Grant Title: ADVANCING INFORMAL STEM LEARNING (AISL)

Funding Opportunity Number: NSF 13-608. CFDA Number(s): 47.076.


Area of Research: Research and development of innovative and field advancing out of school STEM learning and emerging STEM learning environments.

Release and Expiration: Not listed.


Amount: Pathways projects: Up to $300,000. Research in Service to Practice projects: From $300,000 to $2,000,000. Innovations in Development projects: $500,000 to $3,000,000 total. Broad Implementation projects: From $500,000 to $3,000,000. Conferences, Symposia, and Workshops projects: Up to $250,000. It is anticipated that about 6-10 Pathways awards, 7-10 Research in Service to Practice awards, 10-13 Innovations in Development awards, 3-6 Broad Implementation awards, and 5-7 Conferences, Symposia, and Workshops will be made.

Length of Support: Pathways projects: Up to two years. Research in Service to Practice projects: Two to five years. Innovations in Development projects: Up to five years. Broad Implementation projects: Two to five years. Conferences, Symposia, and Workshops projects: Up to two years.

Eligible Applicants: Universities and Colleges. See the full announcement for a complete list of applicants.

Summary: The Advancing Informal STEM Learning (AISL) program seeks to advance new approaches to and evidence-based understanding of the design and development of STEM learning in informal environments; provide multiple pathways for broadening access to and engagement in STEM learning experiences; advance innovative research on and assessment of STEM learning in informal environments; and develop understandings of deeper learning by participants. The projects include: (1) Pathways, (2) Research in Service to Practice, (3) Innovations in Development, (4) Broad Implementation, and (5) Conferences, Symposia, and Workshops. Pathways projects allow practitioners and researchers an opportunity to undertake exploratory development work or feasibility studies that have the potential to lead to the submission of innovative, field-advancing proposals of other project types, such as Research in Service to Practice or Innovations in Development. This type of project should produce evidence, findings, and/or deliverables that form the basis of anticipated further innovative, or potentially transformative, research and development work. The Research in Service to Practice project type specifically focuses on research that advances knowledge and the evidence base for practices, assumptions, broadening participation, and emerging educational arrangements in STEM learning in informal environments. The Innovations in Development project type is specifically expected to result in innovative models, programs, technologies, assessments, resources, and/or systems for any area of STEM learning in informal environments. The Broad Implementation project type specifically supports the expansion of models, programs, technologies, assessments, resources, research, and/or systems that have a documented record of success, innovation, and/or evidence-based knowledge building. Conferences, Symposia, and Workshops should be well focused, relate to the goals of the AISL program, and generate product(s) usable by practitioners and researchers. The program is particularly interested in proposals that lead to, for example, the development of communities of practice, the formulation of field-advancing practice, assessments, and/or research agendas for the participating professional communities.