



National Science Foundation



Mid-Career Advancement (MCA)
Program (NSF 21-516)
Overview



Mid-Career Advancement (MCA) ([NSF 21-516](#))

- **Primary Objective:** To ensure scientists and engineers remain engaged and active in cutting-edge research at a critical career stage replete with constraints on time that can impinge on research productivity, retention, and career advancement.
- **Eligibility:** a) Associate Professor (or equivalent) and b) at least three years in that position by the proposal submission date.

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- **Unique Aspects:** a) only cross-directorate NSF program targeted at the mid-career stage, b) provides protected time and resources to work with a partner, c) supports advancement not otherwise likely to occur

Participating Directorates - these may change in 2022- always check webpage and solicitation before submitting

- Biological Sciences
- Education and Human Resources
- Engineering
- Geosciences
- Social, Behavioral, and Economic Sciences

The screenshot shows the NSF website's 'Funding' page for the 'Mid-Career Advancement (MCA)' program. The page features a navigation menu with options like 'Research Areas', 'Funding', 'Awards', 'Document Library', 'News', and 'About NSF'. A search bar is located in the top right corner. The main content area is titled 'Crosscutting Mid-Career Advancement (MCA)'. Below this, there is a 'CONTACTS' section with a table listing 'MCA Cognizant Program Officers'. A blue arrow points to the link 'A list of the participating programs is available at https://www.nsf.gov/bio/MCA_participants.pdf.' Below this, another link is provided: 'Program specific MCA contacts available at https://www.nsf.gov/bio/MCA_contacts.jsp.'

Name	Dir/Div	Name	Dir/Div
MCA Cognizant Program Officers			

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PROGRAM GUIDELINES

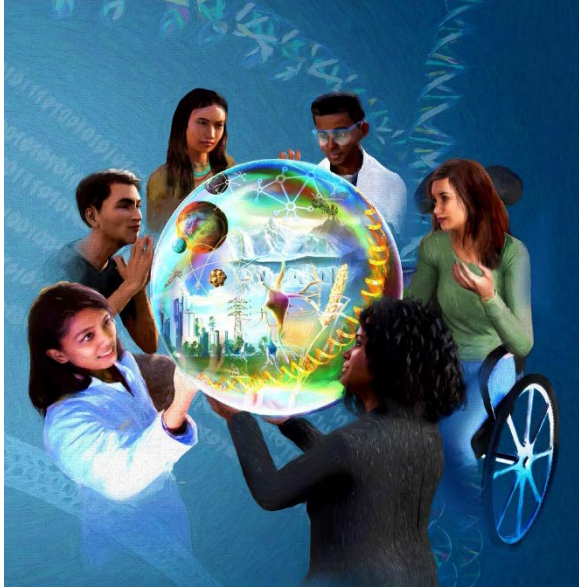
Solicitation [21-516](#)



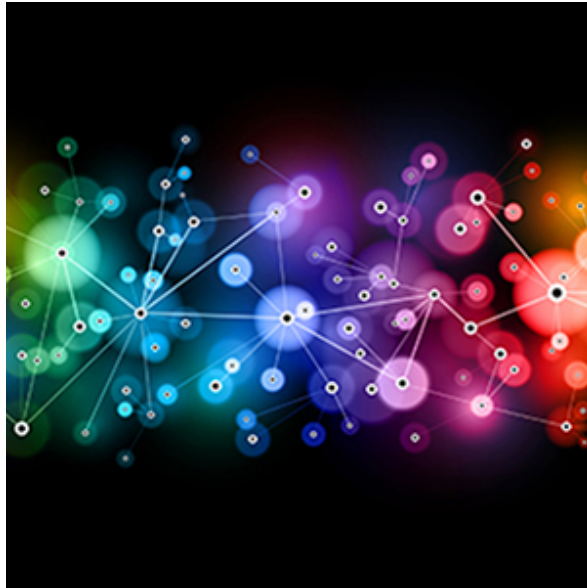
Participating Programs – (solicitation being revised now, so these may change)

Biological Sciences	Engineering	Geosciences	Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences	Education and Human Resources
Division of Environmental Biology	Division of Civil, Mechanical and Manufacturing Innovation 	Division of Earth Sciences	Division of Behavioral and Cognitive Sciences	Division of Undergraduate Education
Division of Integrative and Organismal Systems	Industrial Innovation and Partnerships	Division of Ocean Sciences	Division of Social and Economic Sciences	Division of Graduate Education
Division of Molecular and Cellular Biology		Office of Polar Programs	SBE Office of Multidisciplinary Activities	Division of Human Resource Development
Division of Biological Infrastructure				Division of Research on Learning in Formal and Informal Settings

Alignment with NSF-wide Priorities



Broadening
Participation



Convergent
Research



S&E
Workforce
Development



Fostering
Innovation

Submitting Under the MCA Solicitation – check new solicitation (out 90 days before target deadline)



- 1) Title must begin with “MCA: “
- 2) In addition to PAPPG requirements, proposals must also include the following sections:
 - Section 1: Candidate’s Past Research
 - Section 2: Candidate’s Proposed Research Advancement and Training Plan
 - Section 3: Candidate’s Long-Term Career Plans
- 3) References Cited
- 4) Biographical Sketches – for the PI and for Partner(s) (uploaded as Supplementary Documents)
- 5) Additional Supplementary Documentation
 - Letter(s) of Collaboration
 - Departmental Letter

Submitting Under the MCA Solicitation: Budget

Funds are to support the mid-career researcher*.

Protected Time (salary): Funds include up to a total of 6.5 months of salary plus fringe over the course of the grant, not yearly.

Resources (direct costs): \$100,000.00 in support of the research advancement and training plan.

*Also included in \$100K allotment: a) up to 1 month of summer salary for the collaborative partner; b) funds to cover cost of attendance of the candidate to a 2-day awardee meeting.

Common Questions

- Am I eligible if I work at a 2-yr college or a non-degree granting organization such as a museum? Or if I am a Research Associate Professor (non-tenure track)?
- What if I am being considered for promotion to Full Professor but will be at the rank of Associate at submission?
- Can Research Associate Professors (non-tenure track) apply?
- Does the Partner have to be at a particular rank?
- Does the Partner have to be U.S. based?
- Do I have to choose a Partner from a different institution?

Additional Sources of Info:

NSF 101: The Mid-Career Advancement program

January 15, 2021

As a mid-career scientist or engineer (at the associate professor rank or equivalent), you are familiar with the pressure to remain productive in the lab, yet also obligated to teaching, institutional service and professional development. Being pulled in so many different directions constrains your time and creates inequities in workload, which could hinder research productivity and career advancement in the long term. To address this, the U.S. National Science Foundation created the new [Mid-Career Advancement program](#) to help mid-career researchers re-balance and prioritize their time.

Much like NSF's Faculty Early Career Development Program known as [CAREER](#), the Mid-Career program helps ensure the health and vitality of science at a sensitive career stage. It also aims to lift some of these constraints to support your scientific research career and help build and retain a more diverse science and engineering workforce.

[https://beta.nsf.gov/science-matters/
nsf-101-mid-career-advancement-program](https://beta.nsf.gov/science-matters/nsf-101-mid-career-advancement-program)

12/14/2020 Virtual Office Hours Recap – Mid-CAREER Advancement Solicitation

The Division of Environmental Biology (DEB) held its latest Virtual Office Hour on December 14, 2020. We host these office hours from 1-2 pm EST on the 2nd Monday of every month. Each session has a designated theme, but attendees are welcome to ask about other NSF-related topics. Program Officers provided an introduction to the new cross-directorate Mid-Career Advancement (MCA) program ([NSF 21-516](#)).

The presentation and other documents are available here:

[Slides \(PDF\)](#)

[PAPPG 20-1](#)

[MCA Solicitation webpage](#)

If you were unable to attend, here are some of the questions asked during the Q & A section:

NSF 21-042

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for Mid-Career Advancement (MCA)

1. [What is the MCA?](#)
2. [What are the goals of the MCA?](#)
3. [What key components of an MCA proposal differ from the PAPPG?](#)
4. [Who is eligible to serve as a PI?](#)
5. [Am I eligible if I work at a non-degree-granting organization such as a museum, observatory, or research lab?](#)
6. [Am I eligible if I work at a 2-yr college or community college?](#)
7. [What if I am being considered for promotion to Full Professor but will be at the rank of Associate by the proposal submission date?](#)
8. [Can Research Associate Professors \(non-tenure track\) apply?](#)

<https://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2021/nsf21042/nsf21042.jsp>



Additional Questions?

- Inquiries should be directed to mca.info@nsf.gov
- Contact a Program Officer in your research area for suitability of your ideas for the MCA

