



**National Science Foundation**

4201 Wilson Boulevard  
Arlington, Virginia 22230

Directorate for Geosciences  
Office of the Assistant Director

NSF 05 - 047

September 16, 2005

**SUBJECT: Research Experiences for Teachers (RET) Supplement Opportunity for Principal Investigators on New or Renewal Research Proposals or On-going Research Projects**

Dear Colleague:

This letter calls your attention to an activity that supports the participation of K-12 and community college science teachers in research projects funded by the Directorate for Geosciences (GEO) at the National Science Foundation (NSF). The Research Experiences for Teachers (RET) activity is designed to enhance the professional development of science teachers through participation in new or on-going NSF-funded research projects. GEO strongly encourages its grantees to make special efforts to identify talented teachers for participation in this opportunity.

RET Supplements may be requested in one of two ways: (1) Investigators with an existing NSF research award may submit a request for supplemental funding; or (2) Proposers may include an RET Supplement activity as part of a new (or renewal) research proposal to NSF. For further guidance and inquiries, including due dates, contact the cognizant program officer for the GEO program that is either currently funding the research, or will consider the new (or renewal) research proposal. The duration of the RET activity will generally be one year and the project may be carried out during summer months, during the academic year, or both.

Encouraging active participation of teachers in NSF projects is an excellent way to strengthen the science expertise of our nation's teachers. RET supplements should also lead to collaborative relationships between K-12 science educators and the NSF research community. GEO is particularly interested in encouraging its researchers to build mutually rewarding partnerships with teachers from schools with either limited resources or that serve students who are members of groups underrepresented in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields.

The RET Supplement request should clearly articulate, in some detail, the form and nature of the prospective teacher's involvement in the Principal Investigator's on-going or proposed research. The teacher should be involved in a significant research experience. For example, the teacher might design new experiments, conduct a modeling study, or analyze experimental data. Since it is expected that the RET experience will lead to the transfer of new knowledge into classroom activities, the RET Supplement request should indicate what sustained follow-up will be provided to help in translating the teacher's research experience into classroom practice. A brief biographical sketch of the teacher should be included with the supplement request.

A proposal to supplement an existing NSF award with an RET Supplement should be submitted via FastLane. After logging in to Proposals, Awards & Status, the *Principal Investigator(PI)/Co-Principal Investigator(Co-PI) Management, What Do You Want To Work On?* screen will appear. Click on "Award and Reporting Functions," then click "Supplemental Funding Request." The description of the proposed RET Supplement activity is limited to 3 pages. A separate two-page biographical sketch must be included for each teacher and submitted in the Supplementary Docs section of the supplement request. The Supplement request should also include a budget and budget justification for the funds requested. RET budgets typically include a stipend for the teacher, a travel allowance for the teacher, and up to \$1,000 for the cost of materials, equipment, software and other supplies that will be used by the teacher to develop classroom instructional materials. An administrative allowance (limited to 25% of the teacher's stipend only) is allowed for partial reimbursement of indirect costs; no other indirect costs are allowable on RET Supplement requests. The total cost of the Supplement is generally limited to \$10,000 per teacher.

New (or renewal) research proposals that include RET supplements should include all of the information listed in the preceding paragraph in addition to the information provided as part of the research proposal.

Normally funds may be available to support up to two teachers, but exceptions to this guideline will be considered. Participation of teachers who are members of groups underrepresented in STEM fields is strongly encouraged.

RET Supplement requests will be reviewed internally within NSF. Decisions to recommend a supplement request for funding will be made by the cognizant program officer for the program that administers the research award that would be supplemented. Program officers base their decision on the merits of the supplement request, the composition of the program's overall funding portfolio, and the availability of funds.

NSF encourages GEO-funded PIs to visit K-12 teachers in local school districts and regions, including those participating in NSF-supported activities (see, for example, the [awards list for the Division of Elementary, Secondary, and Informal Education](#)) and make them aware of this RET Supplement opportunity as well as other NSF research and educational projects. We trust that the time and effort expended will strengthen the teaching of science, mathematics, and engineering and enhance the development of the U.S. science and engineering workforce.

Sincerely,

Margaret Leinen  
Assistant Director