Funding Opportunities and Agency Updates

Funding Opportunity: National Science Foundation Louis Stokes Alliances for Minority Participation invites Proposals for National Coordination Hub and Community Resource Centers

The National Science Foundation (NSF) Louis Stokes Alliances for Minority Participation (LSAMP) program is soliciting proposals for an LSAMP National Coordination Hub and to establish several new Louis Stokes Community Resource Centers (LSCRCs). The LSAMP program seeks to diversify the future U.S. STEM workforce by funding minority serving institutions (MSIs), institutions of higher education (IHES), and alliances between MSIs and institutions of higher education, as well as alliances that are committed to implementing evidence-based practices to broadening participation in STEM. The LSAMP Hub and LSCRCs act to enhance LSAMP’s existing work by strengthening partnerships across the LSAMP community and developing community-based activities.

Since 2017, LSAMP has supported nine Louis Stokes Regional Centers of Excellence in Broadening Participation (LSRCEs) which serve as regional hubs for innovation in STEM and broadening participation. LSRCEs, along with other LSAMP programs, have created a significant number of alliances and LSAMP sees a need for increased LSAMP community development. Through this new solicitation NSF aims to:

1. “Increase opportunities in support of developing a diverse STEM workforce;
2. Increase opportunities that pertain to national priorities and to NSF's high priority research areas;
3. Support the development and efficacy of LSAMP alliances;
4. Strengthen connections and provide resources to the LSAMP community; and
5. Support partnerships among both LSAMP and non-LSAMP organizations.”

The LSAMP Coordination Hub will support LSAMP community building and fortify existing collaboration through coordinating all existing LSAMP activities, including alliances, LSCREs, and the new LSCRCs. The goal of the LSCRCs is to facilitate research, development, and dissemination of broadening participation policies and practices, as well as national STEM priorities in emerging sciences. Unlike LSCREs, which are regionally focused, LSCRCs will foster communication across the entire LSAMP community. Each LSCRC will target a topic centered around diversifying the national STEM workforce while meeting national priorities in emerging sciences. Unlike, LSAMP alliances, the Coordination Hub and LSCRCs will not directly develop or implement institutional programs but will support existing LSAMP programs and alliances in reaching project goals.

Proposals for the LSAMP Coordination Hub should demonstrate how it will meet the following goals:

- Enhance communication throughout the LSAMP grantee network through “conferences, workshops, and electronic communication;”
- Broadcast LSAMP project outcomes through greater outreach to non-LSAMP entities;
- Increase overall influence of LSAMP activities;
- Coordinate with other existing NSF centers, especially the INCLUDES network; and
- Collaborate with the entire LSAMP community, including small projects.

Competitive proposals will include a diverse team of individuals and organizations, as well as address LSAMP community engagement, and identify strategic partnerships between the LSAMP community and non-LSAMP organizations.

LSCRC proposals should identify a specific topic or theme that will develop the future STEM workforce while focusing on national priorities centered around emerging sciences. The goals of LSCRCs are to:

- Facilitate innovative broadening participation and STEM education activities for LSAMP populations;
- Further knowledge in emerging sciences that will prepare LSAMP students for “21st century careers;” and
- Foster partnerships between LSAMP alliance and non-alliance organizations that support LSAMP focus areas.

The most competitive LSCRC proposals will address or include:

- Evidence-based or culturally relevant practices;
- Implementation pathway for its chosen theme;
- Engage LSAMP stakeholders; and
- Establish partnerships that genuinely support the LSCRC’s activities.

LSCRCs will be led by IHEs and are required to build partnerships with at least one of the following entities: research organizations, Science & Technology (S&T) centers, national laboratories, industry, private foundations, or professional STEM societies/organizations. Ideally, the partnership should consist of majority- and minority-serving institutions, including community colleges.

Eligibility: NSF welcomes invitations from relevant scientists and institutions. While there are no restrictions on who can act as a principal investigator (PI), institutions are limited to serve as lead on LSAMP Coordination...
Hub proposal, or LSCRC proposal. An individual may serve as PI or co-PI on one LSAMP National Coordination Hub or LSCRC proposal. More eligibility information is provided in the full solicitation and in Chapter I.E. of the NSF Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide.

**Deadline:** Proposals for the LSAMP National Coordination Hub are due by 5:00 PM on January 9, 2023, in the submitter’s local time. Proposals for LSCRCs will be accepted until 5:00 PM on January 9, 2023, and June 1, 2023, in the submitter’s local time.

**Award Information:** Up to $5 million (up to $1 million per year over five years) will be awarded for the National Coordination Hub, as a cooperative agreement. NSF anticipates awarding $3.5 million in continuing grants ($700,000 per year for three to five years) for three to five projects to act as LSCRCs.

**Sources and Additional Information:**
- The full solicitation for the LSAMP Coordination Hub and LSCRCs can be found at: https://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2022/nsf22584/nsf22584.htm?WT.mc_ev=click&WT.mc_id=USNSF_29&utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery#eligible.

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**Funding Opportunity: EDA Releases 2022 Build to Scale Solicitation**

The U.S. Department of Commerce’s Economic Development Administration (EDA) released a solicitation for their competitive Build to Scale (B2S) program (formerly the Regional Innovation Strategies program). B2S aims to stimulate entrepreneurship, cluster based economic development, job growth in emerging sectors, and the translation of discoveries from the lab to the marketplace. As with last year’s competition, the 2022 solicitation features two distinct funding opportunities: the Venture Challenge and the Capital Challenge.

B2S is popular among universities and research organizations as one of the only reoccurring federal funding streams that directly supports capacity-building for regional technology-based economic development. The program helps address demonstrated needs in innovation ecosystems through projects that expand regional entrepreneurship, grow scalable industries, forge cross-sectional partnerships, and create jobs. Project plans must clearly identify goals for a regional ecosystem and core partners, as well as demonstrate a proposed need and solution to better stimulate strategic, technology-based economic growth in said ecosystem. Additional information on each of the funding opportunities is provided below. Interested applicants are encouraged to review previous awards for the programs to better understand desired activities and impacts.

**Venture Challenge (formerly the i6 Challenge):** The goal of the Venture Challenge is to stimulate entrepreneurship and the growth of scalable startups in a region by providing support to innovation-facing organizations like universities or accelerators. Funding could be used to leverage regional strengths to advance job creation, improve research commercialization, and remediate “structural barriers that inhibit regional innovation capacity and resilience.” As with the last competition, there will be two funding levels for the Venture Challenge, Build and Scale. Each program focuses on different stages of regional capacity-building endeavors and applicants for both programs must demonstrate commitment and ability to achieve the proposed impacts of their projects. EDA plans to award approximately $38 million total to Venture Challenge awardees. Overviews of the programs are provided below.
• **Venture Challenge Build** provides support for piloting interventions to address identified needs and/or implementing known interventions to a new community. **EDA will provide up to $750,000 over a three-year project period for Build projects.**

• **Venture Challenge Scale** supports the scaling of known or existing efforts that have achieved positive impacts. Applicants should demonstrate their proven record for success in building regional capacity and carrying out programs. While the Scale track can build upon any successful intervention, this could provide a pathway for applicants previously funded under the i6 Challenge to further scale their work after their project period has ended. **EDA will provide between $750,000 and $2 million over a three-year project period for Scale projects.** This is $500,000 more than the topline funding amounts for the 2021 competition.

**Capital Challenge (formerly Seed Fund Support):** This program will provide programmatic and operational funding for the planning, formation, marketing, expansion, or launch of regional seed capital funds to support scalable startups (e.g., angel, seed, or investment funds). Funding could also be provided to organizations that support equity-based capital development in a local community, including networks of investors or investor training programs. For the first time, there will be two funding levels for the Capital Challenge, Form and Deploy. EDA plans to award approximately $7 million total to Capital Challenge awardees. Overviews of the programs are provided below.

• **Capital Challenge Form** focuses primarily on early-stage capacity-building for capital deployment in a regional ecosystem. This includes support for identifying, educating, and connecting investors and other equity-based capital sources within a regional ecosystem, as well as identifying sources of investments and building capacity to conduct due diligence and close deals. **EDA will provide up to $300,000 over a three-year project period for Form projects.**

• **Capital Challenge Deploy** supports the operation or enhancement of investment vehicles that invest in startups “based on a thesis that clearly supports and fosters the growth of a regional technology cluster and its entrepreneurship ecosystem.” This could include support for methods to raise and deploy equity or equity-based capital in a regional technology cluster through a seed fund or any other collaborative investment vehicle. Investment strategies should thoroughly evaluate companies’ high-growth potential. **EDA will provide between $300,000 and $750,000 for Deploy grants over an expected three-year project period.** This is $350,000 more than the topline funding amounts for the 2021 Capital Challenge competition. For this competition, EDA is allowing applicants to justify a shorter or longer performance period if needed, which would be subject to agency approval. Funding from EDA or the match sources are for the programmatic costs and operational support for investment vehicles and cannot be used to invest in specific companies or other ventures.

Applicants should closely follow instructions in the NOFO, as EDA has been known to immediately disqualify some submissions with technical mistakes, and to consult with their region’s designated EDA contact for questions and support. For this year’s competition, EDA is also asking applicants to outline in what ways a project will benefit historically underserved populations, as well as alignment with any of the Biden Administration’s investment priorities for EDA, among several other evaluation factors.

**Cost-Sharing:** At the time of the submission, applicants must demonstrate a matching cost-share from a non-federal source. The applicant must provide proof that a minimum 1:1 match will be committed to the project for the project period, be available when needed, and not be conditioned in any way that “may preclude its use consistent with the requirements of EDA investment assistance.” In-kind contributions may be used for a
project’s cost-share requirement. Additional restrictions on matching requirements are provided in the full solicitation.

**Dates:** Applications are due no later than **June 13, 2022, at 11:59 PM ET**. Successful applicants should expect to receive grant award notification approximately 90-120 days following the application deadline.

**Eligibility and Limitations:** States, Indian tribes, cities or other political subdivisions of a state, including nonprofits, institutions of higher education, public-private partnerships as defined by the solicitation, science or research parks, federal laboratories, economic development organizations, and consortia of the previously mentioned, are all eligible to apply. B2S is not restricted to applicants in economically distressed regions.

Entities that, as of November 1, 2022, have not yet completed their performance periods for a previous i6 Challenge or Venture Challenge award are not eligible to compete for the Venture Challenge in 2022. Similarly, entities that have not completed the performance period for a previous Seed Fund Support (SFS) or Capital Challenge award are not eligible to compete for the Capital Challenge during this cycle. Institutions may apply to both challenges but can only submit one application per challenge. This means an applicant can submit one application for the Form OR Deploy portions of the Capital Challenge and submit one application for either the Build OR Scale portions of the Venture Challenge.

**Sources and Additional Information:**
- The full announcement is available at [https://eda.gov/files/oie/b2s/fy22/FY22-Build-to-Scale-NOFO.pdf](https://eda.gov/files/oie/b2s/fy22/FY22-Build-to-Scale-NOFO.pdf)
- B2S program page with additional information on the 2022 initiative, as well as debrief webinars for the 2021 competition and information on awardees from that year, can be found at: [https://www.eda.gov/oie/buildtoscale/](https://www.eda.gov/oie/buildtoscale/)
- Additional information on previously-funded B2S projects can be found at [https://eda.gov/oie/buildtoscale/historical/](https://eda.gov/oie/buildtoscale/historical/)
- EDA’s investment priorities can be found at [https://eda.gov/about/investment-priorities/](https://eda.gov/about/investment-priorities/)

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**Funding Opportunity: AHRQ Issues Solicitation on Reducing Racial and Ethnic Healthcare Disparities in Chronic Conditions by Dissemination and Implementation of Patient Centered Outcomes Research (PCOR) Evidence**

The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) released a new solicitation that aims to disseminate and implement patient-centered outcomes research (PCOR) findings into innovative, evidence-based interventions to reduce healthcare disparities in chronic health conditions. PCOR is comparative clinical effectiveness research of the impact on health outcomes of two or more preventative, diagnostic, treatment, or healthcare delivery approaches on health outcomes, including those that are meaningful to patients. Applications are required to disseminate and implement PCOR findings across healthcare settings to address disparities in health outcomes and quality for racial and ethnic minority populations and AHRQ priority populations (linked below).

Research objectives for this opportunity include taking existing PCOR evidence for reducing or eliminating health and healthcare disparities and implementing interventions; and applying innovative and scalable PCOR interventions in expanded settings to uncover evidence in different clinical settings. In addition, applicants
must include a theoretical framework supporting their proposed projects that demonstrates the multi-domain, multilevel factors that may influence health disparities.

Though not limited to the following, areas where evidence-based interventions have evidence for decreasing disparities include:

- Improving control and management of chronic conditions including cardiovascular disease (CVD);
- promoting improved cancer and chronic condition screening; and
- improving prenatal care, maternal health, and infant mortality.

**Due Date:** The due date for this opportunity is **June 17, 2022**.

**Award Information:** AHRQ will invest up to $3.67 million over three years to support up to six awards. The totals costs for a project will not exceed $500,000 in any given year and $1.5 million for the entire project.

**Eligibility:** Institutions of higher education, nonprofits other than institutions of higher education, and state and local governments are eligible to apply for this opportunity.

**Sources and Additional Information:**
- The full funding opportunity is available at [https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/rfa-files/RFA-HS-22-001.html#_Section_II._Award_1](https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/rfa-files/RFA-HS-22-001.html#_Section_II._Award_1).

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