Additional Information Regarding EPSCoR Track-2 Competition

Dear Colleagues,

As you are almost certainly aware, NSF EPSCoR will soon be releasing an RFP for the Research Infrastructure Improvement Track 2 program. Webinars were recently hosted by NSF to explain the new foci, as well as some of the proposal criteria. It is expected that proposals may be submitted that focus on either: (i) The Water/Food/Energy Nexus; or (ii) Understanding the Human Brain. There are public documents that can be referred to for additional information on the fundamental research issues in these fields. In addition, please refer to the NSF website for information on “Understanding the Human Brain”.

We anticipate the release of a Request for Proposals (RFP) by the National Science Foundation for its revised EPSCoR Research Infrastructure Improvement (RII) Track-2 Focused EPSCoR Collaboration (FEC) grant program sometime in early November; we do not yet have a firm date. Proposals are expected to be due in late January 2015, but delays are possible. Given the changes with respect to the Track 2 program, you may wish to alert potential researchers in your jurisdiction. Some key elements, in addition to the programmatic foci, include:

1. Any proposals must entail research collaboration between a minimum of two EPSCoR jurisdictions.
2. All EPSCoR jurisdictions that are eligible for RII activities (28) will be allowed in this new competition. These are Alabama, Alaska, Arkansas, Delaware, Guam, Hawaii, Idaho, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Vermont, US Virgin Islands, West Virginia, and Wyoming.
3. Each institution within an eligible jurisdiction may participate in multiple proposals, but can be the lead institution (i.e., home of the Principal Investigator) on only one.
4. An individual faculty member can be a co-investigator on multiple proposals (but PI on only one). The PI must be an active researcher in the field (i.e. the focus of the project).
5. There will be no cost-share associated with these grants.
6. The RFP will likely emphasize support for and development of junior faculty. In addition, we anticipate that successful proposals must also fulfill objectives of the Broader Impact criteria, meet diversity goals, and demonstrate alignment with the jurisdiction’s broader S&T plan.
7. We expect that up to $6M can be requested in each proposal (with caveats as described below). Specifically, a proposal that involves three or more jurisdictions can request $1.5M per year for four years (for a total of $6M). A proposal that involves two jurisdictions can request $1M per year for four years (for a total of $4M). The RFP should, of course, be consulted for the details.

Although jurisdiction offices and state committees are not involved in selection of the proposals that are submitted (i.e., this responsibility falls to the institution to ensure that only a single proposal is led by a PI from that specific institution), we should advertise the opportunity and will most likely address many questions from potential proposers once the RFP is released. We look forward to the release of the RFP and to seeing you in Hawaii in January.

Best wishes,
EPSCoR PD Executive Council: Bill Michener, Sandra Harpole, Henry Smith, Don Sparks, Jim Wicksted