Western Alliance to Expand Student Opportunities (WAESO)

General Guidelines for Applicants

These guidelines apply to all WAESO activities. When applying for funding, consult the specific instructions published for each project type as well.

What is Western Alliance to Expand Student Opportunities (WAESO) Program?

WAESO is an alliance of institutions of higher education and community colleges throughout Arizona, Colorado, and Utah. WAESO’s goal is to increase the number of underrepresented students who receive baccalaureate and doctorate degrees in science, technology, engineering and mathematics by funding a variety of academic projects.

Which disciplines are eligible for WAESO funding?

The disciplines eligible for funding are projects in science, technology, engineering and mathematics, (STEM) disciplines.

What kinds of projects do the WAESO grants support?

At various times during the year, WAESO accepts proposals for the following types of activities:

- **Summer Bridge Programs** - Designed for incoming freshmen or community college students transferring to four-year institutions in the WAESO region, these programs assist students hoping to major in math, science or engineering-related fields. Summer Bridge Programs have a strong academic emphasis and also feature college survival skills presentations and motivational elements. (Summer only)

- **Undergraduate Research Projects** - The goal of this program is to provide students with the opportunity to serve as apprentice researchers collaborating in a faculty member's research project in a capacity that genuinely prepares them for further research at the graduate level. (Academic year and summer)

- **Peer Study Groups** - Closely coordinated by a faculty member or advanced doctoral student, these undergraduate study groups will consist of collaborative study and rigorous academic work that will prepare students to earn an "A" or "B" in undergraduate science, mathematics, and engineering courses. (Academic year only)

- **Graduate Preparation Institutes** - These research and graduate preparation institutes encourage undergraduate students to continue their academic careers through graduate school. In addition to research experience and academic preparation, students may receive...
orientation to the Graduate Record Exam (GRE) and guidance concerning graduate programs. (Summer only)

**Who is eligible to apply for WAESO Funding?**

Faculty members, administrators or research staff at WAESO institutions of higher education including universities and community colleges that are members of WAESO are eligible to apply for WAESO funding.

There is no limit to the number of applications any one institution can submit for funding. If you are unsure whether you are eligible to apply for WAESO funding, please call our offices at (480) 965-0840. It should be noted that all proposals must contain substantive curricula relating to mathematics, engineering or the sciences. Although proposals from individuals with credentials in fields other than mathematics, science and engineering will be considered, only proposals which are primarily focused on mathematics, science and engineering will be accepted.

**What is the definition of underrepresented student?**

The NSF defines an underrepresented student as a member of a group traditionally underrepresented in mathematics, science, and engineering, such as U.S. Hispanics, African Americans, Native Americans, and Pacific Islanders/Alaska Natives. The NSF does **NOT** consider Asian-Americans or Anglo women or men to be underrepresented as part of its funding guidelines for this program. All WAESO activities **must** include underrepresented student(s) in science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

**What restrictions apply to funding?**

As a National Science Foundation project, WAESO must comply with NSF regulations regarding expenditures. Detailed information about NSF regulations can be found at your institution's Sponsored Projects or Grants office.

Student stipends may only be awarded to qualifying underrepresented students. Stipends will be sent directly to the student as soon as practicable following receipt of their student biographical forms (usually takes four weeks to process). In addition, according to NSF guidelines, institutions must ensure that NSF-funded student stipends, "when awarded to students who qualify for financial assistance under pell grants, guaranteed student loan program and/or other Federal and non-Federal programs, shall displace the student's debt encumbrance and not displace grants". Students are limited to a maximum of three undergraduate research projects funded by WAESO.

Consultant stipends are designed to be paid to the Project Director, the person who will conduct **Peer Study** project activities and whose qualifications are stated in the Application for Funding. If your project is coordinated by one person, yet contains activities conducted by others, you must specify the intended recipient of the stipend. Consultant stipends will be dispersed only after the project has been completed and final project report has been received.
Although an item-by-item justification is not necessary, please provide details about how materials and supplies funding will be used. Activities must be completed within the semester/quarter(s) for which funding was awarded.

**Rules Regarding Student Stipend Payments.**

All student biographical forms must be submitted online to WAESO within **four weeks** after receiving notification of funding. Failure to meet this deadline will result in the student not being awarded a stipend to participate in the activity. The Western Alliance to Expand Student Opportunities views student stipends as incentives for students so that they will participate in activities that will enhance their ability to successfully obtain a baccalaureate degree in science, mathematics, engineering, and technology majors. Students are **not** required to work for a pre-determined period of time nor are they required to log in a set number of hours to qualify for receipt of the WAESO stipend.

**How are projects selected for funding?**

All projects are ranked in order of funding priority by WAESO Peer Review Selection Committees. WAESO Peer Review Selection Committees are comprised of professors and/or WAESO administrators representing the different types of organizations (universities and community colleges) and geographic scope of the WAESO.