National Science Foundation
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Frequently Asked Questions: Alliances for Graduate Education and the Professoriate (AGEP) Program

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GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. **What types of organizations and institutions can submit proposals to the AGEP program?**

    Please refer to Section IV of the AGEP solicitation ([NSF 12-554](#)) and to the NSF Grants Proposal Guide *Chapter I. Pre-Submission Information Section E. Who May Submit Proposals* for the categories of proposers that may submit and be collaborative partners in proposals to NSF. (http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/policydocs/pappguide/nsf11001/gpg_1.jsp)

AGEP-TRANSFORMATION

Scope

2. **Does my AGEP-Transformation project need to include all of the science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) disciplines that are supported by NSF?**

   No. AGEP-Transformation projects may focus on one STEM discipline, a subset of disciplines, or all disciplines as long as the discipline(s) is(are) supported by NSF. NSF supports all fields of fundamental science and engineering except medical sciences (http://www.nsf.gov/about/). Your logic for the disciplinary focus of your project should be clear in the project description. You should also explain the potential impact within the discipline(s) that your project includes.

Alliances

3. **How many partners need to be in an AGEP-Transformation alliance project?**

   An alliance may be made between two or more institutions or organizations. At least one partner in the alliance must award the Ph.D. in at least one STEM field supported by NSF. Note that this is the minimum number of partners required to qualify as an alliance for AGEP-Transformation.

4. **What types of organizations and institutions can be partners in AGEP-Transformation projects?**

   Partners in the alliance can include non-profit institutions of higher education, non-profit organizations, industry, and national laboratories. Please review the NSF Grants Proposal Guide *Chapter I. Pre-Submission Information Section E. Who May Submit Proposals* for the categories of proposers that may submit and be collaborative partners in proposals to NSF (http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/policydocs/pappguide/nsf11001/gpg_1.jsp).

5. **Are there restrictions on what type of organization can serve as the lead?**

   No, there is not.

6. **Must all AGEP-Transformation proposals be submitted as simultaneously submitted collaborative proposals?**

   Yes. Each AGEP-Transformation partner requesting support from the AGEP program must simultaneously submit proposals as part of one collaborative proposal (See Chapter II, Section D.4.b of the GPG for guidance in the preparation of collaborative proposals). Note that you are required to include a communication plan in your AGEP-Transformation proposal to ensure communication between all partners (see Section V of the AGEP solicitation (NSF 12-554)).

7. **Can the AGEP-Transformation proposal include a subaward?**

   Yes. However all alliance partners must simultaneously submit proposals as part of one collaborative proposal (See NSF Grants Proposal Guide *Chapter II, Section D.4.b* for guidance in the preparation of collaborative proposals). Some FFRDCs that cannot submit proposals to NSF may potentially be supported through a subaward mechanism. Minor partners and experts that perform a specific task to support the project may be supported through a subaward.

8. **What are alliance-based activities?**

   Alliance-based activities are project activities that will be implemented that could not be implemented without the alliance partners. Examples might include but are not limited to: building pathways focusing on preparation and interest, providing high quality training and professional development experiences, and career placement; sharing limited and specialized resources to improve outcomes; and/or creating, rewarding, and nurturing new research

connections between faculty and researchers. Your project can still have activities that only involve a subset of partners and you may even have some activities that are at only one partner institution because of the uniqueness of the role of that institution or organization in the alliance. The important thing is that your alliance makes sense and all of your alliance partners are significant partners in the project working toward your goals.

Budget

9. **What is "direct" student or postdoctoral financial support?**

   Direct support includes: Full or partial stipends, scholarships, fellowships, recruitment bonuses, retention bonuses, tuition and fees for their degree or training program, insurance and other benefits. Some examples of support that would not be considered "direct" financial support include but are not limited to access to travel funds in exchange for participating in a mentoring program or professional development opportunities.

10. **Is the 20% limit on direct student support based on the total collaborative budget or is the 20% limit based on the requested budget for each collaborative partner?**

    The 20% limit is for the total direct support requested in the total collaborative proposal budget. The distribution of the direct student support funds among the AGEP-Transformation partners is left to the alliance to determine but the distribution should be clear in the budget and proposal description.

11. **Do I calculate the 20% limit on direct student support based on the direct charges only?**

    Yes. Do not include indirect charges in the total to determine the 20% limit.

12. **Does the 20% limit on direct student support include the related indirect costs that my institution or organization charges for those funds?**

    No. The indirect cost charged for any student support requested should not be included in the 20% limit.

13. **If I have undergraduates and graduate students and/or postdoctoral fellows working on implementing the project as AGEP project personnel is this included in the 20% limit?**

    No. "Project personnel" working to implement the AGEP project's activities or the project's research activities should not be included in the 20% limit. Direct student support for students to complete their own STEM graduate or postdoctoral training program must be included in the 20% limit. Direct student support includes: Full or partial stipends, scholarships, fellowships, recruitment bonuses, retention bonuses, tuition and fees for their degree or training program, insurance and other benefits.

14. **Why do I need to add up the places that direct student support is requested in the budget?**

    Because institutions and organizations categorize student support differently for different purposes (some may be in "participant support" and some may be in the staff support and some may be in the "other" line item, for example). The proposers know where direct student support has been included in the budget request so we ask that you provide a total dollar amount and calculate the total percent of the direct costs (limited to 20%).

Research Activity

15. **How much of the AGEP-Transformation budget should be directed toward the**

research activities?

You have flexibility in determining the appropriate amount of the budget needed to accomplish the proposed research activities. However, NSF anticipates that these expenses will typically be less than 20% of the total requested budget.

16. **Can I include some description of the research activity in the main project description section of the proposal or should it only be in the five page supplement?**

    Yes, some details of the research activity may need to be included in the project description in order to be clear how the proposed activities support the proposed research. The main 15 page project description should indicate how the proposed activities relate to the proposed research activity which is fully described in the five page supplement.

Project-Evaluation

17. **Do we need to include a project-level evaluation plan in an AGEP-Transformation proposal?**

    Yes. Your AGEP-Transformation proposal should still include an evaluation plan; however it will only need to cover the formative evaluation and the staff that will coordinate with the AGEP program evaluator to do the project summative evaluation.

Data Collection

18. **Will we need to collect data on all STEM disciplines at all of our partner institutions if our scope is limited to one STEM discipline or a subset of disciplines?**

    The data you collect should support your formative evaluation needs and your research activities. So the data you collect will be determined by the scope of your project. That **may** in the end include data on all your STEM programs and possibly even non-STEM programs for comparison purposes. The focus of your project, however, will determine where NSF would expect outcomes to be reported and tracked.

AGEP-KNOWLEDGE ADOPTION AND TRANSLATION (AGEP-KAT)

Scope

19. **Does my AGEP-KAT project need to include all of the disciplines that are supported by NSF?**

    No. AGEP-KAT projects may focus on one STEM discipline, a subset of disciplines, or all disciplines as long as they are supported by NSF. The logic for the proposed focus of the project should be clear in the project description.

20. **Why isn't direct student and postdoctoral support allowed under AGEP-KAT?**

    AGEP-KAT is designed to allow proposers to support the adoption or adaptation of new and innovative strategies to new contexts and/or disseminate new and innovative effective practices. The AGEP-KAT track does not consider direct student support to be a new or innovative strategy.

Alliances

21. **Do AGEP-KAT projects require partners?**

    No. AGEP-KAT projects may or may not be alliances between multiple institutions and organizations.

Project-Evaluation

22. **Do we need to include a project-level evaluation plan in AGEP-KAT proposals?**

    Yes. Your AGEP-KAT proposal should include an evaluation plan that covers the formative evaluation and names the staff that will coordinate with the AGEP program evaluator to do the project summative evaluation.

AGEP-BROADENING PARTICIPATION RESEARCH IN STEM EDUCATION (AGEP-BPR)

Research Questions

23. **Are AGEP-BPR proposals limited to the research questions in the solicitation?**

    No. All research questions that relate to the goal of the AGEP program are acceptable for the AGEP-BPR track. Your proposal should explain how your research project will study graduate education and postdoctoral training in order to build our knowledge on how to improve underrepresented minority participation, preparation, and success in STEM graduate education and postdoctoral training and pursuit of academic STEM careers.

Project-Evaluation

24. **Do we need to include a project-level evaluation plan in AGEP-BPR proposals?**

    Yes. Your AGEP-BPR proposal must include an evaluation plan to cover the formative and summative evaluation of the research project.

25. **Why is the project-level evaluation required for the AGEP-BPR more extensive than for the AGEP-Transformation and AGEP-KAT proposals?**

    The AGEP-BPR projects will not be included in the same program evaluation as the AGEP-Transformation and AGEP-KAT projects. It is anticipated that the AGEP-BPR portfolio will be included in a separate program-level evaluation which will not include project-level assistance on evaluation.