National Science Foundation (NSF)
Graduate Research Fellowship Program (GRFP)

Purpose: To help ensure the vitality and diversity of the scientific and engineering workforce in the United States.

Program Website: http://www.nsfgrfp.org/

Program Solicitation: Note: the 2012 Program Solicitation has not been released yet. Check the Program Website periodically for more information. The most recent Program Solicitation can be found here: http://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub_summ.jsp?WT.z_pims_id=6201&ods_key=nsf10604.

Due Dates: Please check 2012 Program Solicitation for upcoming due dates.

Eligibility Information:

- Applicants must be: a US citizen, US national, or permanent resident; in a research-focused Master's or Ph.D. program in an NSF-supported field; attending an accredited United States institution, and must not have completed more than twelve months of full-time graduate study (*this includes any graduate work you have done prior to entering a doctoral program*).
- Individuals must be studying within one of the fields of study listed here: http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2010/nsf10604/nsf10604.htm#appendix.
- Additional eligibility information can be found here: http://www.nsfgrfp.org/how_to_apply/eligibility_guide and in the Program Solicitation.

Budget Information: $30,000 annual stipend; $10,500 cost-of-education allowance. No indirect costs are allowed.

Application Components:

- Personal Statement Essay. *Maximum length: two pages, including all references, citations, charts, figures, and images.* Questions to consider: Why are you fascinated by your research area? What examples of leadership skills and unique characteristics do you bring to your chosen field? What personal and individual strengths do you have that make you a qualified applicant? How will receiving the fellowship contribute to your career goals? How does the information in your Personal Statement address the Intellectual Merit and Broader Impacts criteria?
- Previous Research Experience Essay. *Maximum length: two pages, including all references, citations, charts, figures, and images.* Questions to consider: What are all of your applicable experiences? For each experience, what were the key questions, methodology, findings, and conclusions? Did you work in a team and/or independently? How did you assist in the analysis of results? How did your activities address the Intellectual Merit and Broader Impacts criteria?
- Proposed Plan of Research Essay. *Maximum length: two pages, including all references, citations, charts, figures, and images.* Questions to consider: What are all of your applicable experiences? For each experience, what were the key questions, methodology, findings, and conclusions? Did you work in a team and/or independently? How did you assist in the analysis of results? How did your activities address the Intellectual Merit and Broader Impacts criteria?

- Reference Letters. Applicants must submit **three** reference letters. Letter writers should use official letterhead, and include: Name and Title of reference writer, Department, and Institution or Organization. Letter should also include information on: the nature of the relationship to the applicant; the applicant's potential and prior research experiences; the applicant's proposed research; other information that will enable review panels to evaluate the application according to the NSF Merit Review Criteria of Intellectual Merit and Broader Impacts.
- Academic Transcripts. An academic transcript is required for every institution you have listed in your application. You are only required to list the institution from which you have completed your Baccalaureate degree, and any institutions from which you have completed graduate coursework. If you are in your first semester of graduate school, transcripts from your graduate program are not required.
- GRE scores. Applicants may **not** include GRE scores as part of the application package. (Note: please check 2012 Program Solicitation to verify that this has not changed).

Review Criteria: Applicants must explicitly address the NSF's two merit review criteria are: *Intellectual Merit* and *Broader Impacts*.

- Intellectual merit of the proposed activity. Questions to consider: How important is the proposed activity to advancing knowledge and understanding within its own field or across different fields? How well qualified is the proposer (individual or team) to conduct the project? (If appropriate, the reviewer will comment on the quality of prior work.) To what extent does the proposed activity suggest and explore creative, original, or potentially transformative concepts? How well conceived and organized is the proposed activity? Is there sufficient access to resources? If international activities are proposed, are the proposed activities relevant and do they benefit the applicant?
- Broader impacts of the proposed activity. How well does the activity advance discovery and understanding while promoting teaching, training, and learning? How well does the proposed activity broaden the participation of underrepresented groups (e.g., gender, ethnicity, disability, geographic, etc.)? To what extent will it enhance the infrastructure for research and education, such as facilities, instrumentation, networks, and partnerships? Will the results be disseminated broadly to enhance scientific and technological understanding? What may be the benefits of the proposed activity to society? Background information and examples of Broader Impacts activities are available at http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/gpg/broaderimpacts.pdf,

Fonts and Margin Specifications: Essays must be written using standard 8.5" x 11" page size, 12-point, Times New Roman font, 1" margins on all sides, and must be single spaced or greater. References and footnotes may be a smaller font, no less than 10-point Times New Roman.

Notification of Awards: Applicants will be notified within six months after the deadline of the outcome of their applications.

Additional Information:
- Applicants are limited to only one application in this competition.
- Applications and letters of reference must be submitted through NSF's Fastlane system, which can be accessed here: https://www.fastlane.nsf.gov/grfp/Login.do.

Mailman School Research Resources Office
August 2011

- NSF Fastlane instructions can be found here:
  https://www.fastlane.nsf.gov/NSFHelp/flashhelp/fastlane/FastLane_Help/fastlane_help.htm#2_getting_access1.htm