For Applicants to
the NSF Graduate Research Fellowship Program

nsf.gov/grfp

www.nsfgrfp.org
• To select, recognize, and financially support individuals early in their careers with the demonstrated potential to be high achieving scientists and engineers

• To broaden participation in science and engineering of underrepresented groups, including women, minorities, persons with disabilities, and veterans
GRFP Key Elements

Five Year Award – $132,000
• Three years of support
  – $32,000 Stipend per year
  – $12,000 Educational allowance to institution
• International research opportunity: GROW
• Supercomputer access: XSEDE
• Career Life Balance (family leave)
GRFP Unique Features

- Awarded to individual
- **Flexible:** choice of project, advisor & program
- **Unrestrictive:** No service requirement
- **Portable:** Any accredited U.S. institution
  - MS, MS and PhD, PhD

- **2010 - 2014:** 2,000 Fellowships each year
  - 2014: 14,000 Applications - ~14% success rate
GRFP Solicitation (NSF 14-590)

- Contains the following information:
  - Program Description
  - Award Information
  - Eligibility requirements
  - Application preparation
  - Submission instructions
  - Application Review Criteria
GRFP Eligibility

- U.S. citizens and permanent residents
- Early-career graduate students
- Pursuing research-based MS and PhD
- Science and engineering fields
- Enrolled in accredited institution in US by Fall

**Academic Levels**

1: Seniors/baccalaureates; no graduate study
2: First-year graduate students
3: Second-year grad students
   - \( \leq 12 \) months of graduate study by August
4: >12 months graduate study
   - Interruption in graduate study of 2+ years
     (can have MS degree)
GRFP Fields of Study

- Chemistry
- Computer & Information Science/Engineering
- Engineering
- Geosciences
- Life Sciences
- Materials Research
- Mathematical Sciences
- Physics and Astronomy
- Psychology
- Social Sciences
- STEM Education
GRFP Application Timeline

August
- Solicitation Posted

late Oct – early Nov
- Applications Due
- Acceptance of Award and Declaration of Tenure/Reserve

early November
- Reference Letters Due
- Fellowship Year Begins

March - April
- Recipients Announced

May 1
- June 1 or Sept. 1
GRFP Complete Application

NSF FastLane

• Personal, Relevant Background and Future Goals Statement (3 pages)
• Graduate Research Plan Statement (2 pages)
• Transcripts (uploaded electronically)
• Three letters of reference

DEADLINES: late Oct - early November
• **Personal, Relevant Background and Future Goals Statement**
  Describe your personal, educational and/or professional experiences that motivate your decision to pursue advanced study. Include examples of research and/or professional activities in which you have participated. Describe the contributions to *advancing knowledge* in STEM fields and the potential for *broader societal impacts*. Include future plans to contribute to broader impacts.

• **Graduate Research Plan Statement**
  Present an original research topic that you would like to pursue in graduate school. Describe the research idea, your general approach. Address the potential of the research to *advance knowledge* and understanding within science as well as the potential for *broader impacts* on society.
Applications are reviewed by panels of disciplinary and interdisciplinary scientists and engineers.

Applications are assigned to panels based on the applicant's chosen Primary Field(s) of Study and the discipline(s) represented.

Applicants are advised to select the Primary Field of Study that is most closely aligned with the proposed graduate program of study.

Holistic evaluation.
• Two National Science Board-approved criteria
  – Intellectual Merit
  – Broader Impacts
How important is the proposed activity to advancing knowledge within its own field or across different fields?

AND

How well does the proposed activity benefit society or advance desired societal outcomes?

– Separate sections for Intellectual Merit and Broader Impacts
• Demonstrated **intellectual ability** and other accepted requisites for **scholarly scientific study**, such as the **ability** to:

  – Plan and conduct research
  – Work as a member of a team as well as independently
  – Interpret and communicate research
Broader Impacts

Societal benefits include, but not limited to,

• Impact of project or individual student on society
• Increased participation of underrepresented groups, women/minority, students with disabilities, veterans
• Improved STEM education in schools and teacher development
• Impact on society: Increased public scientific literacy; increased public engagement with science and technology
• Community outreach: science clubs, radio, TV, newspaper,
• Potential to impact diverse audiences: museums, aquarium
• Development of a diverse, globally competitive workforce
• Increased partnerships between academia, industry and others
• Leadership potential

Plans to share your science with the broader community?
Intellectual Merit Assessment

- Academic performance; grades, curricula, awards, etc.
- Graduate Research plan
- Research/professional experience
- Reference letters

Broader Impacts Assessment

- Prior accomplishments and future plans
- Individual experiences
- Potential benefit(s) to society
- Community outreach
- Reference letters
Advice

- Start early
- Read Solicitation, and read it again
- Read NSF GRFP websites
- Select and confirm reference letter writers
- Pay attention to merit review criteria
- Share your application materials and the merit review criteria with reference writers
- Monitor receipt of reference letters (3 required for review)
Reference writers

• Select your reference writers carefully, as they will provide important information about your potential as a leader, researcher, and educator – *familiarity with you as a person is important*

• Your selected reference writers will submit their own references; provide them all necessary information well in advance of deadline

• You may request up to 5 references. It is your responsibility to ensure three letters of references are submitted by the published deadline in order for your application to be complete and reviewed
GRFP Resources

• NSF GRFP Website (nsf.gov/grfp)
  – Solicitation and links
• NSF GRFP FastLane Website (fastlane.nsf.gov/grfp)
  – Application, guides, announcements
• GRFP Website (nsfgrfp.org)
• Current & former Fellows
• Phone & e-mail
  – 866-NSF-GRFP (673-4737)
  – info@nsfgrfp.org