

**Call for Proposals**  
**Northwest Indiana STEM Initiative**  
**Summer-Fall, 2008 Projects**

Indiana Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Initiative  
ISTEM Northwest

Administered by the Northwest Indiana Consortium for Teacher Education  
(NICTE)

**PURPOSE**

The Northwest Indiana STEM Initiative will support new or on-going projects that focus on, but are not limited to, K-12 teacher and/or student development in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics in Region 1 of Indiana (Lake, Porter, LaPorte, Newton, Jasper, and Pulaski Counties).

**ELIGIBILITY**

Faculty and administrative staff of NICTE members (Calumet College of St. Joseph, Indiana University Northwest, Purdue University Calumet, Purdue University North Central, and Valparaiso University) are eligible to apply. Region I K-12 schools may initiate projects, but they must obtain university sponsorship and the budget and project assessment responsibility must reside in that sponsoring university. Preference will be given to collaborative projects from teams of educational professionals that cross discipline lines and university campuses and that include schools or school corporations in their planning and implementation.

**AWARDS**

NICTE estimates that 5-10 project awards will be made in calendar year 2008 for grants of up to one year. Projects must end on or before 6/30/2009. While there is no minimum or maximum grant award, NICTE expects to award grants ranging from \$6,000 to \$10,000 in this round. NICTE may also award a limited number of larger grants for projects that clearly demonstrate potential for region-wide impact involving multiple partners and region-wide scope. These figures are only estimates and do not bind NICTE to a specific number of grants, or to the amount of any grant.

## **COST SHARING**

While there is no mandated matching requirement, NICTE does expect grantees and their collaborating partners to share in the operational cost of funded projects, however. Overhead (Indirect) costs included in the proposal must be limited to no greater than 3 percent of the total grant award. Most projects are expected to continue after the funding period has ended. Grantees should therefore plan to take over the costs of sustaining program administration and operations.

## **EQUIPMENT/INFRASTRUCTURE**

NICTE does not expect to provide support for large equipment purchases or for the development of computer networks or other infrastructure. Applicants are encouraged to leverage institutional and private resources to support these costs

## **APPLICATION PROCESS AND DEADLINE**

**The Northwest Indiana STEM Initiative will employ a single-stage application and review process for calendar year 2008.** Applicants are required to submit their proposals in electronic or written form by 4:30 p.m., Central Daylight Time on Friday, May 30<sup>th</sup>, 2008. The proposal narrative will consist of no more than 10 numbered pages, doubled-spaced, *plus* a one-page abstract, budget, budget narrative, and appendices. An applicant organization may submit more than one application if each is for a different project.

Submit applications to:

Daniel Luncsford  
I-STEM Northwest Coordinator  
Center for Science Technology Education  
Purdue University Calumet  
2200 169<sup>th</sup> Street  
Hammond, IN 46323-2094

Applications will also be accepted by email with attached document file (.doc , docx, or .pdf file formats only)

Email to [luncsfor@calumet.purdue.edu](mailto:luncsfor@calumet.purdue.edu) Request a delivery receipt.

## RECOMMENDED PROPOSAL OUTLINE

There is no standard or required outline for writing your proposal narrative; however, it is **not** generally recommended that you organize your whole proposal in sections separately detailing your response to each of the review criteria. Rather, you should aim to write a clear, naturally flowing essay that is interesting, easy to read, and visually appealing. You will need to provide information that helps reviewers understand what you are proposing, why it is important, how your project will be implemented, and how it will be evaluated.

Many applicants tend to follow an outline such as the following:

- Briefly describe the project and the needs you intend to address. Explain the way in which your proposed project will improve teacher and student work in STEM. Innovative and research based approaches to teacher professional development and student engagement in STEM are strongly encouraged. All projects should tie their activities to either student academic standards or teacher professional standards (or both) in STEM areas.
- Explain what exactly you propose to do in your project (Note: if you are submitting an application for a grant implementing a proven reform, you will additionally want to describe the prior work and evaluation results upon which you are building.)
- Explain the work plan and, as appropriate, each participant's role in completing the project.

Clearly state the primary objectives and outcomes of the project and describe how you plan to evaluate those outcomes.

## Review Requirements and Process

Applicants will submit to NICTE a proposal consisting of a narrative not exceeding 10 numbered pages, double-spaced (no more than three lines per vertical inch), *plus* a one-page abstract, budget, budget narrative, and appendices. Only the following fonts may be used:

- Times New Roman
- Courier
- Courier New
- Arial

Applications submitted in any other font (including Times Roman and Arial Narrow) will not be accepted. To ensure all applicants the same opportunity to present their ideas, applicants are required to conform to the page limit noted above, use minimum 1-inch margins on all four sides of the page, and avoid font sizes smaller than 12 point. Make sure your line spacing is set for double-spacing and not 1.5 lines. Applications that do not conform to these requirements will not be reviewed.

In addition to the 10-page proposal narrative, abstract, budget, and budget narrative, include in the application package an appendix containing the following items. Include *only* these items in the appendix:

- Project evaluation chart (required)
- Narrative summaries (maximum one page each) of the qualifications of key project personnel – project director, co-director, and evaluator (required)
- Very short description(s) of project(s) that will complement and operate in conjunction with the project proposed to NICTE (if applicable)
- Letters of support from partners and other project beneficiaries (if applicable)

Your application package should give NICTE reviewers a concrete understanding of the goals you are addressing and the activities you propose, including a description of how you will evaluate the results. Use clear, direct language and avoid jargon, clichés, and acronyms whenever possible. As noted above, explain how your project strategy differs from and improves upon current practice at your institution and in the region.

Proposals will be read by at least two NICTE reviewers, identified each year from among STEM faculty, administrators, or other professionals in member institutions. A pool of reviewers will be chosen based on project requests. Any individual or group member of the pool submitting projects for the 2008 year will be excluded from the process for that year. Additional experts may review proposals when technical questions arise. Project directors may be telephoned to clarify information about their projects. Staff may also contact others who know the applicant's work and plans, or those who will be affected by the project.

## **SELECTION CRITERIA**

Our intent in this section is to help applicants understand how the selection criteria are applied during the proposal review process. NICTE does not group proposals rigidly by types of activities, sectors of postsecondary education, or other fixed categories. Instead, in our desire to identify the most significant issues and feasible plans, we compare each proposal to all others, using the criteria described below.

Each selection criterion is presented in bold type and followed by a discussion of how it applies to the competition. The reviewers of your proposal use these criteria to guide their reviews, so it is in your interest to be familiar with them. The overall assessment of a proposal is based on the extent to which it satisfactorily addresses all the selection criteria.

Proposals will be considered in light of the following five criteria and their factors, all weighted equally:

**1) The need for the project, as determined by the following factors:**

- a) the magnitude or severity of the needs addressed by the project; and
- b) the magnitude of the need for the services to be provided or the activities to be carried out by the project.

You should describe the nature and magnitude of the problem or opportunity you wish to address *in its regional setting*.

How central is the problem you have identified to your institution's vitality or the effectiveness of your educational services? Have attempts to remedy the situation been made by you or by others in the past, and with what results? What will be the regional consequences of a successful completion of your project? Are other institutions or organizations likely to benefit or learn from your experience in ways that would enable them to improve their own programs and services?

In short, the need should be widely felt, and *the need for your particular response* should be clear. Your strategies should be carefully designed to address the central goals and outcomes you are addressing based on your own research and experience and on previous work by others. Scatter-shot approaches to vaguely-defined problems make poor prospects for funding.

**2) The significance of the project, as determined by the following factors:**

- a) the potential contribution of the proposed project to increased knowledge or understanding of educational problems, issues, or effective strategies;
- b) the extent to which the proposed project involves the development or demonstration of promising new strategies that build on, or are alternatives to, existing strategies;
- c) the importance or magnitude of the results likely to be attained by the proposed project; and
- d) the potential replicability of the proposed project, including its potential for implementation in a variety of settings.

Reviewers will appreciate any evidence you can include to illustrate how your project differs from and improves upon previous efforts. Describe the potential contribution of your project to demonstrating effective, new reform strategies and the likely utility of the products (such as information, materials, processes, or techniques) that will result from it for other institutions. It is the applicant's responsibility to set a context within which reviewers can assess the project's importance to K-12 educational reform.

**3) The quality of the project's design, as determined by the following factors:**

- a) the extent to which the design of the proposed project is appropriate to, and will successfully address, the needs of the target population or other identified needs;
- b) the extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable;
- c) the extent to which the design for implementing and evaluating the proposed project will result in information to guide possible replication of project activities or strategies, including information about the effectiveness of the approach or strategies employed by the project; and
- d) the extent to which the proposed project is designed to build capacity and yield results that will extend beyond the period of NICTE financial assistance.

Your narrative should offer reviewers a clear description of who will do what, when, where, why, and with what anticipated results. The project's goals and objectives must be clearly identified and measurable. Responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks must also be specified. Briefly outline the qualifications of key personnel, including the project director, co-director, evaluator, and major consultants or subcontractors, in the appendix to your proposal. Please note that standard curriculum vitae are not appropriate for this purpose. What is needed is a brief (one page maximum) narrative summary of each individual's background, with a special focus on those experiences related to the topic of your application

Directly or indirectly, learners should be the principal beneficiaries of your project. Our focus on the learner means that NICTE is especially interested in evaluation plans that assess projects in terms of their consequences for student learning. NICTE does not support basic research; rather, its focus is on implementation of projects that demonstrate and test new approaches to STEM K-12 education.

**4) The quality of the project evaluation, as determined by the following additional factors:**

- a) the extent to which the evaluation will provide guidance about effective strategies suitable for replication or testing in other settings;
- b) the extent to which the methods of evaluation are thorough, feasible, and appropriate to the goals, objectives, and outcomes of the proposed project; and
- c) the extent to which the methods of evaluation include the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the project and will produce quantitative and qualitative data to the extent possible.

Evaluation should be an important part of your project planning. Include in your proposal a description of how you intend to document the activities and results of your project.. **Include in the appendix to your application a two-column chart, the first column listing the major goals and objectives, and the second column listing what evaluation measures will be used to show attainment of that goal or objective.** A third column may be added to show responsibilities, timelines, and milestones.

**5) The adequacy of resources for the proposed project, as determined by the following factors:**

- a) the extent to which costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed project;
- b) the demonstrated commitment of each partner in the proposed project to the implementation and success of the project; and
- c) the potential for continued support of the project funding ends, including the demonstrated commitment of appropriate entities to such support.

A detailed budget and budget narrative attached to your proposal should itemize the support you request from NICTE and the support you expect to obtain from sources other than NICTE. It must be clear from the proposal narrative how your budget request relates to the attainment of your goals and objectives. Overhead may not exceed 10% of direct costs. All expenditures must be in accordance with the applicable cost principles as defined by OMB Circular A-21, Cost Principles for Educational Institutions.

It is important to provide evidence that the plans you propose have the support of those who will authorize them, those who will carry them out, and those who will be affected by them. Your proposal may include, in an appendix, letters of specific commitment and support from senior administrators of the host institution, any partners in the project, other key constituents. Applicants are advised that the quality of letters of support is important, not their quantity.

**6) Use of Information and Work Product:**

All information, data, findings, recommendations, proposals, etc., by whatever name described and in whatever form secured, developed, written or produced by Regional Lead Institution shall be available to the Managing Partner for its use and distribution, at its discretion, without additional charge to the Managing Partner.

**7) Awards**

Awards will be made in the form of subcontracts for external applicants and MOUs for internal applicants. The awardees must adhere to terms and conditions set forth by the prime sponsor.

**TITLE PAGE**  
**THE NICTE NORTHWEST INDIANA STEM INITIATIVE**  
**SPRING, 2008**

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1. Institution(s) Submitting this grant application:

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2. Project Director: (Name and Mailing Address)

3. Institutional Information

Level:

\_\_\_\_\_ School or District

\_\_\_\_\_ Postsecondary

\_\_\_\_\_ 2 year

\_\_\_\_\_ 4 year

\_\_\_\_\_ Graduate

Type:

\_\_\_\_\_ Public

\_\_\_\_\_ Private

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

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5. Funds Requested:

1st Year \_\_\_\_\_

2nd Year (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

3rd Year (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

Total Amount: \_\_\_\_\_

6. Duration of Project:

Starting Date \_\_\_\_\_

Ending Date \_\_\_\_\_

Total No. of Months \_\_\_\_\_

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7. Proposal Title:

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8. Brief Abstract of Proposal: (**DO NOT LEAVE THIS BLANK**)

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9. Legal Applicant: (Name and Mailing Address)

10. Population Directly Benefiting from the Project:

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12. Certification by Authorizing Official

The applicant certifies to the best of his/her knowledge and belief that the data in this application are true and correct, that the filing of the application has been duly authorized by the governing body of the applicant, and that the applicant will comply with the attached assurances if assistance is approved.

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Print Name

Title

Phone

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Signature

Date

## **CONTACT INFORMATION**