

fire conditions that enable assured prediction of the full-scale performance of the final product; developing computational molecular dynamics and other mechanistic approaches to understand flame retardant mechanisms and the effects of polymer chemical structure on flammability; characterizing the burning rates of charring and non-charring polymers and composites; and delineating and modeling the enthalpy and mass transfer mechanisms of materials combustion. The contact person for this group is Dr. Jeffrey Gilman, and he can be reached at (301) 975-6573.

Eligibility: The Fire Research Grants Program is open to institutions of higher education; hospitals; non-profit organizations; commercial organizations; State, local, and Indian tribal governments; foreign governments; organizations under the jurisdiction of foreign governments; and international organizations.

Funding Availability: For the Fire Research Grants Program, the annual budget is approximately \$1.3 million. Because of commitments for the support of multi-year projects and because proposals may have been deferred from the previous year's competition, only a portion of the budget is available to fund applications received in response to this notice. Most grants and cooperative agreements are in the \$10,000 to \$100,000 per year range, with a maximum requested duration of three years.

Proposal Review Process: Prospective proposers are encouraged to contact the above researchers to determine the extent of interest prior to preparation of a detailed proposal. Responsive proposals will be assigned, as received on a rolling basis, to the appropriate group leader of the five programs listed above in the program description and objectives. Proposals are evaluated for technical merit based on the evaluation criteria described below by at least three reviewers chosen from NIST professionals, technical experts from other interested government agencies, and experts from the fire research community at large. When non-Federal reviewers are used, reviewers may discuss the proposals with each other, but scores will be determined on an individual basis, not as a consensus. Group leaders will make funding recommendations to the Division Chief based on the technical evaluation score and the relationship of the work proposed to the objectives of the program.

In making application selections, the Division Chief will take into consideration the results of the

evaluations, the scores of the reviewers, the group leader's recommendation, the availability of funds, and relevance to the objectives of the Fire Research Grants Program, as described in the Program Description and Objectives section for this program. The final approval of selected applications and award of financial assistance will be made by the NIST Grants Officer based on compliance with application requirements as published in this notice, compliance with applicable legal and regulatory requirements, compliance with Federal policies that best further the objectives of the Department of Commerce, and whether the recommended applicants appear to be responsible. Applicants may be asked to modify objectives, work plans, or budgets and provide supplemental information required by the agency prior to award. The award decision of the Grants Officer is final. Applicants should allow up to 90 days processing time.

Evaluation Criteria: For the Fire Research Grants Program, the technical evaluation criteria are as follows:

- a. *Technical quality of the research.* Reviewers will assess the rationality, innovation and imagination of the proposal and the fit to NIST's in-house fire research program. (0-35 points).
- b. *Potential impact of the results.* Reviewers will assess the potential impact and the technical application of the results to our in-house programs and the fire safety community. (0-25 points)
- c. *Staff and institution capability to do the work.* Reviewers will evaluate the quality of the facilities and experience of the staff to assess the likelihood of achieving the objective of the proposal. (0-20 points)
- d. *Match of budget to proposed work.* Reviewers will assess the budget against the proposed work to ascertain the reasonableness of the request. (0-20 points)

Award Period: For the Fire Research Grants Program, proposals will be considered for research projects from one to three years. When a proposal for a multi-year project is approved, funding will initially be provided for only the first year of the program. If an application is selected for funding, DoC has no obligation to provide any additional future funding in connection with that award. Funding for each subsequent year of a multi-year proposal will be contingent on satisfactory progress, continuing relevance to the mission of the NIST Fire Research Program, and the availability of funds.

Matching Requirements: The Fire Research Grants Program does not require any matching funds.

Application Kit: For the Fire Research Grants Program, an application kit, containing all required application forms and certifications is available by contacting Ms. Wanda Duffin, (301) 975-6863, Web site: <http://www.bfrl.nist.gov>.

Additional Information: The Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements contained in the **Federal Register** notice of October 1, 2001 (66 FR 49917), as amended by the **Federal Register** notice published on October 30, 2002 (67 FR 66109), are applicable to this solicitation. In addition, the following information is applicable to all programs described above.

Collaborations with NIST Employees: All applications should include a description of any work proposed to be performed by an entity other than the applicant, and the cost of such work should ordinarily be included in the budget.

If an applicant proposes collaboration with NIST, the statement of work should include a statement of this intention, a description of the collaboration, and prominently identify the NIST employee(s) involved, if known. Any collaboration by a NIST employee must be approved by appropriate NIST management and is at the sole discretion of NIST. Prior to beginning the merit review process, NIST will verify the approval of the proposed collaboration. Any unapproved collaboration will be stricken from the proposal prior to the merit review.

Use of NIST Intellectual Property: If the applicant anticipates using any NIST-owned intellectual property, to carry out the work proposed, the applicant should identify such intellectual property. This information will be used to ensure that no NIST employee involved in the development of the intellectual property will participate in the review process for that competition. In addition, if the applicant intends to use NIST-owned intellectual property, the applicant must comply with all statutes and regulations governing the licensing of Federal government patents and inventions, described at 35 U.S.C. sec. 200-212, 37 CFR part 401, 15 CFR 14.36, and in section 20 of the Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements, 66 FR 49917 (2001), as amended by the **Federal Register** notice published on October 30, 2002 (67 FR 66109). Questions about these requirements may be directed to the Counsel for NIST, 301-975-2803.