

# Centers for Chemical Innovation Phase I (CCI-I)

Formerly known as Chemical Bonding Centers (CBC)

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## PROGRAM SOLICITATION

NSF 09-503

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**REPLACES DOCUMENT(S):**

NSF 08-536

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National Science Foundation

Directorate for Mathematical & Physical Sciences  
Division of Chemistry

**Preliminary Proposal Due Date(s) (required)** (due by 5 p.m. proposer's local time):

February 02, 2009

**Full Proposal Deadline(s)** (due by 5 p.m. proposer's local time):

June 03, 2009

full proposals by invitation only

## REVISION NOTES

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A revised version of the *NSF Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide* (PAPPG), [NSF 09-1](#), was issued on October 1, 2008 and is effective for proposals submitted on or after January 5, 2009. Please be advised that the guidelines contained in [NSF 09-1](#) apply to proposals submitted in response to this funding opportunity. Proposers who opt to submit prior to January 5<sup>th</sup>, 2009, must also follow the guidelines contained in [NSF 09-1](#).

One of the most significant changes to the PAPPG is implementation of the mentoring provisions of the America COMPETES Act. Each proposal that requests funding to support postdoctoral researchers must include, as a separate section within the 15-page project description, a description of the mentoring activities that will be provided for such individuals. Proposals that do not include a separate section on mentoring activities within the Project Description will be returned without review (see the PAPP Guide Part I: *Grant Proposal Guide* Chapter II.C.2.d for further information).

## SUMMARY OF PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

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### General Information

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**Program Title:**

Centers for Chemical Innovation Phase I (CCI-I)  
Formerly known as Chemical Bonding Centers (CBC)

**Synopsis of Program:**

The CCI Program is designed to support the formation of centers that can address major, long-term basic chemical research problems that have a high probability of both producing transformative research and leading to innovation. Appropriate research problems are high-risk but potentially high-impact and will attract broad scientific and public interest. Centers are expected to be agile structures that can respond rapidly to emerging opportunities and make full use of cyberinfrastructure to enhance collaborations. Center teams may include researchers from disciplines other than Chemistry and from academia, industry, government laboratories and international organizations. CCIs are expected to integrate research, education, and outreach and to include a plan to broaden participation to under-represented groups. Proposals should contain a compelling strategy for achieving demonstrable impact in all of these areas.

The CCI program is a two-phase program. The Phase I review process consists of a preliminary proposal that will be peer reviewed, followed by an invited full proposal to explore development of a Phase I CCI. Phase I CCI's receive significant resources to develop the scientific, educational, innovation and management aspects of a CCI before requesting Phase II funding. Phase I proposals funded in FY 2009 will seek Phase II funding in FY 2012.

**Cognizant Program Officer(s):**

- Katharine J. Covert, Program Director, telephone: (703) 292-4950, email: [kcovert@nsf.gov](mailto:kcovert@nsf.gov)

**Applicable Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number(s):**

- 47.049 --- Mathematical and Physical Sciences

## Award Information

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**Anticipated Type of Award:** Standard Grant or Continuing Grant

**Estimated Number of Awards:** 6

**Anticipated Funding Amount:** \$3,000,000 in FY 2009, subject to the availability of funds

## Eligibility Information

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**Organization Limit:**

Proposals may only be submitted by the following:

- Non-profit, non-academic organizations: Independent museums, observatories, research labs, professional societies and similar organizations in the U.S. associated with educational or research activities.
- Universities and Colleges - Universities and two- and four-year colleges (including community colleges) accredited in, and having a campus located in the US, acting on behalf of their faculty members. Such organizations also are referred to as academic institutions.

**PI Limit:**

An investigator may participate (as a PI or senior personnel) in only one CCI-I proposal and associated pre-proposal submitted to this competition. It is the responsibility of the PI to insure that all senior personnel do not appear on more than one CCI-I proposal or more than one pre-proposal. Should any of these individuals appear on more than one CCI-I proposal or pre-proposal, all such proposals will be returned without review. The PI must be affiliated with a U.S. academic institution or non-profit research organization. Other investigators may be affiliated with U.S. academic institutions, non-profit research organizations, industry, government laboratories and international organizations. Unaffiliated scientists may also be eligible for support under a proposal submitted by an eligible organization. CCI award funds may not go to industry, government laboratories or international organizations.

**Limit on Number of Proposals per Organization:**

None Specified

**Limit on Number of Proposals per PI: 1**

Only one proposal and associated pre-proposal may be submitted per eligible PI.

CCI proposals should not include coPIs. Other participating researchers should be added as non-coPI senior personnel. Senior personnel should include Biographical Sketches and Current and Pending Support Statements in the submissions.

## Proposal Preparation and Submission Instructions

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**A. Proposal Preparation Instructions**

- **Letters of Intent:** Not Applicable
- **Preliminary Proposals:** Submission of Preliminary Proposals is required. Please see the full text of this solicitation for further information.
- **Full Proposals:**
  - Full Proposals submitted via FastLane: NSF Proposal and Award Policies and Procedures Guide, Part I: Grant Proposal Guide (GPG) Guidelines apply. The complete text of the GPG is available electronically on the NSF website at: [http://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub\\_summ.jsp?ods\\_key=pgg](http://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub_summ.jsp?ods_key=pgg).
  - Full Proposals submitted via Grants.gov: NSF Grants.gov Application Guide: A Guide for the Preparation and Submission of NSF Applications via Grants.gov Guidelines apply (Note: The NSF Grants.gov Application Guide is available on the Grants.gov website and on the NSF website at: <http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/policydocs/grantsgovguide607.pdf>)

**B. Budgetary Information**

- **Cost Sharing Requirements:** Cost Sharing is not required under this solicitation.
- **Indirect Cost (F&A) Limitations:** Not Applicable
- **Other Budgetary Limitations:** Other budgetary limitations apply. Please see the full text of this solicitation for further information.

### C. Due Dates

- **Preliminary Proposal Due Date(s) (required)** (due by 5 p.m. proposer's local time):

February 02, 2009

- **Full Proposal Deadline(s)** (due by 5 p.m. proposer's local time):

June 03, 2009

full proposals by invitation only

## Proposal Review Information Criteria

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**Merit Review Criteria:** National Science Board approved criteria. Additional merit review considerations apply. Please see the full text of this solicitation for further information.

## Award Administration Information

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**Award Conditions:** Standard NSF award conditions apply.

**Reporting Requirements:** Standard NSF reporting requirements apply.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

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The Division of Chemistry is initiating a fifth round of Phase I competition for its Centers for Chemical Innovation (CCI) program, formerly known as the Chemical Bonding Centers (CBCs) program, to nurture innovative approaches to addressing intellectual challenges in basic chemical research and education with the potential for broad societal impact. CCIs will provide the opportunity for especially able and ambitious groups of investigators to share a commitment toward solving a "big problem" in an atmosphere having a high tolerance for risk and within a structure permitting considerable agility. A workshop at NSF, "New Mechanisms for Support of High-Risk and Unconventional Research in Chemistry," explored mechanisms for encouraging and supporting such initiatives. A report of the workshop can be obtained at <http://www.mrl.uiuc.edu/docs/nsfgmwfina.pdf>

The Division of Chemistry expects to make awards in Fiscal Year (FY) 2009 to support activities in the Centers for Chemical Innovation (CCI) Program. The CCI Program competition consists of two phases. The review process for Phase I begins with submission of a Preliminary Proposal that describes a center concept, a brief description of the proposed research, and a group of initiating participants (PI and other senior personnel who have agreed to participate on the project). Meritorious preliminary proposals will be invited to submit a Full Proposal. CCI Phase I Full Proposals will outline center goals and provide a more detailed research plan as well as plans to address critical CCI elements, within the CCI Phase I resources of \$500,000/yr for three years. NSF Chemistry expects to fund up to six new Phase I awards in FY 2009. Those development teams which receive Phase I funding will be eligible to participate in the second phase of the competition, by submitting a proposal for the establishment of a CCI Phase II center in FY 2012. It is anticipated that, assuming availability of funds and appropriate quality of proposals, there will be one or two CCI Phase II awards resulting from the Phase I awards initiated in FY 2009. Each Phase II award is expected to have a duration of

five years, at a level averaging \$4 million per year, with possible renewal for a second five-year period at the same average level of \$4 million per year pending availability of funds. The specific program solicitation for the CCI-II proposals in this second round of competition will be available approximately June 2011 for funding in FY 2012.

## II. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

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The CCI Program is designed to support the formation of centers that can address major, long-term basic chemical research problems. Appropriate research problems are high-risk but potentially high-impact because they will attract broad scientific and public interest. Centers are expected to be agile structures that can respond rapidly to emerging opportunities and make full use of cyberinfrastructure to enhance collaborations. Center teams may include researchers from different disciplines and from academia, industry, national laboratories and international organizations. Team size should reflect the needs of the problem to be studied, but a minimum of three investigators is required.

Successful centers will be focused on novel research centered in the chemical sciences and aimed at solving high-risk, long-term problems of large scope and impact. They will have a high probability of producing transformative research likely to lead to innovations, i.e. research results that can lead to new processes, materials or devices that will enhance economic competitiveness.

These CCI research communities will bring common and complementary interests into productive contact to nurture a culture of risk-taking and innovation around structures that are agile and take full advantage of cyberinfrastructure for fostering collaborations.

CCIs are expected to integrate research and education throughout the course of the project. CCIs should provide novel opportunities for participants to engage in joint efforts that combine education with the excitement of discovery at the frontiers of modern chemical research. There must be a commitment to broadening opportunities and enabling the participation of all citizens -- women and men, underrepresented minorities, and persons with disabilities - in the solution of these "big problems". A vigorous public outreach program should be designed to achieve the CCI goal of increasing public appreciation for the contributions of chemistry to progress in modern science.

During preparation of a CCI Phase I proposal, investigators are strongly urged to discuss details with a cognizant Program Officer listed in Section VIII of this solicitation. Investigators seeking the involvement of industrial, government and/or international team members will need to provide an institutional letter of collaboration (in the Full Proposal) from the partner organization that confirms the participation of a co-investigator. This letter should be included in the Supplementary Documents Section of the Full Proposal. (See Section V.A., below). The letter should describe the plan of interaction with the U.S. academic institution, the time commitment of the researcher(s), and the nature of the collaborative research activities. Letters of general support or recommendation are inappropriate and may cause a proposal to be returned without review. Cost sharing is not required for CCI Phase I proposals.

Support for collaborations with international scientists is provided through the NSF grant to the submitting U.S. institution. No CCI award funds may go directly to foreign institutions. The proposal may include up to \$100,000 in participant support costs, over the duration of the grant, for international collaborative research activities. Travel and incidental research costs may be included; salaries may not. These international collaborations must feature a joint scientific work plan and should be clearly described in the Project Description. If, after review, a proposal is recommended for funding, the cognizant Program Officer will work with Program Officers from the NSF Office of International Science and Engineering and the key project personnel to develop a detailed plan consistent with prevailing international practices and policies.

Co-investigators associated with entities such as industry, state agencies and national laboratories (Federally Funded Research and Development Centers (FFRDCs)) must be supported by their own organization. However, it is appropriate for students supported through universities to work at a partner industrial laboratory, FFRDC or comparable site, or for universities to fund research expenses incurred when scientists from such entities work at university sites. Federal employees may not receive salaries or in other ways augment their agency's appropriation through grants made by this program, and no funds for major equipment at FFRDC's are allowed.

Principal Investigators should ensure that their proposed project does not substantially overlap with ongoing Federally funded research. NSF reserves the right to return without review proposals that are not responsive to this solicitation.

## III. AWARD INFORMATION

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Phase I CCI proposals should request \$500,000 per year for three years for a total award amount of \$1,500,000. NSF expects to award up to six continuing grants during FY2009. Estimated program budget, number of awards and average award size/duration are subject to the availability of funds and quality of proposals received. The anticipated start date of awards in Sept 1, 2009.

## IV. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

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### Organization Limit:

Proposals may only be submitted by the following:

- Non-profit, non-academic organizations: Independent museums, observatories, research labs, professional societies and similar organizations in the U.S. associated with educational or research activities.
- Universities and Colleges - Universities and two- and four-year colleges (including community colleges) accredited in, and having a campus located in the US, acting on behalf of their faculty members. Such organizations also are referred to as academic institutions.

### PI Limit:

An investigator may participate (as a PI or senior personnel) in only one CCI-I proposal and associated pre-

proposal submitted to this competition. It is the responsibility of the PI to insure that all senior personnel do not appear on more than one CCI-I proposal or more than one pre-proposal. Should any of these individuals appear on more than one CCI-I proposal or pre-proposal, all such proposals will be returned without review. The PI must be affiliated with a U.S. academic institution or non-profit research organization. Other investigators may be affiliated with U.S. academic institutions, non-profit research organizations, industry, government laboratories and international organizations. Unaffiliated scientists may also be eligible for support under a proposal submitted by an eligible organization. CCI award funds may not go to industry, government laboratories or international organizations.

**Limit on Number of Proposals per Organization:**

None Specified

**Limit on Number of Proposals per PI: 1**

Only one proposal and associated pre-proposal may be submitted per eligible PI.

CCI proposals should not include coPIs. Other participating researchers should be added as non-coPI senior personnel. Senior personnel should include Biographical Sketches and Current and Pending Support Statements in the submissions.

**Additional Eligibility Info:**

Only U.S. academic institutions and non-profit research organizations may submit proposals as lead institution. Proposals involving more than one organization must be submitted as a single administrative package from the lead organization; collaborative proposals with multiple administrative packages will not be accepted.

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## V. PROPOSAL PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

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### A. Proposal Preparation Instructions

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**Preliminary Proposals (required):** Preliminary proposals are required and must be submitted via the NSF FastLane system, even if full proposals will be submitted via Grants.gov.

Preliminary Proposals must be submitted via FastLane by 5:00 p.m. proposer's local time on the due date indicated elsewhere in this solicitation. On the Cover Sheet, the PI must select the "preliminary proposal" check box in the Proposal Preparation module in FastLane and complete only the sections below appropriate to the preliminary proposal.

The following information is required for all Preliminary Proposals:

- **Information About Principal Investigators/Project Directors and co-Principal Investigators/co-Project Directors** - Use standard GPG guidelines.
- **Cover Sheet for Proposal to the National Science Foundation** - A cover sheet must be submitted and electronically signed by an Authorized Organizational Representative for all preliminary proposals. The NSF Cover Sheet also will identify the amount of funding for three years requested from NSF. No additional budgetary information will be required at the preliminary proposal stage.
- **Project Summary** - in one page describe intellectual merit and broader impacts of the project.
- **Project Description** - limited to 5 pages, see detailed instructions below.
- **Reference Section** - up to 10 key references.
- **Biographical Sketches for PI/co-PIs and other senior personnel** - Use standard GPG guidelines.
- **Current and Pending Support** - list for PI and other initiating researchers

The following points should be covered in the preliminary proposal Project Description:

- the "big challenge" that is to be addressed and why it is appropriate for the CCI structure;
- how the research would lead to major advances in chemistry and impact the broader scientific community;
- how the research will effectively integrate education and diversity;
- how the proposed activities will be effectively communicated to the public;
- how the basic research will be effectively connected with innovation and economic competitiveness;
- proposed group of initiating researchers who have consented to participate at this stage.

Preliminary Proposals must conform to the format restrictions noted in the NSF GPG. Preliminary Proposals will be peer-reviewed by ad hoc and/or panel review. The principal investigators of proposals judged to be meritorious by peer review will be invited to submit Phase I Full Proposals (below).

**Full Proposal Preparation Instructions:** Proposers may opt to submit proposals in response to this Program Solicitation via Grants.gov or via the NSF FastLane system.

- Full proposals submitted via FastLane: Proposals submitted in response to this program solicitation should be prepared and submitted in accordance with the general guidelines contained in the NSF Grant Proposal Guide (GPG). The complete text of the GPG is available electronically on the NSF website at: [http://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub\\_summ.jsp?ods\\_key=gpg](http://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub_summ.jsp?ods_key=gpg). Paper copies of the GPG may be obtained from the NSF Publications Clearinghouse, telephone (703) 292-7827 or by e-mail from [pubs@nsf.gov](mailto:pubs@nsf.gov). Proposers are reminded to identify this program solicitation number in the program solicitation block on the NSF Cover Sheet For Proposal to the National Science Foundation. Compliance with this requirement is critical to determining the relevant proposal processing guidelines. Failure to submit this information may delay processing.
- Full proposals submitted via Grants.gov: Proposals submitted in response to this program solicitation via Grants.gov should be prepared and submitted in accordance with the NSF Grants.gov Application Guide: A Guide for the Preparation and Submission of NSF Applications via Grants.gov. The complete text of the NSF Grants.gov Application Guide is available on the Grants.gov website and on the NSF website at: (<http://www.nsf.gov/bfa/dias/policy/docs/grantsgovguide.pdf>). To obtain copies of the Application Guide and Application

Forms Package, click on the Apply tab on the Grants.gov site, then click on the Apply Step 1: Download a Grant Application Package and Application Instructions link and enter the funding opportunity number, (the program solicitation number without the NSF prefix) and press the Download Package button. Paper copies of the Grants.gov Application Guide also may be obtained from the NSF Publications Clearinghouse, telephone (703) 292-7827 or by e-mail from [pubs@nsf.gov](mailto:pubs@nsf.gov).

Full Proposals submitted, by invitation only, in response to this program must originate from principal investigators whose projects are successful in the Preliminary Proposal competition described above and must be based on those projects. All proposals not meeting this requirement will be returned without review.

Proposers are strongly encouraged to consult the proposal submission checklist included in the Grant Proposal Guide or NSF Grants.gov Application Guide as they prepare their proposal. Proposals not compliant with the proposal preparation guidelines, as supplemented by the following instructions, may be returned without review.

The items outlined below pertain to the corresponding sections in the Grant Proposal Guide or NSF Grants.gov Application Guide.

**Project Summary.** One-page limit, including the names and affiliations of all senior personnel. The project summary must address both the intellectual merit and broader impacts of the proposed CCI project.

**Project Description.** CCI proposals are likely to be read by non-specialists at some stage of the review process. It is therefore particularly important that they be written to emphasize the impact of the projects on the chemical sciences in a broad context. The Project Description may be up to twenty-two (22) pages: i. Results from Prior Support (up to 5 pages), ii. Research Plan (up to 12 pages), iii. Plans for Key Synergistic CCI Elements (up to 5 pages).

i. Prior Support. List NSF awards held in the last five years by any investigator (PI and any other senior personnel who may or may not be a Co-PI). Each PI, co-PI or senior associate must report on the award most closely related to the proposal. The proposal may contain up to a total of five (5) pages to describe the results.

ii. Research Plan. Narrative, not to exceed twelve (12) pages, consisting of the following items:

- An explanation of the scientific context, intellectual merit, relevance to chemistry and timeliness of the proposed project;
- A description of workshops, conferences and/or travel appropriate for developing the research project and team that would comprise the CCI;
- A description of the proposed research;
- A justification for why the CCI mode of research is appropriate (compared with individual or collaborative awards); and
- A description of the contribution to be made by each senior investigator.

iii. Plans for Key Synergistic CCI Elements (Narrative, up to 1 page for each plan, 5 pages total)

- Education Plan for undergraduate students, graduate students, and postdoctoral researchers, including co-mentorship, other collaborative training, or other education activities;
- Broadening Participation Plan by under-represented groups, including the CCI goals, plans for achieving those goals, and a discussion of how progress will be measured;
- Public Outreach Plan, describing the CCI approach to communicating chemistry research to public audiences and possible ways to evaluate the impact of these outreach efforts;
- Dissemination and Innovation Plan, including both dissemination of research results and plans for engaging industry or by other means connecting research products to innovations; and
- Center Management Plan, including how the CCI effort will be coordinated, any use of cyberinfrastructure, how decisions will be made regarding the project (including plans for advisory groups), and a discussion of how agility will be addressed in terms of the incorporation of new ideas, tools, and partners.

**References Cited.** References should include full titles of articles and book chapters cited. This section should include bibliographic citations only and must not be used to provide parenthetical information outside of the Project Description. Indicate with an asterisk (\*) references co-authored by two or more proposal investigators.

**Biographical sketches.** For PI and all senior personnel, provide brief biographical sketches using the format described in the Grant Proposal Guide or NSF Grants.gov Application Guide. Note that recent collaborators and other affiliates should also be collected into the combined list given in the Supplementary Documentation (see below).

**Budget.** Each annual budget should total \$500,000, the duration is three years. A cumulative budget will be automatically generated by Fast Lane or Grants.gov. A detailed budget justification (up to three pages) should document proposed expenses. Multi-institutional proposals should use the award-sub award proposal mechanisms (see GPG guidelines, chapter II.D.3).

**Current and Pending Support.** A full description of the total level of current and pending support from all sources for the key personnel. Any potential overlap between federally funded projects and the proposed research must be clarified.

**Facilities.** A description of the facilities (including laboratories, computational facilities and cyber infrastructure) that will be made available to the project. Separate facilities descriptions should be included for multi-institutional projects or those involving non-academic partners.

**Supplementary Documents.** Required letters of collaboration from national laboratories, international organizations, and industry should be included in this section. Letters of collaboration from senior personnel not supported on the grant are also appropriate. Letters of recommendation or general support are not permitted. Quotations for the purchase of instrumentation and equipment may be included in this section.

**Single Copy Documents.** Provide a combined, alphabetized list of all scientists, with current affiliations, who have collaborated with the PI, co-PIs and other senior personnel in the last 48 months or are otherwise affiliated with them, including Ph. D. and post-doctoral mentors.

**Suggested Reviewers/Reviewers Not to Include (Optional).** Include potential reviewers who span the range of disciplines represented by the CCI proposal.

## B. Budgetary Information

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**Cost Sharing:** Cost sharing is not required under this solicitation.

### Other Budgetary Limitations:

Multi-institutional proposals should use the award-sub award mechanism discussed in the GPG, Chapter II.D.3.

Federal employees may not receive salaries or in other ways augment their agency's appropriation through grants made by this program, and no funds for major equipment at FFRDC's are allowed.

### Budget Preparation Instructions:

Full proposals should include funds in the budget for a site visit or reverse site visit in the second year of the project.

The proposal may include up to \$100,000 in participant support costs, over the duration of the grant, for international collaborative research activities. Travel and incidental research costs may be included; salaries may not.

## C. Due Dates

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- **Preliminary Proposal Due Date(s) (required)** (due by 5 p.m. proposer's local time):

February 02, 2009

- **Full Proposal Deadline(s)** (due by 5 p.m. proposer's local time):

June 03, 2009

full proposals by invitation only

## D. FastLane/Grants.gov Requirements

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- **For Proposals Submitted Via FastLane:**

Detailed technical instructions regarding the technical aspects of preparation and submission via FastLane are available at: <https://www.fastlane.nsf.gov/a1/newstan.htm>. For FastLane user support, call the FastLane Help Desk at 1-800-673-6188 or e-mail [fastlane@nsf.gov](mailto:fastlane@nsf.gov). The FastLane Help Desk answers general technical questions related to the use of the FastLane system. Specific questions related to this program solicitation should be referred to the NSF program staff contact(s) listed in Section VIII of this funding opportunity.

**Submission of Electronically Signed Cover Sheets.** The Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR) must electronically sign the proposal Cover Sheet to submit the required proposal certifications (see Chapter II, Section C of the Grant Proposal Guide for a listing of the certifications). The AOR must provide the required electronic certifications within five working days following the electronic submission of the proposal. Further instructions regarding this process are available on the FastLane Website at: <https://www.fastlane.nsf.gov/fastlane.jsp>.

- **For Proposals Submitted Via Grants.gov:**

Before using Grants.gov for the first time, each organization must register to create an institutional profile. Once registered, the applicant's organization can then apply for any federal grant on the Grants.gov website. The Grants.gov's Grant Community User Guide is a comprehensive reference document that provides technical information about Grants.gov. Proposers can download the User Guide as a Microsoft Word document or as a PDF document. The Grants.gov User Guide is available at:

<http://www.grants.gov/CustomerSupport>. In addition, the NSF Grants.gov Application Guide provides additional technical guidance regarding preparation of proposals via Grants.gov. For Grants.gov user support, contact the Grants.gov Contact Center at 1-800-518-4726 or by email: [support@grants.gov](mailto:support@grants.gov). The Grants.gov Contact Center answers general technical questions related to the use of Grants.gov. Specific questions related to this program solicitation should be referred to the NSF program staff contact(s) listed in Section VIII of this solicitation.

**Submitting the Proposal:** Once all documents have been completed, the Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR) must submit the application to Grants.gov and verify the desired funding opportunity and agency to which the application is submitted. The AOR must then sign and submit the application to Grants.gov. The completed application will be transferred to the NSF FastLane system for further processing.

## VI. NSF PROPOSAL PROCESSING AND REVIEW PROCEDURES

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Proposals received by NSF are assigned to the appropriate NSF program where they will be reviewed if they meet NSF proposal preparation requirements. All proposals are carefully reviewed by a scientist, engineer, or educator serving as an NSF Program Officer, and usually by three to ten other persons outside NSF who are experts in the particular fields represented by the proposal. These reviewers are selected by Program Officers charged with the oversight of the review process. Proposers are invited to suggest names of persons they believe are especially well qualified to review the proposal and/or persons they would prefer not review the proposal. These suggestions may serve as one source in the reviewer selection process at the Program Officer's discretion. Submission of such names, however, is optional. Care is taken to ensure that reviewers have no conflicts of interest with the proposal.

### A. NSF Merit Review Criteria

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All NSF proposals are evaluated through use of the two National Science Board (NSB)-approved merit review criteria: intellectual merit and the broader impacts of the proposed effort. In some instances, however, NSF will employ additional criteria as required to highlight the specific objectives of certain programs and activities.

The two NSB-approved merit review criteria are listed below. The criteria include considerations that help define them. These considerations are suggestions and not all will apply to any given proposal. While proposers must address both merit review criteria, reviewers will be asked to address only those considerations that are relevant to the proposal being considered and for which the reviewer is qualified to make judgements.

**What is the intellectual merit of the proposed activity?**

How important is the proposed activity to advancing knowledge and understanding within its own field or across different fields? How well qualified is the proposer (individual or team) to conduct the project? (If appropriate, the reviewer will comment on the quality of the prior work.) To what extent does the proposed activity suggest and explore creative, original, or potentially transformative concepts? How well conceived and organized is the proposed activity? Is there sufficient access to resources?

**What are the broader impacts of the proposed activity?**

How well does the activity advance discovery and understanding while promoting teaching, training, and learning? How well does the proposed activity broaden the participation of underrepresented groups (e.g., gender, ethnicity, disability, geographic, etc.)? To what extent will it enhance the infrastructure for research and education, such as facilities, instrumentation, networks, and partnerships? Will the results be disseminated broadly to enhance scientific and technological understanding? What may be the benefits of the proposed activity to society?

Examples illustrating activities likely to demonstrate broader impacts are available electronically on the NSF website at: <http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/gpg/broaderimpacts.pdf>.

NSF staff also will give careful consideration to the following in making funding decisions:

***Integration of Research and Education***

One of the principal strategies in support of NSF's goals is to foster integration of research and education through the programs, projects, and activities it supports at academic and research institutions. These institutions provide abundant opportunities where individuals may concurrently assume responsibilities as researchers, educators, and students and where all can engage in joint efforts that infuse education with the excitement of discovery and enrich research through the diversity of learning perspectives.

***Integrating Diversity into NSF Programs, Projects, and Activities***

Broadening opportunities and enabling the participation of all citizens -- women and men, underrepresented minorities, and persons with disabilities -- is essential to the health and vitality of science and engineering. NSF is committed to this principle of diversity and deems it central to the programs, projects, and activities it considers and supports.

**Additional Review Criteria:**

In addition to the National Science Board merit review criteria, reviewers will be asked to apply the following criteria when reviewing CCI Phase I preliminary proposals and proposals.

- Does the proposal have the potential to lead to transformative research in chemistry and related fields?
- Is the need for a center effort well-justified in the proposal?
- Will the education, broadening participation, and public outreach plans be effective?
- Will the dissemination and innovation plan be effective?
- Will the management plan be effective in promoting effective and agile research teams with a high tolerance for risk?

Site visits and reverse site visits during Phase I may be part of the CCI Phase II review process.

## **B. Review and Selection Process**

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Proposals submitted in response to this program solicitation will be reviewed by Ad hoc Review and/or Panel Review.

Reviewers will be asked to formulate a recommendation to either support or decline each proposal. The Program Officer assigned to manage the proposal's review will consider the advice of reviewers and will formulate a recommendation.

After scientific, technical and programmatic review and consideration of appropriate factors, the NSF Program Officer recommends to the cognizant Division Director whether the proposal should be declined or recommended for award. NSF is striving to be able to tell applicants whether their proposals have been declined or recommended for funding within six months. The time interval begins on the deadline or target date, or receipt date, whichever is later. The interval ends when the Division Director accepts the Program Officer's recommendation.

A summary rating and accompanying narrative will be completed and submitted by each reviewer. In all cases, reviews are treated as confidential documents. Verbatim copies of reviews, excluding the names of the reviewers, are sent to the Principal Investigator/Project Director by the Program Officer. In addition, the proposer will receive an explanation of the decision to award or decline funding.

In all cases, after programmatic approval has been obtained, the proposals recommended for funding will be forwarded to the Division of Grants and Agreements for review of business, financial, and policy implications and the processing and issuance of a grant or other agreement. Proposers are cautioned that only a Grants and Agreements Officer may make commitments, obligations or awards on behalf of NSF or authorize the expenditure of funds. No commitment on the part of NSF should be inferred from technical or budgetary discussions with a NSF Program Officer. A Principal Investigator or organization that makes financial or personnel commitments in the absence of a grant or cooperative agreement signed by the NSF Grants and Agreements Officer does so at their own risk.

## **VII. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION**

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### **A. Notification of the Award**

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Notification of the award is made to *the submitting organization* by a Grants Officer in the Division of Grants and Agreements. Organizations whose proposals are declined will be advised as promptly as possible by the cognizant NSF Program administering the program. Verbatim copies of reviews, not including the identity of the reviewer, will be provided automatically to the Principal Investigator. (See Section VI.B. for additional information on the review process.)

## B. Award Conditions

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An NSF award consists of: (1) the award letter, which includes any special provisions applicable to the award and any numbered amendments thereto; (2) the budget, which indicates the amounts, by categories of expense, on which NSF has based its support (or otherwise communicates any specific approvals or disapprovals of proposed expenditures); (3) the proposal referenced in the award letter; (4) the applicable award conditions, such as Grant General Conditions (GC-1); \* or Research Terms and Conditions \* and (5) any announcement or other NSF issuance that may be incorporated by reference in the award letter. Cooperative agreements also are administered in accordance with NSF Cooperative Agreement Financial and Administrative Terms and Conditions (CA-FATC) and the applicable Programmatic Terms and Conditions. NSF awards are electronically signed by an NSF Grants and Agreements Officer and transmitted electronically to the organization via e-mail.

\*These documents may be accessed electronically on NSF's Website at [http://www.nsf.gov/awards/managing/award\\_conditions.jsp?org=NSF](http://www.nsf.gov/awards/managing/award_conditions.jsp?org=NSF). Paper copies may be obtained from the NSF Publications Clearinghouse, telephone (703) 292-7827 or by e-mail from [pubs@nsf.gov](mailto:pubs@nsf.gov).

More comprehensive information on NSF Award Conditions and other important information on the administration of NSF awards is contained in the NSF *Award & Administration Guide* (AAG) Chapter II, available electronically on the NSF Website at [http://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub\\_summ.jsp?ods\\_key=aag](http://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub_summ.jsp?ods_key=aag).

## C. Reporting Requirements

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For all multi-year grants (including both standard and continuing grants), the Principal Investigator must submit an annual project report to the cognizant Program Officer at least 90 days before the end of the current budget period. (Some programs or awards require more frequent project reports). Within 90 days after expiration of a grant, the PI also is required to submit a final project report.

Failure to provide the required annual or final project reports will delay NSF review and processing of any future funding increments as well as any pending proposals for that PI. PIs should examine the formats of the required reports in advance to assure availability of required data.

PIs are required to use NSF's electronic project-reporting system, available through FastLane, for preparation and submission of annual and final project reports. Such reports provide information on activities and findings, project participants (individual and organizational) publications; and, other specific products and contributions. PIs will not be required to re-enter information previously provided, either with a proposal or in earlier updates using the electronic system. Submission of the report via FastLane constitutes certification by the PI that the contents of the report are accurate and complete.

## VIII. AGENCY CONTACTS

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General inquiries regarding this program should be made to:

- Katharine J. Covert, Program Director, telephone: (703) 292-4950, email: [kcovert@nsf.gov](mailto:kcovert@nsf.gov)

For questions related to the use of FastLane, contact:

- FastLane Help Desk, telephone: 1-800-673-6188; e-mail: [fastlane@nsf.gov](mailto:fastlane@nsf.gov).
- Paul G. Spyropoulos, Computer Specialist, 1055 S, telephone: (703) 292-4968, fax: (703) 292-9037, email: [pspyropo@nsf.gov](mailto:pspyropo@nsf.gov)

For questions relating to Grants.gov contact:

- Grants.gov Contact Center: If the Authorized Organizational Representatives (AOR) has not received a confirmation message from Grants.gov within 48 hours of submission of application, please contact via telephone: 1-800-518-4726; e-mail: [support@grants.gov](mailto:support@grants.gov).

## IX. OTHER INFORMATION

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The NSF Website provides the most comprehensive source of information on NSF Directorates (including contact information), programs and funding opportunities. Use of this Website by potential proposers is strongly encouraged. In addition, MyNSF (formerly the Custom News Service) is an information-delivery system designed to keep potential proposers and other interested parties apprised of new NSF funding opportunities and publications, important changes in proposal and award policies and procedures, and upcoming NSF Regional Grants Conferences. Subscribers are informed through e-mail or the user's Web browser each time new publications are issued that match their identified interests. MyNSF also is available on NSF's Website at <http://www.nsf.gov/mynsf/>.

Grants.gov provides an additional electronic capability to search for Federal government-wide grant opportunities. NSF funding opportunities may be accessed via this new mechanism. Further information on Grants.gov may be obtained at <http://www.grants.gov>.

**Related Programs:**

## ABOUT THE NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION

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The National Science Foundation (NSF) is an independent Federal agency created by the National Science Foundation Act of 1950, as amended (42 USC 1861-75). The Act states the purpose of the NSF is "to promote the progress of science; [and] to advance the national health, prosperity, and welfare by supporting research and education in all fields of science and engineering."

NSF funds research and education in most fields of science and engineering. It does this through grants and cooperative agreements to more than 2,000 colleges, universities, K-12 school systems, businesses, informal science organizations and other research organizations throughout the US. The Foundation accounts for about one-fourth of Federal support to academic institutions for basic research.

NSF receives approximately 40,000 proposals each year for research, education and training projects, of which approximately 11,000 are funded. In addition, the Foundation receives several thousand applications for graduate and postdoctoral fellowships. The agency operates no laboratories itself but does support National Research Centers, user facilities, certain oceanographic vessels and Antarctic research stations. The Foundation also supports cooperative research between universities and industry, US participation in international scientific and engineering efforts, and educational activities at every academic level.

*Facilitation Awards for Scientists and Engineers with Disabilities* provide funding for special assistance or equipment to enable persons with disabilities to work on NSF-supported projects. See Grant Proposal Guide Chapter II, Section D.2 for instructions regarding preparation of these types of proposals.

The National Science Foundation has Telephonic Device for the Deaf (TDD) and Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) capabilities that enable individuals with hearing impairments to communicate with the Foundation about NSF programs, employment or general information. TDD may be accessed at (703) 292-5090 and (800) 281-8749, FIRS at (800) 877-8339.

The National Science Foundation Information Center may be reached at (703) 292-5111.

The National Science Foundation promotes and advances scientific progress in the United States by competitively awarding grants and cooperative agreements for research and education in the sciences, mathematics, and engineering.

To get the latest information about program deadlines, to download copies of NSF publications, and to access abstracts of awards, visit the NSF Website at <http://www.nsf.gov>

- **Location:** 4201 Wilson Blvd. Arlington, VA 22230
- **For General Information** (NSF Information Center): (703) 292-5111
- **TDD (for the hearing-impaired):** (703) 292-5090
- **To Order Publications or Forms:**
  - Send an e-mail to: [pubs@nsf.gov](mailto:pubs@nsf.gov)
  - or telephone: (703) 292-7827
- **To Locate NSF Employees:** (703) 292-5111

## PRIVACY ACT AND PUBLIC BURDEN STATEMENTS

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The information requested on proposal forms and project reports is solicited under the authority of the National Science Foundation Act of 1950, as amended. The information on proposal forms will be used in connection with the selection of qualified proposals; and project reports submitted by awardees will be used for program evaluation and reporting within the Executive Branch and to Congress. The information requested may be disclosed to qualified reviewers and staff assistants as part of the proposal review process; to proposer institutions/grantees to provide or obtain data regarding the proposal review process, award decisions, or the administration of awards; to government contractors, experts, volunteers and researchers and educators as necessary to complete assigned work; to other government agencies or other entities needing information regarding applicants or nominees as part of a joint application review process, or in order to coordinate programs or policy; and to another Federal agency, court, or party in a court or Federal administrative proceeding if the government is a party. Information about Principal Investigators may be added to the Reviewer file and used to select potential candidates to serve as peer reviewers or advisory committee members. See Systems of Records, NSF-50, "Principal Investigator/Proposal File and Associated Records," 69 Federal Register 26410 (May 12, 2004), and NSF-51, "Reviewer/Proposal File and Associated Records," 69 Federal Register 26410 (May 12, 2004). Submission of the information is voluntary. Failure to provide full and complete information, however, may reduce the possibility of receiving an award.

An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, an information collection unless it displays a valid Office of Management and Budget (OMB) control number. The OMB control number for this collection is 3145-0058. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 120 hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions. Send comments regarding the burden estimate and any other aspect of this collection of information, including

suggestions for reducing this burden, to:

Suzanne H. Plimpton  
Reports Clearance Officer  
Division of Administrative Services  
National Science Foundation  
Arlington, VA 22230

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