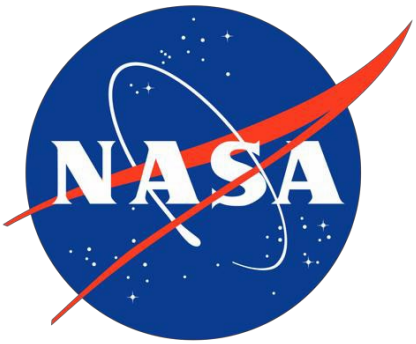


NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION (NASA)

OFFICE OF STEM ENGAGEMENT

Fiscal Year 2027

Established Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR) Basic Research

FY 2027

Cooperative Agreement Notice (CAN)

ANNOUNCEMENT NUMBER: NNH27ZHA001C

ASSISTANCE LISTING NUMBER: 43.016

ANNOUNCEMENT TYPE:
Initial announcement of this funding opportunity

ISSUED DATE: October 27, 2026

KEY DATES

NOFO Released	October 27, 2026
Proposals Due	February 01, 2027 (11:59pm ET)
Anticipated Notification of Award	July-September 2027

OMB Control Number: 2700-0092

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A. Basic Information

Funding Details

Anticipated Funding for the NOFO	$21,000,000 (over 3-year period)
Anticipated Number of Awards	28 Awards
Expected Dollar Value	Approximately $750,000 Per Award
Anticipated Award Date	July-September 2027

Availability of Funds

Awards issued pursuant to this NOFO are contingent upon the availability of FY 2027 and subsequent appropriated funds. Although awards issued under this NOFO may have multi-year periods of performance, NASA generally will obligate funds only for the initial budget period at the time of award. Funding for subsequent budget periods is contingent upon the availability

of appropriated funds, satisfactory recipient performance, and NASA's determination that continued support is in the best interest of the Government.

The publication of this NOFO does not constitute a commitment by NASA to make awards or to provide funding beyond the level currently appropriated and available for obligation.

1. Executive Summary

Public Law 102-588, passed in 1992, authorized NASA to initiate NASA Established Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR) to strengthen the research capability of jurisdictions. EPSCoR establishes partnerships with government, higher education and industry entities that are designed to effect lasting improvements in a state's or region's research infrastructure, research and development (R&D) capacity and hence, its national R&D competitiveness. Twenty-eight (28) jurisdictions including: Twenty-five (25) states, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Guam currently participate in EPSCoR.

Six federal agencies conduct EPSCoR programs, including NASA. EPSCoR promotes the development of a highly skilled workforce by funding hands-on research opportunities that not only prepare students for STEM jobs, but also lead to technological and innovative breakthroughs.

NASA actively seeks to integrate the research conducted by EPSCoR jurisdictions with the scientific and technical priorities pursued by the Agency. Each cooperative agreement shall perform scientific and/or technical research in areas that support NASA's strategic research and technology development priorities. Proposals shall emphasize developing capabilities to compete for funds from NASA and non-NASA sources outside of EPSCoR. The projects shall move increasingly towards gaining support from sources outside NASA EPSCoR by aggressively pursuing additional funding opportunities offered by NASA, industry, other federal agencies and other sources.

This solicitation seeks proposals that are expected to establish research activities that will make significant contributions to NASA's strategic research and technology development priorities and contribute to the overall research infrastructure, science and technology capabilities of higher education and economic development of the jurisdiction receiving funding.

Goals and Objectives:

- Enhance research capability and foster partnerships among NASA, academia, and industry in EPSCoR jurisdictions.
- Develop research capacity in areas of strategic importance to NASA.
- Contribute to jurisdictional workforce and economic development for national aerospace competitiveness.
- Support research aligned with NASA Mission Directorates and Centers (see Appendix J2).
- Improve the capabilities of the NASA EPSCoR jurisdictions to gain support from sources outside the NASA EPSCoR programs.

2. Agency Contact Information

Program Office Contact
Dave Berger, EPSCoR Project Manager/ Selection Official
Mary W. Jackson - NASA Headquarters
300 E Street, SW. Washington, DC 20546
Email: EPSCoR@nasaprs.com

NASA Solicitation and Proposal Integrated Review and Evaluation System (NSPIRES)

NSPIRES is the NASA Solicitation and Proposal Integrated Review and Evaluation System. This web-based system supports the entire lifecycle of NASA research solicitation and selection, from the release of Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) through proposal submission, the peer review and the decision process. Applicants may search for and apply for funding opportunities available at NASA through NSPIRES. For technical assistance with NSPIRES, please contact the NSPIRES Help Desk at nspires-help@nasaprs.com or (202) 479-9376, Monday through Friday, 8:00 AM – 6:00 PM ET.

B. Eligibility

1. Eligible Applicants

☒ **Limited Competition**: Eligibility to apply is restricted to the entity or entities identified in this NOFO. Proposals from entities not specifically identified as eligible will not be reviewed.

The National Science Foundation (NSF) determines overall jurisdiction eligibility for NASA EPSCoR. The latest available NSF eligibility tables are used to determine overall jurisdiction eligibility for NASA EPSCoR. The NSF eligibility table is available at: https://www.nsf.gov/funding/initiatives/epscor/epscor-criteria-eligibility

Eligible Applicants:

Alabama	Nebraska
Alaska	Nevada
Arkansas	New Hampshire
Delaware	New Mexico
Guam	North Dakota
Hawaii	Oklahoma
Idaho	Puerto Rico
Iowa	Rhode Island
Kansas	South Carolina
Kentucky	South Dakota
Louisiana	U.S. Virgin Islands
Maine	Vermont

Mississippi	West Virginia
Montana	Wyoming

While proposals can be accepted only from institutions for which the NASA EPSCoR Directors are serving currently, all institutions of higher education within the jurisdiction shall be given the opportunity to propose by making them aware of this NOFO. Only two proposals per jurisdiction shall be accepted, which must be submitted by the NASA EPSCoR Jurisdiction Director (or their designee). The list of NASA EPSCoR jurisdiction directors can be found here.

All EPSCoR institutions in eligible jurisdictions shall be made aware of this solicitation. All proposals shall be submitted through the jurisdiction's NASA EPSCoR Director's office. Existing EPSCoR awards that already demonstrate partnerships or cooperative arrangements among academia, government agencies, business and industry, private research foundations jurisdiction. agencies, and local agencies shall not be submitted. No requests for renewals or extensions of previous projects will be accepted in response to this NOFO.

EPSCoR Jurisdiction Directors may use a proposal selection process at their discretion. This may include but is not limited to down selection processes originally intended for FY26 and FY27. A jurisdiction's EPSCoR Director is considered the Principal Investigator (PI). The PI is responsible for proper conduct of the research, including appropriate use of funds and administrative requirements such as the submission of the scientific progress reports to the Agency. The PI is the administrator of the proposal.

2. Cost Sharing

Cost-sharing is required at a level of at least 50% of the requested NASA funds. Although the method of cost-sharing is flexible, NASA encourages the EPSCoR jurisdiction committees to consider methods that would add value to the jurisdiction's existing research capabilities. All contributions, including cash or in-kind, shall meet the criteria set forth in 2 CFR 200.306, Cost sharing or matching. In-kind contributions are allowable as part of the cost-share requirement.

Consistent with the Controller Alert 23-04 and Public Law 96-205, title VI, section 601, the cost share is waived for the "insular areas" of : 1) the U.S. Virgin Islands and 2) Guam.

NASA-funded and/or in-kind services provided by Mission Directorates, NASA Centers, or JPL shall be identified as "NASA responsibilities" in the proposals and shall not be included in the 50% cost matching requirement.

3. Other Eligibility Criteria

Ineligibility of Proposals That Include Participation of China or Chinese-Owned Companies

Proposals involving bilateral participation, collaboration, or coordination in any way with China or any Chinese-owned company, whether funded or performed under a no- exchange-of-funds basis, shall be ineligible for award.

C. Program Description

The NASA Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1993, Public Law 102-588, and the Established Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR) Reauthorization Act of 2017, Public Law 114-32 authorized the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) to initiate NASA EPSCoR to strengthen the research capability of jurisdictions that have not historically participated in competitive aerospace research activities. This funding is also authorized by the Commerce, Justice, Science; Energy and Water Development; and Interior and Environment Appropriations Act, 2026 (PL 119-74).

The goal of NASA EPSCoR is to provide seed funding that will enable jurisdictions to develop an academic research enterprise directed toward long-term, self-sustaining, nationally competitive capabilities in aerospace and aerospace-related research. This capability will, in turn, contribute to the jurisdiction's economic viability and expand the nation's base for aerospace research and development.

Funding Opportunity Overview Program Goals and Objectives

- Enhance research capability and foster partnerships among NASA, academia, and industry in EPSCoR jurisdictions.
- Develop research capacity in areas of strategic importance to NASA.
- Contribute to jurisdictional workforce and economic development for national aerospace competitiveness.
- Support research aligned with NASA Mission Directorates and Centers (see Appendix J2).
- Foster partnerships between NASA research assets, academic institutions, and industry.
- Improve the capabilities of the NASA EPSCoR jurisdictions to gain support from sources outside the NASA EPSCoR programs.

Office of STEM Engagement (OSTEM) Goals:

- Prepare students for the aerospace workforce through investments that strengthen research capacity and align with NASA missions and needs.
- Prepare students for the aerospace workforce through work-based learning and experiential opportunities that build technical skills.
- Prepare students for the aerospace workforce by expanding reach through career-connected learning opportunities.

National Priorities

All EPSCoR research awards are consistent with Executive Order (EO) 14332. EPSCoR:

- **Promotes Presidential Policy Priorities** by fostering research, innovation and STEM workforce development.
- **Prefers Lower Indirect Cost Rates** when all other factors are equal.
- **Prioritizes Research with Immediate and Long-Term Impact:** Proposals need to show potential for near-term results and groundbreaking innovations.
- **Endorses Gold Standard Science (GSS):** Applicants are required to adhere to GSS principles as outlined in EO 14303, and *NASA Implementation of Executive Order 14303,*

Restoring Gold Standard Science.

This Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) solicits proposals that will result in awards to establish research activities that will make significant contributions to NASA's strategic research and technology development priorities and contribute to the overall research infrastructure, science, and technology capabilities of higher education. Exemplar products could include but are not limited to peer-reviewed publications, presentations, and post-secondary student research participation. Awards resulting from successful proposals will also contribute to the economic development of the jurisdiction receiving funding. Each funded NASA EPSCoR proposer shall work closely with a NASA researcher to focus on developing competitive research and technology for the solution of scientific and technical issues of importance to the NASA Mission Directorates, Centers, Campuses and NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) as listed in the Appendix-J1, NASA Mission Directorates and Center Alignment. This collaboration will allow EPSCoR researchers to work alongside NASA and commercial partners and is intended to strengthen the bonds among NASA EPSCoR jurisdictions, NASA, commercial partners, and other entities.

Proposals shall be selected through a merit-based, peer-review competition and presented for review to a NASA Review Panel.

NASA EPSCoR will designate a Technical Monitor (TM) for every cooperative agreement award. The TM's role will encompass providing oversight, guidance and monitoring research progress and ensuring ongoing alignment with the established project objectives.

D. Application Contents and Format

Content and Form of Application Submission

Detailed instructions for the preparation and submission of proposals are available in the GCAM. Applicants shall submit their proposals using electronic proposal submission via NSPIRES only. Registration in NSPIRES is required for proposal submission. Proposals shall be written in 12-point font with 1-inch margins. NASA requires the following information be provided in this funding opportunity's grant application package:

Required Parts of a Proposal (In Order of Assembly)	Page Limit
Proposal Cover Page (NSPIRES web forms) including: • **Proposal Summary – limit to 4,000 characters (including spaces)** • **NSPIRES cover page budget** • **Proposal team members** • **Other required elements**	Constrained by NSPIRES
Table of Contents	As needed

Scientific/Technical/Management (S/T/M) Plan	15
References and Citations	As needed
Biographical Sketches for covered individuals	No limit
Current and Pending (Other) Support for covered individuals	No limit
Statements of Commitment and Letters of Support	As needed
Proposal Budget (budget) – both the budget narrative and budget details	As needed
Facilities, Equipment, and Other Resources	As needed
Table of Personnel and Work Effort	As needed
Data Management Plan	As prescribed below

Data Management Plan (DMP)

All proposals submitted under this NOFO are required to submit a Data Management Plan (DMP) in accordance with the *NASA Plan for Increasing Access to the Results of Scientific Research* located at http://www.nasa.gov/sites/default/files/files/NASA_Data_Plan.pdf.

The DMP shall contain the following elements, as appropriate to the project:

- A description of data types, volume, formats, and (where relevant) standards.
- A description of the schedule for data archiving and sharing.
- A description of the intended repositories for archived data, including mechanisms for public access and distribution.
- A discussion of how the plan enables long-term preservation of data.
- A discussion of roles and responsibilities of team members in accomplishing the DMP.

Note: If funds are required for data management activities, these must be included in the budget and budget justification sections of the proposal

In keeping with the NASA Plan for Increasing Access to the Results of Scientific Research, new terms and conditions, consistent with the Rights in Data clause in the award, information about making manuscripts and data publicly accessible may be included in each award document. As a general rule, proposals are required to provide a DMP or the proposer shall provide an explanation as to why a DMP is not necessary given the nature of the work proposed.

The DMP is not required under the following circumstances:

- This is a development effort for flight technology that will not generate any data that the proposer/recipient can release, so a DMP is not necessary.

- The data that the proposer/recipient will generate will be subject to ITAR; or
- The proposer/recipient may explain why its project is not going to generate data.
- The proposal type that requires a DMP is described in the NASA Plan for Increasing Access to the Results of Scientific Research (see above link).

Note: NSPIRES has a mandatory field for the DMP. If the DMP is not required the Proposer shall submit a statement as to why the DMP does not apply to that particular proposal.

Proposers that include a plan to archive data should allocate suitable time for this task. In addition, researchers submitting NASA-funded articles in peer-reviewed journals or papers from conferences shall make their work accessible to the public through NASA's PubSpace at https://sti.nasa.gov/submit-to-pubspace/#.

See NASA's Scientific and Technical Information Program's DMP FAQ at: https://sti.nasa.gov/faq/ and the Science Mission Directorate's DMP FAQ at http://science.nasa.gov/researchers/sara/faqs/ for more information.

Data and Evaluation Costs

Per 2 CFR 200.455 costs related to data and evaluation are allowable grant expenditures.

E. Submission Requirements and Deadlines

How To Request an Application Package

Proposal applications are only available via the NASA Solicitation and Proposal Integrated Review and Evaluation System (NSPIRES). See the GCAM, Section 11.0 for additional information.

Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and System for Award Management (SAM)

Each applicant for NASA funding (unless the applicant is an individual or is granted an exception by a Grant Officer utilizing flexibilities in 2 CFR 25.110) is required to follow requirements in 2 CFR 25.200 and 205 which stipulates that applicants must:

- Be registered in SAM.gov before submitting an application;
- Provide its UEI in each application or plan it submits to NASA. UEIs may be obtained by registering in SAM.gov; and
- Continue to maintain an active registration in SAM.gov with current information at all times during which there is an active Federal award or an application or plan under consideration by NASA.

NASA does not make awards or financial modifications to an existing award to entities unless they have an active SAM.gov registration with current information.

Submission Instructions

Electronic proposal submission is required via NSPIRES only. Hard copy submissions will not be

accepted. For technical assistance with NSPIRES, please contact the NSPIRES Help Desk at nspires-help@nasaprs.com or (202) 479-9376, Monday through Friday, 8:00 AM – 6:00 PM ET, except on Federal Government holidays.

Application Submission Deadline
February 01, 2027 at 11:59 PM Eastern Time zone

Application Materials	Required or Encouraged	Due Date and Time
Letters of Support	As needed Note: Letters of support are only required if there is a facility or resource essential to the implementation of the proposal that a proposal team member does not have guaranteed access to such facility or resource. By submitting a letter of support, the team member confirms that any facilities or resources needed for the proposal are readily available for the proposal team members(s) who require its use.	**February 01, 2027**,11:59 PM ET
Full Application	Required	**February 01, 2027**, 11:59 PM ET

Complete proposals must be submitted via NSPIRES on February 01, 2027, by 11:59 PM Eastern Time. The date/time of submission will be recorded electronically by NSPIRES. Proposers should combine all their documents into a single PDF file and upload in NSPIRES as the Proposal Document. All applications must be received by the established deadline. NASA will not review applications that are received after the deadline or consider these late applications for funding.

Collection of Demographic Information

NASA collects demographic data from grant applicants for the purpose of analyzing demographic differences associated with its award processes. Information collected may include name, sex, race, ethnicity, and disability status. Submission of the information is voluntary and is not a precondition of award.

F. Application Review Information

1. Application Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria: (1) Relevance to NASA, (2) Intrinsic Merit, (3) Budget/Cost and (4) Management and Evaluation.

Successful research proposals shall provide sound contributions to both immediate and long-term scientific and technical needs of NASA as explicitly expressed in current NASA documents and communications, as well as contribute to the overall research infrastructure, science, and

technology capabilities of higher education, and economic development of the jurisdiction. Successful proposals shall also include pragmatic plans for generating sustained non-EPSCoR support.

Relevance to NASA Research Focus Areas (35%)

Proposals shall discuss the value of the proposed research to NASA and to the jurisdiction's research priorities.

- Proposals shall describe the use of NASA content, people, or facilities in the execution of the Research Focus Areas in Appendix J1.
- Proposals shall describe current and/or previous interactions, partnerships, and meetings with NASA researchers, engineers, and scientists in the area of the proposed research, and discuss how future partnerships will be fostered between or among the institution's researchers and personnel at the Mission Directorates, NASA Centers, and/or JPL.
- The name(s) and title(s) of NASA researchers with whom the proposers will partner shall be included (See Appendix J1, Research Focus Areas)
- Proposals shall clearly articulate how the proposed research activities build capacity in the jurisdiction.
- In particular, proposers shall explain how the proposed research is related to the strategic plan for NASA EPSCoR-related research in the jurisdiction.
- Proposals shall state how they plan to develop research competitiveness both in the jurisdiction and nationally. Includes letters of support from partnering organizations

Intrinsic Merit (35%)

- Proposed research shall have clear goals and objectives, address the expectations described in the announcement, be consistent with the budget, effectively utilize the program management, and demonstrate a high probability for successful implementation.
- Proposals shall provide a narrative of the proposed research activity, including the scientific and/or technical merit of the proposed research, unique and innovative methods, approaches, concepts, or advanced technologies, and the potential impact of the proposed research on its field.
- Existing research proposals shall provide baseline information about current research activities within the jurisdiction in the proposed research area, including projects currently funded under NASA EPSCoR.
- If the proposed research represents a new direction for the jurisdiction, the technical team's ability to conduct the research shall be explained. Other relevant research and technology development programs within the jurisdiction shall also be included

Budget/Cost and Budget Narrative (15%)

- The proposed budget shall be adequate, appropriate, reasonable, and realistic, and demonstrate the effective use of funds that align with the content and text of the proposed work.
- All proposed budget line items are well explained and justified.
- The proposed budget shall be adequate, appropriate, reasonable, and realistic, and demonstrate the effective use of funds that align with the project as set forth in the proposal.

Preparation guidelines for the budget can be found in the GCAM. This section shall include detailed budgets for each of the three years of the award period and a summary budget for all three years. All sources of cost-sharing shall be thoroughly described and documented.

- The budget will be evaluated based upon the clarity and reasonableness of the funding request. A budget narrative shall be included that discusses relevant budgetary issues such as the extent and level of jurisdiction, industrial, and institutional commitment and financial support, including resources (e.g., staff, facilities, laboratories, indirect support, waiver of indirect costs).
- Cost-sharing is required at a level of at least 50% of the requested NASA funds. No bonus points will be offered for cost share above the minimum requirement. For additional information see section B.2 of this NOFO.
    - Consistent with the Controller Alert 23-04 and Public Law 96-205, title VI, section 601, the cost share is waived for the "insular areas" of : 1) the U.S. Virgin Islands and 2) Guam.
- NASA-funded and/or in-kind services provided by Mission Directorates, NASA Centers, or JPL shall be identified as "NASA responsibilities" in the proposals and shall not be included in the 50% cost matching requirement.
- Proposers including the use of NASA Unique facilities must include a letter of support from the hosting center. EPSCoR funds may not be used to support civil servant or NASA contractor participation in the research. Funding for the use of NASA-unique facilities must be explicitly included in the Budget section with the basis of estimate and justification.

Investigators are encouraged to prioritize requests for funding of research equipment and instrumentation requests early in the award to maximize its availability for research in the following years.

Work to be performed through subawards shall be proposed in accordance with the GCAM, Section 10.8.3 (Budget Details). Procurement transactions, including contractor and subcontract-type arrangements, shall comply with the procurement standards outlined in 2 CFR 200.317 through 2 CFR 200.327, as referenced in GCAM Section 30.0 (Methods of Procurement). These requirements ensure that all proposed subawards and procurement activities are properly documented, budgeted, and executed in alignment with federal regulations and NASA policy.

Management and Evaluation (15% of overall score)

- NOTE: The following information shall be included in the proposal with page limits as required; the content of this section does not count toward the 15-page limit for the Scientific, Technical, or Management section.
- **Personnel:** The proposal shall include a list of the personnel participating in this research program, including the Principal Investigator (PI), Science-Investigator (Science-I),and all Co-Investigators (Co-I), Research Associates, Post-Doctoral Fellows, Research Assistants, and other research participants. The credentials of the researchers are important; however, one of the goals of EPSCoR is to encourage and help new researchers.
- **Research Project Management:** A description shall be included of the Science-I's management structure of the proposed research project, and the extent to which the project's management and research team will lead to a well-coordinated, efficiently

managed, and productive effort.

- **Multi-Jurisdiction Projects:** If the proposed research is a collaboration between or among more than one NASA EPSCoR jurisdiction, one jurisdiction shall be identified as the lead with additional partners identified as sub-awardees. The proposal shall detail the inter-jurisdiction management structure of the proposed research project, including a list of the participating jurisdictions and the universities and agencies within each jurisdiction. Multi-jurisdictional proposals shall not exceed the $750,000 per award limit.
- **Results of Prior NASA EPSCoR Research Support:** Examples of accomplishments commensurate with the managerial and administrative expectations of the award shall be provided. The EPSCoR Director will not be assessed on their expertise in the specific proposed research area since the Science-PI is tasked with managing the scientific/technical development progress. However, the following information shall be provided: the NASA EPSCoR award number(s), the title of the projects(s); and period(s) of performance; primary outcomes resulting from the NASA EPSCoR award, including a summary discussion of accomplishments compared to the proposed outcomes from the original proposal; coordination with the research and technical development priorities of NASA, and contribution(s) to the overall research capacity of the jurisdiction.

  NASA may, where consistent with program objectives and applicable regulations, consider the reasonableness and efficiency of proposed budgets, including indirect costs as a programmatic priority during the merit review process. Applicants are encouraged to propose budgets that reflect prudent stewardship of Federal funds. After programmatic considerations and in the event of a tied score from: 1) Intrinsic Merit, 2) Relevance to NASA and 3) Budget/Cost and Budget Narrative, NASA will give preference to lower indirect cost rates (pg. 16) Intrinsic Merit and Relevance to NASA require alignment to NASA missions.

2. Review and Selection Process

Reviewers and panelists with appropriate expertise will be identified to evaluate each proposal that is compliant and meets the requirements that have been stated in this NOFO. Proposers must provide enough detail to enable an effective evaluation by persons knowledgeable of but not necessarily specialists in, the proposed area. Reviewers and panelists may include personnel from NASA, Federal Government agencies, industry, colleges, and universities. A check for potential conflicts of interest will be conducted for each reviewer/panelist prior to the start of proposal evaluation.

Proposals will be evaluated through a panel review. Each proposal that reaches the panel review phase will be evaluated by panelists who are personnel from NASA or other Federal Government agencies.

In evaluating proposals, NASA will assign one of the following overall ratings:

- **Excellent –** A comprehensive and thorough proposal of exceptional merit with one or more significant strengths. No deficiency or significant weakness exists.
- **Very Good** – A proposal having no deficiency, and which demonstrates overall competence. One or more significant strengths have been found, and strengths outbalance

any weaknesses that exist.

- **Good** – A proposal having no deficiency, and which shows a reasonably sound response. There may be strengths or weaknesses, or both. Overall, weaknesses not offset by strengths do not significantly detract from the Proposer's response.
- **Fair** – A proposal with no deficiency, and which has one or more weaknesses. Weaknesses outbalance strengths.
- **Poor** – A proposal that has one or more deficiencies or significant weaknesses that demonstrate a lack of overall competence or would require a major proposal revision to correct.

In addition to the merit review and evaluation criteria described herein, selected proposals may be subject to additional reviews by NASA officials, such as Mission Directorate Officials-in-Charge and/or a NASA Senior Appointee, to ensure that awards comply with applicable law, NASA priorities, and the national interest.

Risk Assessment

NASA Grant Officers will conduct a pre-award review of risk associated with the applicant as required by 2 CFR 200.206, Federal awarding agency review of risk posed by applicants. For all proposals selected for award, the Grant Officer will review the submitting organization's information available through multiple government-wide repositories, as outlined in the NASA Grant and Cooperative Agreement Manual (GCAM).

Risk Review

If NASA anticipates that the total Federal share will be greater than the simplified acquisition threshold (currently $250,000) over the period of performance, prior to making the award:

i. NASA will review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the responsibilities/qualification section of SAM.gov (see 41 U.S.C. §2313);

ii. An applicant, may review the SAM.gov information and comment on any information about itself that a Federal awarding agency previously entered;

iii. NASA will consider any comments by the applicant before making decisions in the risk review required by 2 CFR 200.206.

G. Award Notices

1. Notice of Award

NASA will notify successful grant recipients of funding via a Notice of Award (NASA Form 1687) signed by the Grant Officer. This Notice of Award is the authorizing document and will be sent to the proposer's Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) via electronic delivery. All expenses before the period of performance start date listed on the Notice of Award are at the risk of the applicant until the Notice of Award is received and period of performance begins.

Unsuccessful Proposals

Upon selection of award recipients, the PI of an unsuccessful proposal will receive a non-selection letter with an explanation of the review process and reviewers' comments about the proposal via NSPIRES.

H. Post-Award Requirements and Administration

1. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Recipients and subrecipients of NASA grant funding shall adhere to requirements set forth in 2 CFR 200, 2 CFR 1800, 2 CFR 170, 2 CFR 175, 2 CFR 182, and 2 CFR 183. Additionally, NASA grant recipients and subrecipients must adhere to applicable requirements in the following Executive Orders (EOs), Office of Management and Budget (OMB) memoranda, and NASA policy:

- EO 14303, Restoring Gold Standard Science
- EO 14369, Ensuring American Space Superiority
- OMB Memo M-25-33, Eliminating Funding of Unlawful Discrimination
- NASA Implementation of Executive Order 14303, Restoring Gold Standard Science

2. NASA Terms and Conditions

NASA publishes its grant terms and conditions, on the NASA website. These terms and conditions apply to all grant and cooperative agreement recipients and flow down to all subrecipients. In addition to these, programs may have additional program-specific terms and conditions in the grant award.

Termination Term and Condition

The GCAT states that NASA may suspend or terminate a grant or cooperative agreement in part or in its entirety as follows:

- By NASA, to the extent authorized by law, if an award no longer effectuates the program goals or agency priorities, or, in the case of foreign assistance awards, the national interest.

- By NASA, for its convenience, when it determines that termination is in the best interest of the Government.

- By the recipient upon sending NASA a written notification of the reasons for such termination, the effective date, and, in the case of partial termination, the portion to be terminated. However, if NASA determines in the case of partial termination that the reduced or modified portion of the award will not accomplish the purposes for which the award was made, NASA may terminate the award in its entirety.

3. Funding Restrictions

All costs charged to awards covered by this NOFO must comply with the Uniform Administrative Requirements in 2 CFR 200 and 1800, unless otherwise indicated in the NOFO, the terms and conditions of the award, and the NASA Grants and Cooperative Agreement Manual (GCAM).

- Awards must not fund, promote, encourage, subsidize, or facilitate: racial preferences or other forms of racial discrimination by recipients, including activities where race or intentional proxies for race will be used as a selection criterion for employment or program participation; denial by the recipient of the sex binary in humans or the notion that sex is a chosen or mutable characteristic; illegal immigration; or any other initiatives that compromise public safety or promote anti-American values.
- All proposed funds must be allowable, allocable, and reasonable. Funds may only be used for the project. All activities charged under indirect costs must be allowed under 2 CFR 200, cost principles.
- Grants and cooperative agreements shall not provide for the payment of fee or profit to the recipient.
- Unless otherwise directed in 2 CFR 200, for changes to the negotiated indirect cost rate that occur throughout the project period, the recipient must apply the rate negotiated for that year, whether higher or lower than at the time the budget and application was awarded.
- Any funds used for cost sharing must be allowable under 2 CFR 200.
- The recipient or subrecipient must use one of the methods of procurement as prescribed in 2 CFR 200.320, Methods of procurement to be followed.

Direct Costs Limitations

- NASA EPSCoR funding shall not be used to purchase general purpose equipment, e.g. desktop workstations, office furnishings, reproduction, and printing equipment as a direct charge. However, special purpose equipment purchases (i.e., equipment that is used only for research, scientific, and technical activities directly related to the proposed research activities) are allowed and shall be reflected as a direct charge as per cost principles cited in the GCAM.

- Travel, including foreign travel, is allowed for the meaningful completion of the proposed investigation, as well as for reporting results at appropriate professional meetings. Foreign travel to meetings and conferences in support of the jurisdiction's NASA EPSCoR research project is an acceptable use of NASA EPSCoR funds, with a limit of $4,500 per trip for up to two separate years of a jurisdiction's proposal (i.e., the maximum amount the jurisdiction can request for foreign travel is $4,500 total in any one year and a limit of $9,000 total for each research proposal). NASA EPSCoR support shall be acknowledged by the NASA EPSCoR research project number in written reports and publications.

Pre-Award Costs

NASA applicants do not need to obtain prior approval for pre-award costs incurred 90 days or less before an award's period of performance start date, per 2 CFR §1800.210. Pre-award costs in excess of 90 days before an award's period of performance start date are allowable under this NOFO. Any costs that the applicant incurs in anticipation of a grant or cooperative agreement award is at the risk of the applicant and will be subject to the rules described in 2 CFR §1800.210, Pre-award costs and the "Pre-award Costs" section of the GCAM, currently Section 21.

Indirect Facilities & Administrative (F&A) Costs

Indirect costs including the lead institution's general and administrative (G&A) expenses and Facilities & Administrative (F&A) costs are permitted under this NOFO. Any indirect costs must comply with the "Indirect Costs" section of the GCAM, currently Section 22.00 Indirect Costs, and be consistent with the definition of "modified total direct costs" in 2 CFR 200.1, Definitions. The budget must clearly include information for the lead institution's overhead/ G&A expenses.

4. Environmental Statement

Awards of proposals related to this NOFO must comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA); thus, proposers are encouraged to plan and budget for any anticipated environmental impacts. While most research awards will not trigger action-specific NEPA review, some activities (including international actions) will.

The majority of grant-related activities are categorically excluded as research and development (R&D) projects that do not pose any adverse environmental impact. A blanket NASA Grants Record of Environmental Consideration (REC) provides NEPA coverage for these anticipated activities. The NSPIRES award application cover page includes questions to determine whether a specific proposal falls within the Grants REC and must be completed as part of the proposal submission process. Activities outside of the bounding conditions of the Grants REC will require additional NEPA analysis. Examples of actions that will likely require NEPA analysis include but are not limited to suborbital-class flights not conducted by a NASA Program Office, activities involving ground-breaking construction/fieldwork, and certain payload activities such as the use of dropsondes.

Questions concerning environmental compliance may be addressed to the the NASA program official listed in section A3 of this NOFO.

5. Reporting

NASA grant and cooperative agreement recipients are required to follow reporting requirements outlined in Appendix C of the GCAM.

Recipients of NASA funding must submit financial reports. Financial reports must be submitted via the Payment Management System (PMS) as follows:

- Semi-annual Federal Financial Reports (FFR) due no later than 30 days past the reporting period end date.

- Final Financial Status Reports/Final Federal Financial Report (FSR/FFR) are due no later than 120 days after the end of the period of performance.

Performance Reporting

Recipients of NASA funding are required to submit Performance Reports summarizing accomplishments and challenges for the reporting period. Reports shall follow the Research Performance Progress Report (RPPR) format and requirements as outlined in the GCAM, Section 29.1. The Technical Officer will review the reports.

Annual Performance Reports are due no later than 60 days prior to the anniversary of the award's period of performance (POP) start date, except in the award's final year. Awards in their final year are required to submit a Final Report in lieu of an Annual Performance Report, due no later than 120 days after the end of the POP.

Awards that are in a no-cost extension (NCE) or anticipate a no-cost extension beyond the original POP remain subject to the Annual Performance Report requirement. The Final Report shall be submitted following the end of the no-cost extension, consistent with the due dates described below.

- **Annual Performance Report**
  Due each year no later than 60 days prior to the anniversary of the award POP start date, except in the award's final year.
  Submission: Email to NSSC-Grant-Report@mail.nasa.gov, with a copy to agency-epscor@mail.nasa.gov

- **Final Performance Report**
  Due no later than 120 days after the end of the POP.
  Submission: Email to NSSC-CloseOut@mail.nasa.gov, with a copy to agency-epscor@mail.nasa.gov

Annual Closeout Performance Report (CPR)

Annually submit the CPR performance data into the NASA STEM Gateway system (STEM Gateway) by November 30th of each calendar year. The awardee shall adhere to the STEM Gateway reporting guidelines provided by the OSTEM Performance and Evaluation (P&E) team. STEM Gateway report training will be provided by STEM Gateway Trainer & OSTEM P&E Team.

Office of STEM Engagement Performance Metrics

NASA currently utilizes the NASA STEM Gateway registration/application and data management system (Gateway system) for analyzing annual performance data. PIs are required to timely and properly respond to data calls as requested by NASA OSTEM and utilize the Gateway system for performance data reporting. Additional communications and guidance regarding data calls and the Gateway system will be sent to award recipients from the NASA OSTEM and Activity Manager.

The PI shall ensure that it has the appropriate staff and resources to facilitate data collection activities and properly complete tasks required for timely reporting to NASA.

Technical Monitor

NASA will designate a Technical Monitor (TM) for every cooperative agreement award. The TM's role will encompass providing oversight, guidance and monitoring research progress and ensuring ongoing alignment with the established project objectives. Each award recipient is required to furnish an annual report detailing research advancement. These reports will encompass anticipated performance goals, key indicators, target outcomes, baseline data, data collection methods, publications and other resulting insights. Following evaluation by the TM, these reports will be subject to approval by the NASA EPSCoR Project Manager. Also, they will be disseminated among the NASA Mission Directorates, NASA Centers, and JPL for broader awareness and visibility.

Jurisdictions shall submit electronic progress reports to the NSSC at NSSC-Grant Report@mail.nasa.gov and the technical officer at agency-epscor@mail.nasa.gov. The reporting requirements for awards made through this NOFO shall be consistent with the NASA Grant and Cooperative Agreement Manual (GCAM), (https://www.nasa.gov/grants-policy-and-compliance-team/#Regulations).

Access to Research

Awards issued under this NOFO must comply with the provision set forth in the NASA Plan for Increasing Access to the Results of Scientific Research (http://www.nasa.gov/sites/default/files/files/NASA_Data_Plan.pdf) including the responsibility for:

1. Submitting as-accepted peer-reviewed manuscripts and metadata to a designated repository and
2. Reporting publications with the annual and final performance reports.

I. Other Information

Access to NASA Facilities/Systems

All recipients shall work with NASA project/program staff to ensure proper credentialing for any individuals who need access to NASA facilities and/or systems. Such individuals include U.S. citizens, lawful permanent residents (“green card” holders), and foreign nationals (those who are neither U.S. citizens nor permanent residents).

Limited Release of Proposers’ Confidential Business Information

a) For proposal evaluation and other administrative processing, NASA may find it necessary to release information submitted by the proposer to individuals not employed by NASA. Business information that would ordinarily be entitled to confidential treatment may be included in the information released to these individuals. Accordingly, by submission of

this proposal the proposer hereby consents to a limited release of its confidential business information (CBI).

b) Except where otherwise provided by law, NASA will permit the limited release of CBI only pursuant to non-disclosure agreements signed by the assisting contractor or subcontractor, and their individual employees who may require access to the CBI to perform the assisting contract.

Cross-Waiver of Liability for International Space Station, Science or Space Exploration Activities

Per NASA's Award Terms and Conditions, for work that involves the International Space Station, additional requirements apply. Cross-waivers will require the recipient to extend the cross-waiver terms and conditions to their subcontractors at any tier and related entities, ensuring those subcontractors and related entities also waive all claims against any entity or person defined in the provision for damages arising out of Protected Space Operations. This cross-waiver is intended to be broadly construed, and NASA extends it to its related entities as set forth in the provision. See Appendix E of the NASA Grants and Cooperative Agreement Manual for specific conditions that will apply to an approved award.

J. Appendices

Appendix 1: Research Focus Areas

As stated in the NOFO, 35% of the evaluation consists of NASA alignment and partnerships; relevance to NASA priorities and collaboration plans. Research Focus Areas are provided to communicate areas of focus and priority at NASA. All proposals are required to demonstrate relevance, alignment, and impact towards NASA priorities.

Research Focus Areas may be accessed at: https://www.nasa.gov/learning-resources/established-program-to-stimulate-competitive-research/research-focus-areas/