



U.S. NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION  
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## Dear Colleague Letter: Piloting Departmental-level Systemic Change for Equity

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March 13, 2024

Dear Colleagues:

With this Dear Colleague Letter, the National Science Foundation's Directorate for STEM Education (EDU), with leadership from the Division of Equity for Excellence in STEM (EES) and the Alliances for Graduate Education and the Professoriate (AGEP) program, seek to understand the role that STEM departments play in institutionalizing change strategies that promote equitable policies and practices for graduate students, postdoctoral scholars, and faculty.

This Dear Colleague Letter particularly encourages submission of new proposals to support projects focused on departmental-level changes in policies and practices that support and retain the diverse talent of STEM doctoral candidates, postdoctoral scholars and faculty from historically underrepresented and underserved minority groups. (The use of the term "minority" reflects language from the Congressional origin of AGEP in 1998 as the Minority Graduate Education program (MGE), adjusted here to reflect current appropriation language "historically underrepresented minority." See also the [AGEP Solicitation](#).) Proposals are invited for AGEP Catalyst Alliances (ACA) and Institutional Transformation Alliances (ITA), as detailed in the [AGEP Solicitation](#). Some examples of projects may include changes to departmental policies related to recruitment and retention of graduate students and/or postdoctoral fellows; changes to recruitment and retention of faculty members; changes to the structure and practices of promotion and/or tenure of full time instructors or tenure-track faculty; or changes to teaching evaluations, or evaluation of pedagogical practices that promote equitable and inclusive classroom involvement of all students, and most importantly, are considered valid and important components of faculty evaluation.

The AGEP Program especially encourages submissions from institutions in EPSCoR jurisdictions as well as submissions that address the NSF-wide investment priority areas and special interests of the program as articulated in the [AGEP Solicitation](#).

Sincerely,

James L. Moore III  
Assistant Director  
Directorate for STEM Education (EDU)

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<sup>1</sup> <https://new.nsf.gov/about/budget/fy2024#nsf-wide>