



National Science Foundation
4201 Wilson Boulevard
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NSF 12-033

Frequently Asked Questions for [NSF 12-523](#): Climate Change Education (CCE): Climate Change Education Partnership (CCEP) Program, Phase II (CCEP-II)

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1. **Can I submit a proposal for CCEP Phase II funding if I did not receive a CCEP Phase I award?**

Yes. Prior funding through the CCEP Phase I program solicitation ([NSF 10-542](#)) or the FY 2009 CCE Dear Colleague Letter ([NSF 09-058](#)) is not a requirement for proposers seeking CCEP-II funding. However, proposals from Partnerships that did not receive funding through

either of those opportunities must be able to document that they incorporate the Key Features described in the solicitation and have undertaken foundational activities that are equivalent to the CCEP Phase I strategic planning efforts. These foundational activities include: conducting an inventory of current scientific and education resources, organizations, and practices relevant to the chosen climate impact region or theme; assessment of what additional learning-science research is needed for making progress; identification of key stakeholders; creation of an external Advisory Board for the Partnership; engagement of relevant stakeholders in strategic planning for Phase II; development of a comprehensive strategic plan for Phase II that integrates climate education and research; development of a comprehensive formative and summative evaluation plan for a Phase II Partnership with clearly defined metrics and measurable outcomes; and, piloting of instructional materials, professional development and training models, or other activities that will be developed, customized, and/or scaled up in Phase II. CCEP Phase II proposals must also be able to summarize the results of evaluation and assessment activities conducted during pre-Phase II collaborations that can be used to demonstrate the potential capacity of the Partnership to reach its specific goals, address the needs and opportunities facing climate change education, and make progress toward achieving the long term goals of the CCEP program.

2. Are there any required formats or forms for submitting a proposal to the NSF CCEP-II program?

All proposals submitted to NSF must follow basic formatting guidelines identified in the NSF Grant Proposal Guide (GPG) unless otherwise specified in the CCEP-II solicitation. The GPG can be accessed online at: http://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub_summ.jsp?ods_key=gpg. It is very important that proposals follow all of the relevant GPG requirements and include ALL required forms in FastLane or Grants.gov, or they will be returned without review for non-compliance.

3. How many pages am I allowed in the Project Description section?

As indicated in the CCEP-II solicitation, you are allowed up to **20 pages of text in the Project Description**. This guidance supersedes the limit defined in the GPG.

4. Can we have more than four PIs/Co-PIs on the proposal?

NSF policy permits only one PI and a maximum of four Co-PIs on a proposal. However, you can add individuals as non-Co-PI Senior Personnel to a proposal. This is done through the Form Preparation screen within the FastLane proposal preparation module by clicking on the Add/Delete Non-Co-PI Senior Personnel link. The FastLane online Help System has additional details on how to do this. If submitting via Grants.gov, instructions for entering additional senior project participants are included in section V.5 of the NSF Grants.gov Application Guide. The Grants.gov Application Guide can be accessed online at: http://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub_summ.jsp?ods_key=grantsgovguide

5. What does NSF mean by the term "education" in this solicitation?

In the CCEP program, the term "education" refers to the creation and transmission of knowledge and skills related to climate science and climate change and its impacts, in either (or both) formal (K-16) and informal learning environments. Target audiences can be anywhere along the "K to grey" continuum. The emphasis is on achieving climate literacy, which will allow individuals and communities to make informed decisions about climate change. Projects must not delve into advocacy for particular responses, but present evidence so an informed decision can be made.

6. What does NSF mean by the term "expertise in climate science" in this solicitation?

Funding for the CCEP program is being managed within the Directorates of Education and Human Resources, Geosciences, Biological Sciences, and the Office of Polar Programs. As such, participants that provide climate science expertise are expected to involve the types of natural sciences research areas (including mathematical and computer sciences) normally funded by NSF. Other types of climate-related science expertise supported by NSF (e.g., social science) can be incorporated in a proposal, but the proposal must have the natural sciences represented, too. Proposals that focus on human health or medicine-related scientific research that is normally supported by the National Institutes for Health are discouraged.

7. What type of expertise is needed for a CCEP Phase II Partnership proposal to be successful?

At a minimum, the core team of a CCEP Phase II Partnership is required to include an expert in climate science, an expert in the learning sciences (e.g., cognition or educational research), and a practitioner involved with STEM education in formal or informal settings. Additional types of expertise may be appropriate, depending on the focus of the Partnership. These core elements are required to ensure that Partnership activities: 1) incorporate current scientific understanding about climate and its impacts; 2) are built on sound principles of learning; and, 3) are realistic about barriers to practical implementation. Competitive Phase II proposals will make it very clear in the Project Description how each type of expertise contributes to, as well as benefits from, the activities of the Partnership.

8. What is the difference between a Regional and a Thematic Partnership?

CCEP Partnerships should be organized around common impacts of climate change. For Regional Partnerships, these common impacts are shared by contiguous geographic regions. Examples would be the accelerated rate of global warming in the Arctic, or the regional drought in the Southwestern United States. For Thematic Partnerships, the common impacts being addressed are unified by a process (e.g., sea level rise) or a setting (e.g., mountain watersheds); in this case a Partnership may bring together partners who are not from contiguous geographic regions. Some CCEP Partnerships may choose to focus on a topic that is a combination of Thematic and Regional, but it is not a requirement.

9. Are there any climate impact themes that are viewed as being of higher priority in this competition?

NSF has not identified any priorities regarding the type of climate impacts to be addressed, but is generally interested in supporting projects that relate to the types of research normally supported by NSF. Projects that focus primarily on climate impacts on human health and medicine, which is traditionally supported by the National Institutes of Health and not NSF, would not be appropriate.

10. What is NSF looking for in terms of scale or impact of the CCEP projects?

In general, NSF is looking to support CCEP projects that are multi-disciplinary and have significant potential for sustainable effect at a scale that is not easily supported through other core programs within individual Directorates at NSF. Projects that have the potential to impact a small number of institutions, school districts, educators, or learners are unlikely to be as competitive.

11. Can a Phase II CCEP proposal include efforts to develop a new climate change curriculum?

The CCEP Phase II program is intended to primarily support implementation of robust strategic plans that have been developed through synthesis of existing efforts and network building activities, leading to greater adoption of high quality climate change education resources. Full-

scale development and implementation of new climate change curricula could be an appropriate activity to undertake as part of a Phase II Partnership, but only if the scale of implementation is significant (i.e., more than one school or school district). Other NSF programs might be more appropriate for projects seeking to develop smaller-scale or more immediate curriculum changes. These include Transforming Undergraduate Education in STEM in the Division of Undergraduate Education and Discovery Research K-12, as well as Informal Science Education in the Division of Research on Learning.

12. Is it possible to include partners from other countries?

The CCEP program encourages collaboration with international scientists and educators, but there are limitations with regard to what types of financial support can be given to international collaborators. NSF rarely provides direct support to foreign organizations and will only consider proposals for cooperative projects involving U.S. and foreign organizations if support is requested only for the U.S. portion of the collaborative effort. However, it may be possible to provide modest travel support for foreign collaborators to attend conferences, workshops, or symposia related to the proposed project. NSF can also support international travel for U.S. participants.

13. Am I required to submit a Letter of Intent?

Yes, you must submit a Letter of Intent through FastLane by the posted deadline. NSF Letters of Intent are non-binding and used for planning purposes only. They are not used as a filter. Letters of Intent facilitate NSF's ability to identify appropriate reviewers for the CCEP-II proposals, who have the required multi-disciplinary expertise and who do not have conflicts of interest with proposers. There is a limit of 2500 characters (including spaces) for the project synopsis portion of the Letter of Intent template, so a brief description is only required. Be sure to identify all known partner organizations and personnel, as well as Advisory Board members, in the Letter of Intent.

14. Are Collaborative Proposals allowed?

Collaborative Proposals submitted as separate submissions from multiple organizations are NOT allowed for the CCEP-II competition. One Lead Institution must be identified, with all other partnering institutions supported through sub-awards in the budget.

15. Are there limitations regarding who is eligible to submit a Phase II CCEP proposal?

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16. Is it possible for CCEP Partnerships to involve members of other Federal agencies (or Federal employees), or leverage other agency resources, in their proposal?

Leveraging other Federal investments in climate change research and education as part of a CCEP project is allowed, but there are restrictions on the use of NSF funding to support the participation of Federal employees. NSF does not normally support research or education activities by scientists, engineers or educators employed by Federal agencies or Federally Funded Research and Development Centers (FFRDCs). Under unusual circumstances, other Federal agencies and FFRDCs may submit proposals directly to NSF. The NSF Grant Proposal Guide provides additional information regarding these rules.

17. Are there any special conditions that need to be specifically addressed in the proposal?

Yes. Several documents must be included in the Supplementary Documents section of the proposal. Each Partnership will be required to have an external Partnership evaluator for the

Phase II activities. A biographical sketch for the evaluator in the format required by the GPG for Senior Personnel should be included in the Supplementary Documents section. The proposal is required to include a 1-page graphical depiction of the conceptual framework for the evaluation plan (e.g., logic model) in the Supplementary Documents section. A list of the Advisory Board members must be included in the Supplementary Documents section. In addition, representatives from each Partnership are required to attend annual Principal Investigator meetings during the Phase II awards. Funding for up to 3 participants from each project to attend these meetings should be included in the proposal budget. The PI from the Lead Institution is also required to attend an annual meeting of the CCEP Alliance, and participate in monthly teleconferences. There may also be additional required reporting of results and outcomes, in addition to standard annual NSF reports described in the GPG.

18. Since I am required to include an evaluation component, do I need to get an Institutional Review Board (IRB) determination on this project?

Yes. Projects involving research with human subjects must ensure that subjects are protected from research risks in conformance with the relevant federal policy known as the Common Rule (Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects, 45 CFR 690). All projects involving human subjects must either (1) have approval from the organization's Institutional Review Board (IRB) before issuance of an NSF award or, (2) must affirm that the IRB has declared the research exempt from IRB review, in accordance with the applicable subsection, as established in section 101(b) of the Common Rule. Additional information about IRB requirements is given in the Grant Proposal Guide. It is strongly advised that proposers initiate the process of IRB prior to submission of their proposal to NSF, to avoid subsequent delays in award processing.

19. Can I support undergraduate or graduate student climate science research through a CCEP Phase II project?

In general, no. The goal of the CCEP Phase II program is not to advance scientific understanding about climate systems, but to translate knowledge about the science of climate change and its impacts into effective educational resources that promote climate literacy.

20. Can I support undergraduate or graduate student climate education research through a CCEP Phase II project?

Yes. Students involved in the collection and analysis of data related to documenting the efficacy and impact of educational resources developed or implemented through the Phase II Partnership can be supported, but the proposal must address requirements of the America COMPETES Act related to ethics training for NSF-supported students.

21. Can my CCEP-II project support postdoctoral fellows?

Yes, as long as their participation involves implementation or climate education research and not climate science research. If salary support is requested for a postdoctoral fellow, the proposal must address requirements of the America COMPETES Act related to mentoring and ethics training for NSF-supported postdoctoral fellows.

22. My institution has not had NSF funding before; are there special conditions that apply?

Institutions that would be new NSF awardees if their proposal is recommended for CCEP-II funding are strongly encouraged to contact the NSF Division of Grants and Agreements (DGA) to discuss the process for becoming an NSF awardee by the time of proposal submission. This will allow timely processing of award documents prior to the end of the fiscal year close-out process at NSF. Additional information for prospective new awardees is available at http://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub_summ.jsp?ods_key=pnag.

23. Are there additional review criteria that will be used to evaluate my proposal, in addition to the standard NSF Merit Review Criteria of Intellectual Merit and Broader Impacts?

Yes. Additional review criteria are listed in Section VI of the CCEP-II program solicitation.

24. How will my proposal be reviewed, and when am I likely to know the outcome?

Proposals submitted in response to the CCEP-II solicitation will be reviewed by a merit review panel convened in May 2012. The top 10-15 highest ranked proposals will be further reviewed by NSF program staff through a virtual site visit with key participants in the proposed Partnership; this virtual site visit will be conducted in late May 2012. Unofficial notification regarding funding decisions should be given to proposers by the middle of June 2012. NSF anticipates that those projects recommended for funding will have official start dates in mid-September 2012.

25. Will awards be made as grants or Cooperative Agreements?

CCEP Phase II awards will be made as Cooperative Agreements. Negotiations related to these Cooperative Agreements will be conducted in early June.

26. Where can I find more information about the U.S. Global Change Research Program, the National Climate Assessment, and the Climate Literacy framework?

More information about these programs and resources is available at <http://www.globalchange.gov>.

27. Should I discuss my proposal with NSF officers?

It is recommended that you discuss only the suitability of your planned proposal for CCEP-II. Once submitted, proposals may not be discussed with NSF officers, as this would constitute unfair competition, or the perception thereof.

28. Will there be any informational webinars related to this competition?

Yes, NSF will conduct one webinar on Wednesday January 11, 2012 from 1:00 to 2:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time. If you are interested in participating, please contact Ms. Carolyn Wilson at cwilson@nsf.gov to register for the webinar. An archive of the webinar will be made available through the NSF web site (on the CCEP-II solicitation home page) after the webinar has been completed..