



General Programmatic Terms and Conditions (PTCs) for the Innovative Technology Experiences for Students and Teachers Program (ITEST) at the National Science Foundation (NSF 12-597) Cooperative Agreement(s)

NSF 12-597:

http://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub_summ.jsp?WT.z_pims_id=5467&ods_key=nsf12597

1. Key Personnel: Except for the Principal Investigator(s) (PIs) or Co-PIs identified in this award, requests to make any changes to personnel, organizations, and/or partnerships specifically named in the proposal, that have been approved as part of this award, shall be submitted in writing to the cognizant NSF Program Official for approval prior to any changes taking effect. Requests for prior approval of changes to the PI(s) must be submitted through FastLane/Research.gov for review by the cognizant NSF Program Official and approval by an NSF Grants Officer.

2. Program/Project Description: This award shall maintain the previously established ITEST Learning Resource Center with a revised scope of work, under the new name STEM Learning and Research (STELAR) Center. Moving forward, the STELAR Center will be charged with providing targeted technical assistance (TA), data management and synthesis, and dissemination and outreach for ITEST projects, PIs, and the NSF ITEST Program.

2.1. Contribution to the Field: The STELAR Center will build capacity and support continued professionalization in formal and informal science education communities supported by the ITEST program. The STELAR Center will function as a clearinghouse for the compilation and dissemination of ITEST project models, materials, evaluation resources, practices, and publications. The activities of the STELAR Center will support and promote the goals of the ITEST program and engage a comprehensive array of strategies to inform the field. In addition, the STELAR Center will work with the ITEST Program to identify and highlight innovative ITEST projects for stakeholders through various mechanisms (e.g., website, webinars, papers, etc.). The STELAR Center will interface with other NSF Resource Centers including, but not limited to, Discovery Research K-12 (DR K-12), Advancing Informal Science Learning (AISL), and Research and Evaluation on Education in Science and Engineering (REESE) centers for knowledge sharing and to collaborate on annual meetings, and support TA activities.

2.2. Technical Support for PIs: The STELAR Center will continue to build capacity and support the ITEST community of practice through the creation of a targeted TA

vision and strategy tailored to meet the needs of new and veteran PIs. Activities will include, but are not limited to the following: conduct annual needs assessment, host interactive webinars, facilitate thematic working groups, and host thematic face-to-face convenings. PI meetings will be held as deemed necessary by the NSF Program Officer and under supplementary funding. Annual Work Plans with a Technical Assistance section will be required at least three months prior to the start of each STELAR Center funding year and should outline the specific activities for each year. TA plans should clearly describe anticipated TA activities, collaborators, dissemination and outreach efforts, and include a realistic timeline to accomplish the tasks. Explicit plans to address issues of equity, diversity, and inclusion, particularly prospective PIs from underrepresented groups in STEM fields, should be included. The plan should also articulate how it will build on the previous year's activities and include evaluative activities that are aligned with the proposed activities.

2.3. Data Management: The STELAR Center will continue to gather project data, including project outcomes and any indication of impact if available, using the Management Information System (MIS). Efforts will be made by the STELAR Center to make the MIS more flexible and user friendly. There is also an interest in learning more about the ITEST Community's needs, which should also be incorporated into the MIS data gathering and reporting. Data and synthesis reports provided by the STELAR Center will help the ITEST Program to better understand the full breadth and depth of the ITEST portfolio and its impacts.

2.4. Dissemination and Outreach: The STELAR Center will develop and implement a variety of dissemination and outreach strategies, with special emphasis on reaching broader communities of existing and potential PIs and disseminating findings and resources from ITEST projects to K-12 students and teachers. Regional and national dissemination efforts should be employed to ensure sufficient coverage. Plans for dissemination and outreach should be included in the STELAR Center's annual work plan.

2.5. STELAR Center Evaluation: With regards to the STELAR Center evaluation, the Center will work with the external evaluator to develop and implement rigorous formative and summative evaluations of the STELAR Center. The evaluation plan should provide data on a range of impacts, including assessment data on whether or not the STELAR Center is of value to the field and to what extent. Questions to consider include: Has the STELAR Center had a positive impact on building ITEST projects' capacities? If so, how and to what extent was the STELAR Center involved? The evaluator should be involved in the development and refinement of the evaluation questions and plan. Evaluation methodologies should go beyond questionnaires and interviews. The evaluation plan must be approved by the ITEST Program prior to implementation.

3. Project Governance: The Awardee will ensure that an efficient and effective project governing structure is in place throughout the award period to support all critical or significant project activities. Among the governing components will be the:

3.1. Vice President, Chief Financial Officer, Chief Compliance Officer, Senior Vice President, Director of Administration and Finance Division, and Treasurer: Holds legal and fiscal responsibility for the NSF award.

3.2. Senior Vice President, Division Director, and Unit Director: Responsible to the Board for oversight of organizational services to the STELAR Center and Supervision of the Project PI.

3.3. STELAR Center Advisory Committee: Provides STEM and evaluation content expertise, leadership and management capacity, and strategic direction to the Center. The Committee regularly meets annually (at a minimum) with the PI and Co-PIs, supplemented with bi-annual telephone or virtual meetings. Its co-chairs may provide guidance, in consultation with the Committee, more frequently.

3.4. The NSF Program Officer will attend all advisory committee meetings either in person or electronically as schedules permit.

3.5. The NSF Program Officer Working Group will work with the cognizant ITEST Program Officer to provide expertise, support, and guidance on STELAR Center activities. Members of the working group will serve as NSF liaisons to the Center on specific activities (e.g., evaluation, summit).

3.6. Project PI: Manages award in accordance with NSF policies and the Terms and Conditions of this Cooperative Agreement. The PI also makes operating decisions in consultation with the Advisory Committee and Co-PIs. PI supervises the Center's staff and serves as liaison to the Advisory Committee. Together, the project PIs are responsible for the day-to-day management, planning thematic convenings, designing and leading implementation of Technical Assistance systems resulting in development and delivery of services to the field, PIs, and the ITEST Program. Prepare programmatic progress reports and expenditure reports for NSF.

4. Reporting Requirements: The Awardee will provide ad hoc and regular reports as designated by the NSF cognizant Program Official with content, format, and submission time line established by the NSF cognizant Program Official. The Awardee will submit all required reports via FastLane/Research.gov using the appropriate reporting category; for any type of report not specifically mentioned in FastLane/Research.gov, the Awardee will use the "Interim Reporting" function to submit reports mid-year.

4.1. The Awardee will cooperate with and provide data to any NSF-designated program evaluator. NSF may interview and administer surveys to the Project Team, Advisory Committee, Subawardees, or the field at-large to assess project performance. The STELAR Center may be responsible for assisting with the collection of required data from ITEST awardees. In addition, the Awardee will provide all requested information for federal accountability systems including the Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART), American Competitiveness Council (ACC), and any new systems.

4.2. Interim Reports: On a semi-annual basis (excluding the quarter in which the Annual Report is submitted); the PI will submit a progress report in FastLane/Research.gov that summarizes key accomplishments and identifies significant project schedule and budget variances. Furthermore, the Awardee must notify immediately the cognizant Program Official of any significant external or internal factors with potential to affect project management or outcomes negatively.

4.3. Annual Reports: They must include the status of project tasks and deliverables, discussion of progress against projected outcomes, as well as an analysis of project budget vs. actual expenses, accompanied by explanations of budget variances greater than 20% of a line item and their potential impact on the schedule or activities, any changes that will be made as a result, and lessons learned. The Annual Report (or subsequent Interim Report) must include a copy of the Annual Assessment prepared by the evaluator.

4.4. Technical Assistance/Dissemination/Outreach Work Plan: They must be submitted at least three months prior to the start of each new STELAR funding year. The plan should include a timeline, TA activities, dissemination and outreach plans, and evaluative activities for the upcoming funding year.

4.5. Final Report: It must be accompanied by a summative evaluation that gathers data and answers questions as outlined in the approved STELAR Center external evaluation plan (see above).

4.6. ITEST Reports: The Awardee also will provide ITEST Government Results and Performance Act (GPRA) “Highlights” and prepare regular analyses of the ITEST portfolio and related reports on a schedule and in formats determined by the cognizant Program Official in consultation with the PI.

4.7. Deliverables: Major project deliverables, including any PI meetings and convenings, technical assistance, evaluation/research, and dissemination and outreach plans will be developed in close consultation with the NSF ITEST cognizant program officer and ITEST program officer working group, and may be modified to meet the changing needs of the program portfolio.

5. Awardee Support of Ongoing Management and Oversight: The Awardee will ensure full commitment and cooperation among the governing structure components, and all project staff during all ongoing NSF project management and oversight activities. The Awardee will ensure availability of all key institutional partners during any desk or on-site review as well as timely access to all project documentation.

5.1. Site Visits: NSF or its representatives will conduct at least two site visits to the Awardee and other organizations participating or benefiting from the project. A Reverse Site Visit involving experts in informal science education, IT education, and teacher

professional development will be held at NSF to review annual progress of the STELAR Center prior to the close of each project year.

5.2. Meetings: The PIs will communicate quarterly with the cognizant NSF Program Official to review progress of the project in achieving its impacts. Meetings may occur on the phone or in person at conferences or other venues as schedules permit.