Webinar on NSF’s Improving Undergraduate STEM Education: Education and Human Resources (IUSE: EHR) Program

Program Overview with a Focus on Level 1 and Capacity-Building Submissions

For proposals submitted to NSF 21-579
This session is being recorded

By participating in the session, you are giving permission to record your questions and comments.
Webinar agenda

• Introduction to the IUSE: EHR Program
• IUSE: EHR Program organization
  • Tracks and levels
  • Workshop and conference submissions
• Program Expectations
• NSF Review Criteria – Intellectual Merit and Broader Impacts
• Resources
• Just for NEW to NSF (if time permits)

Note: The webinar will include several Q&A sessions. Participants will use the Q&A box in the platform to ask questions.
Introduction to the IUSE: EHR Program
IUSE: EHR calls for projects to...

• Improve the quality and effectiveness of the education of undergraduates in all STEM fields

• Improve undergraduate STEM teaching and learning for all students and/or the institutional environment where they occur
Who can apply?

- Proposals are accepted from all types of U.S.-based institutions of higher education and from professional societies and organizations that work with or represent those institutions.
What institutional types has IUSE funded?

- **Funding**
  - Public: 60%
  - Private: 22%
  - Non-profit: 8%
  - Business/Industry: 1%

- **Degree**
  - Doctorate: 61%
  - Master's: 20%
  - Bachelor's: 0%
  - Associate: 4%
  - Not Degree Granting: 9%
IUSE: EHR Program Organization

Engaged Student Learning
Institutional and Community Transformation
Levels, Funding, and Deadlines
Two program tracks:

- **Engaged Student Learning**: development, testing, and use of teaching practices and curricular innovations that will engage students and improve learning, persistence, and retention in STEM

- **Institutional and Community Transformation**: transformation of colleges and universities to implement and sustain highly effective STEM teaching and learning
# IUSE: EHR Tracks and Levels

## Engaged Student Learning
- Increasing engagement and learning through new tools, resources and models
- Generating knowledge about student learning

## Institutional and Community Transformation
- Spreading and scaling up evidence-based practices using a “theory of change”
- Generating knowledge about the organizational change process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level 1:</th>
<th>≤ $300k, up to 3 years</th>
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| Capacity-Building: | $150k for single institution or $300k for multiple institutions, up to 2 years |
| Level 1: | ≤ $300k, up to 3 years |
| Level 2: | $300k - $2M for single institution or $3M for multiple institutions, up to 5 years |
Engaged Student Learning

• Focuses on improving student learning (directly or indirectly)
• Supports development of improved instructional materials and/or methods
• Aims to engage students, improve learning, and increase retention in STEM
Engaged Student Learning

Range of approaches including (but not limited to):

• Development and implementation of novel instructional methods and technologies
• Design and assessment of metrics to measure STEM teaching and learning or student outcomes
• Faculty learning through professional development
• Discipline-based or interdisciplinary educational research
• Re-envisioning or adaptation of learning environments
• Co-curricular activities that increase student motivation and persistence in STEM
• Synthesis or meta-analysis of prior work
• Collaborations between 2-year and 4-year institutions to develop innovative pathways for transfer and student success
Target populations for ESL projects

• **Undergraduate students** at two- and four-year institutions of higher education
• STEM majors (declared and undeclared)
• Students whose course of study require solid skills and knowledge of STEM principles
• Non-STEM majors seeking to fulfill a general education requirement in STEM
• STEM faculty members
• Pre-Service STEM teachers in *undergraduate* teacher preparation programs
ESL Level 1 projects

• Awards at this level:
  • Support early-stage or exploratory research projects
  • Support projects that propose adaptation of existing pedagogies and methods in a novel environment on a small scale (e.g. conceptual replication).

• What might be appropriate?
  • Proposals from a single institution involving one or more faculty members in a single discipline or across several disciplines
  • Partnerships across disciplines, institutions, or communities focused on a single unifying thematic approach or problem

• Pilot data may be helpful but is not required
• Projects with a strong grounding in relevant literature are appropriate for this level
New to ESL Dear Colleague Letter


• Encourages submission of proposals from institutions that have not had prior IUSE: EHR funding

• Projects can contribute to developing the STEM and STEM-related workforce, advancing a disciplinary STEM field, broadening participation in STEM, educating a STEM-literate public, improving K-12 STEM education through undergraduate preservice teacher preparation, encouraging life-long learning, and/or building STEM capacity in higher education.

• All projects are expected to increase knowledge about effective STEM education through posing and answering knowledge-generating questions.

• If responding to the DCL, begin your proposal title with “New to IUSE: EHR DCL:”
Institutional and Community Transformation

• Focuses on improving evidence-based instruction by academic departments, institutions, and other organizations or communities
• Supports efforts to build and understand systemic change in undergraduate STEM education
• Aims to use appropriate theories of change to transform institutions

Note: AAAS hosted a webinar on November 10, 2020 specifically focused on Institutional and Community Transformation proposals. This webinar is archived on the AAAS website.
Institutional and Community Transformation

Range of approaches including (but not limited to):

- Transformation of high-enrollment classes to include evidence-based teaching practices
- Developing teaching evaluation rubrics rooted in a research-based framework
- Development of faculty communities to improve accessibility or sustainability of evidence-based practices
- Identifying best practices to guide institutional transformation
- Inclusion of non-tenure-track faculty or instructors through policy or professional development
- Identification of common elements across disciplines, programs, institutions, or systems that support students from underrepresented groups to be successful in STEM
Level 1 and 2 Institutional and Community Transformation proposals should....

• Describe **theory of change**.

• Include **research literature and theoretical perspectives** concerning change.

• Recognize STEM higher education as a **complex system**.

• Promote institutional change and include:
  • **Teams** of faculty members
  • **Support** from the department chairs, college deans, or others within the institution's academic leadership
  • **Support** from Provosts or Presidents
ICT Level 1 Proposals

- Awards at this level are intended for early-stage exploratory projects or small- to mid-scale projects that build on prior work.
- Pilot data may be helpful but is not required.
- Projects with a strong grounding in relevant literature are appropriate for this level.
ICT Capacity-Building Proposals

• This is a new category of proposals designed to enable institutions that have not had a prior ICT award to identify and develop a project of interest that can lay the groundwork for a Level 1 or Level 2 ICT proposal

• Funding is intended to support efforts to:
  • Assess institutional needs
  • Formulate departmental and/or institutional commitments
  • Develop necessary partnerships
  • Audit prior institutional efforts
  • Gather data
  • Learn about relevant theories of change
  • Identify relevant institutional practices and policies
  • Formulate plans for advancing institutional or community transformation
ICT Capacity-Building Proposals

- Proposers are encouraged to include a variety of participants:
  - Disciplinary or educational researchers
  - Assessment and evaluation experts and advisors
  - Institutional leaders

- Funds are intended to defray costs for:
  - Coordinating among project participants
  - Gathering and sharing data
  - Convening and hosting working meetings for participants
  - Attending relevant meetings such as the IUSE: EHR Principal Investigator Summit
Institutional and Community Transformation Capacity-Building Proposals

• Proposals may be submitted by a single institution or as a collaborative project from two or more institutions

• Maximum award for a submission from a single institution is $150,000 for a maximum term of two years

• Maximum award for a collaborative project is $300,000 for a maximum term of two years
## IUSE: EHR Tracks and Levels

### Engaged Student Learning
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### Institutional and Community Transformation
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| Level 1: | ≤ $300k, up to 3 years |
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Program Deadlines

• Level 1 and Capacity-Building proposals:
  • **January 19, 2021** (and the third Wednesday in January thereafter)

• Level 1, 2 & 3, and Capacity-Building proposals:
  • **July 20, 2022** (and the third Wednesday in July thereafter)
Workshops and Conferences

• Proposals for workshops and conferences addressing critical challenges in undergraduate STEM education may be submitted at any time.

• Depending on size and scale of the workshop or conference, these proposals typically include budgets between $20,000 and $100,000.

• Proposers must consult an NSF Program Officer (in the IUSE: EHR program) before submission to determine appropriateness of the proposed workshop or conference for IUSE: EHR.

Note: Program Officer contact information is available on the IUSE: EHR program webpage (https://www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm_summ.jsp?pims_id=505082)
Workshops and Conferences

Conference and workshop proposals addressing diversity in STEM teaching and learning and those involving collaborations of educational researchers and disciplinary scientists to ensure that STEM teaching reflects cutting-edge STEM disciplinary research are especially encouraged.
Questions?
Program Expectations
## IUSE: EHR Program Goals

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<th>Goal</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>To build knowledge about STEM teaching and learning at the undergraduate level</td>
<td>Develop novel, creative, and transformative approaches to undergraduate STEM teaching and learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>To incorporate evidence-based practices in STEM teaching and learning for all undergraduates</td>
<td>Adapt, improve, replicate, and include evidence-based practices in STEM teaching and learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>To build and understand systemic change in undergraduate STEM education</td>
<td>Lay the groundwork for sustained departmental, institutional, or community transformation and improvement</td>
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Gaining new knowledge

All IUSE: EHR proposals are expected to increase knowledge about effective STEM education through

- Posing one or more research questions OR
- Evaluation of project activities, impacts, or outcomes
Successful IUSE proposals will...

- **Build on what is known**, summarizing published literature and defining a starting point that extends the prior work
- Include a well-designed plan to **gather data**
- Specify **methods of analysis** that will be employed to answer the questions posed
- Include mechanisms to **evaluate** the success of the project (both formative and summative evaluation)
- Explain how findings and materials will be **shared**
- Address the **sustainability** of project efforts
- **Collaborate** as needed with other investigators, institutions, or communities
Methods of Analysis

• Align research or evaluation methods with the questions posed
• Select appropriate methods to perform the study. These may be:
  • Qualitative
  • Quantitative
  • A mixture of both
IUSE Fact Check (True or False?)

• Q1: All proposals must have a research component.
  • False, but all proposals must generate new knowledge.

• Q2: STEM curriculum development, programmatic pathways, learning resources, assessment instruments, and faculty development may receive funding.
  • True

• Q3: Proposals may focus on both STEM and non-STEM majors
  • True, efforts to improve undergraduate STEM education for either or both is appropriate.

• Q4: Proposals may focus solely on students in a single discipline.
  • True, as well as on multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary STEM education.
IUSE Fact Check (True or False?)

• Q5: An evaluation plan that provides formative and summative assessment of the effectiveness of the project in achieving its goals is required.
  • True

• Q6: Proposals should demonstrate a solid grounding in relevant literature on STEM teaching and learning.
  • True

• Q7: Only colleges and universities may submit proposals
  • False, all categories of proposers in the PAPPG are eligible (including professional societies, companies, nonprofit organizations, etc.)
IUSE Fact Check (continued)

• Which of the following may receive IUSE funding?

- Use and build evidence about improved STEM instructional practices
- Investigate novel instructional tools or learning systems, including cyberlearning
- Create, implement, and test program, curricular, course, and technology-driven models for STEM teaching and learning
- Develop, implement, and test creative approaches for adoption of education research into disciplinary teaching
- Develop and validate assessments/metrics for undergraduate STEM learning and instructional practice; and
- Propagate and sustain transformative and effective STEM teaching and learning through institutional practices or involvement of professional societies

• Answer—ALL of the above
Questions?
NSF Merit Review Criteria

Intellectual Merit

Broader Impacts
Merit Review Criteria

**Intellectual Merit (IM):** What is the potential for the proposed activity to advance knowledge and understanding within its own field or across fields?
  * What will we learn from the work?

**Broader Impacts (BI):** What is the potential for benefitting society or advancing desired societal outcomes?
  * Why is the work important to society?
Other review considerations

• To what extent do the proposed activities suggest and explore creative, original, or potentially transformative concepts?

• Is the plan for carrying out the proposed activities well-reasoned, well organized, and based on a sound rationale? Does the plan incorporate a mechanism to assess success?

• How qualified is the individual, team, or institution to conduct the proposed activities?

• Are there adequate resources available to the PI (either at the home institution or through collaborations) to carry out the proposed activities?

Please Note: Reviewers are also asked to review Facilities, Equipment and Other Resources, Data Management Plan, Postdoctoral Researcher Mentoring Plan, and required Supplementary Documents.
Is it IM or BI?

In addition to development and implementation of a novel curriculum, the project will include educational research to uncover new information about undergraduate model-based-reasoning through detailed assessment of classroom learning.

• Intellectual merit
Is it IM or BI?

Activities planned will provide in-depth faculty development through a national series of workshops, and an expansion of an ongoing national study of the effectiveness of this approach for learning about the nature of science.

• Broader Impact
Questions?
Resources
IUSE: EHR Program Resources

IUSE: EHR Program web page:
https://www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm_summ.jsp?pims_id=505082

IUSE: EHR Program solicitation (NSF 21-579):

Conduct a search of previously funded awards at
https://www.nsf.gov/awardsearch/

Contact a program officer (names and contact info are available on the program web page)
Additional helpful resources

NSF Proposal and Award Policies & Procedures Guide

Common Guidelines for Education Research and Development

NSF Merit Review Overview
https://www.nsf.gov/bfa/dias/policy/merit_review/

The Art and Science of Reviewing Proposals video
https://tipsforreviewers.nsf.gov/

NSF Building Capacity in STEM Education Research (BCSER) program
https://www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm_summ.jsp?pims_id=505645
THANK YOU for your participation in today’s webinar and for your interest in improving undergraduate STEM education.

Stay tuned if you are new to NSF and would like additional information about the proposal preparation and submission process.
Are you (or your institution) new to NSF?
Nuts and bolts of NSF proposals

• Proposal components

• What makes for a compelling proposal?

• Submitting a proposal

• What happens after proposal submission?
Proposal components

- Cover Page
- Table of Contents
- Project Summary (1-Page)
- Project Description (15-Pages)
- References Cited
- Biographical Sketch(es)
- Budget and Budget Justification
- Current and Pending Support
- Facilities, Equipment and Other Resources
- Special Information and Supplementary Documentation
- Data Management Plan
- Postdoctoral Mentoring Plan (if applicable)
- Single Copy Documents
  - Collaborators & Other Affiliations Information
Project summary (1 page)

Each proposal must contain a one-page summary of the proposed project that includes:

- Project overview
- Intellectual merit statement
- Broader impacts statement

NOTE: Label the statement on Intellectual Merit and the statement on Broader Impacts
Project description (15 page limit)

• Provides a clear statement of the work to be undertaken.
• Includes the objectives for the period of the proposed work and expected significance.
• Indicates the relationship of this work to the present state of knowledge in the field, as well as to work in progress by the PI under other support.
• Outlines the general plan of work, including the broad design of activities to be undertaken, and, where appropriate, provides a clear description of experimental methods and procedures.
• Addresses what you want to do, why you want to do it, how you plan to do it, how you will know if you succeed, and what benefits could accrue if the project is successful.
Project description (continued)

• must contain, separately within the narrative, a section labeled “Broader Impacts”

• provides a discussion of the broader impacts of the proposed activities of the proposal and how they will be obtained

Note: Broader impacts may be accomplished through the research itself, through the activities that are directly related to specific research projects, or through activities that are supported by, but are complementary to the project.

Note: NSF values the advancement of scientific knowledge and activities that contribute to the achievement of societally relevant outcomes. Such outcomes include, but are not limited to: full participation of women, persons with disabilities, and underrepresented minorities in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM); improved STEM education and educator development at any level; increased public scientific literacy and public engagement with science and technology; improved well-being of individuals in society; development of a diverse, globally competitive STEM workforce; increased partnerships between academia, industry, and others; improved national security; increased economic competitiveness of the US; and enhanced infrastructure for research and education.
Project description (continued)

Brevity and clarity will assist reviewers and Foundation staff in dealing effectively with proposals.

• The project description (including Results from Prior NSF Support, which is limited to five pages) may not exceed 15 pages

• Visual materials, including charts, graphs, maps, photographs and other pictorial presentations are included in the 15-page limitation

• The project description must be self contained and URLs must not be used

• Appendices are not allowed
Elements of an Assessment and Evaluation Plan
(included within the 15-page Project Description)
FORMATIVE SUMMATIVE

WHEN THE CHEF TASTES THE SOUP

WHEN THE GUESTS TASTE THE SOUP

FROM STEVE WHEELER’S BLOG “THE AFL TRUTH ABOUT ASSESSMENT”

What makes a proposal competitive?

- Original ideas
- Succinct, focused project plan
- Realistic amount of work
- Sufficient detail provided
- Cost effective
- High impact
- Knowledge and experience of PIs
- Contribution to the field
- Rationale and evidence of potential effectiveness
- Likelihood the project will be sustained
- Objective feedback, solid evaluation plan (or advisory board in some circumstances)
Preparing a competitive proposal

• Start with a good idea
• Communicate clearly
• Address the two merit review criteria: IM and BI
• State research objectives and questions as well as plans for evaluation
• Have plans for carrying out the proposed work
• Ground the project in relevant and appropriate literature (perhaps outside of STEM education!)
• Get appropriate expertise on board
• Ask colleagues (in and out of your field) to read and critique your proposal
Preparing a competitive proposal (cont.)

• Include strong arguments for importance of the problem

• Make sure STEM content is clearly articulated (include examples!)

• Make sure research design and methodology are appropriate and sufficiently discussed

• Sensible chain of reasoning links literature review, process for development, research questions, data, and analyses

• Impacts of the research and development addressed
Tips for success

• Start EARLY!
• Read the program solicitation (NSF 21-579) carefully
• Consult the NSF Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide (PAPPG) (NSF 22-001) for proposal preparation instructions
• Test drive FastLane (https://www.fastlane.nsf.gov/fastlane.jsp)
• Alert your Sponsored Research Office
• Follow page and font size limits
• Be aware of other projects and advances in the field
• Cite the relevant literature
• Provide details
• Discuss prior results (if you have them)
• Include evaluation plan with timelines and benchmarks
Tips for success (continued)

• Put yourself in the reviewers’ place
• Consider reviewers’ comments if resubmitting proposal
• Have someone else read the proposal
• Spell check; grammar check
• Meet deadlines
• Follow NSF requirements for proposals involving Human Subjects
• Call or email NSF Program Officers for guidance as needed
Proposal submission

• Proposals must be submitted electronically through FastLane (https://www.fastlane.nsf.gov/fastlane.jsp) or through Grants.gov (https://www.grants.gov/web/grants). Submission through Fastlane is highly recommended.

• For future reference, FastLane is being phased out and will be replaced with research.gov. The IUSE program is not yet available on research.gov, but it will be eventually. Please check the NSF website for updates.
NSF’s Proposal review process

**PHASE I**

1. OPPORTUNITY ANNOUNCED
2. PROPOSAL SUBMITTED
3. PROPOSAL RECEIVED

**PHASE II**

4. REVIEWERS SELECTED
5. PEER REVIEW
6. PROGRAM OFFICER RECOMMENDATION
7. DIVISION DIRECTOR REVIEW

**PHASE III**

8. BUSINESS REVIEW
9. AWARD FINALIZED
Questions?
THANK YOU for your interest in improving undergraduate STEM education!