Welcome to the MCB Virtual Office Hours, we will begin at 2pm EST!

Please submit questions by selecting the Q&A function available to you on Zoom.
MCB Virtual Office Hour
Question and Answers Session

Click on the Q&A icon on the bottom of your Zoom screen, shown here:

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*For specific questions about your project, please contact a Program Director.*
MCB Virtual Office Hour

Today’s Topic

Working with an NSF Program Officer

Program Officers:
Bianca Garner, Systems and Synthetic Biology/MCB
Manju Hingorani, Genetic Mechanisms/MCB
David Rockcliffe, Systems and Synthetic Biology/MCB

Admin Staff:
Mariam Tahir
Supports quantitative, predictive and theory-driven research to understand complex living systems at the molecular, subcellular, and cellular levels

Encourages use of approaches at intersections of biology with other disciplines

- FY 2020 research budget: $152 M
- 613 proposals
- 250 awards
- ~35% success rate
- Award size increased by 10%
- Time to award decision decreased 20%
How to find MCB funding opportunities

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Current MCB funding opportunities

The Directorate for Biological Sciences (BIO) and the Division of Molecular and Cellular Biosciences (MCB) accept proposals to core solicitations as well as special solicitations. MCB also announces its interest in specific areas or alerts the community to new opportunities through Dear Colleague Letters. Below are opportunities which may be of interest to MCB applicants.

MCB Solicitations:

- Investigator-Initiated Research Projects: NSF 21-509
- Transitions to Excellence in MCB Research (Transitions): NSF 21-508

Solicitations of Interest to MCB PIs:

- Designing Synthetic Cells Beyond the Bounds of Evolution (Designer Cells): NSF 21-531
- Mid-Career Advancement (MCA): NSF 21-516
- Future Manufacturing: NSF 20-552
- Faculty Early Career Development Program (CAREER): NSF 20-525 (NSF Wide)
- Biology Integration Institutes (BII): NSF 20-601 (BIO)

https://mcbblog.nsfbio.com/funding-opportunities-2/
Funding opportunities of note

NSF 21-017
Planning for a Molecular and Cellular Science Information Synthesis Center (MoCeIS)
Supports planning conferences to build scientist networks focused on synthesis and integration of molecular and cellular data.

NSF 21-564
Future Manufacturing (FM)
Supports research and education of a future workforce to overcome scientific, technological, educational, economic and social barriers and enable new manufacturing capabilities.

NSF 21-508
Transitions to Excellence in Molecular and Cellular Biosciences Research (Transitions)
Supports mid-career or later-stage scientists to pursue exciting new avenues of inquiry and expand or transition their research toward greater impact.

NSF 21-543
Integrative Research in Biology (IntBIO)
Supports collaborative proposals that tackle bold questions in biology and require an integrated approach to make exceptional progress in a research area.

NSF 19-054
Models for Uncovering Rules and Unexpected Phenomena in Biological Systems (MODULUS)
Supports substantive collaborative research by mathematicians and biological scientists.
Director’s Office
National Science Board

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR
703.292.6000
Sethuraman Panchanathan
Director
Vacant
Deputy Director
F. Fleming Crim
Chief Operating Officer

NATIONAL SCIENCE BOARD (NSB)
703.292.7000
Ellen Ochoa
Chair
Victor R. McCrory
Vice Chair

OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL (OIG)
NATIONAL SCIENCE BOARD OFFICE

DIRECTORATES

Directorates

Directorate for Biological Sciences (BIO)
Directorate for Computer & Information Science & Engineering (CISE)
Directorate for Education & Human Resources (EHR)
Directorate for Geosciences (GEO)
Directorate for Mathematical & Physical Sciences (MPS)
Directorate for Social, Behavioral, & Economic Sciences (SES)

Divisions

Biological Sciences
- Molecular and Cellular Biosciences (MCB)
- Integrative Organismal Systems (IOS)
- Environmental Biology (DEB)
- Biological Infrastructure (DBI)

Engineering
- Chemical, Bioengineering, Environmental and Transport Systems (CBET)

Math & Physical Sciences
- Chemistry (esp. CLP)
- Physics (esp. PoLS)
NSF organization: Scientific staff

President

Director

Assistant Director of a Directorate
Deputy Assistant Director

Division Director
Deputy Division Director

Program Officer
(Program Director)

Dr. Sethuraman Panchanathan

Dr. Joanne Tornow
(BIO AD)
Program Officers: Who are we?

**Permanent Federal employees**
- Often former faculty members from academia
- Work full-time at NSF
- May conduct research part-time

**Rotators**
- Current faculty members in academia
- Work at NSF (often 2-3 year stints)
- Maintain research programs at their home institution
Program Officers: What do we do?

Program planning and management

- Maintain dynamic, high-quality and effective proposal merit review process.
- Serve as advisor to applicants and awardees, e.g., about NSF program objectives, priorities, requirements and policies.

Stewardship

- Conduct planning activities that support NSF’s mission to promote the progress of science and advance national welfare.
- Responsible for post-award management and oversight.
Program Officers: What do we do?

Organization, Coordination and Liaison
- Provide leadership and direction to support the NSF mission.
- Communicate and coordinate within NSF, and with other Federal science agencies, the scientific community and the public.

Diversity and Outreach
- Foster diversity in the review process and the award portfolio.
- Conduct outreach that broadens participation in NSF activities.

Professional Development
- Maintain current knowledge in scientific areas covered by the program, e.g., through participation in conferences, workshops, active research.
Why seek out a Program Officer?

- FOUNT OF NSF KNOWLEDGE
- TAP OF OCCASIONAL INSIGHT
- BUCKET OF USELESS TRIVIA
- SPRINKLER OF DUBIOUS FACTS
- PUDDLE OF MISLEADING STATISTICS
When to engage with a Program Officer?

Before

**Introduce yourself**

- Provide brief information about your background, current career stage/position (especially if new to NSF/program).
- Offer to participate in peer review (especially if new).

**Share short description of your research**

- One-page summary of your project idea.
  
  What to include in the one-pager?
  
  See [VOH Feb 12, 2020](#)

**Seek input on what NSF program(s) fit your research**

- Do some homework ahead of contact.
- Indicate which program(s) appear appropriate to you.
When to engage with your Program Officer?

After (Decline)

Don’t give up

Seek advice on what went wrong
• What are common messages in the reviews and panel summary?
  - Inadequate preliminary data?
  - Lack of focus?

Seek advice on resubmitting the proposal
• What are important considerations?
  - Submit to the same program or another?
  - What aspects need substantive revision? Minor revision?
  - What pitfalls can be avoided?
When to engage with your Program Officer?

After (Award)

What to expect?

• Possible budget revisions.  
  See [VOH Feb 10, 2021](#) on budget prep
• Resolution of any current/pending support overlap.
• Other: preparation of public abstract; timeframe for funding.

Post-award reporting

• Annual report: progress on scientific and broader impact fronts.
• Problems and potential solutions.

Stay in touch

• Hearing your success stories *as they happen* helps us convey the excitement of the science supported by NSF.
• Discuss funding opportunities - supplements, new ideas, programs etc.
How to find us?

NSF Websites (nsf.gov)
Virtual Office Hours (access via Blogs)
Meetings and Conferences
Outreach Visits
MCB Virtual Office Hour
Question and Answers Session

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Next MCB Virtual Office Hour (2-3 pm EST):

Wed, April 14th, 2021

Topic: Getting to Know the Division of Biological Infrastructure (DBI) - Priorities and Opportunities
National Science Foundation

- Supports **basic** research and education via grants
- Discipline-based structure
- Cross-disciplinary programs
- Annual budget ~$8 billion

- >50,000 proposals; ~12,000 new awards per year supporting ~350,000 scientists, educators and students