GRANTS OFFICE
empowering communities

Improving Undergraduate STEM Education (IUSE)

Strategies to Strengthen Your Proposal

Today's Presenters



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Scan for Marc's Funded article on Organizational Capacity

TODAY'S AGENDA

01 | Understanding the Improving Undergraduate STEM Education (IUSE) Grant Program

02 | Evaluating if IUSE is right for you

03 | Preparing a competitive IUSE proposal

04 | Engaging with Grants Office services

05 | Q&A



Understanding the Improving Undergraduate STEM Education (IUSE) Grant Program

Improving Undergraduate STEM Education (IUSE) Grant Program



Description

Funds **innovative approaches** to undergraduate learning and teaching science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields. Projects are funded in two program tracks:

- **Engaged Student Learning (ESL)**
- **Institutional & Community Transformation (ICT)**

Funding Amount

$61 million in competitive grants annually

Individual awards: $200,000 - $2 million (Cost match not required)

Deadline

July 15, 2026
ICT Level Two
ESL Level Two and Three

January 20, 2027
ICT Capacity Building and Level One
ESL Level One

Eligibility Notes

Institutions of higher education and associated organizations are eligible.

find this grant on GRANTS OFFICE COMMUNITIES

Engaged Student Learning (ESL)

Seeks to fund projects which engage students and improve learning, persistence, and retention in STEM.

Level One

Early-stage or exploratory research done on a small scale. Typically from a single institution.

Level Two

Research project that engages larger groups, such as departments, multi-disciplinary faculty, or other institutions.

Level Three

Large scale projects, usually involving two or more institutions.





Institutional & Community Transformation (ICT)

Funds institution-wide transformation of colleges and universities that enables the implementation of highly effective STEM teaching and learning.

Capacity Building

Helps new applicants identify future projects of interest.

Level One

Early-stage or exploratory research done on a small scale. Typically from a single institution.

Level Two

Large scale projects, usually involving two or more institutions.

IUSE: Innovation in Two-Year College STEM Education (ITYC)



Description

Funds innovative approaches to undergraduate learning and teaching science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields specifically at two-year institutions. Projects are funded in two program tracks:

- Focus on Academic Experiences of Two-Year College Students
- Leveraging Institutional Strengths and Innovation

Funding Amount

$10 million in competitive grants annually

Individual awards: $500,000 (Cost match not required)

Deadline

December 9, 2026

Eligibility Notes

Two-year institutions of higher education and associated organizations are eligible.

find this grant on
GRANTS OFFICE COMMUNITIES

Evaluating if IUSE is right for you

Four Questions to Ask Yourself Before Applying to IUSE

01 Can I state the problem I wish to address?

What **gaps exist** in your current STEM learning environment?

02 How am I equipped to address this problem?

What in your **expertise and experience** makes you the right person to undertake this project?

03 Can I identify two or three clear objectives?

What **specific outcomes** will your project produce and **how** will you bring them about?

04 How is this project novel or innovative?

How is your project meaningfully **new**? How is the project **adding to scientific literature** on STEM teaching and learning?

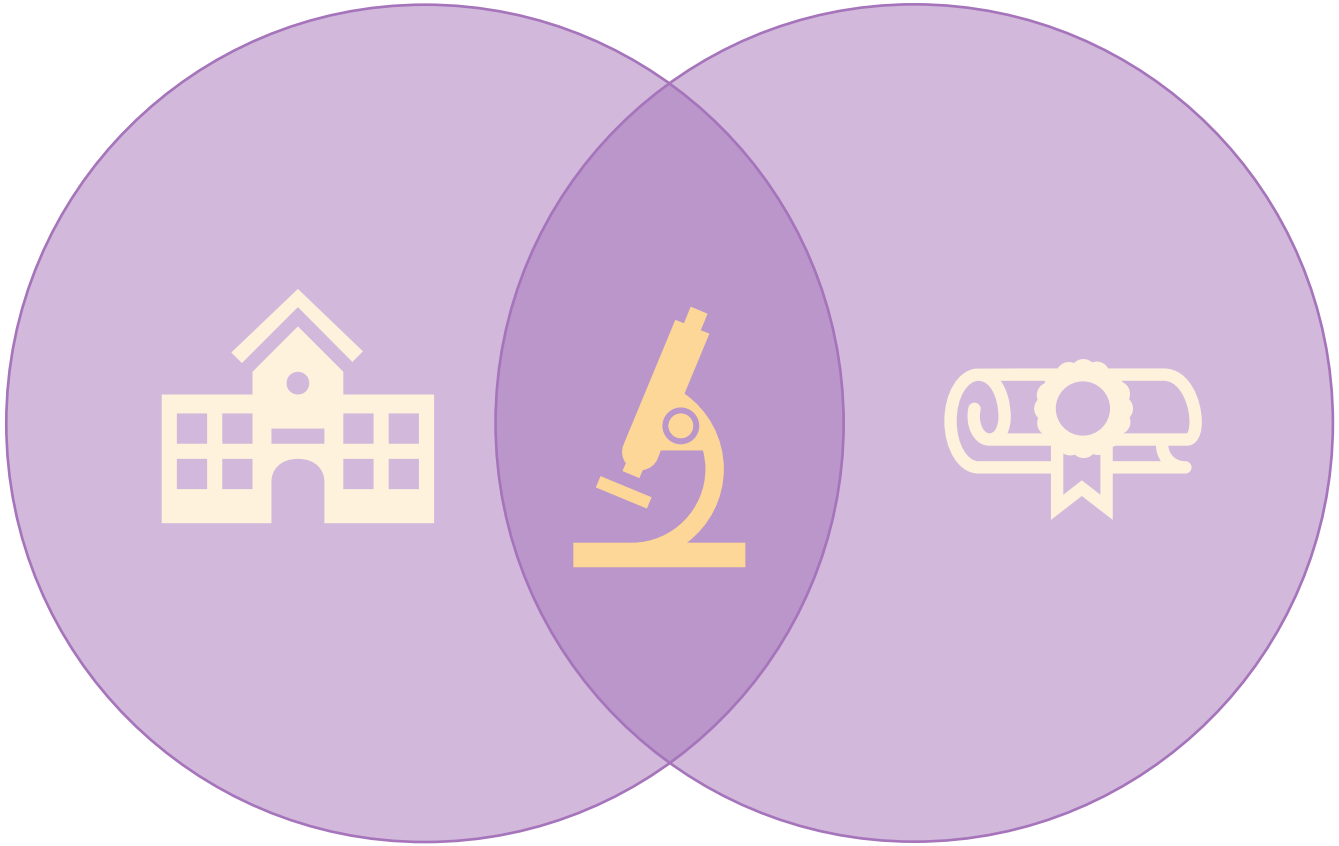
Distinguishing between IUSE Programs

Directorate for STEM Education

Open to **all institutions** of higher education.

Program Tracks:
1. Engaged Student Learning
2. Institutional and Community Transformation

Levels of funding differ by Program Track and Level.



Innovation at Two-Year Inst.

Two-year institutions must be lead applicant.

Program Tracks:
1. Academic Experiences of Students
2. Leveraging Two-Year Institution's Strengths and Innovations

Maximum award of $500,000 for both Tracks.

Considering Tracks & Levels



Institutional Demographics

Two-year or four-year institution? Solo or joint application? Minority-serving institution? Research or teaching institution?

Focus of the Project

Systemic change or innovative methods? Faculty development or student engagement?

Scale and Scope

Department-wide or course-specific? Early-stage or later-stage research? Impacting one community of learners or several?

Preparing a competitive IUSE application

Elements of a Successful Project

01 Knowledge Base for the Project

Projects need to be rooted in compelling scientific inquiry. The NSF refers to this as "Intellectual Merit".

02 Evaluation Plan

The effectiveness of the project must be assessed. Aligning the project's activities to the proposed outcomes is essential.

03 Relevant Research Questions

If proposing research, projects need to clearly state how the research questions are novel, timely, and have what the NSF calls "Broader Impact".

04 Dissemination Plan

A clear process for data collection, analysis, and sharing of the project's findings is required.

05 Sustainability

Projects need to demonstrate an impact beyond the scope of the period of performance.



Deadlines to Keep in Mind

Projects that are **larger** scale, build on **previous** NSF funding, or multi-institutional in scope (Level Two or Three)

July 15, 2026

Projects that are **smaller** scale, received **no** previous NSF funding, or from one institution (Level One or Capacity Building)

January 20, 2027

IUSE: Two-Year Innovation has an expected deadline of December 9, 2026



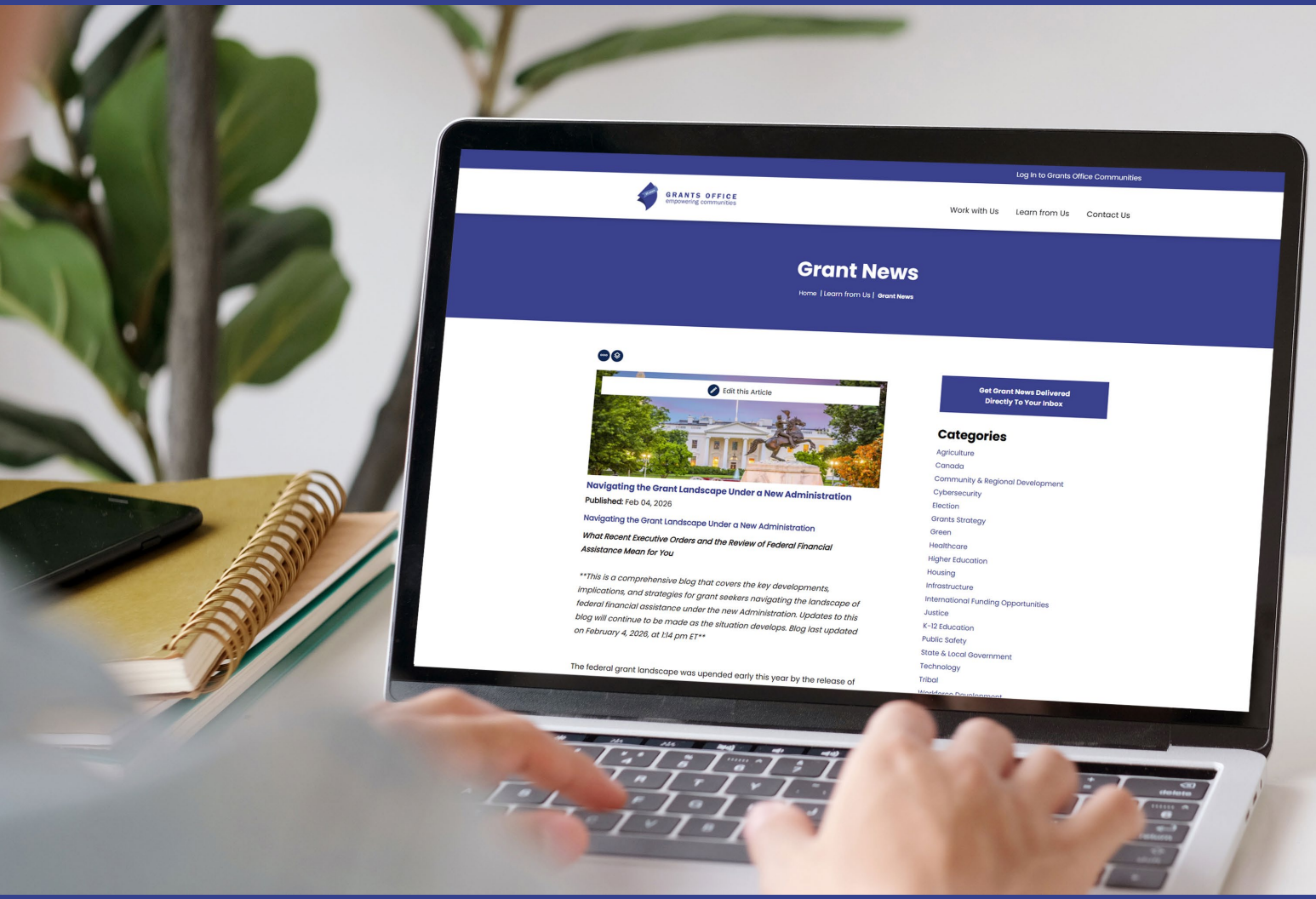
FREE Eligibility and Proposal Workbook

- Collect Important Account Details for Submission
- Build your Goals, Objectives, & Project Activities
- Outline Key Project Personnel & Duties
- Plan your Major Budget Items
- Start Brainstorming Your Narrative Content

Download our **FREE** workbook and get started preparing for IUSE today!

Grants Office is Here to Help

Questions about FY26? We have the answers.





Scan for our
***FREE* Guidance**
for Grantseekers
resources!

Grants Office is here to help!

Proposal Development & Writing

Grants are assigned a cost tier based on the complexity of the application's requirements and the time until the grant's deadline.

For example, the Improving Undergraduate STEM Education Grant Programs tend to fall in either Tier 7 or Tier 8.

Writing the proposal yourself?

Grants Office provides review services at 25% of the grant tier cost.

Example service costs
Pricing valid through December 2025

Tier	Cost for Proposal Development
1	$3900
2	$4900
3	$5900
4	$6900
5	$7900
6+	$8900+



Engage with Grants Office to Write Your Proposal

Step 1

Contact Us

Email your completed Eligibility and Proposal Workbook to Marc, our IUSE expert: grantwriting@grantsoffice.com

Step 2

Initial Meeting

Marc will set up a time to discuss your project goals and development needs.

Step 3

Grant Writing will Begin

Your Grants Office Grant Writer will utilize the materials you provide to write your IUSE Proposal.

Step 4

Proposal Review

Meet with Marc to finalize your proposal and ensure all requirements have been met.

Step 5

Submit Application

Once completed, you will submit your grant application and let us know when you win!

Start here!

Other Grants Office Services

SCAN HERE

Research & Consultation

Grants Office will identify what grants best fit your upcoming projects and develop next steps.

Project Building

Grants Office will advise on project development and material gathering with a particular grant in mind.

Grant Proposal Writing

Grants Office will write a competitive and engaging proposal.

Grant Proposal Review

Grants Office will provide feedback on application materials, ensuring compliance with submission requirements.

Grants Office Communities

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Questions?

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