



NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
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NSF 22-058

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for the Building Research Capacity of New Faculty in Biology (BRC-BIO) Program ([NSF 22-500](#))

ELIGIBILITY

1. Does this activity support medical research?
2. What if I've moved institutions but just started in my current position as Assistant Professor at a Predominantly Undergraduate Institution (PUI)? Do I need to count my prior experience in determining eligibility?
3. If the PI was recruited before the COVID-19 pandemic, would the two-years interrupted by COVID be excluded from the 'no more than 3-year assistant professor' rule?
4. My institution is a Minority Serving Institution (MSI) but is also classified as R1 in the Carnegie scale, am I eligible?
5. How should leaves of absence be counted when determining whether a PI is eligible?
6. I have served as a Co-PI on a funded NSF grant. Am I still eligible?
7. Can I submit again to BRC-BIO if I'm not successful the first time?
8. Do faculty have to be in a Biology Department to apply?

PROPOSAL REVIEW

9. What is the review process for the BRC-BIO proposals?
10. How important is it to be specific about how this research will lead to a sustainable research program?
11. Can you clarify how the 'broader impacts' and the 'impact statement' should differ? Should both address how the project will increase participation of under-represented groups?
12. Can the awards support science education components like Course-based

Undergraduate Research Experience (CURE) labs?

COLLABORATIONS

13. Must collaborators and Co-PIs be at the Assistant Professor level for less than 3 years?

BUDGET

14. Can I budget for student support, including Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REU)?
15. My institution has limited institutional staff to support grant administration. Can the BRC-BIO proposal include support for my institution's Sponsored Research Officer (SRO)?
16. Does the total budget limit of \$450K + \$50K for equipment include the indirect costs?
17. Can postdocs hired under this initiative teach classes at the institution as well as support the research?

ELIGIBILITY

1. Does this activity support medical research?

Research that falls within the purview of one or more of the following divisions is appropriate: Division of Biological Infrastructure, Division of Environmental Biology, Division of Molecular and Cellular Biosciences, and Division of Integrative Organismal Systems. As indicated in the NSF Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide ([PAPPG](#)), biological research on mechanisms of disease in humans, including on the etiology, diagnosis, or treatment of disease or disorder, is normally not supported. Biological research to develop animal models of such conditions, or the development or testing of procedures for their treatment, also are not normally eligible for support. Contact BRC-BIO@nsf.gov if you have questions about a specific research idea.

2. What if I've moved institutions but just started in my current position as Assistant Professor at a Predominantly Undergraduate Institution (PUI)? Do I need to count my prior experience in determining eligibility?

No, if you are at the Assistant Professor rank (or equivalent) at an eligible institution (see solicitation for eligibility) with service at that rank for no more than 3 years by the proposal submission date then you are eligible.

3. If the PI was recruited before the COVID-19 pandemic, would the two-years interrupted by COVID be excluded from the 'no more than 3-year assistant

professor' rule?

This solicitation was written with the COVID context in mind. Hence, no further accommodations will be made on this basis.

4. My institution is a Minority Serving Institution (MSI) but is also classified as R1 in the Carnegie scale, am I eligible?

No, this opportunity is focused on building research capacity at PUIs and MSIs **that are not among the nation's most research-intensive institutions**, and other institutions that are classified as R2, D/PU, or M1-3 (see Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education <http://carnegieclassifications.iu.edu/>)

5. How should leaves of absence be counted when determining whether a PI is eligible?

Official leaves of absence (for illness, family, etc.) may be subtracted from the total time in your position and must be certified by your department chair/head.

6. I have served as a Co-PI on a funded NSF grant. Am I still eligible?

Yes. There are no restrictions related to prior federal funding.

7. Can I submit again to BRC-BIO if I'm not successful the first time?

Yes, as long as you continue to meet the eligibility requirements.

8. Do faculty have to be in a Biology Department to apply?

No, but the project must be focused on research questions appropriate for review in one or more divisions in the Directorate for Biological Sciences.

PROPOSAL REVIEW

9. What is the review process for the BRC-BIO proposals?

They will be reviewed in interdisciplinary panels specific to the BRC-BIO program. See Section VI of the program solicitation for additional information about NSF proposal processing and review procedures.

10. How important is it to be specific about how this research will lead to a sustainable research program?

The goal of this program is to tap the wealth of expertise and opportunities at PUIs and MSIs by supporting new faculty through enhancing their research capacity and building independent research programs. Proposals should articulate research plans that will

enable the PI to build and maintain an active research program, and the Impact Statement should detail how the plan will positively impact the PI's research capacity, career, and influence on undergraduate research experiences.

11. **Can you clarify how the 'broader impacts' and the 'impact statement' should differ? Should both address how the project will increase participation of under-represented groups?**

The Broader Impacts section of any NSF proposal should articulate the broader impacts of the project, including societal impacts of the proposed research and any broader impact activities proposed, including their justification. The BRC-BIO Impact Statement should articulate the impact of the proposed project on the PI's career development and research capacity, as well as the institutional impact on undergraduate research experiences, such as expectations for retention and diversification of STEM majors, and/or preparation of students for advanced degree programs.

12. **Can the awards support science education components like Course-based Undergraduate Research Experience (CURE) labs?**

The Intellectual Merit section of the Project Description should include a research plan that focuses on topics relevant to one or more of the divisions in the Directorate for Biological Sciences. However, the Broader Impacts section could include other related activities like science education research or CUREs.

COLLABORATIONS

13. **Must collaborators and Co-PIs be at the Assistant Professor level for less than 3 years?**

No, collaborators can be at any faculty rank and at other institutions, regardless of Carnegie Classification. Collaborators can also be at a foreign institution. However, as specified in PAPPG Chapter I.E.6, funding is rarely provided for a foreign individual or organization's involvement.

BUDGET

14. **Can I budget for student support, including Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REU)?**

Yes, you can support students at any level. Anything you would normally budget in an NSF BIO Core Program submission can be budgeted in a BRC-BIO project.

15. **My institution has limited institutional staff to support grant administration. Can the BRC-BIO proposal include support for my institution's Sponsored Research**

Officer (SRO)?

Yes, BRC-BIO can support some time for your institution's SRO. Or if you need to hire a consultant or a part time employee in that capacity to help administer the project, that can also be budgeted.

16. **Does the total budget limit of \$450K + \$50K for equipment include the indirect costs?**

Yes

17. **Can postdocs hired under this initiative teach classes at the institution as well as support the research?**

The responsibilities of the postdoc(s) will depend on what is allowable at your institution and justified in the proposal. If a postdoc is requested, a Postdoctoral Mentoring Plan is also required to be included in the proposal.