annual solicitations focused in areas of the Agency's interest. SBIR solicitations, awards, and research summaries are posted on the NCER Internet site. These SBIR solicitations, like the STAR grants, are targeted towards areas of particular importance to EPA's mission.

Other NCER programs include: the Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR), the Minority Academic Institution Program for Graduate and Undergraduate Fellowships, and the AAAS Science and Engineering Fellowship Program.

NCER Leadership

Director, Dr. Peter W. Preuss
Deputy Director, John C. Puzak

Additional Information

ORD believes that communicating the results of its research is extremely important for the Agency, the scientific community, and the general public. STAR information is available through its Internet site at www.epa.gov/ncerqa where research progress and results, grant and fellowship solicitations, events, published summaries, reviews and journal articles, and other program information are readily available.

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Office of Research and Development
National Center for Environmental Research (8701R)
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EPA United States Environmental Protection Agency

National Center for Environmental Research

Building a scientific foundation for sound environmental decisions

National Center for Environmental Research

Who Are We?

The National Center for Environmental Research (NCER) is one of five research organizations that comprise EPA's Office of Research and Development (ORD). NCER's mission is to support high-quality research by the nation's leading scientists that will improve the scientific basis for decisions on national environmental issues and help EPA achieve its goals. NCER is one of three national laboratories and two national centers that mirror the National Academy of Sciences' risk assessment paradigm by focusing on exposure (National Exposure Research Lab), effects (National Health and Environmental Effects Research Lab), risk assessment (National Center for Environmental Assessment) and risk management (National Risk Management Research Lab). NCER supports leading-edge, extramural research in each of these areas of national environmental concern.

The technical staff who work for NCER have backgrounds in engineering, ecological and health sciences, communication and information management. NCER is headquartered in Washington, D.C.

Science to Achieve Results

NCER's Science to Achieve Results or STAR program funds research grants and graduate fellowships in numerous environmental science and engineering disciplines through a competitive solicitation process and independent peer review. The program engages the

nation's best scientists and engineers in targeted research that complements EPA's own outstanding intramural research program and those of our partners in other federal agencies. In addition, through this same competitive process, NCER periodically establishes research centers in specific areas of national concern. At present, these centers focus on children's health, hazardous substances, particulate matter, and estuarine and coastal ecosystems.

STAR research is funded through Requests for Applications (RFAs) that are derived from both the ORD Strategic Plan and ORD research plans for specific topics. RFAs are prepared in cooperation with other parts of the Agency and concentrate on areas of special significance to the EPA mission. At present, STAR is focusing on the health effects of particulate matter, drinking water, water quality, global change, ecosystem assessment and restoration, human health risk assessment, endocrine disrupting chemicals, pollution prevention and new technologies, children's health, and socio-economic research.

NCER receives approximately 3000-3500 proposals every year for its STAR research and graduate fellowship programs. Each year, STAR awards about 180 research grants, 40 research grants jointly with other federal and private-sector partners, and 125 graduate fellowships, in approximately 280 universities and non-profit research institutions in all states, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia. On an annual basis, NCER manages 650-750 active research grants and 300 fellowships. About 10 percent of the applications submitted to STAR are funded after peer review.

STAR partnerships have greatly increased since the program was initiated in 1995. STAR leverages its resources through joint solicitations with 12 federal and private-sector research partners enhancing the NCER research portfolio by about 30-50 additional grants.

Project abstracts as well as annual progress reports and final summary reports for each STAR grant and fellowship are posted on the NCER internet site. Other types of summary reports (topical research summary reports and research "capsules") and workshop proceedings are also available on the Internet site. Internet site users can signup on line to receive e-mail describing updates of research results and new grant announcements as they are posted. More detailed results are available in journal articles that are identified in the summary reports.

Applying for a STAR Research Grant or Fellowship

RFAs for STAR grants or fellowships are found on the announcements page of the NCER Internet site (www.epa.gov/ncerqa). STAR has four formal solicitation periods each year during January, April, August, and October and awards approximately $100 million per year. Instructions and eligibility requirements for applying for any of the STAR announcements are detailed in each solicitation. In general, solicitations are open for at least 90 days. A list of current and projected solicitations is available on the Internet site.

Other NCER Activities

NCER supports the development of innovative environmental technologies and products through its Small Business Innovation Research program (SBIR). Small firms are eligible to apply for