

Grant Proposal Resources, Road Maps and Timelines

March 9, 2017

Introduction

Michael Lesiecki - Welcome everyone to today's Webinar: Grant Proposal Resources, Road Maps and Timelines. Today's March 9, 2017, webinar will be recorded and you'll get automatic reel link to the recording. I'm your host for today's webinar, my name is Mike Lesiecki here at the Maricopa Community Colleges in Phoenix, Arizona.

Webinar Details

Michael Lesiecki - You'll be in listen-only mode for this webinar using your computer or audio device. And please use the questions, use the question window rather to ask questions of us. As I mentioned, this webinar will be recorded.

Brought To You By

Michael Lesiecki - This webinar series is brought to you by Centers Collaborative for Technical Assistance.

The CCTA IS Led By

Michael Lesiecki - What is that? What is CCTA? Well, first of all, it's led by five centers. You can see the list of them here. We're in Texas, South Carolina, Tampa Florida, San Frisco and here at the Maricopa Community Colleges.

CCTA Purpose

Michael Lesiecki - The purpose of the CCTA is to respond to request from the Department of Labor to provide technical assistance to not only TAACCCT grantees, but to NSF grantees and in fact, any one that's interested in workforce-oriented programs of any type. We do these webinars with live Q&A's usually following at some point, typically a week after the webinar. We identify and document best practices and host convenings.

Poll #1: Your Affiliation

Michael Lesiecki - Let's start with a poll. I'd like to ask you about your affiliation. Are you involved with an NSF grant, a TAACCCT grant, both or neither? So just a moment and we will launch the poll. So there it is on your screen, please use the radio buttons. Check your association. I'll leave the poll open for just a moment, because, pretty much, we know the answer to this one. Results are streaming in, I'm going to leave the poll open just for another 5 seconds and we'll take a look at the results...5, 4, 3, 2, 1. Now here's the result on the screen and you can see that a number of us, in fact, the largest of us neither are associated with an NSF nor a TAACCCT grant. And that's good, because that means we're interested in getting into the proposal game or that we'd like, or we've been involved in grants and other mechanisms as well. Let's go ahead and close that poll. One more question before we get started today.

Poll: How many people are listening with you?

Michael Lesiecki Sometimes you're listening in a room where there's multiple people sitting around a conference phone or conference room, let me launch this poll. And would you please tells us how many people are with you today? So just yourself, 1, 2 or 3 more people. Please take a moment and just check that radio button. We use this to document our impact. Thanks very much, I can see all of you putting in your answers. We're almost ready to go. I'm going to close the poll in 5 seconds...5, 4, 3, 2, 1. Closing the poll. And now let's take a look at those results. There they are, of course most of us are by ourselves, typical, but a fair number of people are listening with a colleague or with 1 or more colleagues. So thanks very much, we appreciate your feedback on those polls.

TODAY'S PRESENTERS

Michael Lesiecki - Let me introduce our presenters today. Let me start with Elaine Craft. Elaine, you're the lead presenter today and director of the South Carolina ATE Center of Excellence, welcome. Will you please introduce yourself a little further and then, introduce your colleagues.

Elaine Craft - Hi Mike. Thank you! Hello, everybody. I am the director of the SC ATE Center at Florence Darlington Technical College from Florence, South Carolina. It's also my privilege to be the Principal Investigator for the Mentor Connect project and for the SC ATE National Resource Center for Expanding Excellence in Technician Education. It is a special treat to have with us today Dr. Elizabeth Teles. Dr. Teles is a program officer with the National Science Foundation, who works in two funding programs, Advance Technological Education or ATE, and Scholarships and Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics or S-STEM. Dr. Teles is a mathematician and her professional experience includes community college teaching. We've always considered her one of our own. And she and a colleague actually design and started the ATE program at NSF. Also joining us today is Mel Cossette. Mel has been a principal investigator for numerous NSF ATE grant awards. She is currently the executive director and principal investigator for MatEdU, the National ATE Center for Material Science. Mel is also a mentor for the Mentor Connect project and for Science Foundation Arizona, where she has been successful in helping potential grantees prepare competitive ATE grant proposals. Next Slide, please.

AGENDA

Elaine Craft - You will notice that there are three parts in today's agenda. In Part I, I will share my thoughts on the unique characteristics of NSF grant funding and why you should be interested in applying for this particular program. And Part II, Dr. Teles will share helpful hints for moving up to larger NSF-ATE project grants and in Part III; Mel will point out some useful resources to help you prepare a competitive NSF ATE grant proposal. Now, let's start with some of my thoughts on what makes NSF funding grants unique. Next slide please.

Why Pursue NSF Grant Funding?

Elaine Craft - So why pursue NSF grant funding? The first reason is that the National Science Foundation Division of Undergraduate Education, known as DUE, offers funding that target different levels and aspects of undergraduate education. Today, our focus is on the Advance Technological Education or ATE program. The focus is on technician and related STEM

education at 2-year associate degree granting institutions. The ATE program strongly emphasizes partnerships with industry to align technician education with workforce needs. In addition, ATE encourages collaboration with other 2-year college and secondary school educators. Also important are pathways for students to continue their higher education at 4-year colleges and universities. The college transfer is not the focus of the ATE program. Other NSF undergraduate education funding programs are also available to community college applicants such as S-STEM and IUUSE, which stands for Improving Undergraduate STEM Education. A college can be awarded grants from different NSF funding programs simultaneously, and different grants can work together synergistically to improve STEM education. For example, the NSF S-STEM program provides funding for scholarships. The ATE program, on the other hand, does not fund student scholarships. If a college receives funding awards from both programs students can simultaneously receive scholarships while technician education programs are being improved. The National Science Foundation would like to receive more grant proposals from community colleges; however, be aware that the funding rates vary by program. Most 2-year colleges experience greater success if they start with the ATE program. This is especially true if a college applies for a small grant for institutions new to ATE, where the funding rate is much higher than the ATE program overall. The overall ATE program funding rate is usually in the 20 to 30 percent range, whereas the funding rate for the small grants track is typically 60 to 70 percent. It's pretty easy to figure out where the odds are in your favor. Next slide, please.

Why Pursue NSF Grant Funding?

Elaine Craft - Another attribute of NSF grant funding is that the agency's proposal guidelines lead to thorough preparation and good project design. Once you have written a proposal, even if the proposal is not funded, you will have a well-developed project plan that can be implemented to improve technician education and your college or an industry partner may choose to support your project. Another point is that the proposal you submit to NSF will be peer reviewed. This means that those who review your proposal are people like you. For the most part, reviewers are teachers from similar institutions who share your discipline expertise. Some NSF reviewers will have other relevant expertise such as industry representatives, social science researchers, and public school educators. Reviews are conducted by panels who apply the NSF Intellectual Merit and Broader Impact Criteria. The NSF proposal review process is non-bias and it has long been referred to as the "Gold Standard," among federal agencies who award grants. Another nice practice at the NSF is that the agency most often publishes multiyear solicitations. This gives you extended advance notice of grant deadlines. NSF also funds grants that enable assistance to be provided to potential and existing grantees. An example is Mentor Connect, an ATE project that teaches grant writing, STEM faculty leadership and other skills required for preparing, submitting and implementing successful NSF ATE grant funded projects. Next slide, please.

No Cost Sharing

Elaine Craft - One very important distinguishing characteristics of a NSF grant is no cost-sharing. In fact, for most NSF programs including ATE cost-sharing is expressly prohibited. Now, how great is that? However, the National Science Foundation does expect potential grantees to take

advantage of work that has been previously funded. Partnerships are a hallmark of the ATE program. Partnerships with industry and other educators can be considered the common DNA across all successful ATE funded projects and centers. Next slide, please.

Happy and Connected Grantees

Elaine Craft - So, why do I describe NSF ATE grantees as happy and connected? One reason is that NSF program officers are user-friendly. They actually like to hear from you. Another is that principal investigators are given the latitude to behave like scientist. Potential PI's and grantee colleges are thoroughly vetted at the time a grant is made after that NSF expects PI to conduct the funded project as he or she would conduct a scientific experiment. Test, evaluate, adjust, then test again to maximize results. This means that with very few restrictions NSF gives you and your college the authority to adjust your work plan and move money around in the budget throughout the project to achieve project goals. NSF program officers are there to help you and you should, and should always be consulted about major changes. But they won't be micromanaging your project or your budget unless of course you fail to do your job. Another attribute of the ATE program is its longevity, the program was mandated by Congress through the Scientific and Advance Technology Act of 1992. The ATE program is now 24 years old. This makes ATE one of, if not, the longest running ATE grant program at NSF. Also, you will find that many ATE grantees have received multiple ATE awards. It is very gratifying to work with a program that sticks with those who do good work long enough to make a difference. Another big time saver is unlike the Department of Labor's quarterly reporting requirement; NSF only requires annual reporting from grantees. The last point I would like to make about why you should actively pursue NSF ATE funding is that it connects you to a community of like-minded dedicated educators who share a passion for student success and rigorous, relevant technician education across STEM fields. We often say that as a grantee, you become part of the ATE family, which is a community that shares freely and supports one another in a mired of ways. Now, for those of you who already know all of this, because you are or have been an ATE grantees, NFS Program Officer Elizabeth Teles will share with you some tips from the ATE community about how to be success with your next larger grant proposal.

Part II: 15 Helpful Tips for Moving Up to Larger NSF-ATE Project Grants

Elaine Craft - Now, for those of you who already know all of this, because you are or have been an ATE grantees, NFS Program Officer Elizabeth Teles will share with you some tips from the ATE community about how to be success with your next larger grant proposal. Liz, I'll turn it over to you.

Dr. Elizabeth Teles - Well thank you Elaine for inviting me to participate today. Many institutions have found that they've had, who had smaller NSF award or grants from the Department of Labor or even something that's been funded locally by your school or by industry or by your state have moved it up to larger awards. So to help others learn from these successes at the ATE meeting this last year, we had a roundtable discussion. We, then, built on that by further discussions among us and have written a short guide called Moving Up to Larger NSF ATE Project Grants. I will briefly discus today 15 tips in that publication, but don't worry, you don't have to write everything down quickly as the handouts are going to be available.

Tips 1-3

Dr. Elizabeth Teles - I want to encourage you to read it and learn from it and talk about it with your team. And even if you haven't had one of these grants, almost everything I say or do will be broadly applicable to any type of NSF funding.

Tip number 1 – provide results of prior support, because this really matters. Wait to submit a new project proposal until you have a clear rationale for additional support. A new proposal should not only include evaluation data from prior support, but it should be able to answer some of the following type questions:

- What did you accomplish?
- What did you learn during that prior project?
- And how will this project build on that?
- And how do you know?
- And more importantly, why do you need more money? So you have to justify that.

Tip number 2 – read the most current solicitation carefully to assure that your ideas align with the program goals. Program requirements change and there may be new opportunities that better fit your needs. Some opportunities that were available in the past no longer may be available. In fact, this year you're really lucky to come in at this point in time, because the ATE solicitation is currently being rewritten for another three years and it looks like there going to be at least two new opportunities. So this program should be out in the next month or so maybe, at least by the beginning of June and so, I definitely encourage you to read it. Cause there's nothing worse than writing a proposal that fit the old program solicitation and doesn't fit the new one at all. Another important thing about this one this year is it looks like the maximum for different project tracks are going to be changing, some are going up, some are going down. And you don't want to be asking for more money than that track allows. On the other hand, you don't want to go too far under what you might be able to get if you could justify it.

Tip number 3 – Pay close attention to the latest version of the Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide. I know that's a great big mouth full there, but we just call it the PAPPG. In particular this is where the colleges' authorize organizational representative, the AOR, who's going to actually submit the proposal on behalf of the institution can follow those requirements outline. Note that you can submit a proposal either on Fastlane or by grants.gov. We strongly encourage you to use Fastlane for at least 3 reasons. One reason is NSF has a wonderful helpdesk at Fastlane. Another reason is there's some automatic checks built into Fastlane that'll catch some errors that won't keep your things from being sent back, not that everything, but there are some automatic checks. And it's just easier to use. The PP, PAPPG provides such information as font sizes, margins, how to write project summaries and things like that. An extra little hint in this case is submit a day or so before the deadline; runoff the proposal and check for errors. If it doesn't look good, if you've left something out like last year somebody left out the project summary, which is a required document. If you do not have something there, you can withdraw it and submit again. A particular problem is that in the project summary

you're only allowed ASCII characters and so if you put in things like quote marks or apostrophes, they come out looking as question marks and your project summary doesn't look very good. So I just tell you to try to be sure you, somebody at your campus who submits it, knows these policies and carefully follows them. Next slide.

Tips 4-6

Dr. Elizabeth Teles – Tip number 4 -The ATE program does allow for supplementary documents. The information in the program solicitation always takes precedent over the PAPPGs. So for example, the PAPPG has very strict limitations on supplementary documents, but the ATE program solicitation is much more flexible. The new solicitation is going to carefully outline what you can put in there and so we want you to do that. For example, the ATE program does allow letters of commitment, whereas the PAPPG would not let you do that. On the other hand, be very, very careful, don't include something in the supplementary documents that has to be in the body of the proposals. We've had some institutions that thought they could get some extra room by including the evaluation plan in the supplementary documents rather than in the proposal, itself. So you don't want to do that, you need to use at least two pages of the proposal, itself, to put in the evaluation data.

Tip number 5 – And this one is very different from a lot of funding agencies. What we encourage you to do at ATE is to prepare a 1-page summary of your project well in advance, 3 to 6 months or even more, or you can send it now. Send it to a program officer, like myself, and then, arrange for a phone call to discuss it. Program officers are always willing to spend time talking to you all the way up to the time the proposal is actually submitted. Now once the proposal get submitted, we can't talk to you about that until we either contact you and tell you that we're going to negotiate an award, which of course is what you want, or you receive a decline letter, hopefully you won't, but if you do, then, you definitely should talk to the program officer and plan to resubmit again. I have to tell you, the first one I submitted just didn't get funded, but the next year, by following the advice of reviewers we had a very competitive proposal the next time.

Tip number 6 – Ask advice from principal investigators, they're called PIs, at institutions that have received second ATE awards or even more. Ask them the lessons they learned about the grant process. Request copies of their funded proposals. Now they usually can only, won't share every part with it, because some parts are considered private. But be very careful when you get the proposal to not replicate errors that they made. Ask what modifications to the proposal program officers asked them to make. So for example, if a proposal included scholarships, the program officer would have had them remove the scholarships from the ATE proposal so you wouldn't want to include that in your proposal. When you read these, this is what you need to think about, because some people will read a proposal and ask, "Why did NSF fund it?" So when you read these funded proposals ask yourself and think about and talk about, what about those proposals were appealing to reviewers? And what made them relevant to the ATE program. Next slide.

Tips 7-9

Dr. Elizabeth Teles – Tip number 7 - Make sure your budget request closely matches the scope of your project, the number of partners and potential sub-awards. Don't just go for the maximum, because that's what is available. This often comes up and has 1 of 2 problems, it may prove fatal. Number 1 is you may have asked for more money than you've actually justified in your activities. And a bigger one that I think people also make that really comes out looking like what I call the kitchen sink, is that they, to try to get the maximum, they include extra activities and it doesn't look like they have the people there who can carry out all those activities or even that some of them are needed. Successfully completing a smaller scope of work and moving it on up slowly, maybe from \$200,000 to 4 or 500,000, a likely result in a stronger project, than, trying to go for the maximum immediately.

Tip number 8 – Be clear about the scope and importance of your proposal to address local employer needs by including relevant local data and evidence in your proposal. Include true commitment letters from employees that describe uniquely what they're going to provide. Local project outcomes can then be linked to regional, national or global trends for broader impact and dissemination. But remember that community college students usually want to stay close to home when they go to work as they have families and commitment, and if there no good jobs there, why would they want to enroll in your programs.

Tip number 9 – Make it clear in your proposal, who is going to do the work. And include people who have a passion for the project, commitment to achieving its goals, the capacity to show up for meetings and follow through on their commitments to you. Develop a project with a team that sought the input of colleagues in other disciplines, college administration and from industry. You should name people in your proposal even if they aren't one of the senior personnel or one of the ones receiving funds. For example, if you got a career coach or a recruiter on your campus who's going to help you get students into your program that are supported by the college by industry or some other means, include their names. If a big part of your project is to have faculty or industry mentors include their names in the proposal so that people can see who's actually going to do the work and carry out all your activities. If you're working with high schools that has CTE faculty that's Career and Technical Education faculty, who, name them in the proposal, because they're going to be the ones who's going to have to work with you to get these dual enrollment and other kind of projects actually achievable. Next slide.

Tips 10-12

Dr. Elizabeth Teles - Tip number 10 -Choose partners strategically and cultivate their ongoing involvement. So you have to think about, how can I build really effective partnerships. As a subsequent grantee, you'll be building on what you've already accomplished, but you do need to expand your impact. Think bigger and have more partners. So maybe in a small project that you've had that you only had to have two industry partners or even one, now you're going to move it up to a larger project so you may want to think about 5 or 6 in the new project. Industry partners are usually better than industry groups like the workforce investment boards and the chambers of commerce. So if you need to include a letter from the workforce

investment board, who are actually going to do something on the project, then, that's fine, but make sure those letters have a specific commitment that reviewers can look at to find out how these people are going to be involved in your project.

Tip number 10 B - I want to emphasize something here, because this is one of the biggest mistakes I see in ATE proposals, ask your partners to prepare authentic commitment letters that describes their precise roll in the project. Three good letters are better than 10 letters that look alike or that promise nothing. Or better yet, have a meeting and let the people of the industry people at that meeting sign a joint memorandum of understanding with you that you can submit. If all the letters are alike except the industry or high school name has changed, that's not acceptable. And in fact, there's some discussions that if you do that in these proposals than they're going to be sent back without review. And yet, that's a very, very common practice so please don't do it. And also, the letters that you submit need to actually commit to doing something so don't submit what I call "I love you and if you happen to produce enough students then I will think about hiring them," that's probably not going to fly. It's much better to say, "I'll provide two internships or something along that line. On the other hand, don't be afraid to drop a partnership that wasn't working. If a partner doesn't deliver; you can't work with them or you had a great partner with that company and that person moved on and nobody step up to the plate, then, go find a different industry to work with or a different high school. So don't keep partners just because they work with you before, they have to be able to continue this relationship.

Tip number 11 -Don't go beyond what your institution and your broader community of stakeholders actually value and can carry out. Aim your innovations or your new things where you already have a base of support and build on that support. Align your project with college priorities and documented community workforce needs. Don't proposed to do something just cause you've heard it's the coolest new thing; or maybe if you get this project going at the institution, maybe that industry might come there in five years. The ATE, you need to be able to show some results from this in typically 3 years of the project so don't just go chasing rabbits. Similarly, a little bit to that is be sure if you're doing something with high school partners that you show a clear pathway to the community college, because the ATE program is a workforce program. And if you're working with high schools, it ought to be to get better and more prepared students into your program.

Tip number 12 - Sometimes you need additional expertise on a project that you just don't have at your institution. So you can include in your proposal consultants and advisors from other projects that have had NSF funding or particular experts out in the field. Particularly, your evaluator is probably going to be a consultant and you may need to give a workshop. Let's suppose you're really hoping to increase the number of women in your technical programs. You may need to bring in an expert on that to work with your faculty to get some strategies on it. If they're really critical to this than you can also include a commitment from them that commits them to what they are going to do on your project and you can include their vita, cause this may add some expertise. Remember we were talking about showing you have the expertise

you have to do this. So, you can include that type of thing in your supplementary documents. Next slide.

Tips 13-15

Dr. Elizabeth Teles – Tip number 13 - Elaine is part of a project called Mentor-Connect and they have lots and lots of resources things so use their materials, use their grant development principals, Mel's going to discuss these in the next part the webinar so I won't go into it too much but we've defiantly found out that projects that use these resources are much more competitive than those that don't look at the materials that the program has made available to you.

Tip number 14 -Take evaluation seriously work with an evaluator who will provides feedback and some suggestions for improvement, not just somebody that crunches numbers. Be sure you talk about how your evaluation ties to your goals and objectives. We often see things in a table that are like here's my goals and objectives and here's how I am going to evaluate and know if these things worked. But be sure that your evaluation includes not only what we call accountability data, did you do it, also some effectiveness data what difference did it make, for example if one of your goals was to create a new program and let's call it cybersecurity and you didn't ever get any students in it and if you created the program and all the courses but if students didn't come into it and industry wasn't happy with those people then it didn't make a whole lot of difference that you created it. So be sure you also talk about what difference it made.

Tip number 15 – Be sure to be prepared to receive funding, and this actually has two components some people this well I'll just throw it in the first time because as Elaine talked about to get lots of good advice and lots of feedback on your proposal even if its declined but on the other hand if you're prepared to receive funding then you'll be ready when the grant comes. So go ahead and host these industry meetings and get their feedback. We've even found that some projects that got ready and weren't successful the first time industry stepped up to the plate and went ahead and funded the project anyway. You can go ahead and get your faculty to go to many workshops and conferences and meetings that are supported by NSF and ATE. One of Elaine's resources is something called teachingtechnicians.org it talks about the development projects all over the country most of these won't cost you anything, the faculty are very little you may have to provide your transportation to it but those are excellent workshops and they get you involved in a community. Now I would tell you that it's likely the new ATE programs going to have some opportunity to adapt things that have been created by other projects that's one of the new opportunities were talking about. So go ahead and start looking at the NSF website for things that might interest you or go to ATE central to look or the ATE centers has a wonderful website and you can look at these materials and start thinking about what materials are already available that you wouldn't have to produce again that would work on that. So I appreciate your listening to me today I'm hoping you'll read the documents that you'll be able to access after this meeting and I hope you find them useful. I hope you'll contact me if you have questions although for the next month I won't be available but after

that I'm pretty good at answering emails but most of all I'll tell you have fun. So now back to Mike.

Questions?

Michael Lesiecki – Thank you Liz, got a bunch of questions that have come in, I hope you're not exhausted from talking; we're perfectly on time by the way. Here's a question for you, you mentioned the love letters, I have to admit I smiled at that but the letters of supporting commitment that come at the end of the proposal one of the questions that came in is it useful to have a letter let's say from an elected representative like a senator or a congressman that would might give support to your project, would that be useful?

Dr. Elizabeth Teles - It is definitely not useful and is that we prefer you not to send those at all, reviewers tend to not like them, they think it's a lobbying and NSF is really proud that we don't have things lobby for our funding that we fund the best projects. So please don't do that on the other hand it's probably a good idea for them to know what's happening and if you get funded we clearly hope you would tell them about the funding that you got there. If you really have to support something it might be better for them to just send a nice letter to NSF for something about how pleased they are with things that are going on but it will definitely not help in your proposal.

Michael Lesiecki – That's good advice, thanks. How do you know what you are submitting? Here's the question that came in the word about duplication like somebody's already doing it, they don't want to submit a proposal for the same thing how do they avoid that is there any list you can check or something?

Dr. Elizabeth Teles - Are you talking about getting two proposals in the same year that's being supported or are you talking.

Michael Lesiecki – No, duplication,

Dr. Elizabeth Teles – Your talking about already designed for the ATE. All the ATE projects are now required to put things out on ATEcentral so you should go do some exploring on the ATEcentral website. You should also look at the NSF web page at the bottom of the ATE solicitation is things about prior funding projects that have been funded by this program. So just spend some time looking those over. I'll put a plug in for Mike, you can look at the things that are being supported and presentations at HI-TEC, they have a wonderful website that's available on that. Lots of people do presentations at those so. And then the teachingtechnicians.org has workshops and also you're going to have to do a little bit of homework; NSF clearly expects you to do some homework and find out what's been funded. On the other hand it doesn't have to be something that's never been done before because your institution is unique and again we're pretty sure the ATE program is going to do something this year that's going to have an opportunity for you to adapt some of these good projects at your institution but there'll be something at your institution that's unique maybe it's a different set of students maybe it's a different industry group maybe it's something different that those particular ones are manufacturing that's state-of-the-art. So everyone can be somewhat unique because your institutions are unique.

Michael Lesiecki – Well thanks, very interesting there. Here's a question of some of those new relatively new to grant writing they are wondering do they submit the proposal themselves or does the institution have to submit it?

Dr. Elizabeth Teles – The institution has to submit it, NSF only makes awards to institutions, however we do require that on the front cover there be faculty and other people at the institution who are working on the project and the people who are named as each principal investigator cannot be the person who actually submits on behalf of the institution. It's just good accounting principles that have the people carrying out the work separate from the people who are involved with the financial part.

Michael Lesiecki – Sure, that makes sense.

Dr. Elizabeth Teles – You're going to have to name that and again please make sure they're not the same people.

Michael Lesiecki – Ok, one last question for now and then we will have another question period at the end. So folks don't hesitate to use the question window. The question is what are my chances I mean that's what came in by email, you mentioned that the Mentor – Connect chances or rather excuse me the proposals new to ATE have a good rate of success but what about the regular ATE program, what are my chances like?

Dr. Elizabeth Teles – The ATE program actually usually varies from 25 to 35 percent, kind of depending on how many proposals in and how many of each type you know funding kind of thing. So it's actually a pretty, its competitive but it's still a good funding rate for federal programs of the scholarship is usually between 20 and 25 but they're much bigger amounts so you might look at that project too. And again everything we've taught today would kind of apply to that program too.

Michael Lesiecki – Ok,

Dr. Elizabeth Teles – And I use that Elaine that is a much lower funding percent because that program gets up to as much as 800 to 900 proposals a year. So if you're new, you definitely ought to start with either the scholarship program or the ATE program.

Michael Lesiecki – Well thanks, I don't know, I promised that was the last one but I have one last quick one. When we talk about submitting via an institution can you be a 501C3 non-profit or do you have to be academic?

Dr. Liz Teles - You can be a 501C3

Michael Lesiecki – Ok

Dr. Elizabeth Teles – You can be any kind of institution except an individual I think and even there are some opportunities there but I don't know any that have ever been funded. We've gotten some but, we do fund a fair number of professional societies other kinds of groups and things like that.

Michael Lesiecki – Good

Dr. Elizabeth Teles – You just have to be, you have to have what I think is called SAMs; you have to be registered to get federal grants somewhere.

Michael Lesiecki – Well Liz thanks, I'm going, I appreciate your information all of us do and your response to the questions, I'm going to turn now, I'm going to open Mel's microphone let me just click on this for a second. Ok Mel you're open, I'm going to go ahead and advance to your slide.

Part III: Resources specific to preparing a competitive NSF ATE grant proposal

Mel Cossette - Alright thank you.

Michael Lesiecki – We hear you fine, thank you.

Mel Cossette - Thank you Elaine and Liz for inviting me to participate today. I think this is probably one of the exciting webinars of learning more about ATE and the different areas that you can apply in and those kinds of things. So I have the fun part I get to talk about some of the things I do with Mentor-Connect and some of the helpful hints and tips that I've learned. I guess being a PI for quite some time and also working and enjoying Mentor-Connect. Cause I am actually on my 5th cohort this year, so it's just a fun project and I'm glad that Elaine had the foresight to apply for it. So next slide please.

Mentor-Connect Resources*

Mel Cossette - I'm going to be talking about Mentor-Connect resources as we go through it this part 3 we're going to be talking about the technical assistance webinars and tutorials, some of the FAQs, there's a searchable library with some of these different resources. We're going to talk a little about selected NSF publications, Liz brought up a key one which is the solicitation and the program solicitation and the PAPPG, and I'll be showing you just some front cover sheets of some sample proposals and I'm going to go through a couple of checklists and guidelines and also talk a little bit about the helpdesk. Next slide please.

Sample Resources

Mel Cossette – So some of the local resources that you can find our technical assistance our webinars and tutorials and later on I think in the end of this presentation Elaine is going to talk a little about specific about dates and that kind of information but you can go on and find the tutorial on mentor-connect if you see it the last bullet is the website and if you go on there it is very user-friendly. If you are looking for a specific topic like I was playing with it the other day I went up into the research mode and just put in tutorials and they came up and it's very easy, again it's very user-friendly and very intuitive. So you can find a tutorial on budget, budget justification, on all the forms we go through also a little bit of help on evaluation for small projects and these are all things that you can review, you can watch and sometimes they are very specific so for instance if you want to look at something just around budget and budget justifications you can download that, you can print it, you can have it for future reference. And if you missed the webinar you can always go back and find it because they do archive everything they do, which is a fabulous service that they provide. Also they have NSF advice on financial management of NSF ATE grants. So you'll find that it's got quite a few resources depending on what it is that you're trying to find and what it is that you're trying to identify. So next slide please.

Sample Resources

Mel Cosette – So some of the sample resources if you go on are the frequently asked questions and I know that you might have a lot of questions after this one too but if you go on there you're going to find probably, I think Elaine the last time I looked at it which was last week was several pages of great questions and very in-depth answers. So I would go there first because that's where a lot of the common questions can be answered you. And then might save you a little bit of time and a little bit of stress if you just go there first and look. The other thing that Mentor-Connect provides is a helpdesk and I have to tell you that's probably one of my best tools, if I can't find the answer or if I want to find an answer and I think that maybe others might to or I hear the same question from several mentees, then I just go to the helpdesk and I try and let them know what questions I'm hearing and seeing if they can help me with a standardized answer that could be for all the mentees and then down the road we kind of consider maybe that's a good question to put in the FAQ. Because if several people are asking the same question then maybe we need to be a little bit clearer and that the other part about the resources on Mentor-Connect they're very fluid, they're very real time so they're very you know they're very useful and easy to navigate. The other piece is a searchable library of resources for grant writing. And they have some different pieces there that you can look at get some ideas; get some ideas of how you would write something. If you're looking searching for words that kind of thing. The tutorials are really easy if you just go in and say I'm looking for budgets go there, it's there you can see it, you can view it or you can print it, you can download it, it just becomes. It's based on your needs, it's not just based on what you know the majority would like it just gives you different ways to connect and different ways to be able to go on at any given time. The part that I really like is that you can print them or you can download them and I could take them with you and it makes it really easy and very transportable. Another thing that came out of some of these meetings is the glossary of acronyms as you know Mentor-Connect is a part of ATE which is part of NSF which is the part I can go on but we just try and get the acronyms most of them that people have asked about and so that's a really good source. It's a very good resource for folks that are just trying to get into this whole grant world. So I suggest that you go on Mentor-Connect. You saw the website earlier go on it snoop around see what's there see what can help you don't agonize over pieces because you can just go there and find them and if they are not there ask, you know send an email to the helpdesk, call them, they're very receptive to input and maybe again if you're asking for something maybe someone else would be asking for it too. Next slide please.

Samples from Mentor-Connect Library

Mel Cosette- So what are some of the samples that you can find in the Mentor-Connect library and there is a button by the way where you can click on and it's called library so it's very again it's very user-friendly and very intuitive. So the first one I would say one of my favorite ones is the NSF publication a sample is the Prospective New Awardee Guide. You go on to Mentor-Connect you can click on that you can print it last time I looked again it was like last week it was about 20 pages or under 20 pages but it really summarizes key points and it really helps you, it doesn't overwhelm you and as Liz said the PAPPG is huge I think it's a hundred eighty pages now. This kind of summarizes it really helps you if you're thinking about applying that is a great

document to look at. The other piece that's on this is proposal samples for what we're going to show you is Gaston College and Monroe Community College. Next slide please.

Samples from Mentor-Connect Library

Mel Cossette – And what you are going to see here is the cover sheet of what would it look like when you've submitted a proposal. You can see they assign you a number in the right-hand corner is the NSF proposal number as Liz said earlier up above it says not for distribution again you can ask PI's like myself if we've written one that you're interested in, we scrub them that's what I call it, we clean out the information that we don't want to share that's private as Liz a looted to, but it does say not for publication. But these we've gotten again Mentor-Connect is such a great program they were given permission to use these to be able to useful for other potential awardees and you can see the information they are looking for a date when going to start in the middle there's amount requesting, when's it going to start you know those kinds of things. So it's basic information that you really need to have. What we wanted to show you this because this is what a cover sheet looks like, when it's all done. Next slide please.

Samples from Mentor-Connect Library

Mel Cossette – The last bullet there it's a checklist guideline sample and it's a Proposal Discussion Guide and Monitor Matrix. Next slide please.

Samples from Mentor-Connect Library

Mel Cossette - This is a sample from the Mentor-Connect Library as well and what this is, when we start working with our mentees on the left hand side is start showing some of the key elements and components of a proposal and we talk about in the middle its strengths and weaknesses and to the right is names. And what we do with this as mentors is we look at these and as I'm working with my mentees I go through this and as I'm listening to them talk and by the way I meet with my mentees by phone once a month from the time we leave Mentor-Connect meeting in February until October till they submit and more if they need it. This is how I track the strengths or weaknesses and if I hear something during the conversation again some of the tips that Liz was talking about I'm listening for those and I'm connecting I can give them feedback right away about whether that sounds strong to me or whether that sounds like a weakness to me. So I use this particular form when I work with my mentees to track them and they also I feed it back to them, I send it back to them once it's done so they can kind of see where they're at. Next slide please.

Sample Roadmap

Mel Cossette – But sometimes we have our own sample roadmaps and I have taken one that we got from Mentor-Connect initially and I've rearranged it for my use which mentors can do and it's a guideline for project development and it's called an NSF ATE Proposal Component Tracking Grid. But what I found is that I could take that grid and I could change the components in and out depending on the proposal that we're working with whether its S-STEM or IUSE. I could still adapt it move it around so I use it as a Proposal Management Tool. Next slide.

Sample Roadmap

Mel Cossette – What I've done on this one and again working with the starting with the basics from Mentor-Connect as I talk to my mentees I also track this page and I track and ask them exactly where those components are for instance if I was going down the left-hand side it's the cover sheet I know it's hard to read but it does say cover sheet, it's a component and project data form, the project summary is 1 page and again that's important because if you saw this in real life you would see that bolded because it's a requirement and again that's what helps me communicate to my mentees what's important, what's required and then I know who to contact if I'm having an issue or I'm concerned about their not drafting it strongly enough or they're not there yet or I'm concerned that maybe they're getting to late in the game and haven't gotten to that yet and I know who to contact, who's in charge of that, what's the person's name on that team. So I work with that person to try and work on their component so it gets completed. Then on the right-hand side it's a due date when is it complete that helps me track and report back to Mentor-Connect in a very succinct form of where are they and will they be on track, are they on track and will they be able to submit by the time the deadline comes in October. So I hope those are helpful hints to you and I'd be happy to work with anybody who would need something like this kind of form and thank you for the time today and I'm going to turn this back over to Elaine.

New to NSF ATE Solicitation Coming Mid-2017

Elaine Craft - Thank you Mel. My co-presenters and I hope that we've inspired you to prepare and submit an ATE grant proposal in October 2017. The resources of the ATE program including those of use in the ATE community are here to help you. Now back to Mike to conclude with the webinar with final questions, announcements and an important evaluation activity, Mike.

Questions?

Michael Lesiecki – Thanks Elaine. I do have a question Mel, why don't we start with you. You mentioned how much you loved that helpdesk that Mentor-Connect helpdesk; can anybody take advantage of that or do you have to be a mentee?

Mel Cossette – That's a good question Mike I think anybody.

Michael Lesiecki – Elaine do you know the answer?

Elaine Craft – Well the helpdesk is typically our project manager and co-PI Charlotte Forest or me. Charlotte feels the questions first and if she needs some help answering them then she tosses them to me. What I can say is we're always a little bit hesitant to open the barn door too widely but we've never yet turned anybody down. So we have a passion for helping prospective grantees and you are certainly welcome to call we do encourage you to look first and see if you can get your answers from the online resources, just to help us stretch our hours. But you know we're here for you.

Michael Lesiecki – Good, I'm going to raffle off the helpdesk phone number on eBay. Sorry, I got to have a question for you though Elaine about Mentor-Connect how does one become, how do you get a mentor. That's the question that came in how do you get a mentor?

Elaine Craft - Well once a year we accept applications, applications are available the first of July of each year on our website and colleges apply by forth a team of two STEM faculty members that will work as a team to develop a proposal. We also work with grant writers and administrators at the college but the core of this proposal team needs to be the STEM faculty members. So the applications are due the first of July, I mean they come out, they are available at that time then they're due right at the beginning of October and from the applicants that we receive each year we select 20 colleges to work with and those colleges are supported in a number of ways they are considered the cohort colleges. So you're in the cohort and the cohort participants get a little bit of extra help they some travel support for those faculty to come to workshops to learn grant writing skills and we also finance the faculty to go to the HI-TEC conference that Liz Teles mentioned, which held in July each year where we have another face-to-face meeting with them to teach them some more tricks of the trade and let them work with their mentors face-to-face again. Plus they get the huge advantage of being able to participate in the terrific faculty development that HI-TEC provides and then we pair each of the cohort college teams with a mentor and each mentor like Mel works with two teams for the year to get them ready to submit their proposals. Now for people who are not in the cohort our technical assistance webinars and we offer a minimum of three of those each spring, one on budget and budget justifications, one on forms, and one on evaluation are open to anybody. Our library resources, FAQs, all the resources that Mel mentioned are available to anyone. So a great deal of what we offer is open to anyone who's interested in pursuing this grant funding and those that are selected in the cohort just get the one-on-one assistance and some face-to-face time that we are able to provide because of our grant funding.

Michael Lesiecki - Well thank you Elaine. It's an interesting program so really the next time it opens up if I'm correct is July one right?

Elaine Craft - Right.

Michael Lesiecki - Ok, can I turn the spotlight back on to Liz for a moment. Dr. Teles here a question for you, how does the NSF feel if you write the same proposal at the same time to another agency is that allowable it's like doubling your chances in a way.

Dr. Elizabeth Teles – Well truthfully, because each agency has things they are looking for if you submitted the exact same proposal to two different agencies it probably wouldn't do very well. But we definitely would encourage you if you've had funding through something like with ATE support has supported a lot that came to TAC ABET to add something to it, I don't think your actually supposed to submit the exact same thing but certainly related things so if one program emphasizes the high school part you could submit to the ATE program to do the community college part, or if that part supported equipment you could apply to the ATE program. A little bit of the trick would be if you were counting on one to give you the equipment and then it didn't come through. So I would say sometimes that backfires a little when somebody says well what if they don't get that funding there depending on that but you really shouldn't submit the exact same proposal. We've also had a few instances where people have submitted the exact same proposal to 2 NSF programs but because most program officers work across programs we recognize that pretty well and actually that can be sent back without review if we saw two of the exact same proposals.

Michael Lesiecki - Well thank you, and you actually were serious about accepting phone calls from people weren't you?

Dr. Elizabeth Teles – Well what I'd like you to do is send me an email and let's set up a time for a phone call because that's the way it is because otherwise I don't like to play telephone tag with you. But I am more than happy to chat with people I do ask that people send me a half page up to a page so that when we have the conversation the people on the other end have thought about it enough to do it. Now if it's just a quick question like we can sometimes do it by email but I am very serious I enjoy to people. I taught management at community college for a long time so I like doing these kinds of things so I travel a fair amount though so give me some flexibility if you want to have a long conversation.

Michael Lesiecki - That's a kind offer. One more for you, I'll paraphrase this question slightly is there a preference that's probably not the right word but what if you have never submitted a proposal before and you're going against organizations that have received funding before, is there like a preference you know it's better to be a part of the old network or is there no preference either way what do you think about that?

Dr. Elizabeth Teles - There's no preference and it's at the institutions new to ATE if you come in under the limit which last few years has been under two hundred thousand your put in a set of proposals where your only in competition with other ones that never received any funding and we have actually been funding a larger percent of those because we want to bring in people of the big part of the ATE program is increasing participation so I would say you actually have a slightly better, now you do need to use the resources and don't submit something that you have not researched and things like that but Elaine has lot of guidance and I can help you, Celeste, there are lots of program officers. Celeste Carter is head of the ATE program she does the same thing. Tom Hagen who is from City Colleges of Chicago so you don't need to talk to me particularly but there's lots of program officers, their names are on the website so you can look at the NSF website.

Michael Lesiecki - Well thanks very much.

Join Us

Michael Lesiecki - Well folks we're perfectly on time right here for our last set of announcements were going to have a follow-up Q&A session on March 16th, you do have to register for that one so if you go to the usual website atecenters.org/upcoming-webinars with a hyphen in there you'll be able to register or you can send questions in advance to Christina and you can see her email there.

Join Us – All Webinars 3pm Eastern

Michael Lesiecki - You know all of our webinars are at 3pm Eastern time and in our four part series the next one coming up is on March 23rd you see it there Developing Stakeholder Partnerships Internally and Externally for Successful Grants. On April 20th the last in the series Final Tips for a Competitive Proposal. So typically we will have live Q&A sessions after each of these.

Join Us in Salt Lake City, UT!

Michael Lesiecki - You heard Liz mention HI-TEC so that's the one place if you're going to one conference this year come to HI-TEC where we partner with industry for the new American workforce and network with each other across the community college and higher-ed spectrum as well as including the pre-college folks as well. Real opportunity to talk about workforce, workforce development issues in advanced technological education.

DOL and NSF Workforce Convening

Michael Lesiecki – At the end of HI-TEC is a special free half-day event on Friday July 21. That's an opportunity to talk about issues like the ones we've been discussing today and learn more about funding opportunities on both sides you can register right on the HI-TEC website for that.

Webinar Survey

Michael Lesiecki – Take a look at that as you exit this webinar survey there's a new browser window that open there is a couple of very brief questions that helps us demonstrate our impact. Please take a moment to help us become better. Now as we conclude our webinar for today Elaine, I'd like you to come back in and do you have final thoughtful remarks, we're now let's see October is the submission so we've got about what six months, five or six months to go until that proposal submission date. Any final remarks before we conclude today?

Elaine Craft – Well if you are interested in putting in a proposal don't procrastinate there are a lot of moving pieces, you know it gets easier after you've done one and your sort of understand how they get put together and all the required components but there is a lot of detail and it's not, there are many things that are very difficult if not impossible to do at the last minute like getting those good strong commitment letters that Liz Teles mentioned so just start now, don't procrastinate and if you get an ATE award I don't think you'll ever regret it, it's a great community to work in.

Michael Lesiecki – Thank you again Elaine, Liz and Mel, really appreciate your input today. Colleagues this officially ends our webinar. Remember this webinar has been recorded and you can review it or pass it on the link to a colleague, we'll send out that link to you over the next couple of days or you can find the link on the website as well. Thanks everyone don't forget to click on the survey. Goodbye.