



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

The following tips are intended to help people seeking larger project grants from the National Science Foundation's Advanced Technological Education (NSF-ATE) program. The tips have been tailored to assist two-year college educators who have been principal investigators (PIs) of Small Grants for Institutions New to ATE and others who have had previous grants outside of the ATE program.

This information is a synthesis of the wisdom shared during a round table discussion during the 2016 ATE PI Conference. The discussion participants included NSF program officers, other ATE PIs, and other individuals from the ATE community.

1. Results of prior support matter. Submit a new project proposal when you have evaluation data from a funded project and can answer the following: What did you learn? How do you know it? What was accomplished? Why is more money needed? How will new funds leverage the first project to catalyze something new?
2. Read the most current program solicitation carefully—several times—to assure your ideas align with the program goals.
3. Make sure the college's authorized organizational representative (AOR) pays attention to the latest version of the *NSF Proposal and Award Policies and Procedures Guide*.
4. Follow the instructions for supplementary documents.
5. Prepare a one-page summary of the new project well in advance (e.g. six months or more) of the deadline, send it to an NSF program officer, and schedule a phone call to discuss it. Consider creating and sharing a logic model for the project too.
6. Ask PIs at institutions that have received second ATE awards about the lessons they learned and request copies of their funded proposals. Be careful not to replicate errors.
7. Make sure the budget request matches the project's scope.
8. Be clear about the scope and importance of the project to local employers with data that explains the local need that the project will address, and how it fits with wider trends.
9. Utilize effective communication tactics to build a cohesive project team.
10. Build effective partnerships.
11. Focus on what your institution and partners value and have the capability to do.
12. Utilize consultants and advisors to provide additional expertise.
13. Access Mentor-Connect resources and follow its grants development principles.

14. Work with an evaluator who provides feedback and suggestions for improvement, not just data summaries.
15. Prepare your institution and yourself to receive funding.

Effective Partnerships Expand Impact

As an ATE subsequent grantee you will not only be building on what you have accomplished, but you will be expanding your impact.

- Think bigger —have more partners.
- Recruit diverse partners to explore what works, for whom, and under what circumstances.
- Ask partners to prepare authentic commitment letters that describe their precise role in the new project.
- Align your project with college priorities and documented workforce needs of the community.
- Agree to productive new partnerships.
- Drop partnerships that do not work.
- Make sure your team consists of people who have a passion for the project and are committed to achieving its goals.