

Seven steps to help investigators think about and communicate the broader impacts of their research:

(1) Know the NSF Broader Impacts Criteria and pick 2-3 categories that align with your research:

Broader impacts categories described in the 2014 NSF Grant Proposal Guide – Chapter III:

- A. Increased public scientific literacy and public engagement with science and technology
- B. Improved well-being of individuals in society
- C. Development of a diverse, globally competitive STEM workforce
- D. Increased partnerships between academia, industry, and others
- E. Improved national security
- F. Increased economic competitiveness of the United States

And Additional Broader Impacts Categories listed at <http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2007/nsf07046/nsf07046.jsp>

NOTE: This link presents a list of broader impacts categories and representative activities that complement the Merit Review Principles and Criteria presented in Chapter III of the NSF Grant Proposal Guide. Often when faculty members read through items A through K they discover examples that fit the types of activities that grow naturally from their proposed research.

- G. Advance Discovery and Understanding While Promoting Teaching, Training and Learning
- H. Broaden Participation of Underrepresented Groups
- I. Enhance Infrastructure for Research and Education
- J. Broad Dissemination to Enhance Scientific and Technological Understanding
- K. Benefits to Society

(2) Define your audience: What is the appropriate lay audience to receive your research results or understand your research topic? The target audience could be (e.g., general public, citizen scientists, K-12 students, K-12 teachers, undergraduate students, policy makers, conservationists, health care providers, patient support groups, environmental justice groups, or some other defined group).

(3) Identify the message: Communicate the value of your research. In 1-2 sentences, explain the value of your research to the public. Why should the general public care about your research? (If you have trouble communicating the value of your research, then try completing this sentence, “My research is important to <insert audience> because.....”)

(4) Determine what outcomes you want from the audience (e.g. Do you want them to have a better attitude about science? Do you want your audience to be more knowledgeable about your research or a particular scientific concept? Do you want them to make different life choices? etc.)

(5) Design your outreach activities and prepare outputs that will give you the outcomes you identified above.

(6) Evaluate whether you’ve made an impact: Have some way of objectively evaluating that you have been successful.

(7) IMPORTANT – Link your activities back to the NSF Broader Impacts/Outreach Criteria and communicate in your proposal. In the best case scenario, each audience/outcome/activity/assessment should correspond to one of the Broader Impacts Criteria listed above.