

## Funding Opportunity: NSF Releases Mid-Scale Research Infrastructure Solicitation

*Lewis-Burke Associates LLC – November 28, 2018*

On Wednesday, November 21, the National Science Foundation (NSF) released the first of two new funding opportunities for mid-scale research infrastructure (mid-scale RI-1). Through this solicitation, NSF expects to support a wide range of design and implementation activities for equipment, infrastructure, and computational hardware and software for the advancement of fundamental science and engineering, as well as science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education research. This solicitation is the smaller of the two planned solicitations and will support projects with budgets between \$6 million and \$20 million. The second solicitation, which is expected in the coming weeks, will support larger projects that cost between \$20 million and \$70 million. Proposals will be evaluated on their potential to enable transformative advances in science and engineering and will be reviewed both by an interdisciplinary group centered in the Office of Integrative Activities as well as by the relevant NSF Divisions.

Mid-scale Implementation Projects include procurement, assembly, construction, commissioning, as well as some advanced research and development needed for construction or procurement. Design Projects can have a budget as low as \$600,000 and can be focused on design for future mid-scale projects or larger projects that would be funded under the NSF Major Research and Engineering Facilities Construction (MREFC) account. For all projects, NSF expects proposals for infrastructure that would serve a wide community and would lead to public access to new data resources. Proposals should feature demonstrations of major community support for the project, such as inclusion in decadal surveys, workshop reports, or community roadmaps, or connections to one of NSF's six research Big Ideas for Future Investment. Proposals will also be evaluated on their project management plans, robust cost estimates, and the extent of their ability to enable innovative student training experiences.

NSF anticipates making three to 10 awards worth a total of \$60 million, depending on the availability of funds. There are no limits on the number of preliminary proposals that can be submitted by a single lead organization.

Mid-scale infrastructure is one of NSF's 10 Big Ideas for Future Investment. Lewis-Burke anticipates that these solicitations will be repeated in future years as the National Science Board recently called for NSF to make a sustained, long-term commitment to mid-scale infrastructure.

**Due Dates:** Preliminary proposals are due **February 19, 2019** by **5:00 PM** local time to the submitter. Full proposals are by invitation only and will be due **May 20, 2019**. Letters of intent are not required.

**Eligibility:** Institutions of higher education, nonprofit organizations, and nonprofit consortia are all eligible to submit proposals. Proposals for infrastructure which would support an ongoing MREFC project will not be accepted. Federally Funded Research and Development Centers (FFRDCs) can submit proposals through a nonprofit organization.

*Sources and Additional Information:*

- The full solicitation can be found at <https://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2019/nsf19537/nsf19537.pdf>.
- The Dear Colleague Letter which first announced this solicitation can be found at <https://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2019/nsf19013/nsf19013.jsp>.
- More information about NSF's Big Ideas can be found at [https://www.nsf.gov/news/special\\_reports/big\\_ideas/index.jsp](https://www.nsf.gov/news/special_reports/big_ideas/index.jsp).