Limited Submission Funding Opportunity

NSF Science and Technology Centers (STC): Integrative Partnerships


Program Solicitation #: NSF 14-600

The STC program supports innovative research and education projects that require large-scale, long-term investments. STCs conduct world-class research through partnerships among academic institutions, national laboratories, industrial organizations, and/or other public/private entities, and via international collaborations, as appropriate. These partnerships build intellectual and physical infrastructure within or between disciplines and facilitate the creation, integration, and transfer of new knowledge.

Characteristics of Science and Technology Centers

- The partners comprising an STC share an ambitious research vision or theme of national importance that integrates research and education and is of sufficient scale and complexity to require the center mode of support. The Center's theme may involve any area of research supported by NSF (Consult the NSF Guide to Programs for further details: http://www.nsf.gov/funding/browse_all_funding.jsp). Themes consistent with NSF priorities, including areas as cognitive science and neuroscience, clean energy, and food security, as well as other national priorities are encouraged. Not every partner must support every aspect of the Center's activity, but all of the expected features of a Center must be accomplished via the integrated portfolio of the partners’ activities. Partnerships may include multi-institutional collaborations or arrangements with other universities/colleges, national laboratories, research museums, private sector research laboratories, industrial organizations, state and local government laboratories, and international collaborations.

- The STC program seeks to support education activities directed toward the development of a diverse, internationally competitive and globally engaged workforce of scientists, engineers, and citizens well-prepared for a broad set of career paths.

- NSF is committed to the principle of broadening participation and expects STCs to demonstrate leadership in the involvement of groups traditionally underrepresented in science and engineering, at all levels (faculty, students, and postdoctoral researchers) within the Center.

STCs foster knowledge transfer that involves the exchange of scientific and technical information between the Center and external stakeholders who can then apply and utilize the knowledge to create further advances. Examples of knowledge transfer include, but are not limited to, providing key information to support policy-making decisions and establishing spinoff companies, license agreements or other technology transfer arrangements to support innovation.
AWARD INFORMATION
Proposed STC annual budgets may range up to $4M in the first year, and thereafter $5M per year. NSF expects to make up to 4 awards.

LIMIT ON NUMBER OF PROPOSALS PER ORGANIZATION
A single organization may submit a maximum of three preliminary proposals as the lead institution. There is no limit on the number of proposals in which an organization participates as a partner institution. The STC program will not support more than one Center from any one lead institution in this competition. A PI or co-PI on one STC proposal may not be a participant in another STC proposal.

KEY DATES
- Internal Letter of Intent Due: September 3, 2014 (by midnight)
- Internal Proposal Due (by Invitation): September 22, 2014 (by midnight)
- Notification by: October 10, 2014
- Sponsor Preliminary Proposal Due (Required): December 11, 2014
- Sponsor Full Proposal Target Date (By Invitation): June 16, 2015

SUBMITTING A MANDATORY LETTER OF INTENT
Faculty members interested in applying are required to submit a letter of intent (LOI). An LOI is required but not binding.

1. Click here to access the LOI form.
2. Name the LOI as follows: “LastName-FirstInitial-LOI-NSF-STC-2014”, replacing “LastName” with your last name and “First Initial” with your first initial.
3. Click on the Vault link: https://vault2.northwestern.edu/xythoswfs/webui/_xy-e5584664_1-t_yIKG2VSN
4. Click the Upload button.
5. Click the Browse button and navigate to your file on your hard drive or network.
6. Click the OK button.

Note: You will get a tiny confirmation message upon upload. If you do not see it, you may contact Karen Lapidos Cielo k-cielo@northwestern.edu for a confirmation.

SUBMITTING AN INTERNAL PROPOSAL
If interest exceeds the number of submissions the university is allowed, invitations to submit internal proposals will be sent to all faculty who submitted an LOI. Proposals should be prepared with 1/2 inch margins, all around, 11 point font size and type and are required to contain the following components:

1. Cover page with descriptive title and name of the PI, key personnel, and external partners (one page, max).
2. Project Summary (1 page, max). Provide an overview of the proposed STC, addressing separately the intellectual merit and broader impacts of the Center. The summary should be informative to those working in the same or related field(s), and understandable to a scientifically or technically literate reader.

3. Project Description (3 pages, max).

- The Project Description should articulate a vision for the proposed Center that clearly outlines the grand challenges being addressed or breakthroughs being sought. The proposed research should be sufficiently complex, large-scale, and long-term to justify a Center and flexible enough to permit change as the research proceeds. The proposed approaches must be innovative, and it must be clear how they will transform or significantly impact the research area.
- The Project Description must describe how the integration of research, education, and knowledge transfer in a center-level activity will advance the proposed research in a way that other funding mechanisms cannot.
- Include a description of why each key personnel is essential to the project plan.
- In addition to an outline of research themes, some illustrative examples of specific research directions should be included.

4. Biosketches for the leadership team and key personnel (2 pages max, for each bio).

5. A recommendation letter from your department Chair.

In addition to NSF Merit Review Criteria, the following additional solicitation specific review criteria will be used by the NU Limited Submissions Advisory Committee in reviewing the internal proposal:

1. Is the vision for the project sufficiently compelling, ambitious and complex to justify the large-scale focus of resources that can only be provided by a center mode of support?
2. Are the intended approaches to address the scientific and/or technological questions innovative, promising, and flexible enough to permit change as the research proceeds?
3. Is the team of partner organizations and personnel assembled for the proposed Center appropriate and essential for the planned project?
4. Are there potential legacies in people, ideas, and (if applicable) promising new instrumentation or technologies that might have significant impact to warrant a large Center investment?

Prepare your proposal as a SINGLE PDF FILE. It should be named "LastName-FirstInitial-NSF-STC-2014," replacing "LastName" with your last name and "FirstInitial" with your first initial.

**UPLOADING THE INTERNAL PROPOSAL**

1. Click on the Vault ticket provided in the email inviting you to submit the internal proposal.
2. Click the Upload button.
3. Click the Browse button and navigate to your file on your hard drive or network.
4. Click the OK button. Note: You will get a tiny confirmation message upon upload. If you do not see it, you may contact Karen Lapidos Cielo k-cielo@northwestern.edu for a confirmation.

Vault access will expire after the deadline, as such late submission is not possible. Also, the Vault system does not allow you to overwrite an upload. If you need to upload a revised proposal BEFORE the deadline, contact Karen Cielo k-cielo@northwestern.edu.

**COLLABORATION OPPORTUNITIES**
The Office of Research Development offers assistance in identifying and facilitating collaborations, putting together interdisciplinary teams, programmatic and administrative development of large, cross-school proposals, and leveraging institutional resources for outreach and education. Contact Fruma Yehiely (yehiely@northwestern.edu), Director of ORD, for more information.

**CONTACT AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**
Fruma Yehiely, Director of ORD, 847-491-1074, yehiely@northwestern.edu
Limited Submissions web site: http://www.research.northwestern.edu/ord/funding/limited-submissions/