



NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
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ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA 22314

NSF 20-043

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for Improving Undergraduate STEM Education: Education and Human Resources (IUSE: EHR)

GENERAL INFORMATION

1. [Where can I find information about the Improving Undergraduate STEM Education: Education and Human Resources \(IUSE: EHR\) program?](#)
2. [Will there be webinars about the IUSE: EHR program?](#)
3. [What will the IUSE: EHR webinars cover?](#)
4. [Where can I find information about proposal preparation and submission?](#)
5. [How do I submit a proposal?](#)
6. [Who do I contact for help with the submission process?](#)
7. [What are the IUSE: EHR program deadlines?](#)

ELIGIBILITY

8. [Who can apply for the IUSE: EHR program?](#)
9. [Is there a restriction on the number of proposals that an organization or PI/Co-PI can submit?](#)
10. [How do I know if my ideas are appropriate for an IUSE: EHR proposal?](#)
11. [How do I determine what track and level to submit to?](#)
12. [Can I apply to the IUSE program if my institution has never had an NSF award?](#)

REVIEW PROCESS

13. [When will my proposal be reviewed?](#)
14. [Who will review my proposal?](#)
15. [Where do I find my reviews?](#)

PROPOSAL BUDGETS

16. [Where can I find information about preparing a budget for a proposal?](#)
17. [Does the budget limit include both direct and indirect costs?](#)
18. [What if my institution does not have a negotiated indirect cost rate?](#)
19. [Does NSF have a limit or cap on the indirect cost rate for institutions?](#)

PROJECT ELEMENTS

20. [What are the required elements of a proposal?](#)
21. [Do I need to include a project evaluator?](#)
22. [What is meant by "knowledge generation"?](#)
23. [How can I demonstrate that my project will generate new knowledge?](#)
24. [Does the IUSE: EHR program support replication studies?](#)
25. [Can I submit a Research Experiences for Undergraduates \(REU\) supplement for an IUSE: EHR award?](#)

GENERAL INFORMATION

1. **Where can I find information about the Improving Undergraduate STEM Education: Education and Human Resources (IUSE: EHR) program?**

Information about the IUSE: EHR program can be found in the current program solicitation ([NSF 19-601](#)) or on the [program webpage](#).

2. **Will there be webinars about the IUSE: EHR program?**

Webinar information will be posted to the IUSE: EHR program webpage. Please check the webpage for updates and additional information. Recordings of previous webinars will also be made available on the program webpage.

3. **What will the IUSE: EHR webinars cover?**

The webinars will explain and answer questions about the IUSE: EHR program, including reviewing the solicitation, addressing proposal structure, and providing helpful hints for grant writing.

4. Where can I find information about proposal preparation and submission?

Proposal preparation and submission information is provided in the NSF Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide ([PAPPG](#)). Additionally, the IUSE:EHR program solicitation ([NSF 19-601](#)) contains program-specific guidance.

5. How do I submit a proposal?

Proposals must be submitted electronically via [FastLane](#) or [Grants.gov](#). Please see the IUSE: EHR solicitation ([NSF 19-601](#)) for submission information.

6. Who do I contact for help with the submission process?

For help with FastLane, please call 1-800-673-6188. For help with Grants.gov, please email support@grants.gov or call 1-800-518-4726.

7. What are the IUSE: EHR program deadlines?

Program deadlines may be found in the program solicitation ([NSF 19-601](#)) and on the [program webpage](#).

ELIGIBILITY

8. Who can apply for the IUSE: EHR program?

The categories of proposers eligible to submit proposals to the National Science Foundation IUSE: EHR program are identified in the NSF Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide ([PAPPG](#)), Chapter I.E. Unaffiliated individuals are not eligible to submit proposals in response to this solicitation.

9. Is there a restriction on the number of proposals that an organization or PI/Co-PI can submit?

An individual may serve as PI or co-PI on no more than three IUSE: EHR proposals submitted within a fiscal year (October 1 through September 30). There are no restrictions or limits on the number of proposals per organization within a single fiscal year.

- 10. How do I know if my ideas are appropriate for an IUSE: EHR proposal?** Questions about ideas for possible proposals to the IUSE: EHR program may be addressed to program officers affiliated with the program. Proposers are invited to contact a program officer with relevant expertise for advice about the suitability of a proposed project. Program officers and their expertise are identified on the IUSE: EHR [program website](#). Advice and guidance from the program officer may be provided via

email or through a scheduled telephone conversation. If contacting the program officer via email, proposers should send a one-page outline of their project ideas to the program officer of their choice. Program officers reserve the right to forward the query to another program officer with more suitable expertise.

11. How do I determine what track and level to submit to?

Questions about suitability for a particular track or level may be addressed to program officers affiliated with the program. Proposers are invited to contact a relevant program officer for advice about the appropriate track or level. Advice and guidance may be provided via email or through a scheduled telephone conversation; if email is the preferred method, proposers should send a one-page outline of their project ideas to the program officer. Program officers and their disciplinary expertise are identified on the IUSE: EHR [program website](#).

12. Can I apply to the IUSE program if my institution has never had an NSF award?

Yes, the IUSE: EHR program welcomes proposals from institutions with no prior history of NSF awards. Institutions new to NSF or new to the IUSE: EHR program are advised to consider the Institutional and Community Transformation Capacity-Building track, or Level 1 of the Engaged Student Learning track. A Dear Colleague Letter ([NSF 20-034](#)) has also been published encouraging submissions from institutions that have not received prior IUSE: EHR awards.

REVIEW PROCESS

13. When will my proposal be reviewed?

The review process takes approximately six months from the published program deadline. If a proposal is recommended for funding, additional time may be necessary to negotiate and approve the terms of the award. Once funding decisions are reached, all reviews will be made available to the proposer.

14. Who will review my proposal?

Most proposals will be reviewed by panels of reviewers. Proposals will be sorted into review panels composed of reviewers with expertise in a STEM discipline or interdisciplinary area, evidence-based STEM educational reform, institutional change, and education research, particularly discipline-based educational research. All types of institutions of higher education will be represented in the reviewer pool and panels will be balanced to ensure gender, ethnic, geographic, and institutional diversity. Some proposals may receive written ad hoc reviews from individual experts instead of or in addition to panel review. Ad hoc reviewers do not participate in the panel review process. They are recruited to fill gaps in panel expertise or to provide expert review of

proposals that are not reviewed by a panel. The goal is to ensure that every proposal has appropriate and equitable review.

15. Where do I find my reviews?

Reviews will be released on Fastlane. Proposers will need to log in to their Fastlane accounts and access their proposals to view their reviews. Proposers will receive written verbatim reviews provided by individual reviewers and a written panel summary (if the proposal was discussed by a panel). Proposers may also receive written comments from a program officer summarizing the review and decision-making process.

PROPOSAL BUDGETS

16. Where can I find information about preparing a budget for a proposal?

Instructions for proposal preparation may be found in the IUSE: EHR program solicitation ([NSF 19-601](#)) and in the NSF Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide ([PAPPG](#)), Chapter II.C.2.g.

17. Does the budget limit include both direct and indirect costs?

Yes, both direct and indirect costs are included in the budget limit. Proposals that exceed the budget limit for a competition are subject to return without review. Budget limits differ based on whether a proposal is submitted as a Capacity Building, Level 1, Level 2, or Level 3 proposal.

18. What if my institution does not have a negotiated indirect cost rate?

Institutions that do not have a current US federally negotiated indirect cost rate(s) may use a de *minimus* indirect cost recovery rate of 10% of modified total direct costs in preparing their budget. See [PAPPG](#) Chapter II.C.2.g(viii) for additional information.

19. Does NSF have a limit or cap on the indirect cost rate for institutions?

Except where identified in an NSF program solicitation, institutions must use their applicable US federally negotiated indirect cost rate(s) for a proposal. See [PAPPG](#) Chapter II.C.2.g(viii) for additional information. Indirect cost rates are not subject to negotiation with the National Science Foundation.

PROJECT ELEMENTS

20. What are the required elements of a proposal?

Instructions for proposal preparation, including all required elements, are included in the IUSE: EHR program solicitation ([NSF 19-601](#)) and in the NSF Proposal & Award

Policies & Procedures Guide ([PAPPG](#)).

21. Do I need to include a project evaluator?

All proposals should include a plan and associated resources to determine the outcomes of the proposed project. Evaluation activities may be conducted by an independent evaluator, by qualified members of the project team, guided by a project advisory board, or by a combination of these approaches.

22. What is meant by "knowledge generation"?

All IUSE: EHR projects are expected to increase knowledge about effective STEM education. This goal may be achieved through (1) posing one or more research questions that will be answered through the course of the study or (2) evaluation of project activities, impacts, or outcomes. Knowledge generation often comes through addressing research or evaluation questions related to what works, for whom, and in what environments.

23. How can I demonstrate that my project will generate new knowledge?

Projects should include a well-designed plan to gather data and should specify methods of analysis that will be employed to answer the questions posed and mechanisms to evaluate success of the project. Additionally, the proposal should situate the proposed project in current literature and practices, making clear the project's potential to contribute to the existing knowledge base.

24. Does the IUSE: EHR program support replication studies?

Conceptual replication or adaptation studies are encouraged to foster propagation of evidence-based STEM teaching and learning approaches in new settings and environments.

25. Can I submit a Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REU) supplement for an IUSE: EHR award?

Yes, REU supplement requests may be submitted for IUSE: EHR awards but all IUSE: EHR REU supplement requests must be related to the education research or evaluation proposed in the parent award.