

**Applications are now being accepted for two new NIST Precision Measurement Grants to be awarded beginning October 1, 2009. Each grant is in the amount of \$50,000 per year, renewable for up to two additional years, for a total of \$150,000. Candidates' abbreviated proposals must reach NIST by February 6, 2009, to be considered for these awards.**

**National Institute of Standards and Technology**

# PRECISION MEASUREMENT GRANTS

**Background:** Since 1970, the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) has awarded Precision Measurement Grants to faculty members of U.S. universities or colleges for significant research in the field of fundamental measurement or the determination of fundamental constants.

NIST sponsors these grants to encourage basic, measurement-related research in universities and colleges and other research laboratories and to foster contacts between NIST scientists and those faculty members of academic institutions and other researchers who are actively engaged in such work. The Precision Measurement Grants are also intended to make it possible for researchers to pursue new ideas for which other sources of support may be difficult to find.

If funding is available, two new grants in the amount of \$50,000 per year will be awarded for the initial period of October 1, 2009 through September 30, 2010. Each award may be continued for up to two additional years; however, future or continued funding will be at the discretion of NIST based on satisfactory performance, continuing relevance to program objectives, and the availability of funds.

#### **Research topics/who may apply:**

There is some latitude in research topics that will be considered under the Precision Measurement Grants Program. The key requirement is that the proposed project support NIST's ongoing work in the field of basic measurement science, which includes:

- Experimental and theoretical studies of fundamental physical phenomena which test the basic laws of physics or which may lead to new or improved fundamental measurement methods and standards.
- The determination of important fundamental physical constants.

Proposals from workers at the assistant or associate professor level who have some record of accom-

plishment are especially encouraged in view of the comparative difficulty researchers have in obtaining funds at the early stages of their careers.

Typical projects that have been funded through the NIST Precision Measurement Grants Program include:

*Precision optical spectroscopy of positronium*, S. Chu, Stanford University.

*Spectroscopy of francium: towards a precise parity nonconservation measurement in a laser trap*, L. A. Orozco, State University of New York at Stony Brook.

*Measurement of Newton's constant G using a new method*, J. H. Gundlach, University of Washington.

*Measurement of the polarization of the cosmic microwave background*, S. T. Staggs, Princeton University

*Combining the quantum Hall and AC Josephson effects for electric current metrology*, E. A. Gwinn, University of California, Santa Barbara.

*A test of CPT symmetry using a new  $K\text{-}^3\text{He}$  self-compensating magnetometer*, M. V. Romalis, Princeton University

#### **Application Procedure:**

Applicants will initially submit abbreviated proposals, containing a description of the proposed project, including sufficient information to address the evaluation criteria, with a total length of no more than five (5) double spaced pages.

A completed SF-424 (R&R) form is required to be submitted with the abbreviated proposal. Abbreviated proposals may not be submitted through the Grants.gov website. However, abbreviated proposals may be submitted on paper by mail or delivery service or as an electronic file by email to [mohr@nist.gov](mailto:mohr@nist.gov). The SF-424 (R&R) form can be found at [http://www.grants.gov/agencies/approved\\_standard\\_forms.jsp#1](http://www.grants.gov/agencies/approved_standard_forms.jsp#1)

Approximately eight individuals, four within NIST and four outside of NIST, knowledgeable about the scientific areas that the program addresses will conduct a technical review of each proposal, based on the evaluation criteria described below. The proposals will then be

ranked by the average of the reviewers' rankings. Four to eight finalists will be selected based on the results of the reviewers' evaluations, including rank, and relevance to the program objectives described above.

The finalists will then be asked to submit full proposals containing a description of the proposed project, including sufficient information to address the evaluation criteria, with a length of no more than ten (10) double spaced pages in addition to the federally mandated forms and certifications, to the mailing address given below. The same reviewers will evaluate the detailed proposals based on the same evaluation criteria. Two proposals will be selected for funding by the end of fiscal year 2009, based on the results of the reviewers' evaluations, including rank, and relevance to the program objectives described above.

#### **Evaluation criteria:**

1. The importance of the proposed research – Does it have the potential of answering some currently pressing question or of opening up a whole new area of activity?
2. The relationship of the proposed research to NIST's ongoing work – Will it support one of NIST's current efforts to develop a new or improved fundamental measurement method or physical standard, test the basic laws of physics, or provide an improved value for a fundamental constant?
3. The feasibility of the research and the potential impact of the grant – Is it likely that significant progress can be made in a three year time period with the funds and personnel available and that

the funding will enable work that would otherwise not be done with existing or potential funding?

4. The qualifications of the applicant – Does the educational and employment background and the

quality of the research, based on recent publications, of the applicant indicate that there is a high probability that the proposed research will be carried out successfully?

Each of these factors is given equal weight in the evaluation process.

#### **Mailing address:**

Mail three (3) copies of the proposals to:

Dr. Peter J. Mohr  
NIST Precision Measurement  
Grants Program  
National Institute of Standards and  
Technology  
100 Bureau Drive - STOP 8420  
Gaithersburg, MD 20899-8420

Questions concerning the NIST Precision Measurement Grants Program may be directed to the above address, to [mohr@nist.gov](mailto:mohr@nist.gov), or to 301-975-3217.

**Dates:** Applicants for the Precision Measurement Grants Program must submit an abbreviated proposal for preliminary screening. Based on the merit of the abbreviated proposal, applicants will be advised whether a full proposal should be submitted. The abbreviated proposals must be received at the address listed above no later than the close of business February 6, 2009. Proposals received after this deadline will be returned with no further consideration. The finalists will be selected by March 27, 2009, and will be requested to submit full proposals to NIST by close of business on May 8, 2009. NIST expects to issue awards on or before September 30, 2009.

**Web:** [physics.nist.gov/pmg](http://physics.nist.gov/pmg)