SBE Minority Postdoctoral Research Fellowships and Follow-up Research Starter Grants (MPRF)

PROGRAM SOLICITATION
NSF 09-595

National Science Foundation

Directorate for Social, Behavioral & Economic Sciences
SBE Office of Multidisciplinary Activities

Full Proposal Deadline(s) (due by 5 p.m. proposer's local time):

October 19, 2009

Third Monday in October, Annually Thereafter

IMPORTANT INFORMATION AND REVISION NOTES

A revised version of the *NSF Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide* (PAPPG), NSF 11-1, was issued on October 1, 2010 and is effective for proposals submitted, or due, on or after January 18, 2011. Please be advised that the guidelines contained in NSF 11-1 apply to proposals submitted in response to this funding opportunity. Proposers who opt to submit prior to January 18, 2011, must also follow the guidelines contained in NSF 11-1.

Cost Sharing: The PAPPG has been revised to implement the National Science Board's recommendations regarding cost sharing. Inclusion of voluntary committed cost sharing is prohibited. In order to assess the scope of the project, all organizational resources necessary for the project must be described in the Facilities, Equipment and Other Resources section of the proposal. The description should be narrative in nature and must not include any quantifiable financial information. Mandatory cost sharing will only be required when explicitly authorized by the NSF Director. See the PAPP Guide Part I: *Grant Proposal Guide (GPG)* Chapter II.C.2.g(xi) for further information about the implementation of these recommendations.

Data Management Plan: The PAPPG contains a clarification of NSF's long standing data policy. All proposals must describe plans for data management and sharing of the products of research, or assert the absence of the need for such plans. FastLane will not permit submission of a proposal that is missing a Data Management Plan. The Data Management Plan will be reviewed as part of the intellectual merit or broader impacts of the proposal, or both, as appropriate. Links to data management requirements and plans relevant to specific Directorates, Offices, Divisions, Programs, or other NSF units are available on the NSF website at: http://www.nsf.gov/bfa/dias/policy/dmp.jsp. See Chapter II.C.2.j of the GPG for further information about the implementation of this requirement.

Revision Summary

This funding opportunity was previously offered via a joint program (NSF 06-586) with the Directorate for Biological Sciences (BIO). The significant changes in the new SBE MPRF solicitation are listed below:

- Eligible to apply for Postdoctoral Research Fellowship if Ph.D was obtained within 30 months before application deadline (previously was four years).
- Research and Training Plan page limit: 10 pages (previously was 5).
- Deadline for both Fellowship and Follow-up Research Starter Grant proposals is the third Monday in October (previously was the first Monday of November).
- If the Fellowship candidate already has a tenure-track position, a letter is required from the Department Chair/Head stating that if the MPRF were to be awarded, the Fellow would be allowed a two-year leave of absence.
- Travel awards are no longer offered.
- Follow-up Research Starter Grants: 15 page limit for Project Description.
- In an effort to reduce the number of applications returned without review, applicants who mention human subjects and/or vertebrate animals in their research plans are advised to contact the Program Officer prior to submission.

SUMMARY OF PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

General Information

Program Title:

SBE Minority Postdoctoral Research Fellowships and Follow-up Research Starter Grants (MPRF)

Synopsis of Program:

The Directorate for Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences (SBE) offers Minority Postdoctoral Research Fellowships and Research Starter Grants in an effort to increase the diversity of researchers who participate in

NSF programs in the social, behavioral and economic sciences and thereby increase the participation of scientists from underrepresented groups in selected areas of science in the United States. These activities (postdoctoral fellowships and follow-up research starter grants) support training and research in the areas of social, behavioral and economic sciences within the purview of NSF.

Cognizant Program Officer(s):

Please note that the following information is current at the time of publishing. See program website for any updates to the points of contact.

- Fahmida Chowdhury - Program Officer, 907.09, telephone: (703) 292-4672, email: fchowdhu@nsf.gov

- Christina M. Jones - Science Assistant, telephone: (703) 292-2960, email: chjones@nsf.gov

Applicable Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number(s):

- 47.075 --- Social Behavioral and Economic Sciences

Award Information

Anticipated Type of Award: Fellowship or Follow-up Research Starter Grant

Estimated Number of Awards: 12 - Up to 12 total fellowships and follow-up research starter grants contingent upon the quality of the applications and availability of funds.

Anticipated Funding Amount: $1,250,000 - Maximum anticipated funding amount is approximately $1,250,000 per year contingent upon the quality of applications and availability of funds.

Eligibility Information

Organization Limit:

Proposals may only be submitted by the following:

- Postdoctoral Research Fellowships or Follow-up Research Starter Grants

    - For Postdoctoral Research Fellowships: only individuals who are U.S. citizens, nationals, or permanent residents. The proposals must be submitted by the individual directly to the NSF.
    - For Follow-up Research Starter Grants: U.S. academic institutions may apply with the former Fellow as principal investigator. Academic institutions are defined as universities and two- and four-year colleges (including community colleges) accredited in, and having a campus located in the United States, acting on behalf of their faculty members.

PI Limit:

Fellowships: Applicants must be U.S. citizens, nationals, or legally admitted permanent resident aliens of the United States and meet other eligibility criteria listed below in the program solicitation.

Limit on Number of Proposals per Organization:

None Specified

Limit on Number of Proposals per PI: 1

Applicants may submit only one Postdoctoral Fellowship application per year. Follow-up Research Starter Grants are one-time awards.

Proposal Preparation and Submission Instructions

A. Proposal Preparation Instructions

- **Letters of Intent:** Not Applicable

- **Preliminary Proposal Submission:** Not Applicable

- **Full Proposal Preparation Instructions:** This solicitation contains information that deviates from the standard NSF Proposal and Award Policies and Procedures Guide, Part I: Grant Proposal Guide (GPG) proposal preparation guidelines. Please see the full text of this solicitation for further information.

B. Budgetary Information

- **Cost Sharing Requirements:** Inclusion of voluntary committed cost sharing is prohibited.

- **Indirect Cost (F&A) Limitations:** Fellowships are awarded to individuals and have an institutional allowance in lieu of indirect costs. Follow-up Research Starter Grants allow no indirect costs.

- **Other Budgetary Limitations:** Other budgetary limitations apply. Please see the full text of this solicitation for further information.

C. Due Dates

- **Full Proposal Deadline(s)** (due by 5 p.m. proposer's local time):

October 19, 2009

Third Monday in October, Annually Thereafter

Proposal Review Information Criteria

Merit Review Criteria: National Science Board approved criteria. Additional merit review considerations apply. Please see the full text of this solicitation for further information.

Award Administration Information

Award Conditions: Additional award conditions apply. Please see the full text of this solicitation for further information.

Reporting Requirements: Additional reporting requirements apply. Please see the full text of this solicitation for further information.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The National Science Foundation offers postdoctoral research fellowships in selected areas to provide opportunities for recent doctoral scientists to obtain additional training, to gain research experience under the sponsorship of established scientists, and to broaden their scientific horizons beyond their research experiences during their undergraduate or graduate training. Postdoctoral fellowships are further designed to assist new scientists to direct their research efforts across traditional disciplinary lines and to avail themselves of unique research resources, sites, and facilities, including foreign locations. NSF is committed to broadening participation to all scientists and sees the postdoctoral period as an important level of professional development in attaining this goal. Concern about the scientific leadership position of the United States in the world and continued American competitiveness has led the Federal government to take measures to develop untapped pools of scientific talent that exist in this country. These steps include Congressional passage of the America COMPETES Act. For more information about NSF and the America COMPETES Act, see the NSF section of H.R. 2272 here.

II. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

NSF seeks to promote the participation of scientists from all segments of the scientific community in its research programs and activities, including those from underrepresented groups. This program seeks to encourage doctoral scientists (who are not yet in full-time positions) to take advantage of the independence afforded by fellowships to establish their research careers, to enhance the participation of under-represented groups in science and engineering, and to prepare for positions of scientific leadership in academia, industry, and government. There is one deadline per year for the fellowship applications and the follow-up research starter grants which may be submitted following the termination of the fellowship.

- Fellowships: At the time of application, applicants must have earned the doctoral degree in an appropriate scientific field no more than 30 months before the deadline date of the application or plan to earn this degree no more than one year after the deadline date; have completed no more than 12 months (or full time equivalent) in a post doctoral research or lectureship position prior to the award; have not accepted any other full-time employment for the term of the fellowship; have proposed a research and training plan that falls within the program areas of SBE; and have explicitly explained in the proposal how the fellowship award will broaden participation of underrepresented minorities in the U.S.

- Follow-up Research Starter Grants: The Fellow may apply for a one-year research starter grant to initiate an independent research program at a U.S. academic institution eligible to receive NSF funding. To qualify for the starter grant, the Fellow must hold a tenure–track position and apply within one year after the expiration of the Fellowship.

Descriptions of research areas appropriate for Minority Postdoctoral Fellowships in SBE

The Directorate for Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences (SBE) supports research in a broad range of disciplines and in interdisciplinary areas primarily through its Behavior and Cognitive Sciences (BCS) Division and the Social and Economic Sciences (SES) Division. The BCS Division funds research to develop and advance scientific knowledge on human cognition, language, social behavior and culture, as well as on the interactions between human societies and the physical environment including the implications of nanotechnology on environment and society. SES supports research to enhance our understanding of human, social and organizational behavior by building social science infrastructure, by advancing social science methods, and by supporting disciplinary and interdisciplinary research projects that advance knowledge in the social and economic sciences.

BCS Program Areas (http://www.nsf.gov/div/index.jsp?div=BCS)

SES Program Areas (http://www.nsf.gov/div/index.jsp?div=SES)

A. Location of Work

Research and training supported by Minority Postdoctoral Research Fellowships may be conducted at any appropriate U.S. or foreign host institution. Appropriate institutions include colleges and universities, most government and national laboratories and facilities, and privately-sponsored nonprofit institutes and museums, and, under special conditions, for-profit organizations.

B. Sponsoring Scientist(s)

The Fellow must affiliate with a host institution during the entire tenure of the fellowship. The applicant is responsible for making prior arrangements with the host institution and Sponsoring Scientist(s). Regardless of the number of sponsors or locations, the fellowship application requires a single Sponsoring Scientist statement. If more than one sponsor is proposed, one must be named lead sponsor and information in the proposal must be integrated into a single Sponsoring Scientist statement. Likewise, if more than one site is proposed, the Sponsoring Scientist statement must integrate all sponsors and locations in a single statement. Because of the increasingly multidisciplinary nature of all fields of science, it is expected that dual sponsorship will be common.

If a fellowship is offered, the applicant may be requested to provide documentation from the host institution that the terms and conditions of the fellowship are acceptable and that the Fellow will be provided adequate space, basic services, and supplies.

Any changes in location or sponsorship after an award is made must be approved in advance in writing by the appropriate NSF Postdoctoral Fellowship Program Officer.

III. AWARD INFORMATION

Duration and Tenure: The fellowships are normally for two years. A three-year tenure may be granted at the time of award if the Fellow spends at least a year abroad. A request to renew the fellowship for a third year requires a new application (submitted with the regular deadline) that will be reviewed with the other fellowship applications in the review panel. Such renewals are approved in rare circumstances. Fellowship tenure begins on the first of the month only and may commence at the Fellow's request between August of the initial award year and January of the following year. Interruptions in tenure or extensions without additional cost to NSF are permitted only for extenuating circumstances beyond the control of the Fellow. Fellowships cannot be renewed or increased with NSF supplements. Sponsoring scientists and host institutions may supplement the award amount from non-Federal sources. Follow-up research starter grants are for a maximum of 12 months.

Stipend and Allowances for Fellowships: The total fellowship amount is $60,000 per year and consists of three separate types of payments. The annual stipend of $45,000 is paid monthly in installments of $3,750 directly to the post-doctoral fellow as an electronic funds transfer into a personal account at a financial institution. A research allowance of $10,000 per year is paid as a lump sum to the Fellow in the same manner for expenses directly related to the conduct of the research, such as materials and supplies, subscription fees and recovery costs for databases, travel, travel to the PI Meeting/Workshop, and publication expenses. An institutional allowance of $5,000 per year is paid to the host institution for fringe benefits, including health insurance payments for the Fellow, and for expenses incurred in support of the Fellow, such as space, equipment, and general-purpose supplies. There are no allowances for dependents or travel allowances separate from the research allowance.

Follow-up Researcher Starter Grants Budget: The maximum allocated budget amount for this type of grant is $50,000 for the one-year duration of the award.

IV. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

Organization Limit:

Proposals may only be submitted by the following:

- Postdoctoral Research Fellowships or Follow-up Research Starter Grants

    - For Postdoctoral Research Fellowships: only individuals who are U.S. citizens, nationals, or

permanent residents. The proposals must be submitted by the individual directly to the NSF.
  o For Follow-up Research Starter Grants: U.S. academic institutions may apply with the former Fellow as principal investigator. Academic institutions are defined as universities and two- and four-year colleges (including community colleges) accredited in, and having a campus located in the United States, acting on behalf of their faculty members.

PI Limit:

Fellowships: Applicants must be U.S. citizens, nationals, or legally admitted permanent resident aliens of the United States and meet other eligibility criteria listed below in the program solicitation.

Limit on Number of Proposals per Organization:

None Specified

Limit on Number of Proposals per PI: 1

Applicants may submit only one Postdoctoral Fellowship application per year. Follow-up Research Starter Grants are one-time awards.

Additional Eligibility Info:

You are eligible to apply for an NSF Minority Postdoctoral Research Fellowship if you meet all the following criteria:

- You are a citizen, national, or lawfully admitted permanent resident alien of the United States.
- You have earned the doctoral degree within 30 months before the application deadline or plan to earn this degree within one year after the deadline.
- You have not accepted any other full-time employment for the term of the fellowship.
- You have not received Federal funding of more than $20,000 as PI or co-PI (except graduate fellowship and doctoral dissertation improvement grants); have not submitted concurrently the same project to another NSF program; and are not a named participant on any other proposal submitted to NSF, including regular research proposals, concurrent with the fellowship application, regardless of who is the named principal investigator.

You are eligible to apply for a Follow-up Research Starter Grant if you are an NSF Minority Postdoctoral Research Fellow, have completed your fellowship within the last year, have accepted a tenure-track position at an institution eligible to receive NSF funds, and are proposing research that falls within the purview of SBE sciences.

V. PROPOSAL PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

A. Proposal Preparation Instructions

Full Proposal Instructions: Proposals submitted in response to this program solicitation should be prepared and submitted in accordance with the guidelines specified in the NSF Grant Proposal Guide (GPG). The complete text of the GPG is available electronically on the NSF website at: http://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub_summ.jsp?ods_key=gpg. Paper copies of the GPG may be obtained from the NSF Publications Clearinghouse, telephone (703) 292-PUBS (7827) or by e-mail from nsfpubs@nsf.gov.

Application Preparation Instructions:

Applicants must use FastLane for new fellowships, fellowship extensions, and follow-up research starter grants. Specific instructions are found in FastLane which differ from the standard Grant Proposal Guide (GPG) proposal preparation guidelines. All page limits include pictures, figures, tables, graphics, etc. Applicants are urged to take special care to strictly adhere to page limitations. Proposals that do not conform to the requirements will be returned without review.

1. Postdoctoral Research Fellowships

Fellowship applications must be submitted electronically via the NSF FastLane system. Only one application is permitted per person. The fellowship application consists of many parts, requiring input from Sponsoring Scientist(s) and referees. Applicants are advised to begin the application procedures well in advance of the deadline and to submit the application as early as possible. FastLane procedures allow applicants to work on parts of the application and save them for future completion.

Only complete and timely applications will be accepted. A complete submission requires coordination between the applicant, the applicant's sponsoring scientist(s), and the referees, and includes all of the following items.

From the applicant, a complete FastLane postdoctoral fellowship application consisting of:

- *Cover Sheet* (with Program Solicitation, Division, and Program selected)
- *Application Form*
- *Curriculum Vitae* (Biographical Sketches - limited to two pages)
- *Abstract of Thesis Research* (Supplementary Docs - one page)
- *Abstract of the Proposed Research and Training (*Project Summary - one page and must explicitly and individually address both intellectual merit and broader impacts of the research and training plan). **Note:** Without the explicit description of the intellectual merit and broader impacts in the project summary, the application will be returned without review.
- *Research and Training Plan* (Project Description - 10 pages maximum, detailed requirements listed below)
- *Bibliography of cited references* (References Cited)
- *Sponsoring Scientist Statement and CV* (Supplementary Docs - a single signed statement from the primary sponsoring scientist confirming support of the applicant's plan for research and training, and a plan for mentoring the applicant, along with the the primary sponsoring scientist's CV)
- *Letter from Department Head/Chair* (Supplementary Docs - The letter should clearly state that if the Fellowship is awarded, the faculty member will be given a two-year leave of absence to move to his/her host institution in order to carry out the

fellowship tenure. The application will be considered non-compliant without this letter and the stipulated statements in it. **Note:** This letter is only necessary if the applicant is already in a tenured track position.)

- *Reference Letters* (one from the applicant's doctoral thesis advisor and another from a scientist who knows the applicant well. **Note:** FastLane submission of the reference letters by the authors is required. The references should include the doctoral advisor but not the proposed sponsoring scientist. The referees should be provided a copy of the Research and Training Plan of the applicant so they can comment specifically on the proposed fellowship activities in addition to their personal knowledge of the applicant. An assigned access code is used to provide secure access to FastLane for preparing and submitting the reference letters. It limits access to only those given the access code by the applicant and links the reference letters to the application.)

Additional Instructions for Research and Training Plan

The research and training plan addresses what the applicant hopes to accomplish during the fellowship period, how it relates to her/his career goals, and how participation of underrepresented minorities will be increased. The plan should be developed in collaboration with the sponsoring scientist, but the planned research should be the independent work of the applicant, not part of ongoing work of the sponsor.

The research and training plan consists of:

- An introduction or background section;
- A statement of research objectives, methods, and significance;
- A statement of training objectives and a personal statement of career goals;
- An explanation of how the fellowship activities will enhance the applicant's career development;
- A justification of the choice of Sponsoring Scientist(s) and host institution(s); and
- An outreach plan for broadening participation of underrepresented groups in STEM fields (in the applicant's own field and/or beyond).

If the research project involves experiments, explicit experimental details need not be given, but the plan should provide a clear statement of objectives and methodology to accomplish them, and the specification of hypotheses and ways to test them. In presenting the training plan, the applicant should set clear training goals and explain how the proposed research and training will help achieve these goals. This can be done by explaining why the proposed fellowship institution and sponsoring scientist were chosen, and what role the chosen research, sponsoring senior scientist and host institution will play in enhancing the applicant's conceptual approaches and technical skills. NSF encourages (but does not require) Fellows who choose U.S. institutions as hosts to include research experience of 6 months or longer in a foreign laboratory or site. If a foreign activity is proposed, the plan should include details of the visit (where, when, how long), the unique opportunities, and the expected outcome. Tenure of 36 months may be requested if at least 12 months will be spent at a foreign institution. If the research is to be conducted at an institution with which the applicant is or has been associated, a justification must be given for not selecting a new institution. Applicants not changing their institution are encouraged to develop training goals and short term visits elsewhere to provide new research environments.

Applicants whose research involves human subjects and /or vertebrate animals must indicate in the plan their awareness of regulations and guidelines pertaining to these types of research. Successful applicants must provide NSF with documentation that the research has been reviewed and approved by the appropriate institutional committees, giving assurance of compliance with all Federal policies on research using humans and the care and use of animals. These requirements are relevant to both laboratory and field projects. Documentation is to be provided on the Cover Sheet in FastLane.

Special certifications and permits must be provided when projects involve collecting in foreign countries, endangered species, or hazardous materials. Some applications may require other documentation before the final decision can be made, e.g., government permits, letters of collaboration, and commitments from private sources. The research and training plan should provide general information on these matters and address the availability of these documents. Applicants must submit the information when requested by the NSF Program Officer managing the MPRF program.

2. Follow-up Research Starter Grants

Fellows who accept a tenure-track position at a U.S. academic institution eligible to receive NSF funding may apply for a special one-year, nonrenewable starter grant to assist in establishing an independent research program. The Starter Grant proposal can only be submitted within one year of the expiration of the candidate's MPRF. Later submissions will be returned without review.

Proposals for the Follow-Up Research Starter Grants must be submitted through FastLane by the applicant's employing institution (similar to regular research grants). Research starter grants are reviewed using standard NSF merit review procedures and criteria. The project description should describe in detail the scope of the research to be conducted and its relationship with the applicant's postdoctoral research. The maximum award is $50,000 total. Funds provided by NSF cannot be used for PI salary, renovations of laboratory or office space, or indirect costs. The funds are to be used for expenses directly related to the conduct of research that falls under the purview of the Directorate for Social, Behavioral, and Economic Sciences at NSF. For a description of the research areas supported, see "Section II Program Description" in this document.

The proposal must include, as a supplementary document, a description of the mentoring activities that will be provided for the fellow. (See Chapter II of the GPG for additional information.)

A letter of support from the Department Head/Chair is required as part of this application package. The letter should outline research expectations for the faculty member and confirm the tenure track position.

Follow-up Research Starter Grant proposals must be prepared according to the NSF Grant Proposal Guide, which imposes a 15-page limit on the project description (excluding references). The references (bibliography) should be uploaded separately in FastLane via the References Cited section.

Proposers are reminded to identify the program solicitation number NSF 09-595 in the program solicitation block on the NSF Cover Sheet For Proposal to the National Science Foundation. Compliance with this requirement is critical to determining the relevant proposal processing guidelines. Failure to submit this information may delay processing.

B. Budgetary Information

Cost Sharing: Inclusion of voluntary committed cost sharing is prohibited

Indirect Cost (F&A) Limitations: Fellowships are awarded to individuals and have an institutional allowance in lieu of indirect costs. Follow-up Research Starter Grants allow no indirect costs.

Other Budgetary Limitations: The fellowship award amount is $60,000 per year for two or three years ($45,000 stipend, $10,000 research allowance, $5,000 institutional allowance). For research starter grants, NSF provides $50,000.

C. Due Dates

- **Full Proposal Deadline(s)** (due by 5 p.m. proposer's local time):

    October 19, 2009

    Third Monday in October, Annually Thereafter

D. FastLane Requirements

Proposers are required to prepare and submit all proposals for this program solicitation through use of the NSF FastLane system. Detailed instructions regarding the technical aspects of proposal preparation and submission via FastLane are available at: http://www.fastlane.nsf.gov/a1/newstan.htm. For FastLane user support, call the FastLane Help Desk at 1-800-673-6188 or e-mail fastlane@nsf.gov. The FastLane Help Desk answers general technical questions related to the use of the FastLane system. Specific questions related to this program solicitation should be referred to the NSF program staff contact(s) listed in Section VIII of this funding opportunity.

Submission of Electronically Signed Cover Sheets. The Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR) must electronically sign the proposal Cover Sheet to submit the required proposal certifications (see Chapter II, Section C of the Grant Proposal Guide for a listing of the certifications). The AOR must provide the required electronic certifications within five working days following the electronic submission of the proposal. Further instructions regarding this process are available on the FastLane Website at: https://www.fastlane.nsf.gov/fastlane.jsp.

VI. NSF PROPOSAL PROCESSING AND REVIEW PROCEDURES

Proposals received by NSF are assigned to the appropriate NSF program where they will be reviewed if they meet NSF proposal preparation requirements. All proposals are carefully reviewed by a scientist, engineer, or educator serving as an NSF Program Officer, and usually by three to ten other persons outside NSF who are experts in the particular fields represented by the proposal. These reviewers are selected by Program Officers charged with the oversight of the review process. Proposers are invited to suggest names of persons they believe are especially well qualified to review the proposal and/or persons they would prefer not review the proposal. These suggestions may serve as one source in the reviewer selection process at the Program Officer's discretion. Submission of such names, however, is optional. Care is taken to ensure that reviewers have no conflicts of interest with the proposal.

A. NSF Merit Review Criteria

All NSF proposals are evaluated through use of the two National Science Board (NSB)-approved merit review criteria: intellectual merit and the broader impacts of the proposed effort. In some instances, however, NSF will employ additional criteria as required to highlight the specific objectives of certain programs and activities.

The two NSB-approved merit review criteria are listed below. The criteria include considerations that help define them. These considerations are suggestions and not all will apply to any given proposal. While proposers must address both merit review criteria, reviewers will be asked to address only those considerations that are relevant to the proposal being considered and for which the reviewer is qualified to make judgments.

> **What is the intellectual merit of the proposed activity?**
> How important is the proposed activity to advancing knowledge and understanding within its own field or across different fields? How well qualified is the proposer (individual or team) to conduct the project? (If appropriate, the reviewer will comment on the quality of the prior work.) To what extent does the proposed activity suggest and explore creative, original, or potentially transformative concepts? How well conceived and organized is the proposed activity? Is there sufficient access to resources?

> **What are the broader impacts of the proposed activity?**
> How well does the activity advance discovery and understanding while promoting teaching, training, and learning? How well does the proposed activity broaden the participation of underrepresented groups (e.g., gender, ethnicity, disability, geographic, etc.)? To what extent will it enhance the infrastructure for research and education, such as facilities, instrumentation, networks, and partnerships? Will the results be disseminated broadly to enhance scientific and technological understanding? What may be the benefits of the proposed activity to society?

Examples illustrating activities likely to demonstrate broader impacts are available electronically on the NSF website at: http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/gpg/broaderimpacts.pdf.

Mentoring activities provided to postdoctoral researchers supported on the project, as described in the Sponsoring Scientist(s) Statement (Research Fellowship proposals) or a one-page supplementary document (Follow-up Research Starter Grant proposals), will be evaluated under the Broader Impacts criterion.

NSF staff also will give careful consideration to the following in making funding decisions:

> *Integration of Research and Education*
> One of the principal strategies in support of NSF's goals is to foster integration of research and education through the programs, projects, and activities it supports at academic and research institutions. These institutions provide

abundant opportunities where individuals may concurrently assume responsibilities as researchers, educators, and students and where all can engage in joint efforts that infuse education with the excitement of discovery and enrich research through the diversity of learning perspectives.

Integrating Diversity into NSF Programs, Projects, and Activities
Broadening opportunities and enabling the participation of all citizens -- women and men, underrepresented minorities, and persons with disabilities -- is essential to the health and vitality of science and engineering. NSF is committed to this principle of diversity and deems it central to the programs, projects, and activities it considers and supports.

Additional Solicitation Specific Review Criteria

Minority Postdoctoral Research Fellowship proposals will be reviewed by a panel of disciplinary experts, spanning all areas of SBE sciences. Follow-up Research Starter grant proposals will be handled by the same panel, but extra ad-hoc reviews in specific disciplinary areas may also be sought by the program director if deemed necessary. Panelists will also consider the following criteria for Fellowship proposals:

- How does the project broaden the perspectives and experiences of the Fellowship applicant and prepare him or her for a research career?
- How do the proposed activities help increase the participation and advancement of underrepresented groups in STEM fields?
- Are the sponsoring scientist and the host institution a good match to the applicant's proposed project?

The NSF encourages (but does not require) Fellows to gain international experience by selecting foreign hosts for at least part of the tenure of the fellowship. An important basis for judging the suitability of the host institution is the degree to which the Sponsoring Scientist statement describes and offers a research environment and mentoring opportunity that could be difficult to achieve without fellowship support.

Applicants are evaluated on their ability, accomplishments, and potential as evidenced by the Curriculum Vitae and reference reports. The research and training plan is evaluated on its scientific merit, its feasibility, its significance in generating new knowledge, and its impact on the career development of the applicant.

NSF will select the Fellows on the basis of the panel's recommendations, staff review, program priorities and program portfolio, a consideration of the effect of the selections on the infrastructure of science in the United States, and NSF's overall goals. Priority will be given to applicants who are graduate students at the time they apply, to those who choose foreign locations for carrying out their research activities, and those moving to new institutions and research environments with which they have had no prior affiliation.

B. Review and Selection Process

Proposals submitted in response to this program solicitation will be reviewed by Ad hoc Review and/or Panel Review.

Reviewers will be asked to formulate a recommendation to either support or decline each proposal. The Program Officer assigned to manage the proposal's review will consider the advice of reviewers and will formulate a recommendation.

After scientific, technical and programmatic review and consideration of appropriate factors, the NSF Program Officer recommends to the cognizant Division Director whether the proposal should be declined or recommended for award. NSF is striving to be able to tell applicants whether their proposals have been declined or recommended for funding within six months. The time interval begins on the deadline or target date, or receipt date, whichever is later. The interval ends when the Division Director accepts the Program Officer's recommendation.

A summary rating and accompanying narrative will be completed and submitted by each reviewer. In all cases, reviews are treated as confidential documents. Verbatim copies of reviews, excluding the names of the reviewers, are sent to the Principal Investigator/Project Director by the Program Officer. In addition, the proposer will receive an explanation of the decision to award or decline funding.

In all cases, after programmatic approval has been obtained, the proposals recommended for funding will be forwarded to the Division of Grants and Agreements for review of business, financial, and policy implications and the processing and issuance of a grant or other agreement. Proposers are cautioned that only a Grants and Agreements Officer may make commitments, obligations or awards on behalf of NSF or authorize the expenditure of funds. No commitment on the part of NSF should be inferred from technical or budgetary discussions with a NSF Program Officer. A Principal Investigator or organization that makes financial or personnel commitments in the absence of a grant or cooperative agreement signed by the NSF Grants and Agreements Officer does so at their own risk.

VII. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

A. Notification of the Award

Notification of the award is made to *the submitting organization* by a Grants Officer in the Division of Grants and Agreements. Organizations whose proposals are declined will be advised as promptly as possible by the cognizant NSF Program administering the program. Verbatim copies of reviews, not including the identity of the reviewer, will be provided automatically to the Principal Investigator. (See Section VI.B. for additional information on the review process.)

B. Award Conditions

An NSF award consists of: (1) the award letter, which includes any special provisions applicable to the award and any numbered amendments thereto; (2) the budget, which indicates the amounts, by categories of expense, on which NSF has based its support

(or otherwise communicates any specific approvals or disapprovals of proposed expenditures); (3) the proposal referenced in the award letter; (4) the applicable award conditions, such as Grant General Conditions (GC-1); * or Research Terms and Conditions * and (5) any announcement or other NSF issuance that may be incorporated by reference in the award letter. Cooperative agreements also are administered in accordance with NSF Cooperative Agreement Financial and Administrative Terms and Conditions (CA-FATC) and the applicable Programmatic Terms and Conditions. NSF awards are electronically signed by an NSF Grants and Agreements Officer and transmitted electronically to the organization via e-mail.

*These documents may be accessed electronically on NSF's Website at http://www.nsf.gov/awards/managing/award_conditions.jsp?org=NSF. Paper copies may be obtained from the NSF Publications Clearinghouse, telephone (703) 292-7827 or by e-mail from nsfpubs@nsf.gov.

More comprehensive information on NSF Award Conditions and other important information on the administration of NSF awards is contained in the NSF *Award & Administration Guide* (AAG) Chapter II, available electronically on the NSF Website at http://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub_summ.jsp?ods_key=aag.

Special Award Conditions:

PI Meeting/Workshop for Postdoctoral Fellows and Mentors: All current Fellows and mentors (sponsoring scientists) will be invited to a workshop annually or bi-annually. The purpose of the workshop is to promote the career development and growth of Fellows. The workshop will include scientific presentations by Fellows and mentors in the program. The workshop allows program participants to meet each other, share experiences, and get to know NSF Program Officers. Participation in the workshop is considered an important part of the Fellowship program and new Fellows are expected to attend absent exigent circumstances.

C. Reporting Requirements

For all multi-year grants (including both standard and continuing grants), the Principal Investigator must submit an annual project report to the cognizant Program Officer at least 90 days before the end of the current budget period. (Some programs or awards require more frequent project reports). Within 90 days after expiration of a grant, the PI also is required to submit a final project report, and a project outcomes report for the general public.

Failure to provide the required annual or final project reports, or the project outcomes report will delay NSF review and processing of any future funding increments as well as any pending proposals for that PI. PIs should examine the formats of the required reports in advance to assure availability of required data.

PIs are required to use NSF's electronic project-reporting system, available through FastLane, for preparation and submission of annual and final project reports. Such reports provide information on activities and findings, project participants (individual and organizational), publications, and other specific products and contributions. PIs will not be required to re-enter information previously provided, either with a proposal or in earlier updates using the electronic system. Submission of the report via FastLane constitutes certification by the PI that the contents of the report are accurate and complete. The project outcomes report must be prepared and submitted using Research.gov. This report serves as a brief summary, prepared specifically for the public, of the nature and outcomes of the project. This report will be posted on the NSF website exactly as it is submitted by the PI.

Special Reporting Requirements

Within 90 days after termination of the fellowship, the Fellow is required to submit a final project report via FastLane and a termination certificate (this form will be provided by the NSF program office). Thus, a two-year Fellowship will require two annual reports and a final report. Fellows are expected to report in their annual and final reports on their educational activities during the fellowship tenure, including mentoring and guiding students at all educational levels.

Fellows are expected to maintain contact with the Postdoctoral Fellowship Program Officer after completing fellowship activities to permit evaluation of the success of the program in advancing scientific careers.

VIII. AGENCY CONTACTS

Please note that the program contact information is current at the time of publishing. See program website for any updates to the points of contact.

General inquiries regarding this program should be made to:

- Fahmida Chowdhury - Program Officer, 907.09, telephone: (703) 292-4672, email: fchowdhu@nsf.gov

- Christina M. Jones - Science Assistant, telephone: (703) 292-2960, email: chjones@nsf.gov

For questions related to the use of FastLane, contact:

- FastLane Help Desk, telephone: 1-800-673-6188; e-mail: fastlane@nsf.gov.

IX. OTHER INFORMATION

The NSF Website provides the most comprehensive source of information on NSF Directorates (including contact information), programs and funding opportunities. Use of this Website by potential proposers is strongly encouraged. In addition, National Science Foundation Update is a free e-mail subscription service designed to keep potential proposers and other interested parties apprised of new NSF funding opportunities and publications, important changes in proposal and award policies and procedures, and upcoming NSF Regional Grants Conferences. Subscribers are informed through e-mail when new publications are issued that match their identified interests. Users can subscribe to this service by clicking the "Get NSF Updates by Email" link on the NSF web site.

Grants.gov provides an additional electronic capability to search for Federal government-wide grant opportunities. NSF funding opportunities may be accessed via this new mechanism. Further information on Grants.gov may be obtained at http://www.grants.gov.

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The National Science Foundation (NSF) is an independent Federal agency created by the National Science Foundation Act of 1950, as amended (42 USC 1861-75). The Act states the purpose of the NSF is "to promote the progress of science; [and] to advance the national health, prosperity, and welfare by supporting research and education in all fields of science and engineering."

NSF funds research and education in most fields of science and engineering. It does this through grants and cooperative agreements to more than 2,000 colleges, universities, K-12 school systems, businesses, informal science organizations and other research organizations throughout the US. The Foundation accounts for about one-fourth of Federal support to academic institutions for basic research.

NSF receives approximately 55,000 proposals each year for research, education and training projects, of which approximately 11,000 are funded. In addition, the Foundation receives several thousand applications for graduate and postdoctoral fellowships. The agency operates no laboratories itself but does support National Research Centers, user facilities, certain oceanographic vessels and Arctic and Antarctic research stations. The Foundation also supports cooperative research between universities and industry, US participation in international scientific and engineering efforts, and educational activities at every academic level.

Facilitation Awards for Scientists and Engineers with Disabilities provide funding for special assistance or equipment to enable persons with disabilities to work on NSF-supported projects. See Grant Proposal Guide Chapter II, Section D.2 for instructions regarding preparation of these types of proposals.

The National Science Foundation has Telephonic Device for the Deaf (TDD) and Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) capabilities that enable individuals with hearing impairments to communicate with the Foundation about NSF programs, employment or general information. TDD may be accessed at (703) 292-5090 and (800) 281-8749, FIRS at (800) 877-8339.

The National Science Foundation Information Center may be reached at (703) 292-5111.

The National Science Foundation promotes and advances scientific progress in the United States by competitively awarding grants and cooperative agreements for research and education in the sciences, mathematics, and engineering.

To get the latest information about program deadlines, to download copies of NSF publications, and to access abstracts of awards, visit the NSF Website at http://www.nsf.gov

- **Location:**   4201 Wilson Blvd. Arlington, VA 22230

- **For General Information**   (703) 292-5111
  (NSF Information Center)**:**

- **TDD (for the hearing-impaired):**   (703) 292-5090

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         or telephone: (703) 292-7827

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PRIVACY ACT AND PUBLIC BURDEN STATEMENTS

The information requested on proposal forms and project reports is solicited under the authority of the National Science Foundation Act of 1950, as amended. The information on proposal forms will be used in connection with the selection of qualified proposals; and project reports submitted by awardees will be used for program evaluation and reporting within the Executive Branch and to Congress. The information requested may be disclosed to qualified reviewers and staff assistants as part of the proposal review process; to proposer institutions/grantees to provide or obtain data regarding the proposal review process, award decisions, or the administration of awards; to government contractors, experts, volunteers and researchers and educators as necessary to complete assigned work; to other government agencies or other entities needing information regarding applicants or nominees as part of a joint application review process, or in order to coordinate programs or policy; and to another Federal agency, court, or party in a court or Federal administrative proceeding if the government is a party. Information about Principal Investigators may be added to the Reviewer file and used to select potential candidates to serve as peer reviewers or advisory committee members. See Systems of Records, NSF-50, "Principal Investigator/Proposal File and Associated Records," 69 Federal Register 26410 (May 12, 2004), and NSF-51, "Reviewer/Proposal File and Associated Records," 69 Federal Register 26410 (May 12, 2004). Submission of the information is voluntary. Failure to provide full and complete information, however, may reduce the possibility of receiving an award.

An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, an information collection unless it displays a valid Office of Management and Budget (OMB) control number. The OMB control number for this collection is 3145-0023. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 12 hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions. Send comments regarding the burden estimate and any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to:

Suzanne H. Plimpton
Reports Clearance Officer
Division of Administrative Services
National Science Foundation
Arlington, VA 22230

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The National Science Foundation, 4201 Wilson Boulevard, Arlington, Virginia 22230, USA
Tel: (703) 292-5111, FIRS: (800) 877-8339 | TDD: (800) 281-8749

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