Internal Selection Procedures
for
Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Talent Expansion Program (STEP) (NSF 11-550)

Summary: The National Science Foundation (NSF) released the STEP program solicitation NSF 11-550, which replaces NSF 08-569. The Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Talent Expansion Program (STEP) seeks to increase the number of students (U.S. Citizens or permanent residents) receiving associate or baccalaureate degrees in established or emerging fields within science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). Type 1 proposals are solicited that provide for full implementation efforts at academic institutions. Type 2 proposals are solicited that support educational research projects on associate or baccalaureate degree attainment in STEM.

Program activities under the STEP Type 1 competition should be efforts aimed at adapting and implementing best practices that will lead to an increase in the number of students (United States citizens or permanent residents) obtaining STEM degrees at institutions with baccalaureate degree programs or completing associate degrees in STEM fields or completing credits toward transfer to a baccalaureate degree program in STEM fields at community colleges. The goal of the project must be to increase the total graduation numbers of such students at the institution(s), and all STEP proposals must include specific numerical targets for these increases. If a project focuses efforts on only a subset of STEM fields, increases in those fields must not be at the expense of degrees granted in other STEM fields. Projects may focus on the retention and/or recruitment of undergraduate students into STEM fields. Outreach efforts are appropriate only if the efforts can be expected to result in additional STEM majors and graduates at the submitting institution(s) within the grant period. All Type 1 projects are considered to be institutional efforts.

Proposal Limitations: The University is limited to submitting one Type 1 proposal or to be part of only one consortium submitting a Type 1 proposal to NSF in response to this solicitation. There are no restrictions on the number of Type 2 proposals that an individual or organization may submit. There are no PI/Co-PI limitations specified. We will utilize the following procedures for an internal Notice of Intent (NOI) process to select the project that will be submitted on behalf of the University.

Selection Process: Should more than one NOI be received from across the University, they will be reviewed by the Office of the Vice President for Research (OVPR) and the Provost. The OVPR will notify each applicant whether or not their proposal has been selected to move forward and represent the University.

Proposal Schedule:
- Internal NOI due to OSP on 1 August 2011, 5:00 p.m. CDT
- OVPR Notification of NOI selected as soon as possible
- Full Proposal due to OSP on 22 September 2011, 5:00 p.m. CDT
- Full Proposal due to NSF on 27 September 2011, 5:00 p.m. CDT
NOI Format and Content:

Proposal pages should have at least 1” margins all around, and use no smaller than an 11-point font for the text. Tables and figures are exempt from the 11-point font requirement, but must be clearly legible.

Number of copies: Email PDF file to: susan.phelan@uah.edu

NOI Contents:

1. Cover Page:
   a. Include “NSF 11-550 STEP”
   b. Project title should convey the primary purpose of the proposal.
   c. Names, departments/centers, campus address and email address for each PI, Co-I, and key personnel proposed.
   d. List of other partnering institutions and entities.

2. Project Summary: (Limit: 2 pages double-spaced) Provide a succinct summary of the project including the increases in STEM degrees expected, the strategies to be used to increase number of students in STEM fields, and the proposed activities. Include a description of the Intellectual Merit of the proposal within a subsection entitled “Intellectual Merit,” and a description of the Broader Impacts in a subsection entitled “Broader Impacts.”

3. Project Description1: (Limit: 6 pages, double-spaced) Please include in this section the following information, each in its own subsection with the following headings:
   a. Summary of Increases in STEM degrees expected
   b. Prior efforts to increase interest in STEM and results
   c. Statement of Overall Vision for management and implementation plan
   d. Strategies for increasing STEM graduates
   e. Proposed activities and identification of those expected to be institutionalized
   f. Evaluation indicators and benchmarks

Questions about the internal NOI preparation or process should be directed to your OSP Contract Administrator.

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1 See NSF 11-550, page 7, Project Description, for description of the content of these subsections