NSF Dissertation Improvement Grant

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Purpose of NSF DDIG

• This is a Dissertation Improvement Grant, *NOT*
  – A grant to fund a new (or second) dissertation or
  – A grant to fund work you have already done

• The goal of this program is to give you the freedom and funds to do better science and improve your career prospects, e.g.,
  – Extend your current research in a novel direction
  – Conduct studies independent from advisor’s research program
Why Apply?

• Prestige
  – Opens doors for more funding and job opportunities

• Improves quality of dissertation
  – Can take work in new research directions

• Freedom
  – Not tied to advisor’s research so can develop a more independent research program

• Financial Benefits
  – Up to $13,000 for research activities (over 2yrs)
Eligibility

• Student advanced to candidacy for Ph.D. (still a Ph.D. student)
• Enrolled at U.S. institution but not need to be a U.S. citizen
• Advisor (as PI) submits proposal with you via NSF’s FastLane website
• Deadlines during Fall semester (see your program’s website)
• No pre-proposal or oral interview to apply
Fields Funded by DDIGs

- Archaeology
- Biology
- Cultural Anthropology
- Biological Anthropology
- Geography and Spatial Sciences
- Linguistics
- Political Science
- Science of Science and Innovation Policy
- Sociology
- Economics
- Decision, Risk, and Management Sciences
- Science Technology, and Society
- Law and Social Sciences
- Methodology, Measurement, and Statistics
  .... others
What are my chances of receiving this award if I apply?

About 1 of 3 applicants are funded!

Does a DDIG correlate with a more successful research career?

Yes, it appears so

Components of Application

• Project Summary (1 page)
• Project Description (8 pages--but check program solicitation)
  – Intellectual Merit and Broader Impacts
• References Cited
• Biographical Sketches
• Budget and Justification
• Current and Pending Support
• Facilities, Equipment, Other Resources
• Data Management Plan
• Statement of Improvement (Biology)
Merit Review Criteria
(see program solicitation)

• Intellectual Merit
  – What is the potential of the project to advance knowledge?

• Broader Impacts
  – What is the potential of the project to benefit society and contribute to achievement of specific, desired society outcomes?
Who Reviews?

• 3 (relative specialists) and (potential) advocates
• Many (10 or more) others reading
  – On topics outside core expertise
  – At the last minute
  – 25+ proposals
• Proposals must be . . .
  – Catchy
  – Clear
  – Concise
  – Aimed at a fairly broad audience but scientifically sound
Project Description

• Must hook reader from the beginning
  – Exciting, broad relevance, clear conceptual framework, significant contribution

• Lay out clear, testable questions and hypotheses
  – In context of previous work
  – With appropriate detailed methods proposed
  – And convincing arguments of feasibility and significance of the work

• The different goals of project should flow but also “stand alone”
Example Outline of Project Description

• Introduction (~1pg)
• Project Proposal (~7pg)
  – Goal 1
    • Questions
    • Justification and Background with Figures
    • Methods (data collection and data analysis)
    • Preliminary Data
    • Significance
  – Goal 2 and Goal 3 . . . (same structure)
  – Feasibility
  – Conclusion
  – Project Schedule (timeline for each goal)
Writing the Proposal

- **Seek sample proposals** (me, online, through NSF website abstracts, your advisor, etc.)
- Build on current research and use your preliminary data! (figures and tables good)
- Get help from advisor, committee members, and previous awardees
- Utilize multiple reviewers and revise proposal many times
- Start early (and expect Fastlane to give trouble)
- Upload misc. documents early so can focus on multiple revisions of project description
NSF DDIG (Biology)
Doctoral Dissertation Improvement Grants in the Directorate for Biological Sciences (DDIG)

PROGRAM SOLICITATION
NSF 13-568

REPLACES DOCUMENT(S):
NSF 12-590

National Science Foundation
Directorate for Biological Sciences
Division of Environmental Biology
Division of Integrative Organismal Systems

Full Proposal Deadline(s) (due by 5 p.m. proposer's local time):
October 10, 2013
Second Thursday in October, Annually Thereafter

IMPORTANT INFORMATION AND REVISION NOTES

Any proposal submitted in response to this solicitation should be submitted in accordance with the revised NSF Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide (PAPPG) (NSF 16-1), which is effective for proposals submitted, or due, on or after December 26, 2014. The PAPPG is consistent with, and implements the new Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (Uniform Guidance) (2 CFR § 200).

SUMMARY OF PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

General Information

Program Title:
Doctoral Dissertation Improvement Grants in the Directorate for Biological Sciences (DDIG)

Synopsis of Program:
The National Science Foundation awards Doctoral Dissertation Improvement Grants in selected areas of the biological sciences. Proposals must fall within the scope of any of the clusters in the Division of Environmental Biology (DEB) or the Behavioral Systems Cluster in the Division of Integrative Organismal Systems (IOS). These grants provide partial support of doctoral dissertation research for improvement beyond the already existing project. Allowed are costs for doctoral candidates to participate in scientific meetings, to conduct research in specialized facilities or field settings, and to expand an existing body of dissertation research.