



U.S. NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
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ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA 22314

NSF 24-094

Dear Colleague Letter: NSF Scholarships in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Program (S-STEM) Scholarship Supplements for Advanced Technological Education (ATE) Recipients

May 28, 2024

Dear Colleagues:

With this Dear Colleague Letter (DCL), the National Science Foundation's (NSF) Directorate for STEM Education (EDU) invites active Advanced Technological Education (ATE) program recipients to submit supplemental funding requests to provide scholarship support for students who meet the qualifications for the NSF Scholarships in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Program (S-STEM).

BACKGROUND

A well-educated science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) workforce is critical to maintaining the competitiveness of the U.S. in the global economy, yet there continues to be high attrition among STEM undergraduate students across U.S. colleges and universities¹. The NSF [S-STEM program](#) addresses the need for a high-quality STEM workforce in STEM disciplines supported by the program by providing scholarships to academically-talented, low-income students with demonstrated financial need who are pursuing associate, baccalaureate, or graduate degrees in these disciplines. This DCL encourages active ATE recipients to submit supplemental funding requests to provide S-STEM scholarships to eligible students participating in active ATE projects.

SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDING REQUEST PREPARATION INSTRUCTIONS

Supplemental funding requests from current ATE recipients should be limited exclusively to funds for student scholarships and should align with the eligibility requirements outlined in the [S-STEM program solicitation](#). Namely, prospective scholarship recipients must:

- Be citizens of the United States, nationals of the United States (as defined in section 101(a) of the Immigration and Nationality Act), aliens admitted as refugees under section 207 of the Immigration and Nationality Act, or aliens lawfully admitted to the United States for permanent residence. Please note that Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) individuals are ineligible for support from this solicitation unless they meet the requirements listed in the first sentence of this bullet by the time of application;
- Be enrolled at least half-time as defined by the institution in a program leading to an associate degree in an S-STEM eligible discipline;
- Demonstrate academic ability or potential as defined by the institution;
- Be low-income. The definition of low-income must follow the institutional guidelines for income thresholds that qualify the student as low-income (for example, see eligibility requirements for the U.S. Department of Education (DOE) Pell and TRIO grant programs or for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) public housing program. The institution's definition of low-income must be included in supplementary documents within a letter from the Financial Aid Office.
- Have demonstrated unmet financial need. Demonstrated financial need for undergraduate students is defined by the US Department of Education rules for need-based Federal financial aid Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). In the case of S-STEM, institutions are required to follow the calculations in section II.B of NSF 24-511 that include other grants, fellowships, and scholarships but not loans (see <https://studentaid.gov/complete-aid-process/how-calculated#need-based>). Income from potential work study should not be included in the calculation for undergraduate students. Loans should not be included in calculations of unmet need for students.

The supplemental funding request must include the following:

- A detailed summary of proposed work that describes the planned scholarship program including institutional context and numbers 2-7 below.
- Pool of Potential Scholars: A description of the pool of potential scholars, including the table below.

Number of Domestic Low-Income Students with Unmet Need Currently Registered (per academic level if applicable)

| | 1st year | 2nd Year | 3rd Year | 4th Year | Other Years | Total No, of Eligible Students |
|--------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|-------------|--------------------------------|
| Department or Program 1 | | | | | | |

**Average Unmet
Need**

Average GPA

**Department or
Program 2**

**Average Unmet
Need**

Average GPA

Total

- Retention and Graduation Rates: A description of current 1-year retention rates and graduation rates for the above pool of students in each S-STEM eligible discipline that is included in the request.
- Determination of Scholarship Amount: A description of the determination of scholarship amount including:
 - **Cost of Attendance:** Cost of Attendance (COA), determined by each educational institution, is the total amount it will cost a student to go to school, including tuition and fees; on-campus room and board (or a housing and food allowance for off-campus students); allowances for books, supplies, computer equipment, transportation, loan fees, dependent care, mandatory health insurance, graduation fees, and costs related to a disability; and miscellaneous expenses.
 - **Unmet Need Calculations:** Unmet financial need is calculated in part by the institution's determination of cost of attendance (COA). Generally, the Financial Aid Office determines unmet need for undergraduate students as:
 - COA - Student Aid Index (SAI) - other grants and scholarships (which for the purpose of this program should exclude loans and work) = Unmet Need.
 - The SAI is determined by the FAFSA form and represents the expected family contribution toward the COA (<https://studentaid.gov/>).
- Determination of Financial Eligibility: A description of the determination of financial

eligibility including the institution's definition of low-income must be included in the request.

- Description of Academic Eligibility: The request should describe clear and equitable selection criteria for scholarships and describe how scholars will be selected out of the pool of all qualified individuals.
- Student Support Services: The request should discuss already existing academic and student support structures that are relevant to the S-STEM supplement and describe ways in which the S-STEM supplement will use or enhance those structures. These activities need to respond to the documented low-income student and institutional needs or goals.
- Letter from the Financial Aid Office or equivalent: The letter should certify the Office's understanding of the guidelines and requirements of the S-STEM program, confirming the institutional definition of low income, that the eligible students will meet its definition of low income, and stating their commitment to support the project as described in the proposal if awarded. This letter should be included in the other supplementary documents section.

Additional guidance on the contents of each of the above listed items can be found in Section V.A.5 of the S-STEM solicitation. Additional guidance on preparing and submitting a supplemental funding request may be found in Chapter VI.E.5 of the [NSF Proposal and Award Policies and Procedures Guide](#).

SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDING DETAILS

Support will be provided through S-STEM supplements to existing ATE recipients. Funding shall not exceed 20% of the total original ATE award. Scholarship costs should be entered as Participant Support Costs (line F.1. of the budget request sheets) in the proposed budget. Indirect costs (F&A) are not allowed on participant support costs. Therefore, indirect costs are not permitted for this supplemental funding request.

TARGET DATE

Supplemental funding requests may be submitted at any time in FY2024 or FY2025.

SUBMISSION AND REVIEW

All supplemental funding requests will be reviewed in accordance with the NSF's merit review process.

Supplemental funding requests cannot be submitted without prior NSF approval. To explore submission, please contact the cognizant Program Officer (see list below) of the award to which the supplement will be attached by sending via email, a 2-page (maximum) summary of the planned funding request including a draft budget. You will then be contacted on how to

proceed.

Principal investigators with questions pertaining to this DCL may contact:

- Celeste Carter, Program Director, EDU/DUE, vccarter@nsf.gov
- Thomas Kim, Program Director, EDU/DUE, tkim@nsf.gov

Sincerely,

James L Moore, III
Assistant Director, EDU

¹ Chen, X. (2013). STEM Attrition: College Students' Paths Into and Out of STEM Fields (NCES 2014-001). National Center for Education Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC.