

January 1, 2007

Sylvia M. James
Program Director Youth & Community Programs
Directorate for Education & Human Resources
Division of Elementary, Secondary, & Informal Education
National Science Foundation

Dear Dr. James:

As part of my duties as Research Development Officer in the Sciences at Appalachian State University, I am working with new faculty members as they seek out sources of funding for a variety of research and curriculum development projects. Appalachian is a primarily undergraduate institution (15,000 students) situated in rural North Carolina. We have a small <fill in type> museum that includes space in and around our newly built Rankin Science Center which houses our Biology, Geology, Geography and Astronomy Departments. Professor Yosef, the director of the <fill in type> Teaching Museum, has received funding over the past two years from small foundations and alumni to update some of the museum offerings and create a rock garden. With funding from the NSF-ISE Program he would like to build on this work by:

- Continuing to update current exhibits
- Expanding the museum by adding new interactive displays (replacing static displays)
- Creating an outreach curriculum for informal education that is in line with the State of NC K-12 curriculum (This would include regional distribution of <subject> kits similar to those used by the Augustana College Fryxell Geology Museum): see <http://www.augustana.edu/academics/geology/department/kits.htm>
- Increasing the involvement of undergraduate secondary and middle school education majors as museum guides

Before Professor Yosef begins writing a proposal, we would like to have the answers to the following questions about eligibility and budget:

1. According to the list of abstracts posted on the NSF website, no small, rural museums have been funded in recent history. Most museums are in urban settings or are associated with research-1 universities. Does this mean that a proposal from Appalachian that would directly serve approximately eight rural counties would not be competitive?
2. We would also like to expand outreach by sending kits to K-12 schools in the region. Would inclusion of this goal be outside of the definition of informal education if it was tied to field trips to the museum?

3. Does the scope of this project fit the expectations of a planning grant or should we try to expand the project to include other forms of informal education at Appalachian that are associated with other disciplines?
4. Can undergraduate stipends be included in the budget?
5. If the NSF-ISE is not the appropriate program for us, can you recommend another program in the NSF that might be a better fit?

Professor Yosef is eager to begin working on an ISE proposal and we would appreciate a prompt response to our questions. Please e-mail me at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,

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