



Association of
Science-Technology
Centers

STEM PUBLIC PROGRAMS: Updates and Opportunities for Science Centers

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*In an effort to make ASTC members more aware of some of the lesser-known programmatic and funding opportunities offered by a variety of sources – and available to science centers and museums – ASTC recently launched “**STEM Public Programs: Updates and Opportunities for Science Centers,**” a new series of electronic briefs where we’ll share details from meetings and conversations with key representatives from U.S. federal agencies and elsewhere. For today’s edition (our second), we spoke with the leading official responsible for the Science Education Drug Abuse Partnership Award program offered by the National Institute on Drug Abuse at the U.S. National Institutes of Health...*

Many ASTC members may already be familiar with one of the U.S. National Institutes of Health’s (NIH) grant programs – the Science Education Partnership Award (SEPA) program – for which ASTC members are eligible to apply. It’s not surprising – after all, the SEPA program has provided funding for approximately 150 projects – including many at science centers and museums – since its inception in 1991, and SEPA has a long history of engagement with the field through participation at ASTC Annual Conferences.

ASTC members may be less familiar, however, with another (smaller) NIH grant opportunity, the Science Education Drug Abuse Partnership Award (SEDAPA) program, which is offered through the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA). In short, the program focuses on the science of drug abuse and addiction, and is designed to ensure that all members of society have the opportunity to understand the role of science, biology, and technology – particularly as they relate to neuroscience and drug abuse and addiction research; science centers and museums are among the entities eligible (and encouraged) to apply.

The purpose of the SEDAPA program is “to fund the development and evaluation of innovative programs and materials for enhancing knowledge and understanding of neuroscience and the biology of drug abuse and addiction among K-12 students, the general public, health care practitioners, and other groups.” NIDA has been engaged in the SEDAPA program since 1992, and has funded a variety of projects, including “Changing Your Mind: Drugs and the Brain,” an exhibit that opened at the Museum of Science (Boston, MA) in 1994, had a long life there, and also toured nationally.

While the majority of projects funded through (and submitted to) the SEDAPA program have been geared towards K-12 audiences, target audiences may also include adults, journalists, college and medical school students, etc. SEDAPA is looking for creative projects, and ASTC has learned that applications that propose museum exhibits are always welcome.

Though the program bears some similarities to SEPA, SEDAPA grants differ in significant ways. The duration of SEDAPA grants is shorter and they are more focused; they may not exceed four years in length, and direct costs are limited to \$250,000 annually. The program has roughly \$2 million available for fiscal year 2012, and two or three new awards are typically funded each year (one year, five grants were awarded, but that remains a high-water mark). SEDAPA usually receives a relatively small number of applications, but they are competitive – the funding rate is approximately 15%.

For your planning purposes, the next round of applications are due on May 25, 2013 (a letter of intent is not required), peer reviews will take place in October-November 2013, Council review will occur in January 2014, and the earliest anticipated start date is April 2014. Now is a good time to consider this opportunity and begin preparations if your institution is interested in applying.

For more details on the SEDAPA program, including descriptions of projects that have been previously funded, visit: <http://www.drugabuse.gov/funding/funding-opportunities/science-education-grants-contracts/sedapa>. For the current SEDAPA Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA), visit: <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PA-10-227.html>. And for further information on the program, please contact Cathrine Sasek, PhD at csasek@nih.gov.

For a look at the previous issue of “STEM Public Programs: Updates and Opportunities for Science Centers,” which covered the U.S. Department of Education’s 21st Century Community Learning Centers program, please visit: <http://astc.org/about/pdf/STEMprograms/06-25-2012.pdf>.