive Orders can be found at https://www.nsf.gov/executive-orders

Reminders: Solicitations

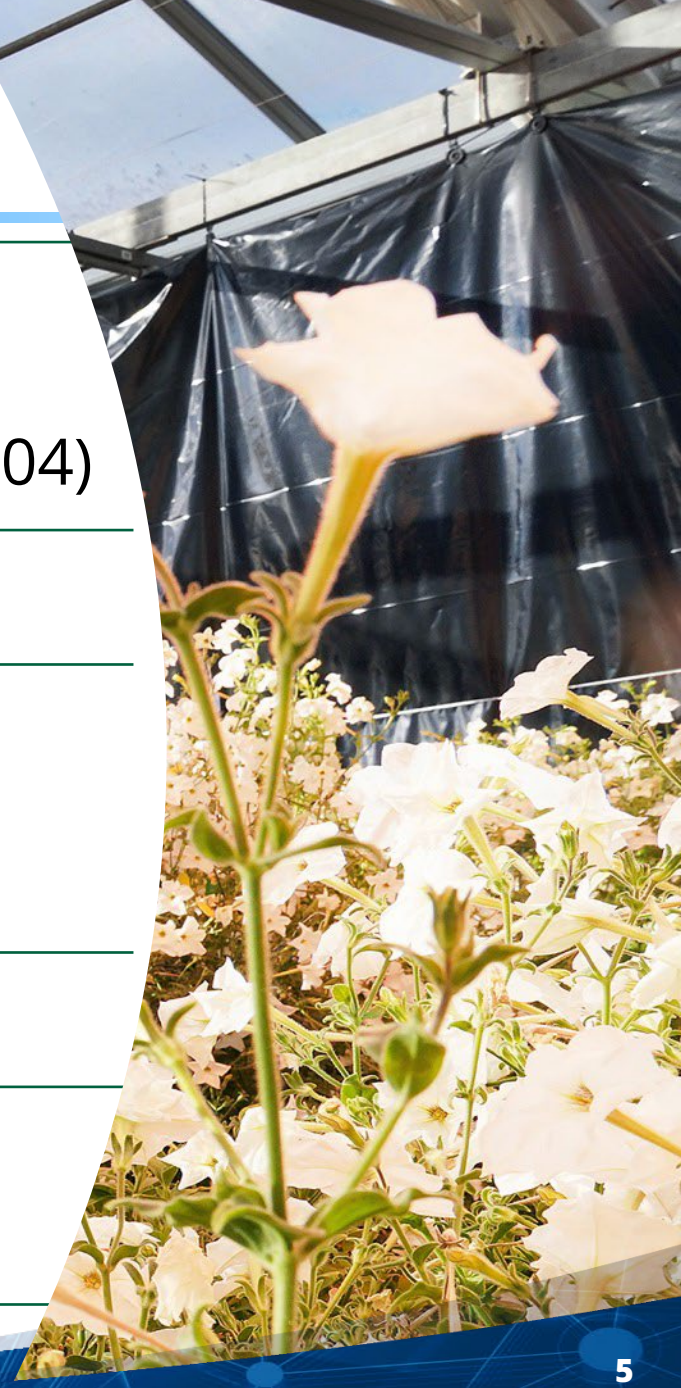
DBI: Infrastructure Innovation (NSF 23-578)
DBI: Infrastructure Capacity (NSF 23-580)
DBI: Postdoctoral Research Fellowships in Biology (NSF 26-504)

DEB: Core solicitation (NSF 24-543)

IOS: Core solicitation (NSF 24-546)
IOS: Plant Biotic Interactions (NSF 20-576)
IOS: Plant Genome Research Program (NSF 24-547)

MCB: Core solicitation (NSF 24-539)

Be sure you refer to the most up-to-date PAPPG and most recent solicitation.



BIO Thematic Areas and Contacts

Foundations of Life: BIO-FL@nsf.gov

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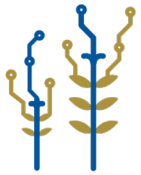

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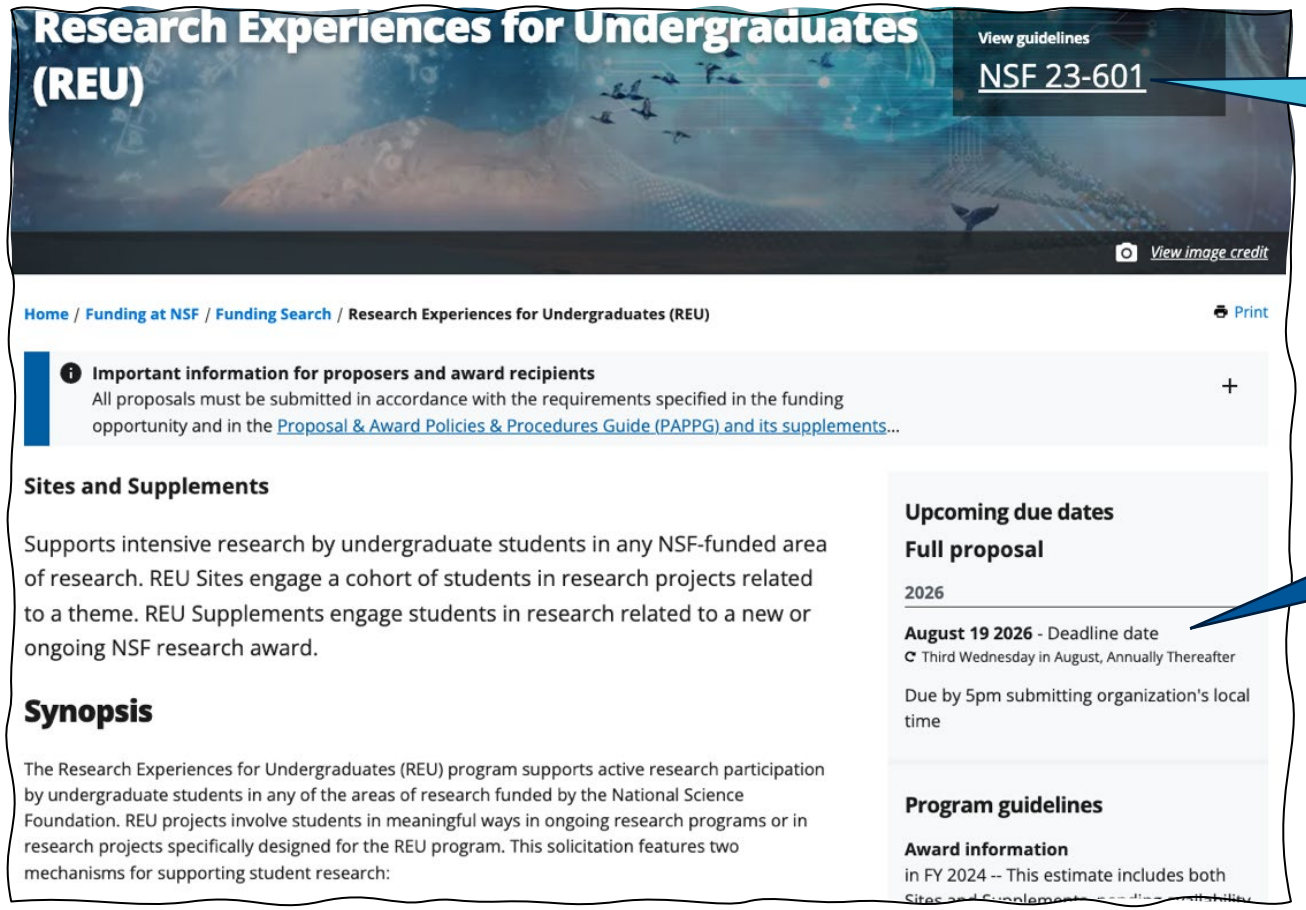
Investigating the functional genomic complexity of life and developing the tools, data, and technologies to drive biological discovery

The REU Program page

reu.bio@nsf.gov

https://www.nsf.gov/funding/opportunities/reu-research-experiences-undergraduates



The solicitation!

Deadline date Wednesday August 19th 2026

Some BIO-specific information

https://www.nsf.gov/funding/opportunities/bio-reu-sites-bio-research-experience-undergraduates-sites

NSF Research Experiences for Undergraduates

Today's topic

- **REU Sites** engage a cohort of students in research projects focusing on a discipline or other coherent scientific/intellectual theme
  - REU sites are typically a summer research experience for a group of students hosted by an institution
- **REU Supplements** to existing grants are on hiatus
- **REU Opportunities** for individual students encouraged as part of new proposals
  - Describe this in your proposal
  - Include in your budget

https://www.nsf.gov/funding/initiatives/reu/faculty

BIO-REU Sites program

Engage a group of undergraduates in a theme-focused research program

- an immersive dive into science and STEM professional development
- involves students from academic institutions with limited research access and early in their academic careers

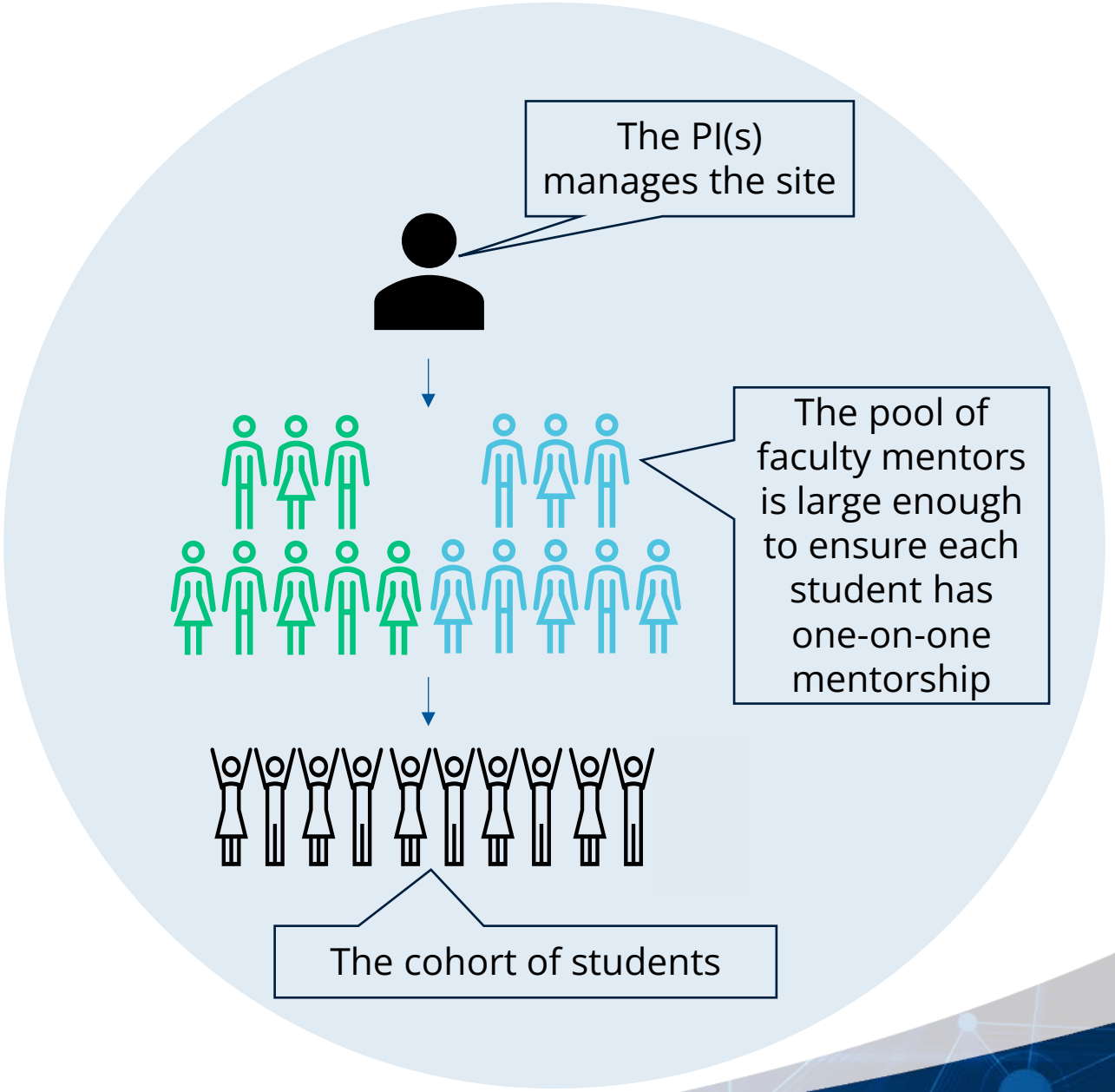
- 8-10 students for ~10-weeks in summer
- At least half from institutions with limited research opportunities
- Project costs must be predominantly for student support
- Most awards provide 3 years of funding

A typical program

Pre-program
- Outreach, applications, and selection
- Mentor training

Program
- Orientation
- Mentored independent research
- Professional development
- Career exploration
- Cohort building
- Surveys

Post program
- Evaluation
- STEM outcome tracking



A whirlwind tour of the solicitation

The slides will be available on the VOH webpage

Information from Solicitation 23-601

- **Participants:** Undergraduates currently enrolled in 2- or 4-year institution; U.S. citizens, U.S. nationals, or U.S. permanent residents
- **Training location:** Both international and domestic programs
- **Proposal deadline:** August 19, 2026 or third Wednesday in August, Annually thereafter

Proposal preparation

In Research.gov, select "Prepare New Full Proposal" or "Prepare New Renewal Proposal”

- PIs can also use grants.gov; however, research.gov is better aligned with NSF proposals
- If you were not the PI or Co-PI on the previous award, Research.gov **will not** allow preparation of the proposal as a "Renewal Proposal“
  - Indicate "renewal” in the "Project Elements" on Project Summary page

Project Summary (limited to one page)

- The "Overview" is different than in a typical NSF proposal and must begin with a list of "Project Elements”, as specified in the solicitation that summarizes the proposed site in terms of the site, the research focus, the number of trainees, etc.
- Intellectual Merit
- Broader Impacts

Project Description (must not exceed 15 pages)

a) Overview
b) Nature of Student Activities
c) The Research Environment
d) Student Recruitment and Selection
e) Student and Mentor Professional Development and Expectations of Behavior
f) Project Evaluation and Reporting
g) Results from Prior NSF Support (if applicable)

Note: all NSF proposals must be organized under two subheadings—Intellectual Merit and Broader Impacts

Budget

- Project costs must be predominantly for student support.
- Student support includes stipends ($700/week), housing, meals, travel, and laboratory use costs.
- Personnel support includes up to one month of salary per year for the PI or distributed among the PI and team members.
- An REU Site may not charge students for access to common campus facilities such as libraries or athletic facilities.
- All student costs should be entered as Participant Support Costs. Indirect costs (F&A) are not allowed on Participant Support Costs.

Merit Review Principles and Criteria

- Intellectual Merit (potential to advance knowledge)
- Broader Impacts (potential to benefit society and contribute to the achievement of specific, desired societal outcomes)
- Solicitation Specific Review Criteria (see solicitation for details)
  - Value of the research and professional development experience
  - Quality of the research environment
  - Appropriateness of the student recruitment and selection plans
  - Plan to promote continuation of student interest and involvement in STEM
  - Appropriateness and cost-effectiveness of the budget
  - For renewals, effectiveness of the previous Site

The solicitation is an essential guide—some key points:

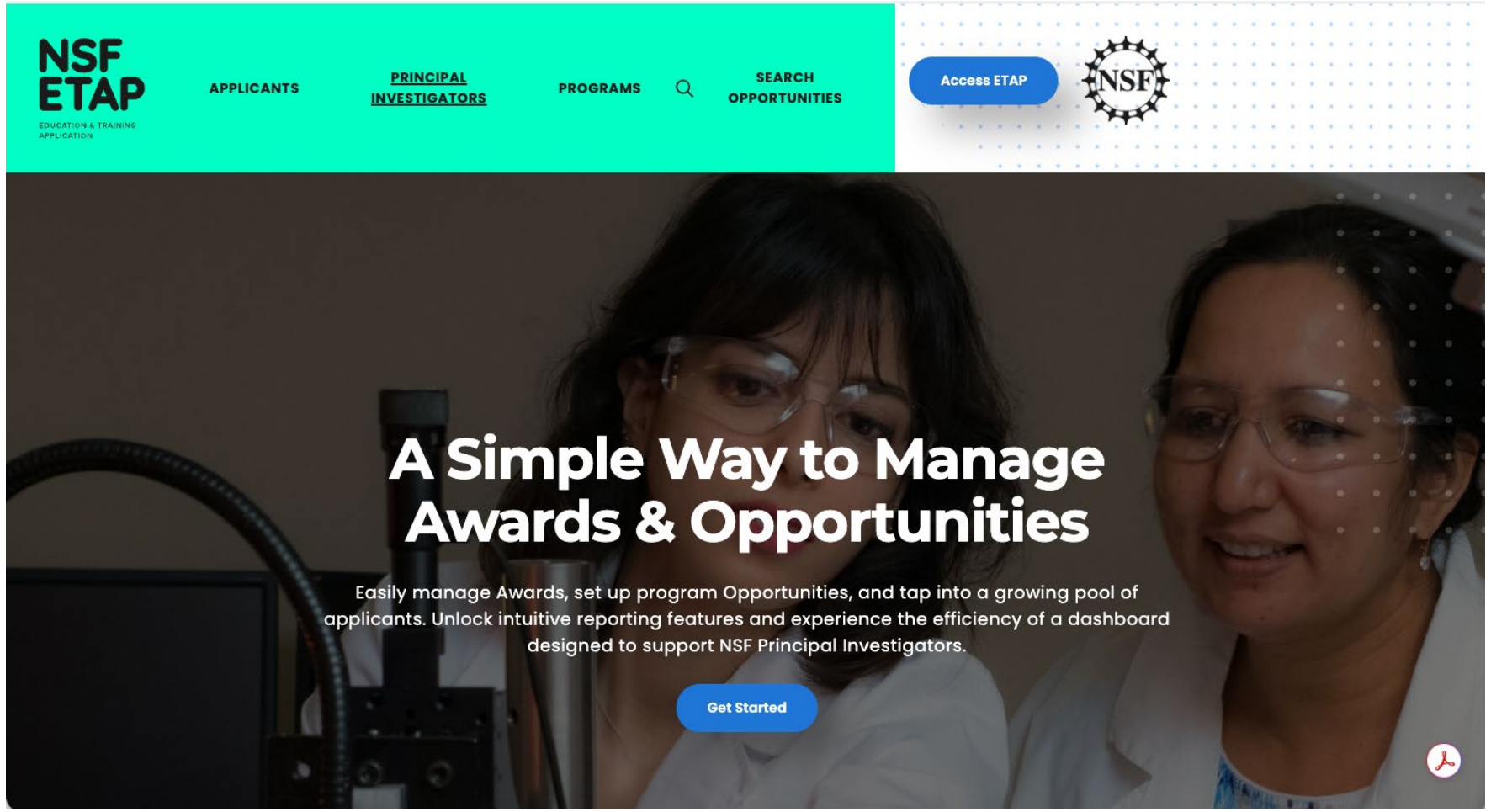
- Research theme—a commonality that links projects
  - Project descriptions should be in sufficient detail and indicate the REU student role
- Cost effective budget
  - ~$1550/week/student (use total costs to calculate)
  - Participant Support Costs (~90% of direct costs)
  - Travel for one person to PI meeting (2027 and 2029, expected)
- Applications and selection
  - Broad outreach to **all Americans** (use ETAP- Education and Training Application)
  - Must not preference particular groups
- Participants
  - Attract students early in degree program (if appropriate)
  - From other institutions, especially those with limited access to research (at least 50%)
- Evaluation
  - Many PIs use the Undergraduate Research Student Self-Assessment (URSSA) validated questions and their own survey tool

https://www.lifescied.org/doi/full/10.1187/cbe.14-11-0206

Updated NSF priorities

- Opportunities must be **open to all Americans**
  - ETAP, an NSF-application portal, is strongly encouraged for BIO sites
- From the solicitation
  - “Investigators are encouraged to conduct comprehensive outreach, awareness, and recruitment efforts to encourage students **representing the full spectrum of diverse talent in STEM** to apply for REU opportunities. In general, the goal should be to achieve a diverse pool of applicants and then to consider all eligible applicants in that diverse pool when selecting students for the opportunities.”
- Read updates on NSF priorities especially the FAQ on broadening participation
  - https://www.nsf.gov/updates-on-priorities
  - https://www.nsf.gov/updates-on-priorities#broadening-participation

ETAP: advertise, manage applications, and generate annual reporting data for your REU site



Using ETAP ensures an REU site is open to all Americans

https://etap.nsf.gov/

NSF BIO supports the full range of basic biology

Thematic Areas

- Foundations of Life
- Living Systems
- Bioinformatics and Innovation

- NSF BIO supports basic biology research
- NSF BIO does not support research with a human disease motivation
  - However, basic research can have **biomedical broader impacts**. Ensure the student projects are centered on the basic question.
- If relevant, explain how NSF science priorities are addressed in the research and cohort activities, including:
  - AI
  - Quantum Information Science
  - Biotechnology
  - Advanced Manufacturing

https://www.nsf.gov/focus-areas

A competitive proposal:

- Adheres to the solicitation and goals of the REU program
- Proposes research supported by NSF BIO (including priority areas, if applicable)
- Is open to all eligible undergraduates according to the solicitation and updated NSF priorities (using ETAP is encouraged)

Renewal

- Success of past site
- **Innovation** including the following:
  - New research opportunities
  - Response to program evaluation
  - Best practices in mentoring
  - Workforce development needs

New

- Clear understanding of components of REU site as both an individual and cohort research & professional development opportunity
- Rationale and capacity for proposed research theme
- Management experience of PI(s)
- Mentoring experience of faculty

Reports

Key details and what Program Directors expect to see

REU Sites: Reports

- Annual project reports are due 90 days prior to the end of the current budget period (and are overdue after that).
- Final Report and Project Outcomes Report are due no later than 120 days following the end of an award.
  - The Project Outcomes Report is a summary of the activities and results of the project and will be posted on the NSF website exactly as submitted.
- Each REU student who is supported with NSF REU funds must be identified as an "REU Participant" together with information about their home institution and year of schooling completed (sophomore, junior, etc.).

Reports continued

- Not cumulative
  - Only report activities during the current one-year reporting period (including the final report)
- Try to address most (all) sections including
  - For the research provide a minimum of the student project title and mentor name
  - Most PIs include a paragraph per student, or attach posters/abstract book
- Attach the ETAP report
- Student evaluation
  - Present results in narrative and/or attach data (quantitative and qualitative)
  - Describe plans to address student feedback
- Acknowledge NSF-REU support in publications
  - For example, “We thank the National Science Foundation for support through REU award #”
- In your final year and before you submit a report
  - Check the award balance and request a no-cost extension as needed to expend funds
  - Once a final report is approved residual costs are no longer available

Thanks!

For all you do to provide exciting research for students and to prepare the American STEM workforce of the future!

reu.bio@nsf.gov

New Postdoc Funding Opportunity

- Postdoctoral Research Fellowships in Biology, NSF 26-504
- Focus area: Intersection of Artificial Intelligence and Biological Sciences to Strengthen and Safeguard Biotechnology Innovations
- Deadline: September 29, 2026
- Virtual Office Hour: June 17, 2026

BIO Virtual Office Hour Reminders

- Submit questions in the Zoom Q&A box
- Project-specific questions are best addressed individually by contacting a Program Officer
- Next BIO Virtual Office Hours:
  - June 17, 2026 (1-2pm ET): Postdoctoral Research Fellowships in Biology (PRFB) Program

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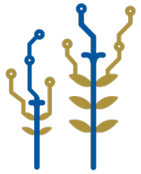

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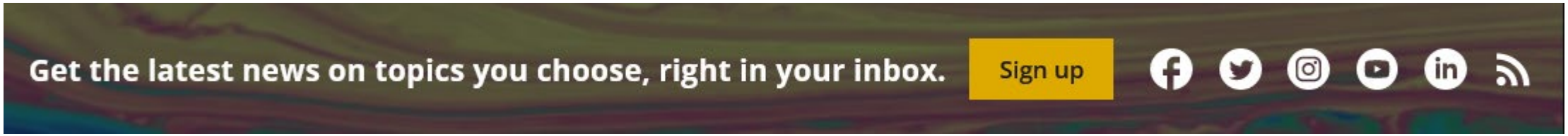
For more info:

Sign-up for emails on new solicitations; events; due date reminders; and BIO's quarterly newsletter, including information on new priorities and solicitations, highlights from the community, and more!

Visit www.nsf.gov and scroll down until you see the Sign up and social media banner, click on the yellow box, and follow the prompts.

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