

2015 Mini-Grant Program Overview

The NISE Network is pleased to make available a limited number of small, one-time awards to partner institutions that apply and meet application requirements. The purpose of these mini-grant awards is to support initiatives by NISE Net partners to engage their local public audiences in nanoscale science, engineering, and technology topics.

Mini-grant initiatives should represent an increase or expansion in the nano programming an organization currently offers. Requests can be made for an award of **up to \$3,000 dollars** to fund a small project or be put towards a larger endeavor. Only one application per institution per year, please.

Please note organizations cannot be awarded a mini-grant in consecutive years. Organizations awarded during the 2014 mini-grant cycle (December 1, 2013-August 31, 2014) are ineligible for the current 2015 program. Organizations awarded during any cycle prior to 2014, or those who have applied during any previous cycle and were NOT awarded a mini-grant, may still apply for a 2015 award. We anticipate awarding forty (40) mini-grants in 2015. Mini-grant projects must be completed between November 1, 2014 and August 31, 2015.

Applications are due **October 1, 2014**.

If you have any questions about whether your project meets the eligibility requirements and award criteria, please contact your regional hub leader. You can also reference the NISE Net Online Brown Bag “Mini-Grants 2014 Brainstorming and Guidelines” for more general program info, as well as project examples. A recording of this presentation can be found online:

<http://nisenet.org/events/online-workshop/online-brown-bag-mini-grants-2014-brainstorming-and-guidelines-recorded>

ELIGIBILITY

Eligible activities include:

1. New efforts to integrate nano into existing programming.
2. New efforts to reach new audiences with nano programming (including traditionally underserved or under-represented audiences).
3. New partnerships between museums and nano researchers, community-based organizations, or diversity serving organizations.

Eligible institutions:

- The mini-grant program is designed for NISE Network informal science education institutions (such as museums and research center outreach programs) within the United States.
- Institutions located outside the United States and K-12 schools are not eligible for this program.

Examples of eligible projects:

1. New efforts to integrate nano into existing programming:

- Integrating nano content into existing programming you regularly offer at your institution that you plan to sustain, such as adding nano content into chemistry demonstrations you already offer.
- Revising your existing summer camp curriculum or after school program activities to incorporate nano activities and concepts.
- Expanding regular outreach work with K-12 educators, such as reworking an existing physics teacher workshop to include nano content.
- Hosting a training workshop or short series of training sessions at your institution to increase the capacity of your staff and volunteers to deliver nano programming to the public (NISE Net training materials are available here: http://www.nisenet.org/catalog/tools-guides/training_materials).
- Purchasing or constructing a cart to store NanoDays kit activities to facilitate regular use by staff and volunteers on the museum floor **year-round**.
- Enhancing your visitors' experience by adding visual equipment, labels and signage, or facilitating mobile technology featuring content already developed by the NISE Network (NISE Net materials available here: http://www.nisenet.org/catalog/exhibits/nano_museum_labels_graphic_signs_nanodays_2013; http://www.nisenet.org/catalog/media/diy_nano).
- Modifying existing exhibit signage to include nano science content and nanotechnology connections, using NISE Net resources (e.g. adding gecko and butterfly nanoscience content into an existing nature gallery, using the following resources: http://www.nisenet.org/viz_lab/image-collection and http://www.nisenet.org/catalog/programs/biomimicry_synthetic_gecko_tape_through_nanomolding and: http://www.nisenet.org/catalog/exhibits/changing_colors).
- Starting a nano-related Science Café, nano forum, or other program that address the societal and ethical implications of nanoscale science, engineering, and technology.
- Hosting training for your staff and volunteers about how to incorporate nano-related technology and society issues into conversations with the public (NISE Net Nano and Society training materials are available here: http://www.nisenet.org/catalog/tools_guides/nano_society_training_materials).

2. New efforts to reach new or underserved audiences with nano programming (including reaching traditionally under-served or under-represented audiences):

- Significantly modifying or adapting an existing program in the nisenet.org online catalog to work for a different audience (e.g. adapting materials to better meet the needs of your audience or reaching new audiences underserved by regular programming).
- Significantly modifying or adapting an existing program in the nisenet.org online catalog to work in a different educational context (e.g. creating a field trip program for visiting students using several NISE Net programs as source material).
- Expanding a successful program, which already includes nano for underserved audiences. The program could be offered more frequently (e.g. from once a year to once a month) or to new partners (e.g. expanding an outreach program from one library to four).

- Integrating nano into an existing program at your institution that reaches under-served or under-represented audiences.
- Adapting nano activities that reach new or underserved audiences for a festival or community outreach event.
- Working with a new or existing partner to present nano content in an informal educational context (such as an after-school program or local Boys and Girls Club programming).
- Translating an educational program into a different language to meet your local audience needs (Please note that many NISE Net products have already been translated into Spanish: <http://www.nisenet.org/catalog/spanish>).
- Hosting a training workshop or short series of training sessions at your institution to increase the capacity of your staff and volunteers to deliver nano programming to an underserved audience.
- Creating a podcast or other programming around the *Nano* mini-exhibition to reach new underserved audiences.

3. New partnerships between museums and nano researchers, community-based organizations, or diversity serving organizations:

- Developing new or significantly enhanced partnerships between museums and research centers/scientists to engage the public in nano (see <http://www.nisenet.org/rise> for examples).
- Developing or expanding a training program to train college science students in nanoscale science communication skills (contact rise@nisenet.org for assistance in locating relevant materials).
- Developing or expanding a college student intern program to focus on nano education with the public (contact rise@nisenet.org for assistance in locating relevant materials).
- Developing a new or significantly enhanced partnership with an organization that reaches an underserved audience to build a structure for delivering nano programming to that audience.
- Developing new or significantly enhanced programming around the *Nano* mini-exhibition through new or existing partnerships with research centers/scientists.

Past projects:

A list of previously funded mini-grant projects is available here:

<http://www.nisenet.org/community/mini-grants>

Examples of projects not eligible for mini-grant funding:

- Continuing existing, ongoing activities
- Implementing your NanoDays 2015 events
- Travel funds to attend a professional conference
- Scholarship and tuition programs
- Projects outside the United States

TIMELINE

Mini-grant projects must be completed between November 1, 2014 and August 31, 2015.

BUDGET AND EXPENSES

Eligible Expenses:

Mini-grant recipients will receive a check to cover staff time, benefits, materials and other applicable costs directly related to implementing their proposed project. Mini-grant funds may only be used for work directly relating to the proposed project – indirect costs cannot be paid with mini-grant funds.

Some examples of eligible expenses include:

- Staff time – planning meetings, supervising staff, recruiting and training volunteers/staff/participants, developing new curriculum, adapting existing programming, evaluation
- Educational materials – equipment and supplies to deliver nano programming
- Production and documentation – photography, videography, graphic design, writing
- Evaluation – including Team Based Inquiry (NISE Net TBI guide available here: http://www.nisenet.org/catalog/tools_guides/team-based_inquiry_guide)
- Promotional materials – printing signs, graphic design, newspaper advertisement
- Travel – to outreach audiences, for new audiences related to the project, to meetings with collaborators related to your project
- Booth fee at a local science festival or community outreach event
- Honorarium for outside presenters or panelists
- Other – parking and incidental expenses for guest speakers, translations

Ineligible Expenses:

- Mini-grant funds cannot be used to pay for indirect costs (overhead).
- Mini-grant funds cannot be used for alcohol or food and refreshments.
- Mini-grant funds cannot be used as tuition or scholarships, however funds can offset costs for staff time planning and running a workshop or camp, as well as materials and transportation costs.
- Mini-grant funds cannot be used to attend conferences or for conference registration.
- Mini-grants cannot be used to pay stipends for individuals to attend a training or workshop.

Budget:

The total maximum request is \$3,000. Please break down expenses as in the application example budget included here. Your project may be funded by multiple sources; please only include NISE Net funds in the table. You will be asked to note outside sources of funding elsewhere.

Example Budget

	Amount (in dollars)	Description
Salary *	1500	Staff time writing camp curriculum & adapting Surface Area program for camp
Benefits *	500	Staff involved in writing/adapting programming
Materials & Supplies *	1000	6 Surface Area demos, plus supplies for 40 kids to adapt/create their own
Other *		
PROJECT TOTAL *	3000	

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS:

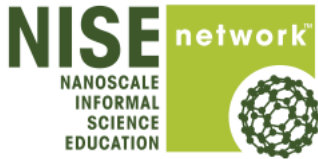
- Mini-grant recipients will complete a short online report describing their project post completion. *The NISE Network will provide a template for this report. The reporting deadline for the 2015 mini-grant cycle is August 1st, 2015.*
- Mini-grant recipients may be asked to attend a NISE Network Meeting to give a brief presentation about their completed project. *If your institution is asked to present, the NISE Network will cover travel costs for one presenter to attend this meeting.*

APPLICATION PROCESS

The mini-grant application is an online only process. You cannot save your work on the SurveyGizmo site, so we are attaching a hard copy PDF of the online application for reference. Also, applications left idle in SurveyGizmo for more than ten minutes in will go blank when you progress to the next screen. We strongly suggest that you start your essay questions in a Word doc, save, and cut and paste to the online application. *2015 mini-grant application is open from August 1st – October 1st, 2014.*

SELECTION PROCESS

The NISE Network will review mini-grant applications and award funds only to institutions and projects that meet the eligibility criteria. Proposals will undergo a peer review process by NISE Network representatives. We will be looking to support proposals that demonstrate strong goals and potential reach, that comply with the project terms, and that represent a diverse range of projects. *Applicants will be informed of award status in early November, 2014*



ADDITIONAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY **Team-Based Inquiry (TBI) Program Recruitment**

Program overview

For the second year in a row, a small number of institutions that are awarded a mini-grant will also be invited to participate in an additional professional development opportunity focused on team-based inquiry (http://www.nisenet.org/catalog/tools_guides/team-based_inquiry_guide). Team-based inquiry (TBI) is a practical approach to empowering education professionals to get the data they need, when they need it, to improve their products and practices and, ultimately, more effectively engage public and professional audiences. The professional development will be designed to help institutions use TBI to incorporate evaluation and data-based decision-making into their nano education work.

At the end of the mini-grant application, you will be asked to indicate whether or not you would like your institution to be considered for this opportunity. Selected institutions will then receive a follow-up invitation e-mail in November 2014. *Your interest in this professional development will NOT affect the selection and review process of your mini-grant application.*

Please carefully consider the time commitment and timeline of this opportunity before indicating your organization's interest in participating. Although the professional development will be offered at no charge, it will require significant staff time from your institution.

- Between December 2014 and June 2015, two individuals from each invited institution will be expected to participate in a 1.5 hour phone call every two weeks and spend an additional 6 to 8 hours per month on professional development activities.
- Two individuals from each invited institution will also be expected to attend a two-day workshop in St. Paul, Minnesota in March, 2015. (Travel, lodging, and food expenses will be covered by the NISE Network.)

Because the professional development will be designed to relate directly to the mini-grant projects, participating in the opportunity may also impact the timeline of your project.

- Between December 2014 and February 2015, participants will learn about TBI and prepare for a shared inquiry experience in February 2015.
- Between March and June, participants will then have the opportunity to work on a TBI study at their own institutions, specific to their mini-grant projects.
- By July 2015, participants will draft a brief final report that describes their TBI study and mini-grant project (separate from the report required for the mini-grant program).

Although mini-grant awards cannot be used to pay for staff time involved with the TBI professional development, we encourage institutions to consider how TBI might be incorporated into a mini-grant project when applying.