

ANNOUNCEMENT OF FEDERAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Federal Agency Name: U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC)

Funding Opportunity Title: U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission Nuclear Education Program Scholarship and Fellowship Announcement of Opportunity, Fiscal Year 2008

Funding Number: HR-FN208-NED01

Type of Award Instrument/Announcement Type: Grants. Initial Announcement

Topics: Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 77.008

Dates: Institutions must submit full proposals by 5 p.m. (ET) on Tuesday, April 1, 2008. NRC will not consider proposals received after that submission deadline.

Proposal Submission: All applicants are required to submit full proposals. The full announcement contains important guidance for the format, content, length, and review criteria for full proposals.

Funding Opportunity Description: The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) was created as an independent agency by Congress in 1974 to enable the nation to safely use radioactive materials for beneficial civilian purposes while ensuring that people and the environment are protected. The NRC regulates commercial nuclear power plants and other uses of nuclear materials, such as in nuclear medicine, through licensing, inspection and enforcement of its requirements.

Funding under this program includes support for education in nuclear science and engineering to develop a workforce capable of supporting the design, construction, operation, and regulation of nuclear facilities and the safe handling of nuclear materials. The total amount of funding available for undergraduate scholarships, graduate fellowships, trade school scholarships, and faculty development grants together in FY08 totals \$15 million.

As a condition for receiving scholarships or fellowships, recipients must demonstrate satisfactory academic progress in their fields of study, as determined by criteria contained in this announcement and as established by the NRC. The nuclear education supported by this funding is intended to benefit the nuclear sector broadly. Consequently, NRC requires scholarship and fellowship recipients to serve 6 months in nuclear-related employment for each full or partial year of academic support. The employment may be with NRC, other Federal agencies, State agencies, Department of Energy laboratories, nuclear-related industry, or academia in the recipients' sponsored fields of study. A waiver of this requirement may be granted in appropriate circumstances.

This announcement is just for undergraduate scholarships and graduate fellowships. The announcements for trade school scholarships and faculty development grants are published separately. Publishing these announcements does not obligate NRC to fund any specific scholarship, fellowship, trade school scholarship, or faculty development program, or to obligate all or any part of available funds. There is no guarantee that sufficient funds will be available to

initiate or continue grant activities where funding has been recommended by NRC. The exact amount of funds that NRC may recommend to be granted is determined in pre-award negotiations between the applicant and NRC representatives. Future opportunities for submitting proposals may be available, depending on future NRC funding authorization. NRC only awards grants directly to accredited U.S. institutions of higher education and does not award individual scholarships or fellowships. Individual students cannot apply directly to NRC for scholarships or fellowships.

FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Program and Notice Objective

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) was created as an independent agency by Congress in 1974 to enable the nation to safely use radioactive materials for beneficial civilian purposes while ensuring that people and the environment are protected. The NRC regulates commercial nuclear power plants and other uses of nuclear materials, such as in nuclear medicine, through licensing, inspection and enforcement of its requirements.

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B. Program Authority: The Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended.

II. Award Information

A. Scholarship Program/Eligible Applicants:

The scholarship program provides funding to colleges and universities to award scholarships to students to pursue an education in nuclear science and engineering. Recipients need to be enrolled in a professional degree program offered by an accredited institution of higher education in the United States. Universities receiving NRC grants must establish programs to monitor the academic progress of the scholarship recipients.

Applicants must meet the following criteria to receive a scholarship:

1. Have at the time of application, and maintain a 3.5 GPA (on a 4.0 scale) overall and within major.
2. Maintain a course load of at least 12 credit hours per semester or be classified as a full-time student.
3. Be matriculated in a baccalaureate degree program in a nuclear-related area.

B. Scholarship Funding Availability

NRC expects to support a limited number of scholarship awards of up to \$200,000 per institution through this solicitation. Scholarships may be given to individuals for amounts of up to \$20,000 a year for up to 2 years including costs for tuition, books, fees, and lab expenses: however, no individual may receive a scholarship for any year that exceeds the yearly cost of attendance as defined in section 472 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 USC 1087II). Scholarship recipients must be U.S. Citizens, be matriculated in a baccalaureate degree program, and be students in good standing with the institution. NRC only awards grants directly to accredited U.S. institutions of higher education and does not award individual scholarships or fellowships. Individual students cannot apply directly to NRC for scholarships.

C. Fellowship Program/Eligible Applicants

The Fellowship Program provides funding to colleges and universities to award fellowships to students to pursue an education in nuclear science and engineering. NRC is preferentially awarding fellowships in the fields of Nuclear Engineering, Health Physics, and Radiochemistry. Recipients need to be enrolled in a graduate degree program offered by an accredited institution of higher education in the United States. Universities receiving NRC grants must establish programs to monitor the academic progress of the fellowship recipients.

Applicants must meet the following criteria to receive a fellowship:

1. Have at the time of application, and maintain a 3.6 GPA (on a 4.0 scale) overall.
2. Maintain a course load of at least 12 credit hours per semester or be classified as a full-time student.
3. Be matriculated in a graduate degree program in a nuclear-related area, preferably in the fields of Nuclear Engineering, Health Physics, and Radiochemistry.

D. Fellowship Funding Availability

NRC expects to support a limited number of fellowship awards of up to \$400,000 per institution through this solicitation. Fellowships may be given to individuals for amounts of up to \$50,000 per year for up to 4 years including costs for tuition, books, fees, lab expenses, and stipends. No individual may receive tuition for any year that exceeds the yearly cost of attendance as defined in section 472 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 USC 1087II) exclusive of stipend. Fellowship recipients must be U.S. Citizens, matriculated in a graduate degree program, and students in good standing with the institution. NRC only awards grants directly to accredited U.S. institutions of higher education and does not award individual fellowships. Individual students cannot apply directly to NRC for fellowships.

E. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirements

There are no cost-sharing or matching requirements.

F. Due Dates

Full proposals are due by 5 p.m. (ET) on Tuesday, April 1, 2008.

III. Proposal Submission Information

A. Full Proposals

Full proposal packages are available and submitted through www.grants.gov. Email, facsimile, and hard copy submissions are not accepted.

1. Full Proposal Content

Full proposals are required for all submissions. Full proposal packages are available and submitted through www.grants.gov.

2. Required Elements for Full Proposals

Full proposals must include the following packaged in the order listed, with the bottom right-hand corner of every page numbered and labeled with the Principal Investigators' last name. All full proposal text must be formatted for 8.5 x 11 inch paper, in an 11 pt. font, with 1-inch margins. Adobe pdf format is preferred.

a. Maximum half-page Executive Summary, include:

1. Name of program—Scholarship or Fellowship Program.
2. Name of institution involved in the proposal.
3. List of names and contact details for each person administering this project.
4. Total dollar funding request for the project.

b. Project Description: The Principal Investigator (PI) has overall responsibility for the administration of the institution's award, the management of the project, and interactions with the NRC. The PI and the grantee institution are expected to have or to develop an administrative structure that enables faculty, academic administrators, recipients, and others involved in the project to interact productively during the award period. Grantee institutions will provide scholarship or fellowship support to recipients who successfully compete in a selection process developed by the institution along NRC-developed guidelines. Proposing institutions must clearly describe the recipient support structure, outline plans to manage and administer the program, provide a description of its selection criteria and process, and agree to provide the NRC with a list of recipients. Additionally, grantee institutions must provide documentation of tuition rates. Recipients must be United States citizens having full-time student status at the grantee institution.

Proposals must include and clearly identify the following elements in the Project Description section:

- A description of the proposed program including the number and size of the scholarships or fellowships.
- A description of the recruitment activities and specific marketing strategies designed to attract a large and diverse pool of applicants.
- A description of the selection process that will ensure the most qualified applicants are selected based on academic merit, with consideration given to financial need and the goal of promoting the participation of minorities and women.

- A description of the management and administrative structure and the capability for administering the program.
- An evaluation plan that will provide information on the effectiveness of the project in attracting, preparing and retaining individuals in nuclear careers. This plan should include methodologies for measuring the effectiveness of the program.
- A schedule of tuition fees and other pertinent costs for recipients who would be participating in this program.
- Whether or not these scholarships or fellowships are contemplated as an integrated element of a State or regional strategic plan.

Limit the Project Description to 10 pages, including text. The 10-page limit does not include the Executive Summary, Budget and Budget Narrative, Current and Pending Support, Curriculum Vitae, and required forms.

c. Summary of Relevant Current Funding Support: Grant applicants must provide information on all their current and pending Federal support for ongoing projects and proposals, including potential subsequent funding in the case of continuing grants. The proposed project and all other projects or activities using Federal assistance or that require a portion of time of the principal investigator or other senior personnel must be included.

d. The following forms are required:

1. SF 424 – Application for Federal Assistance. Applicants must enter 77.008 for the CFDA Number.
2. SF 424A – Budget Information.
3. SF 424B – Assurances.
4. SF LLL – Disclosure of Lobbying Activities; (required if participating in Lobbying activities).

IV. Institutional Responsibilities

Institutions must require individual scholarship and fellowship recipients to accept the terms as defined. All projects are expected to include an evaluation plan for measuring the project's impact and the effectiveness of proposed strategies in attracting, preparing, and retaining students. The evaluation plan should include a mechanism for tracking the scholarship and fellowship recipients as they fulfill their academic obligation. The institution agrees to provide compliance monitoring of recipients academic performance. Recipients who fail to satisfy the requirements of the program must reimburse the United States Government for the entire amount of the assistance provided them under the scholarship or fellowship plus interest at a rate determined by the NRC.

A. Project/Award Period

Scholarship Program awards are for up to 2 years and may be renewed at the NRC's discretion for an additional 1 year subject to the availability of funding at renewal. Fellowship Program awards are up to 4 years and are not renewable.

B. Types of Funding Instrument

Awards are funded through grants under the terms of this notice.

C. Funding and Award Restrictions

Indirect costs are limited to a total of 8 percent of the total grant awarded. Costs for travel, materials, supplies etc. are not allowed in these grants.

D. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants are regionally accredited 4-year U.S. public and private institutions of higher education. Awards are not made to any other form of entity or directly to individuals. Individuals and other entities may not apply directly to NRC for these grants.

E. Limit on Number of Proposals per University

Institutions may submit only one proposal for a 2-year Scholarship Program of up to approximately \$200,000 and one proposal for a 4-year Fellowship Program of up to approximately \$400,000.

F. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirements

There are no cost-sharing or matching requirements.

G. Proposal Submission Information

For program and proposal information, contact John Gutteridge at NRC, 301-492-2313 or via email at eduscholar@nrc.gov. The full announcement can be found at www.grants.gov. NRC does not accept proposals submitted by facsimile, hard copy, or electronic mail.

V. Award Information

A. Submission Dates and Times

Institutions must submit proposals through www.grants.gov by 5 p.m. (ET) on Tuesday, April 1, 2008. NRC will not consider proposals received after that submission deadline. The date and time receipt indication included with your submission on www.grants.gov is the basis of determining timeliness. NRC does not accept proposals submitted by facsimile, hard copy, or electronic mail.

B. Procedures for Submitting Proposals

Full Proposals are only accepted through www.grants.gov.

C. Merit Review Criteria

Merit Review Criteria – NRC approved criteria. Additional merit review considerations apply. Please see the full text of this solicitation for further information.

D. Proposal Review Information

NRC evaluates each proposal in a two-part process. First, applications are screened to ensure that they meet the administrative requirements set forth in this Request for Application. Second, proposals meeting the administrative requirements are evaluated by a review panel. Reviewers are selected based upon education and experience in relevant scientific, technical, or academic fields, taking into account the following factors: (a) The individual's level of relevant formal scientific, technical, or academic experience and the extent to which the individual is engaged in relevant scientific, technical, or academic activities; (b) the need to include as reviewers experts from various areas of specialization within relevant scientific, technical, or academic fields; (c) the need to include as reviewers other experts who can assess relevance of the applications to targeted audiences and to program needs; (d) the need to include as reviewers experts from a variety of organization types (e.g., colleges, universities, professional, industry, State and private profit and nonprofit organizations), and geographic locations.

E. Full Proposal Criteria:

Multiple independent peer reviewers evaluate and rate each full proposal using the following criteria and weighting values:

1. Capacity and ability of the institution to effectively conduct the program. (15 points)
2. Number and quality of students that will be served by the program. (15 points)
3. Justification for number of students served and amount of scholarship or fellowship. (5 points)
4. Quality and feasibility of recruitment and marketing strategies. (10 points)
5. Quality of technical programs for scholarship or fellowship programs. (15 points)
6. Type and degree of proposed student support (i.e., mentoring or advisor assistance). (10 points)
7. Feasibility and completeness of an evaluation plan to measure the effectiveness of the scholarship or fellowship program. (10 points)
8. Institutional support for the program and the extent to which the institution is committed to making the program an organizational focus. (10 points)
9. Plans for sustainability. (5 points)
10. Whether or not the program is considered as part of a State or regional strategic educational development plan (applicants must submit an attestation letter from the cognizant body as part of the proposal for this element to be considered). (5 points)

F. Review and Selection Process

After receiving full proposals, NRC conducts an initial administrative review to determine compliance with requirements and completeness of the proposal. If proposals are determined to be compliant and complete, peer reviewers then rate the individual proposals using the evaluation criteria and point values provided above. Both Federal and nonfederal experts in the field may be used in this process. Individual peer reviewer's scores are shall be averaged to produce a rank order to present to the selecting official. The selecting official makes awards in rank order except when justification exists to select out of rank order. Investigators may be asked to modify objectives, work plans or budget levels, or provide supplemental information required by the agency prior to the award.

NRC keeps names of submitting institutions and individuals, as well as application content and peer evaluations confidential, except to those involved in the review process, to the extent

permitted by law. The identities of peer reviewers also remain confidential throughout the entire review process and are not released to applicants.

G. Selection Factors

The selecting official makes awards in rank order except when selecting out of rank order is justified based on one or more of the following factors:

- Availability of funding.
- Balance/distribution of funds:
 - Geographically.
 - By discipline types.
- Whether this project duplicates other projects funded or considered for funding by NRC.
- Program priorities and policy factors.
- Needs that the Commission determines to be critical to the NRC's regulatory mission.

H. Anticipated Award Announcement

NRC notifies all applicants of the final recommendation to award or decline funding of proposals via email. Successful applicants also receive written notification from the NRC that their proposals have been funded. Official funding notification from an NRC Grants Officer is the authorizing document that allows NRC to begin funding the project. Notifications are issued via U.S. mail to the authorizing officials at the proposing institutions.

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

Successful applicants may be asked to modify objectives, work plans, or budgets prior to final award approval. The exact amount of funds to be awarded, the final scope of activities, and specific NRC cooperative involvement in the activities of each partnership is determined in pre-award negotiations between the applicants and NRC. Successful applicants should not initiate any project activities in the expectation of receiving grant funding until a notice of award document is received from the NRC.

B. Limitation of Liability

In no event is NRC responsible for proposal costs if this program is cancelled because of other agency priorities identified prior to final grant award. Publishing this announcement does not obligate NRC to award any specific project. Employment is at the NRC's discretion and receipt of a scholarship or fellowship is not an employment guarantee.

C. Reporting

Semiannual progress reports must be submitted directly to the NRC Project Manager electronically beginning 6 months after the project's start date. Reports must be received by NRC no later than 30 days after each 6-month project period. A final report is due no later than 90 days after the award's expiration date. NRC expects progress reports to detail activities that

have occurred during the reporting period that correspond with the goals and objectives identified in the narrative, as well as provide specific, project-related information.

VII. Agency Contacts

A. Administrative Questions

Nicole Pratt
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Division of Contracts
Mail Stop T7-I2
Washington, DC 20555-0001
301-415-0236

B. Technical Questions

John Gutteridge
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Scholarships and Fellowships
Mail Stop GW5 A06
Washington, DC 20555-0001
301-492-2313

C. Email

edusolar@nrc.gov.

D. Frequently asked questions (FAQs)

Frequently asked questions can be found on our Web site at: <http://www.nrc.gov/about-nrc/grants.html>

VIII. Other Information

A. Grants.gov

Proposals must be submitted through grants.gov to be considered for award. You cannot submit a proposal through grants.gov unless you are registered. Please read the registration requirements at www.grants.gov/applicants/get_registered.jsp carefully and start the process immediately. Remember you have to update your CCR registration annually. If you have any questions about your registration, contact the grants.gov helpdesk at 1-800-518-4726.

B. Registration Requirements

There are several one-time actions you must complete in order to submit a proposal through grants.gov (e.g., obtain a Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number, register with the Central Contract Registry (CCR), register with the credential provider, and register with grants.gov). Use the grants.gov organization registration checklist to guide you through the process. Designating an E-Business Point of contact (Ebiz OC) and obtaining a

special password called an MPIN are important steps in the CCR registration process. Applicants, who are not registered with CCR and grants.gov, should allow at least 15 days for completing these requirements. It is suggested that the process be started as soon as possible.

C. Important Notice to Potential Applicants

When you have completed the process, you should call the grants.gov helpdesk at 1-800-518-4726 to verify that you have completed the final step (i.e., grants.gov registration).