National Science Foundation
Graduate Research Fellowship Program

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Purpose of the program

• “provides up to three years of support for the graduate education of individuals who have demonstrated their potential for significant achievements in science and engineering research. The GRFP supports over 100 sub disciplines, including social sciences and psychology as well as the hard sciences.“
via www.nsfgrfp.org
Benefits of the NSF GRFP

- Total funding package of $138,000 over five years (3 years paid)
- 3-years of support, at $34,000, during a five-year fellowship period
- Cost-of-education allowance of $12,000 annually which typically covers tuition and fees
- Internship opportunities (via GRIP and INTERN) exclusive to NSF GRFP
Eligibility for NSF GRFP

**Pathway 1**
- Undergraduate seniors
- Can apply again

**Pathway 2**
- First-year graduate students
- Can only apply once during graduate school

**Pathway 3**
- Second-year graduate students
- Can only apply once during graduate school

**Pathway 4**
- Returning graduate students with 2+ year interruption in study
How many people apply?

Generally, over 12,000+ people apply

In 2020, 2,045 award offers and 98 were in a geoscience-specific field of study

In 2019, 2,052 award offers and 95 were in a geoscience-specific field of study
Key components of the application

**Two statements**
- Personal Statement, Relevant Background, and Future Goals (3-pg limit)
- Research Statement (2-pg limit)

**Merit review criteria**
- Broader Impacts – “the potential to benefit society…”
- Intellectual Merit - “the potential to advance knowledge”
- Application must include separate headings for each

**Letters of recommendation**
- Two required, three recommended
Advice for a successful application

Tell an interesting story (reviewers read A LOT of statements, find a way to tell a narrative of your life that stands out!)

Start early and solicit comments and critiques from a range of audiences and experience levels

Provide explicit examples that point to why YOU should be funded (e.g., remember they “fund the person, not the project”; are you qualified? is your project well-reasoned?)
Pitfalls to avoid

• Show, don’t say – for example, instead of “I am a passionate scientist” or “I have always been interested in X”, provide a compelling example demonstrated by volunteer, research, or life experiences

• Do not undervalue the importance of the Broader Impacts section and be prepared to provide past and future examples

• Poor writing style, structure, and content – follow directions, be concise, proofread, and structure your statements so that they are easy to read
Useful websites for more information

• https://www/nsfgrfp.org/
  Official website for deadlines, application tips, tutorials and more…

• https://www.alexhunterlang.com/nsf-fellowship
  Examples of successful applications (and advice)