



National Science Foundation
4201 Wilson Boulevard
Arlington, Virginia 22230

NSF 11-092

Frequently Asked Questions about the Broadening Participation Research Initiation Grants in Engineering (BRIGE)

[NSF 11-574](#)

SUBMISSION DEADLINES

BRIGE proposals must be submitted via FastLane by 5:00 p.m., proposer's local time, on or before January 20, 2012.

The following set of questions and answers refer to frequently asked questions (FAQs) about the Broadening Participation Research Initiation Grants in Engineering (BRIGE).

Before preparing your BRIGE proposal, please read the BRIGE solicitation at <http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2011/nsf11576/nsf11576.htm> and this FAQ document. Additional guidance for preparing and submitting proposals is included in the NSF Grant Proposal Guide (GPG) at:

http://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub_summ.jsp?ods_key=gpg and the NSF Grants.gov Application Guide available at: http://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub_summ.jsp?ods_key=grantgovguide

If you have questions about submitting your BRIGE proposal in FastLane, the NSF FastLane FAQ's can be found at: https://www.fastlane.nsf.gov/NSFHelp/flashhelp/fastlane/FastLane_Help/fastlane_help.htm#fastlane_faqs_introduction.htm.

If submitting via Grants.gov, applicant resources can be found at: http://grants.gov/applicants/app_help_reso.jsp

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A. CONTACTS FOR QUESTIONS

1. Whom should I contact if I have questions about my BRIGE proposal?

For questions or information on submission of a BRIGE proposal, contact the Diversity and Outreach Director or the Program Coordinator designated for each engineering discipline as follows:

- Dr. Omnia El-Hakim, Program Director, Diversity and Outreach, Office of the Assistant Director for Engineering, telephone: (703) 292-2149, oeihakim@nsf.gov
- Dr. Ted Conway, BRIGE Coordinator for CBET, telephone: (703) 292-7091, email: tconway@nsf.gov
- Dr. Juan Figueroa, BRIGE Coordinator for IIP, telephone: (703) 292-7054, email: jfigueroa@nsf.gov
- Dr. Mary Toney, BRIGE Coordinator for CMMI, telephone: (703) 292-7008, email: mtoney@nsf.gov
- Dr. Larry Goldberg, BRIGE Coordinator for ECCS, telephone: (703) 292-5373, email: lgoldber@nsf.gov
- Dr. Alan Cheville, BRIGE Coordinator for EEC, telephone: (703) 292-7107, email: rchevill@nsf.gov

For questions related to the use of FastLane or Grants.gov contact:

- FastLane Help Desk, telephone: 1-800-673-6188; e-mail: fastlane@nsf.gov.
- Grants.gov Contract Center, telephone 1-800-518-4726; email: support@grants.gov

B. BRIGE ELIGIBILITY

2. Is there a limit on the number of Principal Investigators that I can include in my proposal?

Yes, there is a limit. Only one PI is allowed on the BRIGE proposal. Co-principal Investigators other project or senior personnel are not permitted.

3. What is the definition of Senior Personnel?

NSF defines senior personnel as follows:

- a. (co) Principal Investigator(s) -- the individual(s) designated by the proposer, and approved by NSF, who will be responsible for the scientific or technical direction of the project. NSF does not infer any distinction in scientific stature among multiple PIs, whether referred to as PI or co-PI. If more than one, the first one listed will serve as the contact PI, with whom all communications between NSF program officials and the project relating to the scientific, technical, and budgetary aspects of the project should take place. The PI and any identified co-PIs, however, will be jointly responsible for submission of the requisite project reports.
- b. Faculty Associate (faculty member) -- an individual other than the Principal Investigator(s) considered by the performing institution to be a member of its faculty or who holds an appointment as a faculty member at another institution, and who will participate in the project being supported. Please see the following link:

4. **I have a doctoral degree in computer science, however, my computer science department is under the college of engineering. Am I eligible to submit a BRIGE proposal?**

Please see the PI limitation specified in the solicitation: "*PI must hold a primary position in an engineering department.*" If your position is a primary position in the engineering department, you are eligible.

5. **I have a doctoral degree in Chemistry, but I have a position in the Department of Chemical Engineering. Am I eligible to submit a BRIGE proposal?**

Yes. Individuals with doctoral degrees holding primary positions within the department of engineering are eligible to submit to the BRIGE solicitation.

6. **I have a Master's Degree in Engineering and will obtain my Ph.D. next semester. Am I eligible to submit a BRIGE proposal?**

No, you must hold a doctoral degree in an engineering supported discipline on the date of the proposal submission.

7. **Do I have to be a U.S. citizen or permanent resident?**

Yes. You must be a U.S. citizen, U.S. national, or permanent U.S. resident.

8. **I am expecting my permanent residency in a few months. Am I eligible to submit a BRIGE proposal?**

BRIGE candidates must be U.S. citizens, U.S. nationals, or permanent U.S. residents at the time of proposal submission.

9. **I currently hold a post-doctoral appointment. Am I eligible to submit a BRIGE proposal?**

No. You are not eligible to apply if you hold a post-doctoral appointment. You must hold an active full-time, tenure track faculty position for less than three years regardless of how many U.S. colleges or universities in which you have served on the date of proposal submission to be eligible to receive support.

10. **I am a new investigator employed as tenure track faculty at my current institution for the past three years, however, at my previous institution I was in a tenure track position for two years. I have never been a PI, Co-PI or senior personnel on any grants nor has my total funding amount on research grants exceeded \$50,000. Am I eligible to submit a BRIGE proposal? How many years are considered for a new investigator in a current institution?**

No. You are not eligible to submit a BRIGE proposal if you have a combined total of more than three years in a tenure track position at all institutions where you were a faculty member. You are only eligible to submit a BRIGE proposal within your first three years in the tenure track regardless of how many institutions in which you have been employed.

11. **I am a new investigator and have exceeded the three years of eligibility because of maternity leave. Am I still eligible to submit a BRIGE proposal?**

Yes. You can apply for the BRIGE award. Maternity leave time or time lost for a major illness does not count towards the three years of eligibility.

12. **My award is less than \$50,000 and expiring in two months, and I have requested a one-year no-cost extension. Can I still submit a BRIGE proposal?**

Yes.

13. **I served on a previous research grant as co-PI for an amount of \$55,000. Am I eligible to submit a BRIGE proposal?**

No. You must not have previously served as Principal Investigator, co-Principal Investigator, or Senior Personnel on any research grants of which the total exceeds \$50,000. Previous federal support through a doctoral dissertation improvement award, as a Fellow (post-doctoral or graduate), or through a fellowship

research starter grant is not a disqualifying criterion.

14. **When I submitted my BRIGE proposal I did not have any current funding. Since then I have received a grant for \$51,000 from another source. Am I still eligible to receive a BRIGE award?**

No. Please see the special award condition in the solicitation: *"If the PI receives research support that contributes to a total which exceeds \$50,000 between the time of the BRIGE proposal submission and the time of award, the proposal will not be eligible for an award."* **You are expected to contact NSF program director if you receive any research support exceeding \$50,000.**

15. **I am currently a new professor but had been in industry, and had SBIR funding exceeding \$50,000, am I eligible to apply for BRIGE?**

ANY research funding over \$50,000 except university support and instrumentation or education type awards is disqualifying. Therefore, the SBIR funding that exceeded \$50,000 is in that category of being research funding and thus disqualifying.

16. **I have a collaborator from a foreign country who will assist me with the research. Can I provide funds to support his/her travel and compensation for his/her time?**

No. You can only request funds for yourself and your students. NSF funds are not allowed for a collaborator or consultant on this award.

17. **I do not have any current or pending (C and P) support research since I started my tenure track position, do I need to provide the C and P form?**

Yes. You must submit the current and pending (C and P) support form, and list the BRIGE proposal as your pending support.

18. **I want my proposal to be reviewed by CMMI under a specific program, how can I ensure that my proposal will be reviewed under this specific program?**

Please indicate the program in which your research is most closely affiliated with at the time of submission. We will seek to place your proposal in a review panel that is most appropriate to your proposal's topic area.

C. BRIGE SUPPLEMENTARY DOCUMENTS, BUDGET PREPARATION, AND FASTLANE SUBMISSION

19. **What is the Broadening Participation Plan mentioned in the solicitation? Is it different from the Broader Impact Merit Review Criterion?**

The Broadening Participation Plan is one of several conditions that satisfy the general Broader Impact criterion. For the BRIGE program, you must include at least a 2-3 page plan that shows how the proposed activities will increase: 1) the participation of engineers from underrepresented groups, and 2) the numbers of such individuals that serve as role models for the scientific workforce of the future.

20. **Should I include my Broadening Participation Plan in the body of my Project Description?**

No. Your Broadening Participation Plan, different from previous years, must now be uploaded as a separate document in the Supplementary Documentation Section of the Proposal. This allows the PI to give the Broadening Participation Plan more depth and clarity. If it is not included as a supplementary document, your proposal will be returned without review.

21. **What are the supplementary documents that I must provide with my proposal in the "Supplementary Documents" section?**

Required supplemental documents include:

1. Broadening Participation Plan

2. Letter from the PI's Department Chair or Dean which must include confirmation of the following criteria:

- The PI has **NOT** previously served as principal investigator, co-PI, or senior personnel on **any research grants and/or contracts, the combined total of which exceeds \$50,000**. Thus, the proposer's name cannot appear as PI or co-PI on the cover sheet of the grant(s) and/or contract(s), regardless of how much funding the proposer received on the grant or contract. Nor has the PI received any other *research funding* which would bring the combined total in excess of \$50,000. Instrumentation and workshop grants and internal university start-up funding do not count toward the \$50,000 maximum limit. Previous federal support through a doctoral dissertation improvement award, as a Fellow (post-doctoral or graduate), or through a fellowship research starter grant is not disqualifying.
- The PI has held a full-time, tenure-track faculty position for **less than three years** on the date of proposal submission deadline, January 20, 2012. Tenure-track positions at other universities prior to the current appointment must be included in the consideration for eligibility. Official leave of absence for illness or maternity, etc., may be subtracted from the total time in tenure-track position if approval documentation from the institution is submitted in the Supplementary Docs section of the proposal.
- The PI has availability to facilities and support for the research from her/his institution.
- The PI is a US citizen or permanent resident

3. Documentation of official Leave of Absence, if applicable.

4. A [Post-Doctoral Mentoring Plan](#), if post-docs will be supported.

5. A [Data Management Plan](#).

6. Letters describing any **collaborative arrangements and commitments**.

22. Please provide examples of Broadening Participation Plan of activities for BRIGE program?

The Broadening Participation Plan may include, but is not limited to, any of the following menu of activities as appropriate for your project and the circumstances of your institution(s):

- **Graduate, Undergraduate Students and Post-docs** - Inclusion of persons from underrepresented groups as graduate student, undergraduate student, and post-doctoral researchers;
- **REU and GRDS** - A plan to apply for post-award supplements to engage undergraduate underrepresented researchers, using [REU](#) supplement, and/or graduate researchers, using Graduate Research Diversity Supplement (GRDS);
- **Minority Serving Institutions** - Engaging faculty and/or student researchers at minority serving institutions, and Hispanic Serving Institutions in the research project;
- **Community Colleges** - Engaging faculty and/or student researchers at community colleges in the research project;
- **Research Experiences for Teachers** - A plan to apply for post-award supplements to engage teachers through [RET](#) program;
- **Research Experiences for High School Students** - Provide research opportunities for members of underrepresented groups at the high school level;
- **Existing Institutional Programs** - Enhance/collaborate with existing diversity programs at your home institution and/or nearby institutions;
- **Mentoring** - Faculty and senior personnel serve as role models and mentors for an underrepresented graduate and undergraduate student population;
- **Tutoring Opportunity** - Provide tutoring opportunities in the gatekeeper courses for underrepresented middle school, high school, and undergraduate students;
- **K-12 Outreach** - Provide outreach activities that will interest and attract underrepresented K-12 students to engineering undergraduate programs, utilizing YouTube and other fun technological tools.
- Including parents and community members in "hands-on" engineering activities provided by engineering students.

D. BRIGE REVIEW AND DECISIONS

23. How will my BRIGE proposal be reviewed?

After the annual submission deadline for BRIGE proposals, the proposals are reviewed by external panels comprised of experts with the necessary discipline specializations to adequately critique the full complement of proposals. Each panel may include reviewers from the previous panels; however, the make-up of the panel is different from one year to the next. Funding recommendations are made by the cognizant Program Director based on the individual reviewer ratings, panel discussion and recommendation, funding availability, and the desire to balance the portfolio among sub-fields within the program.

24. Are there any other review criteria for BRIGE awards that will be of interest to the reviewers?

Yes. As specified in the solicitation, in addition to the Intellectual Merit and the general Broader Impacts criteria, BRIGE proposals will be evaluated on their Broadening Participation Plans and on the potential of the research initiation activities to produce sufficient preliminary results to serve as the basis for a future competitive research proposal to the Directorate for Engineering. The PI should elaborate on her/his long-term goals of interest.

25. When will I be notified if my BRIGE proposal is being recommended for award?

It is standard NSF practice to process all proposals within six months from the submission deadline; therefore, you will be notified of the status of your BRIGE proposal within six months from the BRIGE submission deadline.