



National Science Foundation
4201 Wilson Boulevard
Arlington, Virginia 22230

NSF 13-046

Dear Colleague Letter: Workshop for Engaging Social, Behavioral, and Economic Scientists through Social and Policy Entrepreneurship

DATE: January 29, 2013

Directorate for Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences
Division of Behavioral and Cognitive Sciences
Division of Social and Economic Sciences
SBE Office of Multidisciplinary Activities

America's advancement has originated in part from the ability to capitalize on scientific discovery and innovation. While a strong capacity for leveraging fundamental scientific discoveries into powerful engines of commercial innovation is essential to maintain our competitive edge, actionable knowledge is equally critical to other national priorities, such as quality education, public health, and environmental sustainability. Much scientific knowledge - especially in the social, behavioral, and economic sciences - will produce the greatest societal benefit by informing public policy or contributing to innovative social ventures, rather than through the production of commercial products. Increasing the accessibility of such science for policy-makers, non-profit organizations, and community groups is an important step toward achieving many important social goals. Taking advantage of the potentially applicable results of these sciences requires more than simply fostering better communication; explicit attention to the interactions among scientific innovation, public decision-making, and social action is needed.

Building on the National Science Foundation's commitment to increasing the broader impacts of its science, the Directorate for Social, Behavioral, and Economic Sciences (SBE) seeks to explore possible avenues for guiding scientific discoveries closer to the development of public policy and social ventures. To this end, SBE would like to invite proposals for organizing interdisciplinary, multi-sector workshops that focus on (but are not limited to) the following topics and issues:

- What is the nature of the system within which scientific knowledge is transformed into public policy or social action? What interactions characterize this system? What system failures or barriers impede the utilization of non-commercial science by governments, non-profit organizations, community groups, and other social ventures? How can universities and scholars best serve this system?
- What non-commercial pathways best connect academic science to public policy and management and to social ventures designed to meet public needs? What types of interactions with scientists are most fruitful in these contexts?
- How should scholars, social entrepreneurs, policy-makers, and administrators engage each other to facilitate better application of SBE science?
- What skill sets and partnerships do scientists need to develop in order to optimize the transformation of their science into actionable and useful knowledge in the non-commercial contexts of public policy, management, and social need?
- What types of curricula or educational activities should be developed to advance knowledge in the area of social and policy entrepreneurship?

Ideally, the reports generated by these workshops could be used by a variety of audiences as starting points for the development of a curriculum or a specific set of activities designed to facilitate the transformation of fundamental SBE science into actionable knowledge.

Proposals should have as their goal the development of high quality collaborations to advance social science engagement with public policy and social ventures - specifically, via a workshop to be held in July or August 2013. SBE expects to fund 1-2 workshops each with a total cost of up to \$50,000. Workshops are not intended solely for planning activities that would primarily benefit a single institution and should include academic and practitioner participants from a variety of disciplines, institutions, and sectors, including (for example): academic experts in public policy, social entrepreneurship, or engaged scholarship; policy and social entrepreneurs; local, state, or federal decision-makers; and researchers who have successfully bridged the academic - policy/social-need gap. A successful workshop proposal will demonstrate a compelling rationale, with clear goals, a committed team, leveraged resources, and strategic planning. An implementation plan and plan for the dissemination of results must also be included. Collaborative proposals between scholars, entrepreneurs and policy-makers are also welcomed.

This is not a special competition or new program. Proposals should be prepared and submitted via FastLane using the specific guidelines below for completing the Cover Sheet information.

- For the Program Announcement, select "NSF 13-1 Grant Proposal Guide - GPG".
- For the NSF Unit Consideration, select "SMA-SBE Office of Multidisciplinary Activities" for the Division and "CROSS-DIRECTORATE ACTIV" as the Program.
- Under the Remainder of the Cover Sheet section, precede the proposal title with the text: "ENGAGING SBE".

Proposals submitted in response to this DCL should be submitted via FastLane by March 29, 2013 in accordance with the general guidelines contained in the NSF *Grant Proposal Guide (GPG)* as well as the additional specific Cover Sheet criteria listed above. The complete text of the GPG is available electronically on the NSF website (http://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub_summ.jsp?ods_key=gpg). Specific questions about this call for workshop proposals should be directed to Quinetta Roberson, Science of Organizations Program Director, at qroberson@nsf.gov.

Sincerely,

Dr. Myron Gutmann
Assistant Director, National Science Foundation
Directorate for Social, Behavioral, and Economic Sciences