

NISE Net: Building a Nationwide Infrastructure for Hands-on Public Education

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The Nanoscale Informal Science Education Network (NISE Net) has grown significantly since its inception four years ago. The NISE Net community now encompasses three tiers of partners. Tier 1 consists of about 14 subawardee institutions that are charged with gaining expertise at developing informal educational materials that engage visitors in learning about nanoscale science, engineering, and technology; and in leading collaborations among a diverse set of partners within the Network. Tier 2 consists of about 100 institutions that are charged with gaining expertise in presenting informal educational experiences to the public through a wide range of their educational activities. Tier 3 is yet a larger group comprised of organizations that have been introduced to nanoscale informal science education or gotten materials or training through the NISE Net, and used them occasionally or adapted them for use in their own way. Special efforts are underway to welcome and support the inclusion of minority-serving organizations in the NISE Net, to build connections with other educational efforts internationally, and to build partnerships with the research community. The 100 Tier 2 organizations within the NISE Net have a combined total annual attendance on site of about 45 million visitors. So the NISE Net is working to infuse nano content throughout the educational offerings of those institutions. The NISE Net is working to build stronger partnerships on all Tiers with the NSECs and MRSECs and professional organizations like the Materials Research Society.

