NSF Graduate Research Fellowship Program (GRFP)
Letter of Recommendation

Thank you for agreeing to write a letter of recommendation for _____ who is applying for an NSF GRFP. We have served as reviewers for this program and often a well-intentioned letter does not support the applicant. We know you want to ensure the success of our Stan State applicants.

In your letter, please give specific examples that support your strong statements about the applicant. Ideally, begin with an introduction that describes how you know the applicant. How long have you known them? Are you their research advisor? Were you their professor in a specific class? Did you supervise/mentor the applicant in a project/activity outside of class time?

The GRFP is designed to fund the applicant and the proposals are based on intellectual merit and broader impacts. This application requires a personal statement and a research plan. If the applicant has shared those with you, please reinforce the applicant's information in your letter.

If you are qualified to judge the applicant's approach to their research plan, It is very important to comment on the originality of their ideas. For example, if you are their research advisor, and the student has developed an idea from their undergraduate research into a new project, it will be extremely beneficial to explain how the creative and intellectual capabilities of the applicant led them to this new research project idea. Explain how they used the literature and their previous research to develop the new research plan.

If you are qualified to weigh in on the broader impacts of the project or the applicant, please add this to your letter of recommendation. The applicant may have experience in leadership and/or commitment to community involvement. Perhaps you had a service learning project in a course and the applicant was a very successful leader for the project. Be sure to describe what they did, why it was important and explain how they exhibited leadership skills. The research project should also address the broader impacts criteria. Why should this knowledge be obtained? How will it improve the lives of others?

For more information, https://www.nsfgrfp.org/

Letters of recommendation will be sent via the NSF fast lane portal; look for an email from grfp@nsf.gov it will have complete instructions for submitting your letter of reference. Letters are due November 1st at 5pm Eastern time

Again, thank you for agreeing to write a letter for our Stan State student. If you have questions, or need more assistance, please contact us.

Koni Stone
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I agree to write a letter of application for _____.

Printed name signed/date

More information from the GRFP website, https://www.nsfgrfp.org/:

The two merit review criteria are listed below. Both criteria are to be given full consideration during the review and decision-making processes; each criterion is necessary but neither, by itself, is sufficient. Therefore, proposers must fully address both criteria. (PAPPG Chapter II.C.2.d.i. contains additional information for use by proposers in development of the Project Description section of the proposal.) Reviewers are strongly encouraged to review the criteria, including PAPPG Chapter II.C.2.d.i., prior to the review of a proposal.

When evaluating NSF proposals, reviewers will be asked to consider what the proposers want to do, why they want to do it, how they plan to do it, how they will know if they succeed, and what benefits could accrue if the project is successful. These issues apply both to the technical aspects of the proposal and the way in which the project may make broader contributions. To that end, reviewers will be asked to evaluate all proposals against two criteria:

- **Intellectual Merit**: The Intellectual Merit criterion encompasses the potential to advance knowledge; and
- **Broader Impacts**: The Broader Impacts criterion encompasses the potential to benefit society and contribute to the achievement of specific, desired societal outcomes.

The following elements should be considered in the review for both criteria:
1. What is the potential for the proposed activity to:
a. Advance knowledge and understanding within its own field or across different fields (Intellectual Merit); and
b. Benefit society or advance desired societal outcomes (Broader Impacts)?
2. To what extent do the proposed activities suggest and explore creative, original, or potentially transformative concepts?
3. Is the plan for carrying out the proposed activities well-reasoned, well-organized, and based on a sound rationale? Does the plan incorporate a mechanism to assess success?
4. How well qualified is the individual, team, or organization to conduct the proposed activities?
5. Are there adequate resources available to the PI (either at the home organization or through collaborations) to carry out the proposed activities?**

Additionally, Chapter II of the NSF Proposal and Award Policies and Procedures Guide states:Broader impacts may be accomplished through the research itself, through the activities that are directly related to specific research projects, or through activities that are supported by, but are complementary to, the project. NSF values the advancement of scientific knowledge and activities that contribute to achievement of societally relevant outcomes. Such outcomes include, but are not limited to: full participation of women, persons with disabilities, and underrepresented minorities in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM); improved STEM education and educator development at any level; increased public scientific literacy and public engagement with science and technology; improved well-being of individuals in society; development of a diverse, globally competitive STEM workforce; increased partnerships between academia, industry, and others; improved national security; increased economic competitiveness of the US; and enhanced infrastructure for research and education.

**Undergraduates are not judged on this criteria.